



# OAK LEAF

A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume 37 • Issue 4

November – December 2013

*Thank you to those who attended our Fall programs, which were co-sponsored by Shenandoah University. Big thanks to Rosemary Rogers, our tireless Programs/PR chair, and Environmental Studies professor Woody Bousquet for making these programs a big success.*

*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

## Member/Board Meeting

at The State Arboretum of Virginia/Blandy Experimental Farm  
Boyce, VA

Saturday, December 14, 5:15 PM

Our next meeting will be held on December 14, 2013 at 5:15 PM in the Blandy Library. At this meeting, a new slate of candidates will be presented for election to the 2014- 2016 term. Please attend to vote your new board into office!

This meeting coincides with the Northern Shenandoah Valley Christmas Bird Count post-count celebration. CBC volunteers, we'll see you there!

## Annual Seed Exchange

at The State Arboretum of Virginia/Blandy Experimental Farm  
Boyce, VA

Saturday, January 25, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM

The last Saturday in January is National Seed Swap Day. Come celebrate the 3rd Annual Seed Exchange in the Blandy Library, even if you have no seeds to trade! You'll leave with FREE seeds and invaluable knowledge from local experts.

If you bring seeds, please bring them in small envelopes well marked with the common name and color of the plant, or with the Latin name of the species and cultivar. Many Master Gardeners will be on hand to offer gardening advice and support.

Seeds available will include those from Blandy Farm plants. For more information, please visit [blandy.virginia.edu](http://blandy.virginia.edu) or call Blandy staff at (540) 837-1758 x 224.

## Shenandoah Naturalists Dinner

at Winchester Travelodge  
Winchester, VA

Saturday, February 28 - Open Bar: 6:00 PM, Buffet: 6:30 PM

The local environmental group Shenandoah Naturalists will sponsor their second biennial winter dinner on Friday, February 28th at the Winchester Travelodge. The dinner will feature speaker Dr. Woody Bousquet, who will lecture on Shenandoah University's exciting acquisition of the Cool Springs Battlefield Park and plans to develop the 195 acres of historic land alongside the Shenandoah River into an outstanding educational environmental center. Tickets (\$16) can be purchased through Shenandoah Naturalists' website, [shenandoahnaturalists.org](http://shenandoahnaturalists.org).

Mark your calendars for this evening of fun, camaraderie, good food and door prizes! For more information, contact Judy and Charlie Hagan at [NatureLover@ShenandoahNaturalists.org](mailto:NatureLover@ShenandoahNaturalists.org) or (540) 667-6778.

## 2012 – 2014 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### OFFICERS

President: Lee Bowen  
Vice President: Eric Williams  
Secretary: Jeannie Senter  
Treasurer: Kaycee Lichliter

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Conservation: Kaycee Lichliter  
Education: OPEN  
Field Trips: Margaret Wester  
Finance: Kaycee Lichliter  
Membership: Tracey Ramsey  
Programs: Rosemary Rogers  
Public Relations: Rosemary Rogers

### NEWSLETTER

Tracey Ramsey

### WEBMASTER

Jeannie Senter

*We welcome your feedback!*

### WRITE:

Shenandoah Audubon, PO Box 2693,  
Winchester, VA 22604

### EMAIL:

[shenandoahaudubon@yahoo.com](mailto:shenandoahaudubon@yahoo.com)

### CALL:

Our friendly Programs/PR chair Rosemary Rogers can field any questions or concerns at (540) 323-7627

*We wish you a safe holiday season  
full of peace and joy!*





# A Lasting Legacy



*Celebrating the Life of Jean & Sam Patten*



On August 20, 2013, Jean Patten passed away peacefully. For decades, Jean and her husband Sam were key members of Shenandoah Audubon, and their inspiration is still alive today.

Sam, who passed away March 9, 2007, was a West Point graduate who retired from the Army as a full colonel. He was a professor of military science at Syracuse University, and later a history professor at Shenandoah University.

Sam was a great community activist involved in many things. For years he led an Adopt-a-Highway group to pick up trash between Old Chapel and Millwood.

Friend Joyce Badanes said, "I truly miss all the *Clarke Courier* reports of trash picked up and recycled by his followers. He tried so hard to stop the littering with these reports."

***"Sam served many times as the heart and conscience of Audubon and was universally respected and admired." -Charlie Hagan***

Sam's interest in birds started "when he was Scout Master and my brother was getting his merit badge in birds," says daughter Laura. In the 1980's, Sam and another local conservationist Charlie Clevenger put up bluebird boxes at Blandy Experimental Farm. At first, neither knew of the other's efforts. When they discovered they had each put up boxes, they teamed up and continued their efforts together with Shenandoah Audubon.

Kaycee Lichliter continues to manage the trail that Sam and Charlie started, which now has 110 boxes. The success of this trail has given the Shenandoah Valley the distinction of having more bluebirds than almost anywhere else on the east coast.

In 2011, Margaret Wester started a 69-box bluebird trail at Sky Meadows State Park. The trail has been very successful, jumping from 97 bluebird chicks fledged in 2011 to 240 chicks in 2013.

