



# OAK LEAF

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

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## Are you a bird conservation enthusiast?

Then you should join one (or both) of our Christmas Bird Counts (CBC). The longest running citizen science bird survey, the CBC is a project of the National Audubon Society, and our Shenandoah Audubon chapter sponsors two local count circles.

How does it work? An official count circle is a 15-mile diameter circle, divided up into sectors. Each compiler, the count circle organizer, selects a date within the official count period from December 14 to January 5th. When the count dates are advertised, volunteers sign up with the compiler. A sector leader then contacts the volunteer to coordinate where to meet and at what time. After meeting, volunteers cover a specified area, by car and or foot, observing, identifying and counting all birds seen or as identified by sound. A field checklist is taken from all sectors and then at the end of the count day, is compiled into a complete list by the compiler. That list is then entered into the National Audubon data base.

These surveys are invaluable to scientists tracking the health of the bird population. Typically, the bird count lasts all day from sunrise to sunset, but also with some doing nocturnal birding for owls and feeder watch counts within the circle. A volunteer may opt to participate for half a day or a full day. Locations and length of stay are coordinated by the sector leader, but the official count is a complete 24 hours of that day to cover the entire count area. Participants of all levels of experience are welcome to attend and beginners are teamed up with experienced birders. So, please consider joining a CBC!

To join the 125th CBC for the 2024/2025 count period, contact:

Northern Shenandoah CBC, Saturday, December 14, 2024.

Compiler: Greg Justice • Email: gjustice1@gmail.com

Calmes Neck CBC, Saturday, January 4, 2025.

Compiler: Margaret Wester • Email: margaretwester@hotmail.com

## Citizen Science in Your Own Backyard!

As birdwatchers, we're all potential citizen scientists! With each bird we observe, even casually, we're gathering information about that species: What is it doing? How is it behaving? What traits is it displaying? You can turn these ordinary, everyday experiences into something extraordinary – by joining Project Feederwatch!

Project FeederWatch turns your love of watching birds into important data for the scientists at Cornell Lab of Ornithology! FeederWatch is a November-April survey of birds that visit backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America. Despite the name, you don't even need a feeder (or other special equipment)! All you need is access to an area with plantings, habitat, water, or food that attracts birds, and some time to observe this area on a regular basis (as well as Internet access to record your findings). This can be your balcony, your backyard, a neighborhood green space or park. The watching schedule is completely flexible! Count your birds for as long as you like on days of your choosing, then enter your counts online. If you have young children or grandchildren, Project Feederwatch is a great way to introduce them to birding and an ideal "entry level" citizen science experience. Include them in the observations, encourage them to identify the birds they're seeing, ask them to describe what the birds are doing as they watch. Older kids could also help enter your household's counts online. Project FeederWatch is wonderful learning opportunity for the whole family!

The cost to participate is \$18 per household per season, and includes helpful support materials and full instructions. We encourage you to visit the Project Feederwatch website to learn more about the program and sign up to participate!

For more information visit: [feederwatch.org](http://feederwatch.org)

Northern Shenandoah Valley Audubon Society is a chapter of the National Audubon Society.  
Visit our Facebook page or website: [www.nsvaudubon.org](http://www.nsvaudubon.org)  
Contact us by email: [shenandoahaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:shenandoahaudubon@gmail.com)

## Calling All Local and National Audubon Members!

Are you curious about what our organization does and how we operate? We are looking for energetic, concerned volunteers and organizers to help with all aspects of our conservation operations. From heading up and joining programs and projects to technical computer skills to board of director leadership, we need you! Please join us at our board meetings.

All meetings are held at the Virginia State Arboretum, 400 Blandly Farm Lane, Boyce, VA. All are welcome!

Schedule of board meetings for the remainder of the 2024:  
Tuesday, September 17, 5:30pm at the Blandly Library  
Sunday, October 20, 1:00pm at the Blandly Library  
Sunday, November 17, 1:00pm at the Blandly Library

# Autumn Events Schedule 2024

## Abrams Creek Wetland Nature Walks

Walks are on the following Saturdays: **September 14, September 28, October 12 and October 26, 8:30–10:30am**

Meet your guide at the intersection of Jubal Early, Meadow Branch and Handley Avenues, Winchester, VA.

