



# Oak Leaf



## CHANGES ABOUND

### A Letter From The Editor

Hello fellow nature lovers!

I hope everyone is enjoying this sun-filled summer. It seems all creatures down to the tiniest insect are active now, and the outside world is teeming with life. I hope you are able to take time to enjoy the bounty of this season.

First, I'd like to personally apologize for the lack of newsletter communication. You may notice that this newsletter looks different than it has previously. That's because I no longer work at Colorcraft of Virginia, the company that generously donated the paper and printing of last 10 issues. So, back to basics! We received great pricing from Printing Productions, Inc, for printing this and future issues. We appreciate them working with us. WeKnowMail has kindly agreed to continue to donate their upstanding mailing services. Thank you, Joe and Dan! They are truly amazing people; if you are looking for mailing services for your business, look no further- you will find true expertise at WeKnowMail.

The following pages detail the progress we've made this year. We have a new Programs Chair, Mark Bruns, who has been working on our fall educational program meetings. Please mark your calendars to seize the opportunity to attend these wonderful events.

Cheers!  
Tracey



## LOOKING AHEAD

### A Letter From The President

Dear Members,  
The Northern Shenandoah Valley Audubon Society (NSVAS) Board continues to work throughout the year on conservation and education projects that are central to the Audubon mission. "The mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats, for the benefit of humanity and the Earth's biological diversity."

With this important mandate as our guide, we have before us the challenge to foster the programs and projects started in the past, while realizing additional energy, ideas, and commitment are required to address some of the ever increasing threats to our natural world. Many people are at odds about whether the threats may include apathy, greed, and/or ignorance, climate change, habitat loss, invasive species, pollution, or lack of population control, etc. It seems as though we have all contributed to at least some of the ongoing issues and problems. Perhaps we should, in good faith, ask ourselves what we can do to contribute to solutions.

Listed below is some of the work that NSVAS, your conservation organization, sponsors:

- Last December marked the 115th year for the Christmas Bird Count, and locally our 38th year. (Citizen scientists and enthusiasts working together with professional scientists)
- The Bluebird Trail at Blandy was started approximately 30 years ago, and its influence has grown to bluebird trails at Shenandoah River/Andy Guest State Park and Sky Meadows State Park. These projects provide vital data about Eastern Bluebirds and other native cavity nesters to the Cornell University Lab of Ornithology and the Virginia Bluebird Society.
- The Audubon Arboretum at Jim Barnett Park in Winchester had its first trees planted 15 years ago. Annual plantings and work continue to this day.
- Outdoor education and nature walks are conducted throughout the year on a regular basis.

Development, growth, and operations (finances, programs, newsletter, website, etc.) are always on the plate and require dedication, time, and vision.

So! How are we doing? Do you have comments or suggestions? Can you help?

Please call me with your concerns, ideas, or recommendations: (540) 303-3983. Let's talk about our shared interests.

Enjoy the seasons to come, and thank you for your membership and support.  
Jim

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*Shenandoah Audubon, your local Chapter of the National Audubon Society, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization. Financial statements are available upon request. Our Audubon Chapter Code is X-54.*

Visit us on the web at  
**AUDUBON-NSVAS.ORG**

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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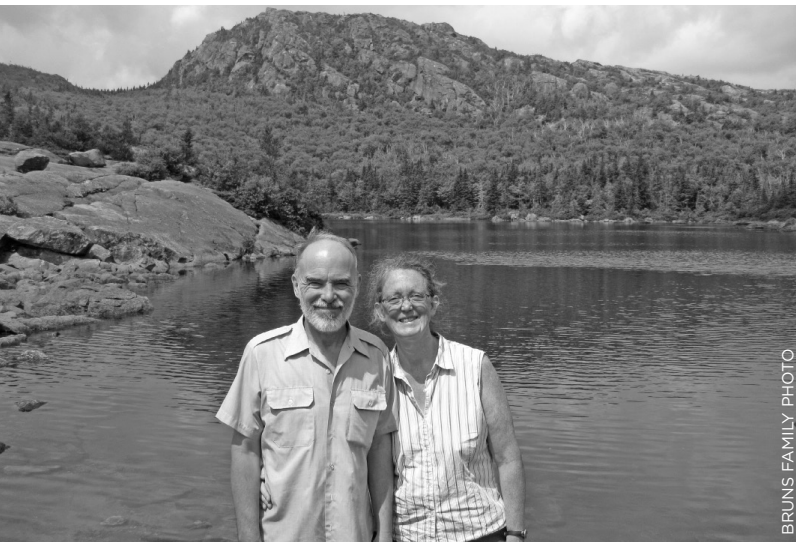
Conservation: Kaycee Lichliter  
Education: OPEN  
Field Trips: OPEN  
Finance: Kaycee Lichliter  
Membership: Tracey Ramsey  
Programs: Mark Bruns  
Public Relations: Mark Bruns

