

OAK LEAF

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

VOLUME 48

WINTER 2023

NO. 2

Annual Report for 2023

Dear NSVAS members,

Thank you to all of the supporting members of Northern Shenandoah Valley Audubon Society. Your regular contributions keep the activities, projects, programs and on-line media going for the chapter. Our membership currently stands at 434, including both local and national members. I am grateful to our board members for their tireless efforts to continue moving the organization toward our collective goals. The following is a summary what your chapter accomplished this past year:

The 123rd Annual Christmas Bird Count took place last December. Here in the northern Shenandoah Valley, 68 volunteers observed 87 bird species. The Calmes Neck Christmas Bird Count had 59 volunteers. Within that count, they observed 85 bird species, with a total of 16,993 individual birds. Thank you to all the volunteers for making these counts successful again this year. Special thanks to Mark Bruns, Larry Frey, Rob Simpson, NSVAS CBC Compiler Greg Justice, and Margaret Wester, coordinator and compiler of the Calmes Neck CBC. See this year's dates on page 3.

The 2023 Bluebird trail season at Blandy Experimental Farm, Shenandoah River/Andy Guest State Park, Chet Hobert Park and Belle Grove Plantation continued to be productive. Please see the Shenandoah Audubon Bluebird Trails 2023 Data Summary within this newsletter for details. Thank you to Margaret Wester, Lee Bowen, Tammy Batcha and, especially, Kaycee Lichliter for their work with these trails.

In addition to the 132 Bluebird nest boxes at Blandy, the Purple Martin Colony at the State Arboretum now has a total of 96 gourds. This past June, your chapter had its first *Purple Martin Mania* event, wherein individuals adopted Purple Martin gourds. Blandy's Dave Carr presented a brief natural history of the Purple Martins to participants, who then walked to see the colony. The event was well attended and was an overall success. Information from the nesting season was recorded and will be shared with individuals adopting each gourd. The gourds have since been cleaned and prepared for next year's flock of Purple Martins. Particular thanks to Kaycee Lichliter for overseeing the Purple Martin Colony, to Ted Saunders for his assistance in erecting and maintaining the structures and to other volunteers who helped analyze the gourd contents and then clean them.

Started in 1999, the Audubon Arboretum within Jim Barnett Park in Winchester now has approximately 150 trees of between 60-70 species. Continued cooperation between Winchester Parks and Recreation Department and the Northern Shenandoah Valley Audubon Society, both of which provide care and management of the arboretum, makes this green space available to the public. Within this space is the Winchester Host Lions Club Sensory Trail and

the Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener's Pollinator's Garden. The Winchester Parks and Recreation Department has submitted a proposal to add a walking trail throughout the arboretum. The City of Winchester hosted a Tree Fest in October, with numerous vendors offering native plants for sale and instruction from Shenandoah University students on how to properly plant and maintain trees. Sustainability Matters has proposed adding a wildflower meadow in the future. An additional thank you to the City of Winchester and the following Parks and Recreation staff: Director Chris Konyar, City Arborist Jordan Herring, Operations Manager Robbie Garrett and other workers who continue to help with the arboretum. A special thanks goes to Jim Smith, our former president, who was instrumental in the creation of this arboretum, all of its component and continues to be involved in much that occurs within this valuable green space. We are all grateful for his continued work with the arboretum.

Our chapter hosted several bird walks this past year. Jim Smith led several spring and fall walks along Abrams Creek Wetlands. We also had a Heron rookery hike at Cool Springs Campus of Shenandoah University in March. Thanks to Jim Smith and Mark Bruns for organizing those outings.

In October, Professor J. Kincaid from Shenandoah University presented a program, Aquatic Biology and Stream Ecology. The program was offered in conjunction with STEM Club and Trout Unlimited. Thanks to Professor Kincaid, for presenting the program and to Mark Bruns for scheduling this program.

Your chapter's Adopt-A-Highway project had two trash collection days, one in April and another in October. This will continue to occur twice a year along the Shenandoah River near Lockes Landing in Clarke County. Thanks to the volunteers who helped continue this project.

Our website, nsvaudubon.org, continues to grow and offer event updates, articles, and past newsletters as well as information about local birding resources. Our Northern Shenandoah Valley Audubon Society Facebook page offers event updates, photos and other relevant information. Thanks to Sharon Fisher for providing this information electronically. 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 Earth's biological diversity". We will continue to make every effort to bring programs, events and information to you so we may all work toward such a worthwhile end.

