



OAK LEAF

Volume 35; Issue 4

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING SHENANDOAH AUDUBON!!

Nov/Dec 2011

A 501 (c)(3)
NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION

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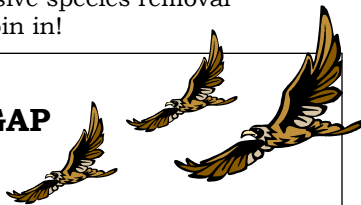
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Fall Birding in Shenandoah National Park

(excerpts form www.nps.gov website)

Over 200 species of resident and transient birds are known to use the park. Approximately half of these species breed in the park including eighteen species of warblers. Roughly thirty of the species are year-round residents including tufted titmice, red-tailed hawks, Carolina chickadees, wild turkeys, and barred owls. Due to the park's location along the crest of the Blue Ridge and the extent of the forested habitat, Shenandoah provides essential habitat for neo-tropical migratory birds, both for nesting and as a travel corridor. Certain areas, such as Big Meadows, support species that can be found nowhere else in the park. One useful reference specific to Shenandoah National Park for the bird enthusiast is *Birds of Shenandoah National Park, A Naturalist's View* by Lindsay, T. and P. Lindsay, 1997, published by Shenandoah Natural History Association, Luray, Virginia. SNP birds include: [Peregrine Falcon](#), Owls, hawks, eagles, falcons, and vultures, [Cerulean Warbler](#), [Downy Woodpecker](#), and the beautiful red [Scarlet Tanager](#). **Did You Know?** The most harmful exotic plants, animals and diseases in Shenandoah National Park include: chestnut blight, Dutch elm disease, dogwood anthracnose, gypsy moths, hemlock woolly adelgids, kudzu, mile-a-minute vine, Oriental bittersweet, and garlic mustard. The VA Important Bird Areas Program sponsors seasonal volunteer invasive species removal efforts at the Park - we encourage you to join in!

NATIONAL AUDUBON HAWK WATCH at SNICKERS GAP Saturday, November 5th 10:00 am



We will meet and watch the hawks from the commuter parking lot (which is located just off of Route 7) starting at 10am. **Dr. Greg Butcher, Audubon's Director of Bird Conservation will be leading the Watch!** Coffee and bagels will be on-hand.

For more information and to register contact Lynne Mecum at lmecum@audubon.org. **Advance registration is required.**

DIRECTIONS: From Northern Virginia and the Washington, D.C. area, travel west on Virginia Route 7 to the intersection with Virginia Route 601. Make a left turn and the public commuter lot will be on your immediate right. From Winchester, travel east on Route 7 to the intersection with Route 601, make a right turn and an immediate right turn into the public commuter parking lot. <http://virginia.hometownlocator.com/maps/distance-directions2.cfm?snickers%20gap@39.1156611,-77.8452729>



Get Outdoors! Visit our State Parks

**Public Invited!
Audubon Members,
Please Join In!**

Nov. 5 - Bird Walk at [Sky Meadows State Park](#), Paris, VA. 9:00 to 11:00 am. Take a walk with Volunteer Naturalist Scott Baron. Learn about bird identification and find some of the birds that reside at Sky Meadows. Meet near the Visitor Center. Children Allowed. Questions? Call the Park at (540) 592-3556, or email: skymeadows@dcr.virginia.gov

Nov. 25, 26 & 27 - Meet the Beekeepers at [Sky Meadows State Park](#), Paris, VA. 1:00 to 3:00 pm. Enjoy learning the art of Apiculture (AKA Beekeeping), Meet Doug & Ramona Morris our local beekeepers. This month during our Holiday House there will be a display of hive products from the Beekeepers of the Northern Shenandoah club. The display will include hive equipment, beekeeping tools and presentations. Meet near the Visitor Center. Children Allowed. . Questions? Call the Park at (540) 592-3556, or email: skymeadows@dcr.virginia.gov.

