

OAK LEAF

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

Volume 38 • Issue 2

July - August 2014

Turning a New Page

A Letter From The President

I look forward to working with the current board members and I'm hopeful that we can make improvements and lend support to vital ongoing programs such as our bluebird trails, community bird walks, educational programs, and the Audubon Arboretum. I encourage past Shenandoah Audubon board members to revitalize this year and start anew and work with us again. I welcome new members and encourage current members to do the same. Please contact me with your thoughts. I am happy to talk to anyone and eager to listen to new ideas and ways we can continue our legacy that has been ongoing for 38 years and counting. Let's all stay involved and enjoy the seasons to come together.

Jim Smith
President

Jim Smith has been an enthusiast and student of the natural world for over 60 years. He has been involved with National and local Audubon activities for over 35 years, and was President of our chapter in 2000 and 2001. He is the proud "Gandy" of 3 wonderful granddaughters: Ellie, Virginia, and Sarah Elizabeth.

► Jim Smith in his natural element, educating at Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve in Winchester.

Looking Ahead...

Join Jim this fall to discover natural treasures in the heart of Winchester! From early September to mid October, Jim will lead walks every other Saturday at Abrams Creek, focusing on the changing fall foliage and migratory birds.

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

Fall walk dates are **September 6th, September 20th, October 4th and October 18th.**

Interested walkers should meet 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.

Hawk Migration Hike - September 20th

Following the early morning walk at Abrams Creek, Jim will lead a hike at Snickers Gap. This area is an official Hawk Migration Association of North America counting site where over 19,000 migrating raptors have been spotted in a single day!

This moderate hike begins at Snickers Gap and follows the Appalachian Trail to Bears Den overlook. There Jim will point out woodland birds, ravens, and migrating raptors.

Interested hikers should meet in the parking lot at Snickers Gap on Rt. 7 and Blue Ridge Mountain Road at 1:00 PM.

Jim's guided walks and hikes are **FREE** and open to everyone. In the case of inclement weather, these events will be cancelled. For more information, contact Jim Smith at (540) 303-3983.

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

EMAIL:
shenandoahaudubon@yahoo.com

CALL:
Contact President Jim Smith at
(540) 303-3983

Hats off to 2 board members who have recently stepped down, Eric Williams and Rosemary Rogers. The dedication, commitment and energy they gave to our chapter over the years are greatly appreciated.



Getting to know the rest of the board!

Below are a few lines about the other board members. We would love for you to join us to help make a difference in our community!



▲ Bottom: L-R: Kaycee Lichliter, Jeannie Senter, Tracey Ramsey.
Top: L-R: Jim Smith, Mike Ramsey.

Tracey Ramsey

Tracey has a degree in Graphic Communications and works at ColorCraft of Virginia, the company that has generously donated the paper and printing of every newsletter since Spring of 2012. She monitors the bluebird trails at Blandy, Sky Meadows and Shenandoah River State Park as a team with her husband Mike. This is her third year with Shenandoah Audubon as newsletter editor. She enjoys hiking at Shenandoah National Park, biking, and bird watching, especially with her birdhouse camera (best purchase EVER!).

Mike Ramsey

Mike joins us for his first year on the Board to offer help where needed. Mike has a degree in Meteorology, and is a fan of being in nature. He monitors the bluebird trails at Blandy, Sky Meadows, and Shenandoah River State Park with his wife Tracey, and LOVES being dive-bombed by Tree Swallows. ☺ He enjoys the great outdoors and bird watching, and relishes the small wooded oasis they call home. He is passionate about music, particularly progressive rock. He and Tracey are proud parents of 2 spoiled indoor rescue cats, Iommi and Sib.



▲ Lee Bowen and Jeannie Senter move mulch at the Aububon Arboretum.

Recent Activites

On Saturday, May 31, Jim Smith, Lee Bowen, Jeannie Senter and Scott Senter mulched trees at the Audubon Arboretum in Winchester. 12 new trees were added to the collection this spring: 2 Black Gum, 4 Ginkgo, 2 Beech, 2 Crepe Myrtle and 2 Elm Princeton. These trees were added thanks to a large anonymous donation we received last December.

On Saturday, June 7, Shenandoah Audubon hosted a booth at the Garden Fest at Belle Grove Plantation (right). It was a beautiful weekend to show our presence in our community! Special thanks to the Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardeners Association for making the event possible and waiving the fee for our booth.