Please stay safe and well.

Sincerely,
Dave Borger

Shenandoah Audubon Bluebird Trails 2023 / Data Summary

Compilation by Kaycee Lichliter, Conservation Chair, October 2023

Blandy Experimental Farm (132 nest boxes)

Species	Nesting Attempts	First Egg Date	Eggs Laid	Eggs Lost	Unhatched Eggs	Nestlings	Nestlings Lost	Fledglings	Fecundity (%)
EABL	103	8 Apr	444	56	10	378	47	331	74.5%
TRES	103	24 Apr	507	108	26	373	37	336	66.3%
HOWR	5	2 Jun	29	3	1	25	0	25	86.2%
CACH	1	28 Apr	6	3	0	3	0	3	50.0%
*(Non-native) HOSP	11	17 Apr	44	44	0	0	0	0	0%
TOTALS	212		986	170	37	779	84	695	

Trail Manager: Kaycee Lichliter *Non-native HOSP numbers are not included in totals.

Andy Guest/Shenandoah River State Park (107 nest boxes)

Species	Nesting Attempts	First Egg Date	Eggs Laid	Eggs Lost	Unhatched Eggs	Nestlings	Nestlings Lost	Fledglings	Fecundity (%)
EABL	81	28 Mar	375	49	U	326	7	319	85%
TRES	70	13 Apr	342	89	U	253	3	250	73%
HOWR	1	U	6	2	U	4	0	4	67%
CACH	7	U	11	6	U	5	0	5	45%
*(Non-native) HOSP	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
TOTALS	159		734	146	U	588	10	578	

Trail Manager: Lee Bowen U = unspecified / unknown

Chet Hobert Park (12 nest boxes)

Species	Nesting Attempts	First Egg Date	Eggs Laid	Eggs Lost	Unhatched Eggs	Nestlings	Nestlings Lost	Fledglings	Success Rate (%)
EABL	12	4 Apr	50	11	3	36	1	35	70.0%
TRES	9	26 Apr	43	4	2	37	4	33	76.7%
HOWR	1	4 Jul	6	0	0	6	2	4	66.6%
*(Non-Native) HOSP	6	16 Apr	27	27	0	0	0	0	0%
TOTALS	22		99	15	5	79	7	72	

Co-Trail Managers: Margaret Wester, David Borger, Jill Butler, Kaycee Lichliter

*Non-native HOSP numbers are not included in totals.

Belle Grove Plantation (6 nest boxes)

Species	Nesting Attempts	First Egg Date	Eggs Laid	Eggs Lost	Nestlings	Nestlings Lost	Unhatched Eggs	Fledglings	
EABL	3	15 Apr	15	5	9	0	1	9	60.0%
*(Non-Native) HOSP	4	23 May	16	16	0	0	0	0	0%
TOTALS	3		15	5	9	0	1	9	

Trail Manager: Tammy Batcha *Non-native HOSP numbers are not included in totals.

Thank you to the following trained trail technicians who gave their time and energy to support Shenandoah Audubon Bluebird Trails during the 2023 monitoring season:

Judy Aaron	Diana McHenry
Roger Aaron	Dennis McLoughlin
Tammy Batcha	Mary Carolynn McLoughlin
Tom Batcha	Mark Merrill
David Borger	Andy Miller
Lee Bowen	Margie Miller
Juli Bowers	Bill Moore
Jill Butler	Lori Mumaw
Jane Colgan	Alyce Rideout
Glenny Comer	Joanne Ridings
Dana Crone	Janet Rigoni
Leah DeLong	Mary Keith Ruffner
Hope Duarte	Angela Schwarzkopf
Susan Galbraith	Ursula Sherrill
Cynthia Gee	Deb Teates
Jim Geurts	Tim Teates
Rebecca Harriett	Julia Temple
Anna Havron	Margaret Wester
Richard Hayden	Mary Beth Yarbrough
Mary Ann Kirkpatrick	Zita Zduoba
Lucinda Lentz	
Kaycee Lichliter	

Special recognition for continued support of trail systems includes David Carr, Director, and T'ai Roulston, Curator of Blandy Experimental Farm; Ms. Kristen Laise, Director of Belle Grove Plantation; and Lisa Cooke, Director of Clarke County Parks and Recreation.