Dec. 10 - Audubon Bird Walk at [Sky Meadows State Park](#), Paris, VA. 9:00 to 11:00am. Meet at Shearman's Mill Trail. Spend the morning with volunteer from Shenandoah Audubon and VA Master Naturalist Margaret Wester. This walk focuses on Winter Resident Woodland Birds seen along the Shearman's Mill Trail. Meet in the Eastside parking lot near the Equestrian Trails. Bring binoculars, a field guide and water. Wear sturdy walking shoes or hiking boots. Sun protection is recommended. Children Allowed. Questions? Call the Park at (540) 592-3556, or email: skymeadows@dcr.virginia.gov.

NATURE WALK - WINCHESTER CITY

through **Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve**

FREE!!

**Saturday Nov. 5th
Starts at 8:00 am
Public Invited!
Audubon Members,
Please Join In!**



Join Jim Smith on a moderate guided walk through the Abrams Creek Wetlands. **Discover fall flowers and migrating birds!** The group will meet in the Children of America parking lot off W. Jubal Early Dr., approx. 1/2 mile west of Valley Ave. Park at the area by the woods.

The walk will last approximately 2 hours and is non-strenuous. Bring binoculars, spotting scopes, and/or your camera. Participants are also encouraged to bring water and dress for the weather. Contact Jim Smith for more information: 540-662-5033



✂ PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE ✂

New Board Member Nominations and Elections for 2012-2014

Dear Audubon Members and Friends,

Due to our Chapter's tenuous status, I have decided that the Chapter will not hold any meetings in October or November. We are again lacking a strong core of volunteers and find ourselves on the brink of dissolution despite the fact that the current Board has have put an enormous amount of effort into saving the Chapter from going under these past two years. Unfortunately, changes that would bring the Chapter in line with current technology and new Board members that were appointed were not met with the full support I had hoped for.

Therefore, I have called for the membership, both by email and on the website, to submit interest or suggestions for nominations for Board Officers (must be elected by the membership) or Board Committee Chairs (are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Board) by November 4th. Interest will be forwarded to the Nominating Committee. As of today, Kaycee Lichliter, Lee Bowen, Jeannie Senter and Jason Shaffer are serving on the Nominating Committee.

I am granting the Nominating Committee an additional month over the prescribed time frame for nominations (until December instead of November) to provide our Board of Directors with a valid slate of nominees for Chapter Board Officers. The Nominating Committee must prepare a presentation of candidates for Board positions to present to the membership in December. The nomination reports will be written and will describe the background, experience and intent of each nominee for the 2012-2014 term of office.

We plan to send out information on the slate of nominees for election to local members at least one week prior to the meeting so that members will have time to review the candidates. Information on the nominees will also be posted on the website for reference. The Chapter will have a membership meeting in December, probably at Blandy or the public library in Stephens City or Front Royal. We will notify the membership as soon as we can make these arrangements.

According to the Bylaws, at least 11 local members in good standing with their dues payments must attend the meeting in December to constitute a valid voting quorum of the membership to vote on the nominees. If there are not the required number of members to vote at the meeting, or if nominees cannot be found for all Board Officer positions, this Chapter will be dissolved and all monies in the Chapter accounts (with the exception of earmarked funds) will be returned to National Audubon.

I encourage you to take an active role in this important process to keep the Chapter moving forward. Your input is crucial.

If you have any questions, please let me know. Thanks to all who have shown your support for the Chapter over the past two years.

- Diane Greco, SA President



Please send all correspondence to:

NSVAS, PO Box 2693
Winchester, VA 22604

Email: shenandoahaudubon@yahoo.com

Headquarters: The State Arboretum of VA
400 Blandy Farm Rd, Boyce, VA

www.audubon-nsvas.org

The Northern Shenandoah Valley Audubon Society (NSVAS), dba Shenandoah Audubon, is a chapter of the National Audubon Society (NAS) and a member of the Virginia Audubon Council (VAC) and of the Virginia Environmental Network (VEN). This newsletter belongs to the NSVAS membership. Chapter Code: X-54.

