

OAK LEAF

A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume 36 • Issue 4

November – December 2012

Winter Bird Walk

at Sky Meadows State Park

Delaplane, VA

Saturday, December 8, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Join naturalist Margaret Wester for an educational walk on the Shearman's Mill trail at Sky Meadows State Park. The focus will be on Resident Woodland Birds.

Daily parking/State Park fees apply (\$4.00 per vehicle). Interested walkers should meet at the Eastside/Equestrian Parking Lot.

In the event of inclement weather, there will be a lecture at the Carriage House. Please contact Margaret with any questions at margaretwester@hotmail.com (preferred) or (540) 837-2799.

Winter Young Naturalist Program

at The State Arboretum of Virginia/Blandy Experimental Farm

Boyce, VA

Alternate Saturdays in January, February and March

The Young Naturalist Program focuses on local natural history, geography, weather and other related topics. Winter 2013 themes emphasize how organisms (including humans) use their senses, and will include sessions titled Feel the Forest; Fragrance and Flowers; Natural Noise; Vital Vision; and Sense-Sational Spring.

Morning sessions (9:00 AM – 11:30 AM) are for First through Third Graders; afternoon sessions (12:30 PM – 3:00 PM) are for Fourth through Sixth Graders. Each program includes observation, hands-on activities, crafts, and time outside.

The Young Naturalist Program is presented by Blandy staff with volunteer assistance from Virginia Master Naturalists, teachers, and others with an interest in education and the natural world. Visit blandy.virginia.edu/public-programs/young-naturalist to register, or talk with Blandy staff at (540) 837-1758 x 224 for more information.

Annual Seed Exchange

at The State Arboretum of Virginia/Blandy Experimental Farm

Boyce, VA

Saturday, January 26, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM

The last Saturday in January is National Seed Swap Day. Come celebrate in the Blandy Library, even if you have no seeds to trade! You'll leave with FREE seeds and invaluable knowledge from local experts.

If you bring seeds, please bring them in small envelopes well marked with the common name and color of the plant, or with the Latin name of the species and cultivar. Commercial seeds are also welcome. Many Master Gardeners will be on hand to offer gardening advice and support.

Seeds available will include those from Blandy Farm plants. For more information, please visit blandy.virginia.edu or call Blandy staff at (540) 837-1758 x 224.

Shenandoah Audubon, your local Chapter of the National Audubon Society, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization. Financial statements are available upon request. Our Audubon Chapter Code is X-54.

Visit us on the web at
AUDUBON-NSVAS.ORG

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We welcome your feedback!

WRITE:

Shenandoah Audubon, PO Box 2693,
Winchester, VA 22604

EMAIL:

shenandoahaudubon@yahoo.com

CALL:

Our friendly Programs/PR chair Rosemary Rogers can field any questions or concerns at (540) 323-7627

*We wish you a safe holiday season
full of peace and happiness!*

THE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT:

AN EPIC WINTER CENSUS

Audubon's Christmas Bird Count is the oldest and largest citizen science project in the world. It covers more miles and accounts for more species than any other project.

Up through the 19th century, many North Americans participated in the tradition of Christmas "side hunts" in which people took sides and competed to see who could shoot more birds. The group that finished with largest number of dead birds won. Birds were killed regardless of species or whether the hunters had any use for the carcasses.

At the end of that century, New York ornithologist Frank Chapman, an officer in the recently formed National Audubon Society, recognized that declining bird populations could not withstand this excessive hunting and proposed to count birds on Christmas Day instead of shooting them.

So, in 1900, 27 observers took part in the first Christmas Bird Count in 25 locations in the United States and Canada. Since then, the counts have been held every winter. Last year's 112th count completed in January 2012 had over 60,000 participants in 20 countries!

Counts are performed in 15 mile diameter "count circles". Each count circle consists of a number of volunteers including a compiler to coordinate and manage data. They break up into small groups and follow assigned routes, counting every bird they see throughout one designated day. The routes that the counters take are consistent from year to year.