Jeannie Senter

Jeannie graduated from California State University with a degree in Geography. She has been on the Board since 2010 and continues her third term as Secretary. She is also the Webmaster and created and maintains the current website. Jeannie has had a lifelong love of birds and owned her first parakeet as a child. She currently has four cockatiels, two of which are the babies of a mated pair which were raised from hatchlings. Jeannie has been a member of the Bluebird Monitoring Trail at Blandy Farm. In her spare time she enjoys gardening, kayaking, canoeing, bicycling, hiking and just being outside. She is employed at FEMA and is the proud mom of three grown sons.

Kaycee Lichliter

Kaycee graduated with an associate of science degree from LFCC in 2005. She obtained a federal permit as a master bird bander and operated a bird banding station for five years at the Burwell van-Lenepp Foundation, Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (the MAPS program). She has managed the Shenandoah Audubon / Blandy Bluebird Trail for 11 years, chairs the Conservation Committee, and currently holds office of Treasurer. She was Secretary for a two year term in the past. This spring Kaycee completed the Virginia Master Naturalist program. She enjoys mountain biking, kayaking, traveling and reading. She resides near Middletown with her dog, Red.



▲ Jim Smith and Lee Bowen at the Aububon Arboretum.

Lee Bowen

Lee, our current Vice President, has a long history of conservation work over the last 30 years. He has been active with the Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club, serving as Treasurer, Conservation Chair, and also President of the Virginia Chapter. He has led numerous service trips for the Sierra Club's National Outings Program. He has been active with the Potomac Appalachian Trail Conservancy (PATC) doing trail maintenance for over 30 years. He also co-manages the 50 box bluebird trail at Shenandoah River State Park with Roxie Leonard.

Margaret Wester

Margaret is a lifelong lover of nature and advocate for conservation and preservation of wilderness and wildlife. She has been on the Shenandoah Audubon board since 2003 and held the roles of Secretary and Webmaster in the past. Her dedication to volunteer work earned her the 'Sam Patten Award for Volunteer of the Year' in 2006. She currently leads our seasonal bird walks at Sky Meadows State Park and has been the compiler of the Calmes Neck Christmas Bird Count Circle since 2003. Margaret was a graduate of the Virginia Master Naturalist class of 2008, was a participant in the MAPS bird banding station, and has been the organizer and manager of the bluebird trail at Sky Meadows since 2011. She received the prestigious "Bluebird of the Year" award from the Virginia Bluebird Society in 2013. In her free time, she enjoys hiking, kayaking, volunteer work, traveling and learning about everything.



Summer Events At Our Local Parks

Sky Meadows State Park - Delaplane, VA

Flutter By, Butterfly

Saturday, August 9, 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Location: Visitor Center

Description: Meet Volunteer Naturalists Mary Alexander and Steve Malone from the Washington Area Butterfly Club at the Visitor Center. They will lead a walk along park trails in search of butterflies, assisting with netting and identification as you go. Bring binoculars and water and wear comfortable shoes.

Meet the Beekeepers - National Honey Bee Day

Saturday, August 16, 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Location: Carriage Barn

Description: Meet with local apiarists Doug and Ramona Morris of the Beekeepers of Northern Shenandoah (BONS) and discover the art of Apiculture (a.k.a. Bee-keeping). This monthly program series examines all aspects of beekeeping from hive construction to honey extraction (which will be performed at this event!). See the park's apiary and learn how to set up and care for your own hives using historic and modern agricultural techniques. Support beekeeping and the Beekeepers of Northern Shenandoah by purchasing local honey from club members.

Early Bird

Sunday, August 17, 6:00 AM - 9:00 AM

Location: Carriage Barn

Description: Here is an opportunity to do some avian observing in the early morning hours. The park is opening early for birders of all ages and experience levels. Before you hit the trails, stop by the Carriage Barn and pick up a 'Birds of Sky Meadows' checklist. After your observing time, be sure to come back to the Carriage Barn, let the Rangers know what you saw, and grab some refreshments. Beverages and snacks will be available from 8:00 AM to 9:00 AM.

State Park parking fees apply (\$5.00 per vehicle).

Visit <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/sky-meadows.shtml> for more information, or call (540) 592-3556.