2010-2012 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers

- President: Diane Greco - stepping down
1st Vice President: Cynthia Fenton - stepping down
2nd Vice President: vacant
Secretary: Jeannie Senter
Treasurer: Christine Harden - stepping down

Steering Committee Chairs

- Conservation: Kaycee Lichliter
Education: To Be Appointed
Field Trips: Margaret Wester - stepping down
Finance: Christine Harden - stepping down
Membership: Lee Bowen
Programs: Rosemary Rogers
Public Relations: Jason Shaffer, contact Jason at nsvaudubonpr@gmail.com



Contact us for information about SPECIAL PROJECTS:

Audubon Arboretum at Jim Barnett Park; Annual Bird Counts: Calmes Neck area & N. Shenandoah area; Bluebird Trail at Blandy Farm & Andy Guest State Park; Hawk Watch at Snicker's Gap (Sept.).

Newsletter Editor (Interim): Cynthia Fenton - stepping down

Web Page Coordinator: Cynthia Fenton - stepping down

- All members are encouraged to attend Membership meetings and Public programs.
All members are welcome to observe Board Meetings, join committees, and help plan activities.
Can you donate an hour or more of your time to help us keep our Chapter going? Contact us today!

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The Oak Leaf is distributed in March, May, September, and November. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions about this publication.

- Cynthia Fenton, Interim Editor



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VA Audubon Council (VAC) Fall 2011 Meeting Report

By Cynthia Fenton

The Virginia Audubon Council is a non-profit organization comprised of one to two Board representatives from each of the five Audubon Chapters in the Commonwealth. Three Shenandoah Audubon Board members, Diane Greco, Cynthia Fenton and Jason Shaffer, attended the October 22nd VAC meeting at the Rice Center, located along the James River just southeast of Richmond. The meeting was held at the Center's Education Building, which is the first LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum building in Virginia, the highest sustainability rating possible. The Council was treated to a tour of the building and surrounding area. Click [HERE](#) to see the facility and read more about the Rice Center.

The meeting included new VAC Officer nomination elections, reports on the VA Important Bird Areas Program, a preview of "The Big Year" movie, and Chapter Sharing - a reporting from each Chapter of their current administrative status, recent programs, successes and struggles. Discussions also included petitions against new legislation being introduced in the upcoming VA Legislative Session in favor of [Uranium mining](#) (after a moratorium lasting several years), questionable [Menhaden fishing](#) practices and oyster reef seeding programs in the Chesapeake Bay, and issues arising from the placement of land-based [wind power turbine generators](#) around VA in important [migratory flyways](#) and in fragile bat ecosystems. John Roberts reported that studies show that bats are now at high risk when long-bladed turbines are installed on the slopes of mountain ridges and within important flyways. Also, it seems that a low priority has been given to the impact of the new construction of all power source generators (wind, water, nuclear and coal) versus a more stringent conservation approach to use of energy and other resources by legislators and energy companies. Coal power generator facilities are also taking the tops off mountains, destroying forever the natural beauty of the Alleghenies to the southwest.

VA IBA representative, Mary Elfner, reported that the program was able to obtain a grant from VCU for [Team Warbler](#), a partnership supports the ongoing efforts to protect IBAs, including the [Lower James River IBA](#), conserve critical habitats and native wildlife, and promote long-term studies of migratory birds such as the Prothonotary Warbler, which serves as the link between Virginia and Panama.. It focused on the importance of the Richmond-Panama flyway and allowed the children to participate in discussions about bird migrations and important habitats in the flyway that support the long seasonal treks.

The VAC has been, and hopefully will continue to be, a phenomenal resource and support system for our Chapter. The Chapter's participation in the Council moving forward is not only in line with our Chapter's Mission of conservation advocacy, but also is an invaluable resource for funding and support for projects initiated by National Audubon for implementation in our service area. It has been requested by the Council that Shenandoah Audubon, as well as all other Audubon chapters in VA, assign a primary representative to attend all VAC meetings. Their goal is to have representation of all five VA Chapters on the VAC Board, preferably as Officers. However, the two Board Officers who attended the meeting from our Chapter are stepping down from Board positions and cannot commit to this type of position in the near future. The Secretary position was not filled by someone from our Chapter, however if there is someone from the incoming Board (2012-2014) who would be willing to fulfill this commitment, the VAC will welcome them to participate on the Board and in future meetings, which are held 3 times per year at locations across the Commonwealth.