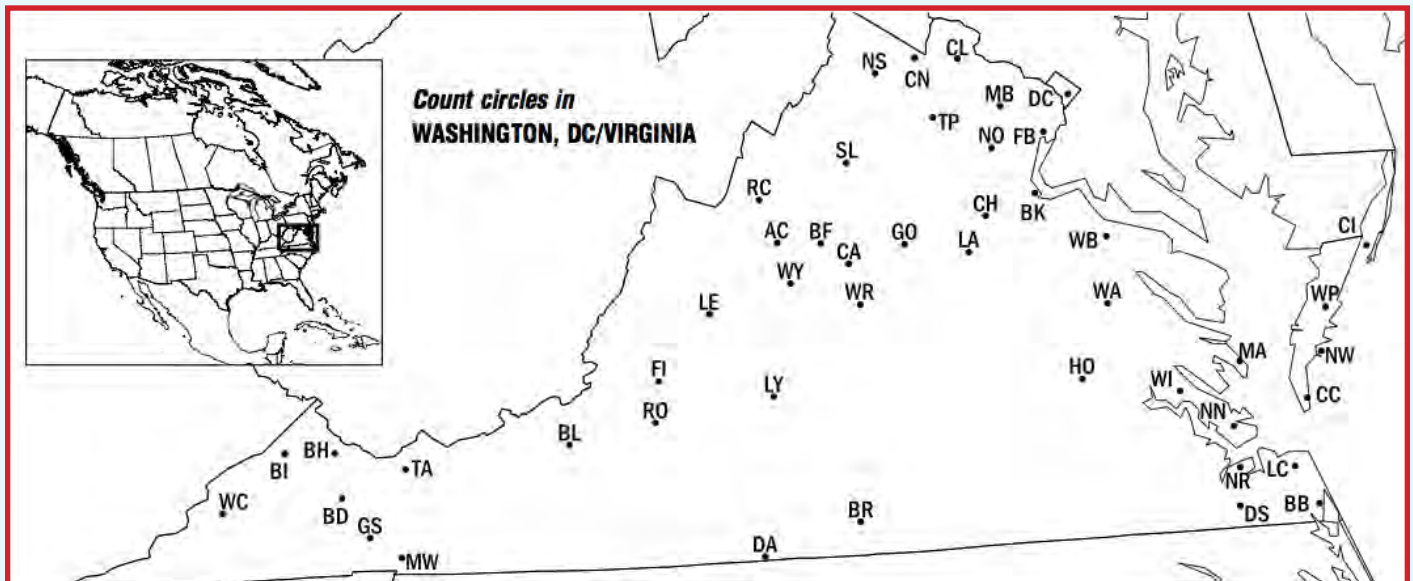
All counts are then submitted to compilers who consolidate the data and enter it into an online database. Regional editors review and confirm all data, and the final findings are reported to the public.

Last year, 2,242 circles counted over 64,900,000 individual birds. 2,400 species were reported which accounts for 25% of all bird species on Earth!

Birds are good indicators of environmental health because they are abundant and widespread. They are sensitive to environmental change and fortunately respond relatively quickly to conservation efforts.

The data collected by observers over the past century allow researchers, conservation biologists, and other interested individuals to study the long-term health and status of bird populations across North America. It is also a very reliable source to track environmental effects of climate change. The many entities that use CBC data for various analysis include universities, nonprofit organizations, the United States Geological Survey, the United States Air Force and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. The data are also used for editing field guide range maps.

Count volunteers perform a great service in providing information of such value to science and society. Audubon's analysts looked at data from the 106th count and determined that the value of the effort of all CBC participants that year equaled over **5 million dollars!**



▲ Map of Christmas Bird "Count Circles" in Virginia. Shenandoah Audubon is affiliated with the Northern Shenandoah Valley (NS) and Calmes Neck (CN) circles. Map Source: *American Birds 2011-2012, Summary of the 112th Christmas Bird Count*

Counts can be held on any single day from December 14 to January 5. The Northern Shenandoah Valley count will be held December 15. If you are interested in participating, contact compiler Chuck Turner at cht282@gmail.com. There will be a potluck celebration and compilation discussion at 5:30 PM at Blandy Experimental Farm following the day's counting.

The Calmes Neck count will be conducted on January 5. Contact compiler Margaret Wester at margaretwester@hotmail.com if you would like to participate. Last year the Calmes Neck circle reported a Northern Goshawk (right) which was a first for that species and the only one spotted in the region last year.

For more info about the Christmas Bird Count or to participate in a count circle other than our 2 local circles, visit christmasbirdcount.org or email cbc@audubon.org.



THINK GLOBALLY, DISCOVER LOCALLY!

▼ Rosemary Rogers introduces Michael Neese, recycling coordinator for the City of Winchester. Michael presented his program "Solid Waste, Pollution and Avian Habitat: What You Can Do" to us on October 15. Below are some of the highlights of what we learned.



Dispose of household hazardous wastes properly.

Things like insecticides, pesticides, pool chemicals, antifreeze, transmission fluid, car batteries, fluorescent and compact light tubes, paints, thinners, solvents and household cleaners are collected monthly for proper recycling or disposal.

You can bring these items to the Landfill Citizen's Convenience Site at 281 Landfill Road (off of Sulphur Springs Road) in Winchester. Collection days are the first and third Wednesday of each month from 12:00 PM to 6:00 PM, April through October. During the months of November, December, January, February and March, one collection will be held each month on the third Wednesday of the month. Call (540) 665-5122 for more information.