Shenandoah River State Park - Bentonville, VA

Toads, Turtles and Snakes

Saturday, July 26, 3:00 PM - 3:30 PM

Location: Visitor Center

Description: Learn about the differences and similarities between reptiles and amphibians, along with some interesting facts about them. Meet some of the resident critters at the visitor center and watch them eat!

Black Bears of Virginia

Saturday, July 26, 5:30 PM - 6:00 PM

Location: Culler's Overlook

Description: Join a ranger and learn all about the largest mammal in the park. See what bears like to eat, what kind of trees they like to climb and where they hibernate.

Gone Batty!

Sunday, July 27, 10:45 AM - 11:15 AM

Location: Visitor Center Deck

Description: This is a children's program designed to teach kids all about these wondrous creatures of the night and why they are in trouble!

State Park parking fees apply (\$5.00 per vehicle).

Visit <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/shenandoah-river.shtml> for more information, or call (540) 622-6840.

Shenandoah National Park - Stanley, VA

Twilight Hikes

Saturday Evenings in August - August 9, 16 & 23, 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM

Location: Depart from Big Meadows Lodge lobby, Mile 51 on Skyline Drive

Description: Easy to enjoy, these evening hikes feature the natural world as it settles into evening. Hike out into the Big Meadow at dusk through the dramatic changing colors of the mountain sky and, eventually, the incredible spread of the night sky with its multitude of stars (at 3,500 feet, you are high above the haze and light pollution of the mid-Atlantic). This is truly an unforgettable experience. Distance covered is less than two miles. Led by the Shenandoah Mountain Guides. A jacket is definitely recommended and a flashlight can also be helpful.

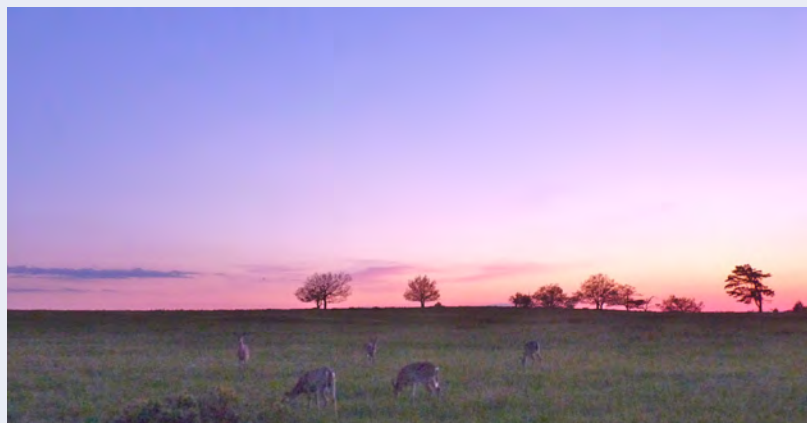
National Park entrance fees apply (\$15.00 per vehicle), PLUS the event fee for each guided hike: \$10.00 for Adults, \$8.00 for Children 12 years and under. Visit goshenandoah.com for more information, or call 1-877-847-1919.



▲ Overlooking Sky Meadows State Park.



▲ The famous view at Culler's Overlook at Shenandoah River State Park.



▲ Big Meadows at sunset at Shenandoah National Park.

SUPPORT US

Together we can promote conservation and appreciation of this beautiful place we call home.

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Shenandoah Audubon is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Membership dues and donations help defer costs such as website fees, materials for bluebird trail maintenance, Shenandoah Audubon Arboretum maintenance, educational programs and more.

This printed newsletter is made possible through the generous donations of ColorCraft of Virginia and WeKnowMail. The only cost to Shenandoah Audubon is nonprofit rate postage, allowing your contribution to go further than ever. **Thank you sponsors and supporters!**

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TWEET FOR THOUGHT

Nothing is impossible- the word itself says "I'm Possible!"

—Audrey Hepburn

WHERE CAN I GET PLANS TO BUILD A BIRDHOUSE? WHAT ARE THE CORRECT DIMENSIONS FOR EACH SPECIES?

http://birds.audubon.org/sites/default/files/documents/nest_box_chart_0.pdf

As always, make sure the box is properly mounted with predator guard(s) to keep the occupants safe!

Photos throughout by Tracey Ramsey unless noted otherwise.



Please recycle.

