

# OAK LEAF

A Newsletter for Members and Friends of the Northern Shenandoah Valley Audubon Society

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WINTER 2020

NO. 2

## 2020 NSVAS Annual Report

I hope this report finds all Northern Shenandoah Audubon members safe and well. As the spring and summer of 2020 have presented challenges for each of us, so too has it been for the activities and programs of our organization. Difficult decisions were made resulting from the restrictions surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic, most of which were beyond the control of our program chairperson and bird trail managers. Programs scheduled after March 2020 were canceled, including those through October. Despite the limitations created by the Corona virus outbreak, some things were able to be accomplished.

As state parks remained open during Covid-19 restrictions, Bluebirds were monitored at Andy Guest State Park, with the season ending by August. Blandy Experimental Farm and Arboretum closed to the public on March 13 and reopened June 6. As a result, monitoring at the Blandy Bluebird trail did not take place this past spring and summer. Instead, 18 volunteers served as House Sparrow (HOSP) patrol to make sure House Sparrows did not gain a foothold within the nest boxes. The Shenandoah Audubon Bluebird Trail at Belle Grove Plantation training for trail monitors took place February 24. Two Chapter volunteers monitored the six-nest box trail for the 24-week summer breeding season. This past summer the Purple Martin colony located near Blandy's Lake Arnold once again attracted a healthy population of migratory birds which return from South America each season to breed, raise their young and then return to South America for the winter. The colony includes five gourd racks (60 nest gourds total) interspersed with rectangular and octagonal aluminum houses.

At the burgeoning sensory trail within the Audubon Arboretum in Winchester, Crape Myrtle and Butterfly Bush were added and Redbud trees were planted to replace those lost within the trail. Mulch was spread around the trees of the arboretum. Pruning is scheduled for late this fall. This space, along Pleasant Valley Road, with over 100 trees, representing

more than 40 species, is a welcome green space within the city of Winchester. If you are interested in having a memorial tree planted within the arboretum, call Jim Smith at 540-303-3983.

*Dates for the 2020-21 Christmas Bird Count have been scheduled. The local circles' dates are:*

- **December 19** NSVAS Christmas Bird Count
- **December 26** Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy Christmas Bird Count
- **January 3** Calmes Neck Christmas Bird Count

These will all be part of the 121st Audubon Christmas Bird Count, the nation's longest-running community science bird project. Bird counts will be conducted according to the guidelines that National Audubon has issued to conduct the count safely during this pandemic.

If you have not had a chance to view our Facebook page yet, please consider doing so. There you will find information related to local birds, links and events that may be of interest. We are hoping to have our new website online very soon. It will keep you up to date as programs and events become available.

Although social restrictions have limited activities and events since early spring, we at NSVAS remain committed to our mission, "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." We will make every effort to bring programs, events and information to you so we may all work toward such a worthy end.

*Please stay safe and well.*

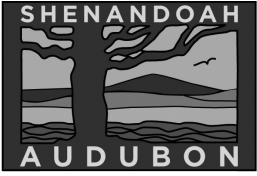
Sincerely,

Dave Borger, President  
Northern Shenandoah Valley Audubon Society

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### Here are some of the things your membership and donations help to support!

- Birding and Nature Walk events to observed a heron rookery, eagles and early spring migrants and native species.
- The Audubon Arboretum in Jim Barnett Park, Winchester. Care of trees and new plantings; development of Winchester Host Lions Club's Sensory Trail including Braille signage; planning of a future Pollination Garden with native wild flowers and shrubs.
- Funded the Purple Martin Colony Project at Blandy Experimental Farm, as it continues to provide critical habitat for this species.
- Operate The Shenandoah Audubon/Blandy Bluebird Trail and The Shenandoah Audubon/Andy Guest Bluebird Trail, serving over 200 nest boxes for our native, cavity-nesting birds.
- Established a Bluebird Trail with Bell Grove consisting of 6 nest boxes for Eastern Bluebirds. These nest boxes were monitored by two local volunteers.
- Coordinate funding and materials to establish a new Bluebird Trail in Chet Hobert Park, in Berryville, VA. The plan is to have that trail open for the next nesting season.



P.O. Box 2693  
Winchester, VA 22604

A Chapter of the  
National Audubon Society

For information about NSVAS, please visit our Facebook page or website: [www.audubon-nsvas.org](http://www.audubon-nsvas.org) • Email: [shenandoahaudubon@yahoo.com](mailto:shenandoahaudubon@yahoo.com)

## Membership and Donation

Dear Friends and Supporters,

I am happy to say that, despite challenges presented by Covid-19 restrictions over the last several months, the Northern Shenandoah Valley Audubon Society has continued to maintain existing projects, has developed a new partnership, and will continue to explore new avenues for public outreach, education, and community involvement. Membership now stands at over 400, with National and Chapter members combined. Our mission will continue to guide our decisions. We will always give great consideration as to how your monetary donations are directed in order to get the best use out of each and every dollar.

Along these lines, please look for your membership renewal date on your address label of this newsletter/annual report. We thank you in advance for your continued support. All donations are tax-deductible and we will continue to use your dollars wisely.

*Please use the form below with the envelope provided – thank you!*

### SUPPORT US

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

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please check an option below:*

Mail a printed Newsletter to me

Email my Newsletter to the email given above

New Memberships, Renewals and Donation payments may be made with PayPal at our website: [www.audubon-nsvas.org](http://www.audubon-nsvas.org)

Is your payment a RENEWAL or a NEW MEMBERSHIP?  
(Please circle one.)

MEMBERSHIP ( 1 YEAR) \$15.00

(Membership is good for one year beginning the date payment is received.)

ADDITIONAL DONATION \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL ENCLOSED \_\_\_\_\_

CHECK NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

Kindly remit payment to:

**Shenandoah Audubon**  
**c/o Kaycee Lichliter, Treasurer**  
**1346 Sulphur Springs Road**  
**Middletown, VA 22645**

Shenandoah Audubon is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Membership dues and donations help support local Bluebird trails at Blandy Experimental Farm and Shenandoah River State Park, the Purple Martin Colony at the Virginia State Arboretum, the annual Christmas Bird Count, as well as educational programs and student scholarships. **Thank you for your support.**