"I feel like I'm carrying on Sam's tradition at Sky Meadows. I think about him when I'm working on the trail," Margaret said.

Former Shenandoah Audubon board member Jim Smith recalls, "Sam assumed various positions over the years such as Secretary and Vice President, but he was always behind everything. He loved it. He was always very involved in some way and just encouraged people. I could have never done my term as President without Sam's knowledge and support."

little 3x5 file box to update regularly."

Leslie remembers that her mother also helped with the newsletter for many years along with other dedicated Audubon members.



they were both very active with that. Sam was instrumental in starting talks to the local schools, especially about bluebirds and their conservation," Jim Smith remembers.

Longtime Shenandoah Audubon member Scott Kenney recalls his memories of "Grandfather & Grandmother Bluebird."

"They were a great team. They put a lot of effort into keeping people informed. In addition to the newsletter, Sam would send current conservation literature to members."

Another former Shenandoah Audubon board member Charlie Hagan shares similar words of praise.

"Sam was a man of incredible energy and still went 'all out' even after his valvular heart disease would have slowed down a more prudent man!"

Leslie continued, "Mom was a good backup to my Dad, who was President, and for many years led countless bird walks and manned the booth at Garden Fair and ArborFest at Blandy. They were quite the team."

Jim echoed, "Sam and Jean encouraged everyone. They kept everyone involved. They kept things glued together for our Audubon chapter for many, many years."

Laura finished, "They shared their love of everything together. They imparted their love of nature to their children, and their legacy is being carried on today."

***"Sam Patten was one of a kind. I was fortunate to serve on the board with him for many years. He was always the one to keep things smooth when tensions arose- a great diplomat that focused on what we were trying to accomplish." -Margaret Wester***

Sam's son, Sam Jr, remembers his father's involvement as newsletter editor. Sam Jr. would receive newsletters in Alaska for many years while working diligently in wildlife conservation, following right in his Dad's footsteps.

Jean, a Pittsburgh native, served in the Women's Army Corp from 1942-1944. She had her own roles in Shenandoah Audubon to which she dedicated hours of time, including Membership Chair.

Daughter Leslie couldn't pin down the exact years, but, "It was back in the days before the computer made things easier, so she had her

"They all used to get together and sort the newsletters by zip code, bundle them and then my Dad would make a trip to the post office."

In December 2011, Shenandoah Audubon held a meeting at Blandy in which members were encouraged to attend to vote in new board members. Jean was 94 years old, but still made it there that cold dark night. This is a perfect example of her incredible dedication.

"Sam and Jean were always participating in some capacity the whole time I can remember. We had bird seed sale fundraisers, and





# THE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT: CITIZEN SCIENCE AT WORK



Annual migrations send thousands of birds traveling for new food sources. Many will make their way to the northern Shenandoah Valley, where some will stay until late winter or early spring.

Each year holds new promises for the National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count, which is the oldest and largest citizen science project in the world. This will be the 114th count season.

Last year, a weak growing season in southern Canadian forests meant a decrease in cones, which sent hordes of Red-Breasted Nuthatches, Pine Siskins and Red and White-Winged Crossbills toward our area.

This pattern, called irruptive migration, can prove especially promising for Christmas Bird Counts.

Counts are performed in 15-mile diameter "count circles". Each count circle consists of a number of volunteers including a compiler to coordinate and manage data. They break up into small groups and follow assigned routes in separate sections, counting every bird they see throughout one designated day. The routes that the counters take are consistent from year to year.

Data gathered from Christmas Bird Counts yield valuable insights into the changes in numbers and types of birds recorded. Birds are extremely sensitive to various environmental threats such as habitat destruction and pollution. Because counts are conducted within the same boundaries each year, results can reveal environmental changes in a specific area.

Teams of three to four volunteers are assigned to cover each section as thoroughly as possible. Most teams typically drive around their sections and stop at convenient areas to look for birds.

All counts are then submitted to compilers who consolidate the data and enter it into an online database. Regional editors review and confirm all data, and the final findings are reported to the public via the National Audubon Society.

71,531 participants volunteered for last year's count. There were 2,369 count circles (1,849 in United States, 417 in Canada and 103 in Latin America, the Caribbean and the Pacific Islands). 64,133,843 individual birds were accounted for.

The highest species total in the United States and Canada- 232 species- came from a count circle in Mad Island Marsh, Texas. This total is lower than past seasons, largely due to inclement weather on count day and the ongoing severe drought in Texas. Mad Island Marsh still holds the record for number of species (250) reported in a count circle in the United States & Canada.

The top count circle overall was Yanayacu, Ecuador with 493 total species.

▼ Top 10 count circles in the United States based on number of species seen.