Year 2023 detailed data will be submitted to Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Virginia Bluebird Society and other supporting organizations.

Please see page 4 for this season's result for the Purple Martin colony located at Blandy Experimental Farm.

Final Mailing of Oak Leaf Newsletter

Due to the cost of printing and mailing our Oak Leaf Newsletter, and in the interest of conserving natural resources, this will be the last newsletter that will be mailed to our members. Future newsletters will be emailed to our members and made available on our website at www.nsvaudubon.org.

2023 Christmas Bird Count

Dates for the 124rd Annual Christmas Bird Count have been scheduled. The local circles' dates are:

Northern Shenandoah CBC: Saturday, December 16, 2023.
Compiler Greg Justice, contact by email:
gjustice1@gmail.com

Calmes Neck CBC: Saturday, December 30, 2023.
Compiler Margaret Wester, contact by email:
margaretwester@hotmail.com

Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy CBC: Thursday, December 28, 2023. Compiler Joe Coleman, contact by email:
jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org

✓ Save \$5.00 by renewing membership now!

Effective January 1, 2024 the dues for the annual membership will be \$20.00.

Pay \$15.00 when renewing by December 31, 2023.

We appreciate your continued support!

Annual Meeting for the Election of Board Officers for the 2024-25 Term

The Annual Meeting for the election of board officers will take place on Wednesday, November 15, at 7 pm in the Library at Blandy Arboretum, 400 Blandy Farm Lane.

The meeting is open to all members. The Nominating Committee (Dave Borger, Kaycee Lichliter and Jim Smith) will provide their nominations at this meeting.

Shenandoah Audubon

2023 OFFICERS/BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

President..... Dave Borger
Immediate Past President Jim Smith
Vice President..... Open
Secretary..... Open
Treasurer..... Kaycee Lichliter
Finance..... Kaycee Lichliter

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Membership..... Open
Conservation..... Kaycee Lichliter
Education..... Open
Arboretum (City)..... Jim Smith
Programs/Public Relations..... Mark Bruns
Newsletter..... Angela Schwarzkopf
Webmaster/Facebook..... Sharon Fisher
Field Trips..... Open

ADVISORS

Advisor..... Margaret Wester
Advisor..... Glenn Comer
Advisor..... Judi Booker
Advisor..... Lori Mumaw
Advisor..... Corey Seymour

2023 Fund Drive

The NSVAS has continued to maintain existing projects, and will continue to explore new avenues for public outreach, education, and community involvement. With membership 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.

Your chapter continues to look toward future growth, new ideas and opportunities for participation and learning, for our current members and our region's youth. We are completely open to new ideas on how to conserve our natural resources and protect our wildlife. Please feel free to offer any suggestions you may have through our Facebook page, our website (nsvaudubon.org) or email (shenandoahaudubon@gmail.com). We thank you in advance for your continued support. All donations are tax-deductible and we will continue to use your dollars wisely. *Thank you.*

A copy of our financial statement is available through: Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Service, Office of Charitable and Regulatory Programs, P.O. Box 1163, Richmond, VA 23218 (804) 786-1343

MEMBERSHIP FORM Northern Shenandoah Valley Audubon Society

Annual Local Chapter Membership Dues are \$15.00 until December 31, 2023.

BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2024 DUES WILL BE \$20.00.

NAME _____ PHONE _____

STREET ADDRESS / P.O. BOX _____

CITY / STATE / ZIP _____

EMAIL _____ *Your email is our preferred method to communicate with you. You will receive event announcements, newsletters, and information pertaining to our local chapter by this method. NSVAS does not sell or share your email.*

Please check the appropriate box(s):

Renew Membership \$ _____

New Membership \$ _____

Donation (optional) \$ _____

Total Payment Amount \$ _____

Check Enclosed • Payable to: NSVAS

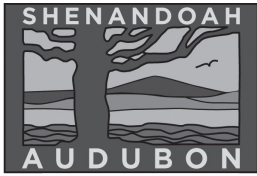
Paypal / Credit Card • To pay in this manner, please click DONATE on our website.
GO TO: www.nsvaudubon.org

A Paypal account is not required to use this payment page.

Membership, new or renewal, is valid for one year beginning when this form and payment is received.