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National Audubon Website - It's a Big Time for Birds!

Have you visited the National Audubon website lately? If so, you have seen some exciting stuff. If you haven't, well, it's time you took a peek! The new motion picture "The Big Year" is based on Mark Obmascik's 2004 book "The Big Year: A Tale of Man, Nature and Fowl Obsession", which tells the tale of the competitive nature some birders have to record the sighting of as many bird species as possible and break existing records. To read more about the Big Year at Wikipedia, [click here](#). For the article in Audubon Magazine, [click here](#).

National Audubon is also advertising a FREE introductory membership and free electronic magazine. Sign up with your email address. In addition, there is an interactive bird sighting competition "Birding the Net", which allows you to report digital sightings of birds while online, something fun for the kids and for kids at heart!!

National Audubon and Toyota are providing grants that support local, solutions-based environmental projects across the USA, and Shenandoah Audubon has been asked by National Audubon to participate in the Together Green Program. If you have suggestions about community conservation projects that might be in need of funding, please contact us. To read more about the Together Green Program, [click here](#).

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Shenandoah National Park's Partners for Wildlife

(excerpt from the Park's Fall 2011 *Shenandoah Overlook*)

2011 marks the 25th anniversary of a unique partnership between Shenandoah National Park and the Wildlife Center of Virginia (WCV), a non-profit wildlife hospital in Waynesboro, VA. The center places raptors on a permanent-loan basis for the park's popular "Birds of Prey" programs. WCV staff provide routine medical exams, beak and talon trimming, and acute care for these birds, all free of charge to the park. Over the years, the park's educational raptors have reached more than 100,000 visitors with a vital wildlife conservation message shared by both organizations.

Learn more about WCV at www.wildlifecenter.org. To read more of the Park's *Overlook*, [click here](#).



Spring Middle School Bird Talks *by Patsy Gochenour*

For the past several years, it has been my pleasure to participate in Virginia Cooperative Extension Conservation Awareness Program. I must admit each year it becomes a greater challenge, basically because we are experiencing more and more students and less and less time! When the floodgates opened and designated groups of eager students flowed out of the school building to pause for 13 minutes during a two-hour time period at each of the nine stations of the participating conservation presenters, I was extremely blessed to have Rosemary at my side and our Audubon support system well in place. From past experience I learned that if you don't have a sound structure to follow by the time the third group appears at the table, panic will set in! A script allowed us to greet each new group with the same enthusiastic introduction, basic key points, and a closing statement, just as we had done for the first - for when that whistle blows, the flock in front of you migrates!

The title of our presentation was "Turn off electronics, Turn on nature (The best way to have a friend is to be one!)". With Rosemary's beautiful table display, which immediately caught the students and teachers' attention, it was easy for them to connect birds with Northern Shenandoah Audubon Society when I introduced that we were representing the Chapter. When we started gesturing to what was before them as being our friends, they could quickly say in a chorus, "birds!" From that point on, we had their attention. Continuing with the friend concept, we opened with a series of quick questions like, "When you hear the word *friend*, does someone immediately come to mind? What are the characteristics of your friend? If you are on your way to the bus and a friend calls out your name, without turning around, do you know who is behind you?" We even asked, "If you are going to give a party and invite your friends, do you know the food and drinks you will be serving?" Needless to say by now, all of you have substituted "friend recognition" for "bird recognition!"

