



OAK LEAF

Volume 35; Issue 2

May/June 2011

THE BLANDY GARDEN FAIR May 7th and 8th

At the State Arboretum of VA at Blandly Farm, Boyce
9:00 am - 4:30 pm



An annual spring event, the Blandly Garden Fair is a wonderful marriage of vendors selling a wide variety of plants and gardening accessories, locally made jams, relishes and pottery, and delicious and fun food. Traditionally held on Mother's Day weekend, it's a wonderful way to incorporate activities that allow you to appreciate nature and that are Earth-friendly into your Mother's Day celebration. Bring Mom along, and as a bonus, you can pick up a gift or two for Mom while you are there! The event location is easy to find, just off VA Route 50, east of Winchester (between Rte. 340 & the Shenandoah River). Take I-81 to Winchester exit 313, then east on Rte. 50. From Front Royal: take Rte. 522 north to Rte. 340 north to Rte. 50 east. Look for Garden Fair signs. Admission is \$10 per car, and there are free activities for kids, talks on plants and a bird walk on the Arboretum grounds. If you are able to come and roam the fair and the beautiful Arboretum grounds (the spring flowers are in beautiful bloom!), stop by the Shenandoah Audubon tent to say hello. We plan to have information on conservation issues, and bird houses and bat boxes for sale.

WINCHESTER NATURE WALKS through Abrams Creek Wetlands

with naturalist Jim Smith



Saturday Mornings
May 7th and 21st
8:00 am

Public Invited
Mark your calendar!!

Join Jim for an early morning walk through the nature preserve - right in the City of Winchester! The focus of the walk is **birds and blooms**. Observe birds of the Abrams Creek Wetlands in spring, as well as blooming wildflowers. The area is a haven for migrating birds, so...*you never know what you might spot at the Wetlands!*

Meet up with the group at 7:50 am at the Children of America parking lot on W. Jubal Early Dr., (approx. 1/2 mile west of Valley Ave), and park at the west side of the lot by the tree line. The walk starts promptly at 8:00 am down the sidewalk along W. Jubal Early to the entrance to the Preserve.

This walk is on a paved pathway at an easy pace, allowing ample time for questions and bird watching. **The walk will last approximately 2 hours and is non-strenuous.** There will be several benches at which to rest along the way.

Bring your field guide, binoculars or a spotting scope and your curiosity. Cameras are welcome. Participants are also encouraged to dress for the weather and bring an umbrella in case of rain.

Contact Jim Smith for more information
540-662-5033

Planting Choices to Support Wildlife and the Environment

Because we humans have taken over so much of the natural landscape for our own purposes, much of Earth's wildlife is now in peril and needs our help to survive. As our remaining rural landscapes change around us, there are actually significant (and relatively easy) things we can do as land owners and land stewards to help protect and preserve the natural beauty around us, for not only our own enjoyment, but also for future generations and for the wildlife with which we share the planet.

Spring is the perfect time to think about planting on your property to establish and/or increase areas that support birds and other wildlife. The Virginia Native Plant Society is a phenomenal resource to find planting suggestions for native plants - whether it be trees, shrubs, flowers or aquatic plants - that will feed, protect and promote wildlife right in your yard!

The Blandly spring Garden Fair is the ideal place to start your search for native planting choices. Why choose native plants? Native plants provide extremely attractive food, shelter and nesting opportunities for native songbirds, insects and mammals. In addition, they need less care than exotic plants, and thus require less maintenance (who doesn't like that?) and also a reduction in the expenditure of finite resources, expensive fuels, and toxic chemicals.

Contact the Piedmont Chapter of the VA Native Plant Society for ideas on how to "nature-scape" your garden, yard, or farm field and reap the rewards of not only helping the local ecosystem but also the beauty of a natural landscape.

☞ PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE ☞

Happy Spring!

Thanks to all who volunteer to keep our Chapter running - we could not do it without you. Thanks to past presenters who make learning about our natural world and its inhabitants fun and exciting! It is my sincere hope that both local and National Audubon members plan to attend future membership meetings and upcoming events.



Diane Greco, SA President



Make Earth Day EVERY DAY!