Rank	Count Circle	Species Total
1	Mad Island Marsh, TX	232
2	San Diego, CA	214
3	Santa Barbara, CA	213
4	McFadden Ranch, TX	212
5	Orange County (Coastal), CA	210
6	Rancho Santa Fe, CA	202
7	Morro Bay, CA	198
8	Thousand Oaks, CA	196
9	Freeport, TX	196
10	Point Reyes Peninsula, CA	195



▲ Mike Ramsey & Tom Aurelio record their sightings in their section of the Calmes Neck count circle in January.

One new species was spotted in the United States- the Little Egret at Mid-Cape Cod, Massachusetts. The only other report of this species came from Bermuda in the 1980s.

In Canada, 292 species were tallied across the country, including two new additions, the Citrine Wagtail at Comox, British Columbia and an amazing Scarlet Tanager at Williams Lake, British Columbia. The Citrine Wagtail is a new addition to the overall CBC list, while Scarlet Tanagers have been reported very few times before in North America, but frequently from South American count circles.

There are over 100 count circles outside the borders of the United States and Canada, and the cumulative list of species climbs each season as more circles are created in new areas and countries. There were three new circles in Cuba last season, and for the first time ever the tiniest bird in the world, the Bee Hummingbird, was included in CBC results, along with many other wonderful species only found in Cuba. These join the ever-growing list of endemic and highly range-restricted birds, many of which are highly threatened, that are tallied in circles from the Hawaiian Islands to the Caribbean to the mountain valleys of the Andes. Last season's full species tally was 2,296 species.

Christmas Bird Counts can be held on any single day from December 14 to January 5. This year, our area hits both ends of that window, with the Northern Shenandoah Valley count falling on **Saturday, December 14, 2013** and the Calmes Neck count on **Sunday, January 5, 2014**.

The Northern Shenandoah Valley count circle extends from southern Winchester to Front Royal. 49 volunteers participated in last season's count, reporting 85 different species. If you are interested in participating, please contact Ann Simpson at [asimpson@lfcc.edu](mailto:asimpson@lfcc.edu) (preferred) or (540) 868-7220.

There will be a potluck celebration and compilation discussion at 5:00 PM in the Library at Blandy Experimental Farm that evening.

CBC participant Jim Smith adds, "After a day's counting, we meet at Blandy and go over what species were seen. If you hear that someone spotted something of interest in a particular area, you can go there the next day and to try to find it."

The Calmes Neck count will be conducted on Sunday, January 5. The center of this 15-mile diameter count circle is the Route 7 bridge over the Shenandoah River. 67 volunteers counted in this circle last season, spotting 93 total species. Contact compiler Margaret Wester at [margaretwester@hotmail.com](mailto:margaretwester@hotmail.com) (preferred) or (540) 837-2799 if you would like to participate.

For more info about the Christmas Bird Count or to participate in a count circle other than our local circles, visit [christmasbirdcount.org](http://christmasbirdcount.org) or email [cbc@audubon.org](mailto:cbc@audubon.org).

## GIVE THE GIFT OF NATURE AND BENEFIT YOUR LOCAL AUDUBON CHAPTER!

Looking for the perfect gift for a fellow nature lover? These bluebird boxes are the answer! Built with TLC by dedicated trail monitor and handyman Chris Lewis, these boxes are the same design as the boxes used on our bluebird trails.

► Constructed using the safest, most preferred specifications, these boxes will happily accommodate many of our native cavity nesters. They are made of unpainted, untreated 3/4" pine, have a large overhanging slanted roof for shade and ample protection from the elements, no perch, a 1.5" diameter hole, ventilation, drainage holes, grooves inside the front door to aid fledglings in climbing out, and a side door that opens for cleaning and monitoring. **Suggested Donation: \$25.** If interested, please contact Kaycee Lichliter at [kayceelichliter@hotmail.com](mailto:kayceelichliter@hotmail.com) or (540) 664-9596.

### TIPS:

- Mount on 8 ft., 3/4" diameter galvanized pipe, with the entrance hole 5 ft. off the ground.
- Install a predator guard to keep snakes, raccoons and other predators from raiding nests.
- Monitor boxes at least once a week to check on progress and control House Sparrows, wasps, etc.

Please visit [sialis.org](http://sialis.org) for information on monitoring procedures and suggestions for deterring House Sparrows.



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



Printing & paper generously donated by  
ColorCraft of Virginia  
[colorcraft-va.com](http://colorcraft-va.com)

**WEKNOWMAIL**

Professional mailing services cordially donated by  
WeKnowMail  
[weknowmail.net](http://weknowmail.net)



## “TICK” FOR THOUGHT!

We've had a bunch of these Audubon wall clocks on hand for a long time, and we're ready for them to fledge our nest of supplies!

Beautiful photo-quality artwork indicates the hour. All familiar songbirds? Nah, this clock's got serious birders covered with all kinds of West Coast species!

**FREE with donation!** Contact Tracey Ramsey at [Tracey.Ramsey@aol.com](mailto:Tracey.Ramsey@aol.com) or (540) 636-1677 and we'll get one in your hands ASAP. Requires one AA battery (not included).

Please note that these clocks **DO NOT** sing on the hour like most newer Audubon clocks do.



Please recycle.