We told the students that during the brief time we had, "we would like to introduce to you four common birds you will see if you just take time to look and listen. I would say there are at least 100 different varieties of birds in our area, so we are going to get you started with four, and this might excite you enough to want to be able to recognize the other 96, but you have to look up, look around, and listen!" The four birds chosen were the Cardinal, Mourning Dove, Robin and Blue Jay. By including the Blue Jay, we could also introduce the identity of the Blue Bird. We shared that the Cardinal, who many knew as our State bird, "likes to sing 'wet, wet, wet,' or 'cheer, cheer, cheer,' and by doing so, will let us know if it is going to be a rainy or sunny day!" However, when I shared that he sometime confuses me with singing both songs within seconds of each other, and then as I am heading back into the house to get my umbrella, I ask him, "Will you please make up your mind?!" To this a student quickly said, "Perhaps it's going to be a cloudy day!"

While introducing the Mourning Dove, a bird I call "my gentle, elegant lady" who holds her head erect while walking around the railing of the deck outside my window, Rosemary has not only held up a picture of her, but then holds up two cards, one with "Morning" and one with "Mourning". I point out that the dove's cooing sound is said to be sad, but I think it's very peaceful and soothing. "Just listen and see what you think". At the moment Rosemary plays the call, there is a growing ripple of excitement of recognition, and we see smiles and hear "oh, I've heard that" repeated over and over. Some say, "She wakes me up in the morning," and even some say, "I thought it was an owl," which gives me the delightful opportunity to share my Girl Scout Camp story.

"How many of you," I ask, "have seen a Robin in your yard and heard him sing, 'cheer-up, cheer-up?' Have you ever noticed as he goes bob-bob-bobbing along that he will stop and cock his head to one side?" At that point I ask the students to look forward and roll their eyes. Then I announce to very shocked expressions, "Birds can't do that! It is my understanding that he can hear the worm, therefore by tilting his head he can see where to retrieve the worm from the ground." One young lady said that she had heard that they can feel the worm through the vibration in their feet. Sounds reasonable to me!

Last, but not least, is the Blue Jay. I have heard many students say, "I saw a blue bird in my backyard," when they really meant a Blue Jay. "Let us take a closer look at these two birds," I say. Rosemary holds up the pictures of each bird while I ask if there is anyone who lives on a farm or close to open space, "because this lovely bird likes lots of air space, but would like for you to put a Bluebird nesting box up on a fence post." This statement gives Rosemary the opportunity to hold up the Bluebird box, and we go into as much detail as time allows. Of course, I like to return to the Blue Jay, which is the bird that comes to their backyards, but then I have to admit, "He is very bossy!" As I said in the beginning of my article, that the presentation ending varied according to where we were in our presentation when the whistle blew, however we would always try to say, "Turn off electronics, turn on nature, and the best way to have a friend is to be one!"

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SHENANDOAH AUDUBON CALENDAR OF EVENTS *No Membership Meetings in Jan., Jul., Aug., or Dec.*
 (Events subject to cancellation due to low participation or bad weather). *Dates and locations subject to change.*

DATE & PLACE	EVENT DESCRIPTION	CONTACT INFORMATION
Nov. 5th 8:00 am Winchester	Nature Walk with Jim Smith Join naturalist Jim Smith for an easy walk through the Abrams Creek Wetlands! Dress for the weather, bring binoculars and a field guide. We recommend you call to confirm the walk.	Jim Smith 540-667-0504
Nov. 5th 10:00 am Snickers Gap	National Audubon HAWK WATCH !! Dr. Greg Butcher, Audubon's Director of Bird Conservation will be leading the Watch! Bring binoculars, spotting scopes, or a telephoto lens as these raptors sail high above the mountain!	Pre-registration is required! Email Lynne Mecum at lmecum@audubon.org
Dec. 10 9:00 am Paris, VA	Guided walk at Sky Meadows State Park with Naturalist Margaret Wester. Meet at the bridge trail parking lot at 9:00 AM and we will walk the Shermans' Mill trail to view resident winter woodland birds, such as chickadees, titmice, woodpeckers and others and I will explain the habitat that attracts these species and which species do not migrate, but stay for the winter.	shenandoahaudubon@yahoo.com Please RSVP by typing "Field Trips" in the subject line.
December 14 through January 5	LOCAL AREA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS CALMES NECK CBC NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY CBC	Click here for more information in early November. Contact your local CBC Coordinator for details.