Mother Earth needs your TLC. Consider trying the following if you don't already:

- Patronize business that recycle, conserve & have carbon neutral programs - ask before you buy!
- Purchase organically grown produce and support local farm markets and organic growers.
- Plant a native tree on your property.
- Use native plants in gardens, yards and fields.
- Recycle and/or reuse plastics, metals and glass.
- Use reusable containers for drinks on the go.
- Use reusable, washable fabric bags for shopping.
- Walk or bike short distances instead of driving your vehicle if possible.
- Take advantage of public transportation or carpooling opportunities when possible.
- Keep trash inside your vehicle to throw away at home - this includes cigarette butts, fast food paper waste, and soda and beer cans! Ask your friends to please do the same!
- Compost organic waste (including egg shells and coffee grounds), along with paper towels.
- Purchase clothing that can be washed in cold water.
- Purchase energy efficient appliances and light bulbs when replacing old ones. This will benefit your wallet as well!
- Turn off lights and other electronic devices when not using them. Note: some devices still consume small amounts of energy when they are plugged in, even when not in use!
- Use consumable personal grooming products that are organic and not tested on animals.
- Pick up trash on your property, including along the fence line and along the road.
- Get your whole family involved and/or volunteer.

Many small steps can make a difference!



**GO GREEN - CONSERVE PAPER, INK AND POSTAGE
GET YOUR OAK LEAF ELECTRONICALLY!**

Email us with your request to be on our e-newsletter notice list today!



Please send all correspondence to: NSVAS, PO Box 2693
(please note our new address) Winchester, VA 22604

Email: shenandoahaudubon@yahoo.com

Headquarters: The State Arboretum of VA
400 Blandy Farm Rd, Boyce, VA

www.audubon-nsvas.org

The Northern Shenandoah Valley Audubon Society (NSVAS), dba Shenandoah Audubon, is a chapter of the National Audubon Society (NAS) and a member of the Virginia Audubon Council (VAC) and of the Virginia Environmental Network (VEN). This newsletter belongs to the NSVAS membership. **Chapter Code: X-54.**

2011 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS 2010-2012

President: Diane Greco (514-8280 cell)
1st Vice President: Cynthia Fenton (535-8955 cell)
2nd Vice President: no nomination submitted
Secretary: Jeannie Senter
Treasurer: Christine Harden

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Conservation: Kaycee Lichliter
Education: To Be Appointed
Field Trips: Margaret Wester
Finance: Christine Harden
Membership: Lee Bowen
Programs: Dennis Fenton
Public Relations: To Be Appointed



SPECIAL PROJECT CONTACTS

Audubon Arboretum: Jim Smith (662-5033)
Scott Kenney (722-9551)
Bird Counts: Margaret Wester, Calmes Neck area;
Rob & Ann Simpson/Chuck Turner, N. Shenandoah area
Bluebird Trail at Blandy Farm: Kaycee Lichliter
Hawk Watch at Snicker's Gap (Sept.): Jim Smith
Newsletter Editor (Interim): Cynthia Fenton
Contact us if you can help out!
Web Page Coordinator: Cynthia Fenton

(All phone numbers are area code 540 unless otherwise noted.)

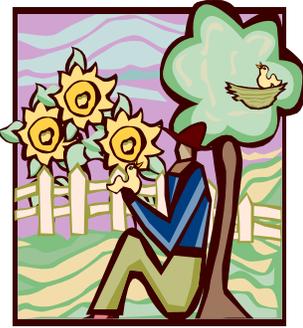
- ~ All members are encouraged to attend Membership meetings and Public programs.
- ~ All members are welcome to attend Board Meetings and join committees to help plan activities.
- ~ Please contact us if you can donate an hour or more of your time to help us keep our Chapter going!

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Thank you, contributors! The *Oak Leaf* is distributed in March, May, September, and November. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about this publication.



Backyard Bird Habitats - Are you seeing the big picture?



Putting out a feeder full of seed is a good start, however if the birds do not have some type of attractive cover nearby, they may avoid your feeder, especially if your (or the neighbor's) cat sits in wait for a tasty feather covered meal! How do you lure gorgeous songbirds to your yard and keep them coming back?

You might try offering fresh water for bathing and drinking, shrubs or brush piles for cover, and trees or house boxes for nesting. If you build it and they don't come, the location of the seed, water source, or nesting area may be less than ideal. Try changing the location or planting to provide cover and nesting sites.



If you are interested in providing a bird-friendly habitat in your yard, contact the folks at Persimmon Springs Farm in Flint Hill, VA. They not only provide a wide variety of shrubs that grow well in our area, but also offer landscape and garden design services if you need a bit of help getting started. Feeding wild birds is work, but is rewarding in so many ways. For more information on feeding wild birds, visit the National Bird Feeding Society's website at www.birdfeeding.org. Also, to reduce predatory threats to birds, it's best to keep domestic cats indoors and ask your neighbors to do the same.