<b>WEBMASTER</b>	<b>NEWSLETTER</b>
Jeannie Senter	Tracey Ramsey

*All photos by Tracey Ramsey unless noted otherwise.*

## Meet Mark Bruns

We are grateful to have Programs Chair Mark Bruns joining us on the board. Mark has degrees in English Education, Environmental Education and Special Education. He has taught in environmental centers, jails and public schools. He is currently working at Warren County High School as a Special Education teacher. He is active member of Fellowship Bible Church in Winchester and conducts Bible study at Warren County Jail. Mark is an avid gardener, hiker, canoer & birder, and a proud father of 2 grown daughters.



▲ Mark Bruns with his wife Dottie in the mountains of western Maine.

BRUNS FAMILY PHOTO

## UPCOMING FALL PROGRAMS

### FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

#### *Hawk Migration Hike*

**Saturday, September 19, 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM**

*Location:* Meet in the parking lot at Snickers Gap on Rt. 7 and Blue Ridge Mountain Road.

*Description:* Enjoy a guided hike to Bears Den rocks to watch migrating raptors.

#### *Hawk Migration Lecture*

**Saturday, September 19, 7:00 PM**

*Location:* Shenandoah University / Cool Spring Campus

*Description:* Speaker Liam McGranaghan discusses the amazing journeys of migrating raptors.

#### *Stream Restoration Lecture*

**Wednesday, October 21, 7:00 PM**

*Location:* Lord Fairfax Community College

*Description:* A presentation by Bill Prokopchak of Trout Unlimited on conserving, protecting and restoring our watersheds.

#### *Virginia Working Landscapes Lecture*

**Tuesday, November 10, 7:00 PM**

*Location:* Shenandoah University, Henkel Hall Auditorium

*Description:* A presentation by Tom Akre of VWL on promoting the sustainable use of Virginia's landscapes for native biodiversity.

## ACTION NEEDED!!!

### The bad news:

Extremists on Capitol Hill have declared war on every major law that protects birds and their habitats. Literally dozens of damaging threats have been proposed. Among the targets are the Endangered Species Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. And under the guise of "budget austerity," critical conservation programs like the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the National Wildlife Refuge System are being decimated.

### The good news:

These harmful proposals are not law yet. We have an opportunity to join together to help defend against these attacks.

### What can you do?

Let your voice be heard! Write letters to your lawmakers telling them how you feel about these issues. AudubonAction.org lists all current advocacy campaigns and provides sample letters for each issue that can be personalized. You can submit your letter electronically, or for more effectiveness, handwrite and mail your letter.

### Where to send your letters:

Office of Senator [Name]  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Office of Representative [Name]  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

***"When we pull together, there's nothing we can't do. This is a moment that requires maximum effort from all of us... to keep fending off these extremist attacks, and to ensure we pass on strong conservation laws that protect the world that will be inherited by our children and grandchildren."***

*- David Yarnold, President of the National Audubon Society*

*Below is a sample letter to oppose efforts to weaken the Endangered Species Act.*

Dear [Your Senators/Your Representative],

I strongly urge you to oppose any efforts to weaken the Endangered Species Act.