Join naturalist Jim Smith for an easy, level walk, approximately 2 miles along the Abrams Creek Wetland Preserve. Meet at the entrance located at the intersections of Jubal Early Drive, Meadow Branch Avenue and Handley Avenue. Bring water, binoculars and friends! These walks are canceled in the event of rain. On street parking is available. Text 540-303-3983 for further information or questions.

### Adopt-A-Highway Trash Pick Up

Saturday, September 21 from 9am to noon.

Rain date: Saturday, September 28

Bi-annual trash pick up at Lockes Landing and nearby roads. Safety vests, trash bags and trash pickers will be provided. Participants will be asked to sign a waiver on site before picking up trash. Register on our website: [nsvaudubon.org](http://nsvaudubon.org)

### How to Identify Birds in the Field

Saturday, September 28, 2024, 11:00am to noon, Free event

Auditorium at Handley Regional Library

100 West Piccadilly St., Winchester, VA.

Part of the Handley Library "How to" Fest, this is an overview of how to identify birds in the field using resources and observational skills. Presented by Margaret Wester, President of NSVAS, VMN bluebird trail manager, Audubon CBC compiler.

### Freshwater Aquaculture

October 3, 2024, 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM, Free event

Laurel Ridge Community College Science Bldg. Auditorium

American consumers want high quality seafood caught or produced in a manner that does not negatively impact the environment. Land-based recirculating aquaculture system (RAS) production of Atlantic salmon can provide this option. This method utilizes water reuse after filtration to minimize use of water resources thereby conserving our natural water sources. Presented by John Davidson, PhD., a Senior Research Scientist at the Freshwater Institute in Shepherdstown, WV.

For more information visit: [The Conservation Fund](http://TheConservationFund.org) [freshwaterinstitute.org](http://freshwaterinstitute.org) or [conservationfund.org](http://conservationfund.org)

### WILD FEST 2024! Blue Ridge Wildlife Center Wildlife and Conservation Festival

Saturday, October 12, 2024, 11:00am to 3:00pm, Free event  
VA State Arboretum, 400 Blandly Farm Lane, Boyce, VA

Rain date is October 19

This is a Conservation and Wildlife Festival featuring vendors, exhibits, demonstrations, presentations, activities, bird walks, informational display booths and more. Shenandoah Audubon will be a vendor participant.

### Virginia Grassland Bird Conservation

Thursday, November 7, 7:00pm to 8:30pm, Free event

Shenandoah University, Henkel Auditorium in Henkel Hall

The Virginia Grassland Bird Initiative (VGBI) is a collaboration among The Piedmont Environmental Council, Smithsonian's Virginia Working Landscapes, American Farmland Trust and Quail Forever focused on promoting the science-based knowledge and resources needed to manage Virginia's private lands for grassland bird conservation.

Presented by October Greenfield, Wildlife Habitat Restoration Coordinator and Virginia Grassland Bird Initiative, Piedmont Environmental Council.

For more information visit: [vagrasslandbirds.org](http://vagrasslandbirds.org)



Connect with us  
for up-to-date info and events!  
Northern Shenandoah Valley  
Audubon Society

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 \$20.00.

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

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. NSVAS does not sell or share your email.

#### Mail Membership Form and Payment to:

Northern Shenandoah Valley Audubon Society  
Attn: Treasurer  
1346 Sulphur Spring Rd, Middletown, VA 22645

#### Please check the appropriate box(s):

Renew Membership \$ \_\_\_\_\_

New Membership \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donation (optional) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Payment Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

Check Enclosed • Payable to: NSVAS

Paypal / Credit Card  
You can use your own PayPal account to pay by this method. *Direct your payment to:* [shenandoahaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:shenandoahaudubon@gmail.com)

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