The Ohio State University Indoor Cat Initiative

Many people let their cats outside for reasons as simple as, well, because they always have, and mistakenly believe that it's not fair to keep a cat confined indoors because cats naturally need the exercise and fresh air they get outside. However there are many valid reasons for keeping our feline pets indoors, most for their own protection, but also to reduce predation on bird populations. It has been proven that indoor cats live much longer and healthier lives, and with proper care and exercise, they can be happy and well-adjusted indoor pets. Here is a list of the problems that are encountered when allowing pet cats to have free roam outdoors:



1. Injury or death by vehicles, especially in areas near busy roads and/or highways
2. Poisoned intentionally or accidentally, possibly from eating poisoned rodent prey
3. Injury (or death) by fighting with other cats, which can also be quite costly with frequent vet visits
4. Infectious diseases contracted from other cats: FIP, FIV, FeLV, URIs, which can cause early and painful death
5. Parasites: fleas, ticks, ringworm, which can also infest other household pets and children
6. Injury or death by sadists
7. Injury or death by dogs or predators
8. Killing of wildlife by outdoor cats - cats do not distinguish between common, protected, or endangered species when attacking their prey
9. Getting lost, picked up by Animal Control
10. Theft for sale as laboratory animals, or "bait" for illicit gaming
11. Problems with neighbors: cats littering in their yards or preying on birds at their feeders

As you can see, there are many benefits to keeping cats indoors - the cats are healthier and live longer, health expenses are lessened (saving you money), wild animals (especially birds) are less exposed to predation, and you and your family have the benefit of the emotional well being that comes with knowing your pet is safe and well at all times. Visit the OSU website for more information: <http://indoorpet.osu.edu/cats/>

Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve Signage Project - "One Preserve, Many Bird Inhabitants"

With the help of Winchester Parks Foundation, Winchester Parks and Recreation, Designer Chris Dearing, and the direction of Professor Woody Bousquet of Shenandoah University, Shenandoah Audubon has joined several other community organizations in providing funds for a group of several interpretative signs along the walking path of the Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve in the City of Winchester. After five years of planning, work and waiting, the signs have been installed and can be viewed while enjoying the trail. Local photographers contributed photographs of several species of birds that can be seen at the Wetlands Preserve for the Shenandoah Audubon sponsored sign. The signs look great, and we thank everyone involved with this important community education project!





Winchester, VA 22604

A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

DID YOU RENEW BY APRIL 15th? YOUR ANNUAL \$15 MEMBERSHIP DUES PAYMENT HELPS SUPPORT LOCAL CONSERVATION PROJECTS!

"RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED"



Please share or recycle this newsletter!

SHENANDOAH AUDUBON CALENDAR OF EVENTS (outdoor events subject to cancellation due to bad weather)

No Membership Meetings in Jan., Jul., Aug., or Dec. Dates and locations subject to change.

DATE & PLACE	EVENT DESCRIPTION	CONTACT INFORMATION
May 7th/ 8 am In Winchester	Bird & Nature Walk with Jim Smith Join naturalist Jim Smith for an easy walk through the Abrams Creek Wetlands (<i>SEE pg. 1 FOR INFO</i>)	Jim Smith 540-667-0504
May 14th/ 9 am Paris, VA	Bird Walk at Sky Meadows State Park 9-11am. Meet at the Visitor's Center for a walk focusing on migrating birds in spring in celebration of International Migratory Bird Day!	Margaret Wester shenandoahaudubon@yahoo.com
May 21st/ 8 am In Winchester	Bird & Nature Walk with Jim Smith Join naturalist Jim Smith for an easy walk through the Abrams Creek Wetlands (<i>SEE pg. 1 FOR INFO</i>)	Jim Smith 540-667-0504
June 25th/ 9 am Paris, VA	Bird Walk at Sky Meadows State Park 9-11am. Meet at the Eastside Parking Lot for a walk focusing on birds of the meadowlands.	Margaret Wester shenandoahaudubon@yahoo.com
Oct 8th/ 10 am Paris, VA	Bird Walk at Sky Meadows State Park 10am-12pm. Meet at the VC Parking Lot for a walk focusing on park wildlife and the habitat of the Redheaded Woodpecker.	Margaret Wester shenandoahaudubon@yahoo.com
Dec 10th/ 9 am Paris, VA	Bird Walk at Sky Meadows State Park 9-10:30am. Meet at the Eastside Parking Lot for a walk focusing on resident woodland birds.	Margaret Wester shenandoahaudubon@yahoo.com

Where Are We?

NSVAS is a non-profit conservation organization which serves:

the City of Winchester, Virginia

**and the Counties of
Frederick
Clarke
Warren
Shenandoah**

**plus portions of
Loudoun Co.
Fauquier Co.
Rappahannock Co.**



Shenandoah Audubon is where you are!