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) is an essential safety net for America's wildlife, and it is working. As a constituent who supports bird conservation, I'm thankful that the ESA has helped to recover species like the Bald Eagle, Brown Pelican, and Peregrine Falcon. In all, it has helped to save more than 99% of the listed species from permanent extinction.

I am dismayed to see that there are efforts underway in both the House and Senate that would gut the vital protections of the ESA. In the Senate, bills like S. 855 would virtually repeal the ESA by de-listing species after 5 years and removing protections for species that only exist in one state, while S. 736 could require the use of inferior science.

In the House, H.R. 2098 would inject burdensome and redundant economic analysis to decisions on critical habitat, as economic factors are already taken into account, and H.R. 1667 would require publicizing potentially sensitive data, putting vulnerable species at risk of poaching and collection.

We can all agree that we have a responsibility to prevent extinction, and that the recovery of species benefits everyone. But legislation that removes the vital and successful safety net provided by the Endangered Species Act will only serve to accelerate extinction.

I strongly urge you to oppose these bills, and any effort that would weaken our nation's most important law for protecting wildlife.

Sincerely,  
[Your Name]  
[Your Address]  
[City, State ZIP]

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PASSION AND COMMITMENT!



# RECENT ACTIVITIES

On April 13, Jim Smith led a bird walk at Blandy (right). Birds are just one highlight of these enlightening walks. Here, Jim points out a large Beech tree. This particular specimen was planted in 1940.

Jim leads educational nature walks at Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve in Winchester several times every spring and fall, when birds are active migrating. His walks are always free and open to the public. The below right photos illustrate a few scenes from walks this spring.

Jim has been walking the wetlands for over 30 years, and was instrumental in helping to make the preserve a protected area. Take advantage of these unique opportunities to learn from him.

**Fall walk dates are below!**

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This spring, work continued on the Audubon Arboretum, thanks to another generous donation made from an anonymous donor. 10 new trees were planted and identification/memorial plates have been ordered. We have plans to add a native plant and butterfly garden. If you have ideas to improve the Arboretum or would like to help, we'd love to speak to you! Please contact President Jim Smith at (540) 303-3983.

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Gorgeous spring weather helped make our booth at Blandy's Annual Garden Fair a success. Big thanks to Lee Bowen (below) and Chris Lewis for their time and efforts in accomplishing this. Chris built unique stands to display our bluebird boxes (which he also built!). Tree Swallows scouting for potential nest sites repeatedly checked out the boxes, proving their attractiveness. We sold many boxes and "complete setups" which included a mounting pole and stovepipe predator guard.



## UPCOMING WALKS IN WINCHESTER

Dates for fall guided walks at Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve are **September 19th, October 3rd, October 17th, and October 31st.**

Walks begin at 8:30 AM, last approximately 2 hours and are non-strenuous. Bring binoculars, spotting scopes, and/or cameras.

Meet Jim in the Children of America parking lot off of W. Jubal Early Drive, approximately 1/2 mile west of Valley Avenue. Park at the west side of the lot by the woods. If you arrive a few minutes late, simply walk the path until you catch up with the group.



## UPCOMING WALK AT SKY MEADOWS

Join Master Naturalist Margaret Wester for an educational walk on the Woodpecker Lane trail at Sky Meadows State Park.

The walk will be held **Saturday, October 17, from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM.** Daily parking/State Park fees apply (\$5.00 per vehicle). Meet Margaret at the Visitor's Center at 10:00 AM.

**SHENANDOAH AUDUBON**  
**PO BOX 2693**  
**WINCHESTER, VA 22604**

## WEKNOWMAIL

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*SEE INSIDE FOR UPCOMING  
FALL PROGRAMS AND EVENTS!*

## MEMORIAL BENCH INSTALLED

This spring, Shenandoah Audubon sponsored the installation of a bench (right) at Blandy in memory of Jean Patten. The bench appropriately overlooks the existing bird feeding station (below) in memory of her husband, Sam Patten. Both Jean and Sam worked tirelessly for local environmental causes and were very active with Shenandoah Audubon. Their inspiring legacy still lives on today.

A very special thanks to Charlie and Judy Hagan for their initiative and efforts in installing this memorial.