Shenandoah Audubon is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Mail Membership Form and Payment to:
Northern Shenandoah Valley Audubon Society
Attn: Kaycee Lichliter, Treasurer
1346 Sulphur Spring Rd, Middletown, VA 22645



P.O. Box 52
 Middletown, VA 22645

A Chapter of the
 National Audubon Society

Visit our Facebook page or
 website: www.nsvaudubon.org
 Email: shenandoahaudubon@gmail.com

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Donate a Tree to The NSVAS Arboretum! Trees continue to be planted at the Audubon Arboretum within Jim Barnett Park in Winchester. The arboretum currently has more than 100 trees representing over 60 species. Please contact Jim Smith at 540-303-3983.

Purple Martin Mania!

The Shenandoah Audubon Purple Martin Colony at Blandy Experimental Farm received a boost this season with the Adopt-A-Gourd project. Coordinated by Kaycee Lichliter, the project raised the funds to grow the colony creating more nesting opportunities for the Purple Martin. See this season's results below.

Gourd Analysis	2021	2022	2023
Total Number of Gourds	60	84	96
Nesting Activity (leaves/droppings)	See Note #1	70	40
Roosting Activity (flattened nesting material/feces present)	See Note #1	8	41
No Activity (clean pine needles)	0	6	15
Deceased Adults	5	7	4
Deceased Chicks	9	15	1
Eggs – Unhatched PUMA	28	43	11
Note (see below)	#1	#2	#3
Gourds Utilized	60	78	81
Percentage Gourds Utilized	100%	92.8%	84.4%

Note #1: (2021) No differentiation between 'roosting' and/or 'nesting' activity documented; all 60 gourds indicated being utilized for either roosting or nesting during the season.

Note #2: (2022) One (1) HOFI deceased adult and one (1) unhatched HOFI egg found.

Note #3: (2023) Eight (8) unhatched eggs, identify not confirmed (likely TRES eggs); odd sizes.

Data compiled by Kaycee Lichliter,
 Purple Martin Landlord - September 6, 2023

We thank the following people for their sponsorship in the Purple Martin Adopt-A-Gourd Project.

Terri Anderson in Memory of Frank and Shirley Howell	Gina and Joe Prochaska
Pam Bell	Mike and DeeDee Prochaska, Mary and Timmy
Judi Booker	Jim Prochaska
Nada Jill Butler	Joanne Ridings
Kendall Carter	Lucas Ridings
Ingrid Christensen	Janet Rigoni
Jane Colgan	Anonymous in Memory of Dot and Don Robey
Glenny Comer	Sally and Gregg Rowley
Anne W. Crocker	Ted Saunders
Jan Donovan	Ted Saunders in the Honor of Red Lichliter
Anonymous in Memory of Pauline and Jack Durst	Ashton Saunders
Ken Fisher	Jack Schoellkopf
David Fisher	Riley Schoellkopf
Aaron and Rachel Fisher	Karen K. Schultz
Susan and Mark Galbraith	Angela Schwarzkopf
Byron and Karen Galbraith, Zephan, Tamzin and Carsten	Bernard Voll and June Sheaks
Colin Galbraith	Mary Sitton
James Geurts	Marci G. Smith
Patricia W. Gochenour	Claire Tucker
Meg Guirguis	Walter Tucker V
Rebecca Harriett	Ann Voll
Anna Havron	John and Melva Voll
Maura and Dan Justice, KC and MSy	Mike M. Voll
Jessica King	Tom Voll
Kaycee Lichliter	Matthew and Jill Voll, Emmie, AJ, and Gracie
Stanley Lipinski	Patrick and Nicole Voll, Jack
Tisha and Tim McBride	Brian Voll
Sean and Atala McBride, Meara, Atala-Maria, and Isabella	Kevin and Wan Mai Voll, Madeline, Henry and Alexander
Carey and Jenny McBride	Mike and Jessica Voll, Benjamin and Caitlin
Andrew and Monica McBride, Collette, Finn, Ruby, Deus, Pamera and Josey	Ryan and Heather Voll
Brendan and Lauren McBride, Logan	Kristen Voll
Nancy Pietrangeli	Lauren Voll
Peter Pietrangeli and Kindred Sparks, Angelo and Knight	Barbara Warner
Julie Pineiro	Charles Watson
	Margaret Wester
	Michael Wilson
	Tracy and Holt Zeidler, Molly, RJ, Max and Duncan