Recycle your electronics!

Electronics recycling is also offered at the Landfill Citizen's Convenience Site! Collection days are the second Saturday of each month from 7:00 AM until 1:00 PM and the fourth Wednesday of each month from 12:00 PM until 4:00 PM (Wednesday collections will not be held in November and December due to the holidays).

Electronics such as computer monitors, laptops, cell phones, adapters, dry cell batteries, processors, keyboards, mice, cables, televisions, VCRs, fax machines, copiers, scanners, calculators, electric typewriters, telephones, answering machines, tape recorders, camcorders, cameras, stereos and speakers are all accepted. Businesses and residents are encouraged to participate in eCycle collection days!

- **Best Buy** will accept most electronics except a few appliances & CRT monitors. All stores have recycling kiosks near the front door for you to drop off ink and toner cartridges, rechargeable batteries, wires,

cords, cables and cell phones. Employees will even pick up heavy items from your car!

- **Donate your electronics (any brand, any condition) to Goodwill!** They accept all computer parts and accessories. They are partnered with Dell and have a "recycle and reuse" efficiency rate of 98%. Dell has been an eCycling pioneer and currently leads the U.S. in CRT monitor recycling.

Dell explains how their partnership with Goodwill works:

Your donated equipment has value: sometimes as a whole system, sometimes as parts, and sometimes as raw materials such as metals, plastics and glass. The proceeds from your donation are returned to Goodwill and help to support their important mission of putting people to work. You'll get a receipt for tax purposes, plus you'll be helping to protect the environment and benefit your community at the same time!

Visit dellreconnect.com for more info.

If you are donating a computer and want to wipe your hard drive clean of your personal data, check out the FREE "2 Minute Miracle Hard Drive Wipe" instructions from Geek Squad:

geeksquad.com/do-it-yourself/2mm/hard-drive-wipe.aspx

The City of Winchester, Best Buy and Goodwill/Dell DO NOT outsource electronics recycling to foreign countries. When you eCycle with them, you can rest assured that all materials will be dismantled and responsibly recycled within the United States.



Extend the life of your unwanted items.

One man's trash is another man's treasure! You can:

- Freecycle your junk to others who need it!

Freecycle is an easy-to-use online network of people who are giving (and getting) stuff for free in their own towns. It's all about reusing and keeping good stuff out of landfills. Not only can you post your items, but you can check out "wanted" posts of people who are looking for things, which just may be your "junk"!

Editor's Note: For example, I saw a post that said, "Wanted: Hangers, all kinds & sizes." I just happened to have a bin of extra hangers in my shed! Talk about a site that facilitates win-win connections.

Freecycle groups are moderated by local volunteers, and there is no cost to join. Check it out at freecycle.org!

- **Post your items in The Valley Trader** (see details at valleytraderonline.com).

- **Donate items to your favorite charity.**

- **Check out winchesterva.gov/publicworks/unwanteditems** for a list of locations where you can dispose of common "unwanted items" in the most conscientious way.

Put waste in its place.

Most litter you see on the street will eventually end up in one of our waterways, which directly affects our avian friends. Adopt a street or a stream to keep solids from polluting local habitats.

Questions?

You can contact Michael directly at mneese@ci.winchester.va.us or (540) 667-1815 x 1452. We are truly fortunate to have such a wealth of green knowledge as a local resource!





FREE COMPOST!



The City of Winchester collects leaves and composts them into nutrient rich black soil. Not only is the compost used for fertilizing City grounds, it is also available to the public at no charge. (A few of our program meeting attendees vouched that this is *really* good compost!) Use it as a weed suppressant around flowers or in your garden.

You can pick up this free black gold at the Winchester City Yards (301 East Cork Street). Load it yourself Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM, or call Terry Davis at (540) 667-1815 x 1490 at least one day in advance to schedule your vehicle to be loaded.



This compost is not recommended for mulching around trees (leaves of all tree species are mixed together which might contain elements that may harm sensitive trees).



Remember us this holiday season! Become a member, renew your membership, or donate to us online at audubon-nsvas.org.
OR, give us the gift we need most: a few hours of your time each month to make a difference locally!
See front page for contact information.

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QUACK FOR THOUGHT

You will feel fulfilled when you do the impossible for someone else.

—Yogi® Tea quote

THANK YOU, SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS!

Thanks to the generous donations of time, material, and labor of many, this newsletter is designed, printed, and professionally mailed for FREE! The only cost to Shenandoah Audubon is nonprofit rate postage.

Cheers to that!



Please recycle.

