

OAK LEAF

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

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NO. 1

Purple Martin Mania!

Along the north bank of Lake Arnold at Blandy Experimental Farm, you'll notice the Shenandoah Audubon Purple Martin Sanctuary tucked neatly into the landscape. A total of 96 gleaming white gourds dots the landscape at this colonial nesting site for our delightful migratory birds, the Purple Martins (*Progne subis*), and abbreviated as PUMA, which belong in the family of swallows, *Hirundinidae*.

Since 2012, Shenandoah Audubon has worked diligently to replace old broken and worn-out PUMA nesting structures and to install and maintain the current nesting habitat. Once abundant in its range, PUMA now depend almost entirely on man-made housing. PUMA arrive locally starting around first of April from their wintering roosts, nice warm places, like Manaus, Brazil, deep in the Amazon. They return to their northern range each year to breed and raise their young where they find an abundance of insects. They return to South America again, for the winter, usually having all disappeared from our airways by end of August. To track the spring migration, visit this website: www.purplemartin.org/research/8/scout-arrival-study. To hear lively and boisterous chattering, rattling and

to observe PUMA performing their aerial acrobatics up close and personal, enjoy some time near the sanctuary at Blandy this season.

FREE Event & Educational Opportunity Purple Martin Mania

Date: Saturday, June 3, 2023 Time: 6:00-8:00 PM
You must register for this event due to limited seating.
Go to our website to register: nsvaudubon.org

Join us at this special event to learn about our continuing conservation efforts to provide safe and appropriate nesting habitat at the Shenandoah Audubon Purple Martin Colony at Blandy Experimental Farm. Dr. David Carr (Blandy Director) will present interesting facts about Purple Martins. After the presentation, Kaycee Lichliter and Ted Saunders (PUMA Colony Landlords) will lead a guided walk to the Purple Martin Colony. Please bring a lawn chair and dress in outdoor attire and protective footwear. This event is free to all and is co-sponsored with Blandy Experimental Farm.

ADOPT-A-PUMA-GOURD

Please partnership with Shenandoah Audubon and help support Purple Martin Conservation by adopting a gourd. Your sponsorship will go directly towards maintenance and upkeep of your local Sanctuary and is tax deductible.

Your sponsorship of \$25 per gourd for the 2023 season includes:

- An Official Adoption Certificate;
- A 4x6-in. full-color photograph taken at the Sanctuary and signed by the photographer, Ms. Sharon Fisher.
- A free Educational Guide published by the Purple Martin Conservation Association "Identify, Attract & Manage Purple Martins."
- A mail-in, return postcard, which entitles you to a FREE Trial Membership to the Purple Martin Conservation Association (*offer valid for new PMCA members only*).
- End-of-season report (*October of each year*) on whether your gourd was utilized for shelter, utilized for nesting, remained empty, contained unhatched eggs, deceased chicks, adults or other at time of clean-out. We currently do not collect data on specific number of nesting pairs or number of chicks fledged. You are welcome to observe the colony during Arboretum hours.

Adoptions made by April 15 of the current year will receive reports in October;
adoptions made from April 16 onwards will receive reports from the next years' breeding season.



ADOPT-A-PUMA GOURD APPLICATION

Make checks payable to Shenandoah Audubon and mail to:
Adopt-A-PUMA Gourd Program, 1346 Sulphur Springs Rd.
Middletown, VA 22645

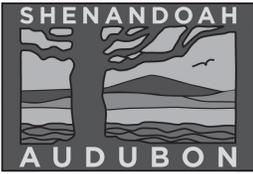
Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____
(All adoption information and materials will be mailed to this address.)

Email: _____ Phone number: _____
(optional)

I would like to Adopt:

Number of gourds: _____ @ \$25 per gourd = \$ _____ Additional donation: _____ Total donation: _____



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](mailto:shenandoahaudubon@gmail.com)

Summary of 2022 Christmas Bird Counts

Calmes Neck Christmas Bird Count

We had a total of 85 species on count day and one species for a count week bird (Lesser Scaup). I reported one rare bird, the Palm Warbler (with a photo and rare bird report) even though it had been observed and reported in years past, as well as the Ring-necked pheasant, not reported as rare, but rarely seen. Both were accepted. Overall, I would say it was a pretty average day for numbers of species, however on the somewhat low side for most numbers of individuals. All of the woodpeckers were observed, plus several of the owls and raptors. We had a high count on Red-breasted merganser (24) and Trumpeter Swan (6). There were 59 observers in the field and 5 feeder watchers, a great turn out. It was a mild day, but overcast with light rain in the afternoon. The data for the Calmes Neck (VACN) CBC is available on the National Audubon website here:

www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count

Enjoy reviewing the count summary online.

–Margaret Wester, *compiler for VACN, CBC*

Northern Shenandoah Valley Christmas Bird Count

Thank you to everyone for their participation and dedication in another successful Christmas Bird Count. This is the 48th year! With the count now tallied I thought I would share the highlights with you. The weather was fair for birding without rain and temperatures between 34 and 46F, with all bodies of water open.

We did have some notable birds on the day of the count and I want to give a shout out to James Fox for his sighting of the Common Yellowthroat at White's Lake and Gabriel Ricketts for his sighting of a Palm Warbler in area 6. Two very rare birds that I'm glad were included for count day. For the count week Dave Boltz reported the Orange Crowned Warbler and a Red-Breasted Merganser on Lake Frederick. Cliff Hup sighted a Lesser Scaup and Kristen Zimet had a Rough Legged Hawk bringing the total of count week birds to 5.

Our overall total for the count day was 84 species, perhaps not the lowest ever count but certainly a low year. Numbers of individuals were also low with only 1,219 Canada Geese and 6,503 European Starlings really standing out. A couple of other notable birds that are often missed would include Wood Duck from area 11, Wilson's Snipe from area 5 and a Fox Sparrow from area 17.

Again, I want to thank everyone for their participation and determination to make the Northern Shenandoah Valley count a successful one. Best wishes and good birding for the upcoming year.

–Greg Justice, *Compiler for Northern Shenandoah Valley Christmas Bird Count*

Upcoming Events & Information

Abrams Creek Spring Nature Walks

Birds, butterflies and flowers call this special place home!
Saturdays – April 1, April 15, April 29, and May 13

Abrams Creek Wetlands is a 25 acre nature preserve in Winchester. Join Jim Smith for a Nature and Bird Walk to explore this unique place. Meet at 8:30 AM at intersections of Jubal Early Dr., Handley Ave, and Meadow Branch Ave. Walk lasts approximately 2 hours.

Heron Rookery Hike – Saturday, March 11 at 9:00 AM

Shenandoah University River Campus at Cool Spring. Meet in the parking lot. Registration not required. Cool Spring is located off Rt. 7 at the Shenandoah River – 1400 Parker Lane, Bluemont, VA 20135.

Glass Recycling Returns

After several years suspended, glass recycling has returned to Winchester with five locations to drop off recyclable glass. The city has purchased a glass crusher which will pulverize glass into sand and aggregate to be utilized locally. Go to the city's Public Works website for locations and information about acceptable glass.
Go to: www.winchesterva.gov/public-works

Frederick County resumed its glass recycling in 2022. Recyclable glass must be taken to the county landfill, as it's not accepted at the citizen convenience centers.

We Ask for Your Assistance

To conserve resources and increase the frequency of communications with members, we will be limiting future mailing to twice per year while adding monthly email updates. We are missing email addresses from a number of members. If you are unsure if we have your email address and would like to receive electronic communications from the chapter, please send us an email requesting to be added to our email list and include your name. Email us at: shenandoahaudubon@gmail.com

NSVAS 2022 Financial Picture

Shenandoah Audubon has completed its 2022 year and has created easy to read charts to show you our financial picture. To see these charts showing revenue and expenses, please visit our website – www.nsvaudubon.org