

## NABS Affiliate Start-Up Handbook

### *Welcome to the World of Bluebirding!*

Thank you for your interest in beginning a bluebird group in your state, province, city or region.

This handbook is filled with first-hand advice from bluebirders across the continent who have been actively involved in the affiliate process. This "advice from the trail" will offer you resourceful ideas and support as you lead your NABS affiliation efforts.

On behalf of NABS and the bluebirding conservation movement, thank you for this support at the grass roots level. As you go through your own affiliation process, send us your ideas and suggestions. This handbook will incorporate new ideas in each revision.

Please contact Philip Berry, NABS 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President who serves as NABS' affiliate liaison for any advice or assistance.

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## I. FIRST STEPS: NABS AFFILIATE CRITERIA

By affiliating with the North American Bluebird Society, the affiliate agrees to:

1. Be a registered non-profit organization, or actively working toward that status. This includes establishing a bank account in the organization's name and forming a Board of Directors and/or having elected officers.
2. Designate a NABS member within the affiliate organization to be the official liaison with NABS.
3. Cooperate with and support of NABS' continent-wide programs, including the NABS Speakers Bureau, Transcontinental Bluebird Trail, and NABS nestbox approval process. An affiliate representative present at the Annual NABS Convention is encouraged.
4. Actively promote NABS membership (along with local membership).
5. Fill out an annual report or annual questionnaire (i.e., membership figures) and update NABS with any new affiliate contact liaison information by October 31 of each year.

Receipt of the completed Affiliate Registration Form will confirm your affiliation and your organization will be listed on the NABS website and in *Bluebird*, the journal of NABS. Please note that this criteria list will be effective for all new affiliates. This will not affect organizations already affiliated with NABS. Upon receipt of this form, a confirmation and certificate of affiliation will be sent.

*(The above criteria were approved at the 6/00 NABS Board Meeting in Galena, IL)*

## I. FIRST STEPS: GETTING ORGANIZED

*It seems like such a big job -- starting a new organization and getting non-profit status. Then to keep it going! Help! What do I do first?*

Answers:

### **Kathy Clark, Pennsylvania:**

Start small is my best suggestion and just have fun with it. Let the organization things come in time. Get together for a while and chat about bluebirds. You can do it as small as you like. No need to get stressed out over all kinds of tasks.

Don't feel like you have to be the expert on things or a longtime bluebirder to do this. Most of us on the board are into this only three or four years. There are a few who came along with many more years of experience and mentored us.

NABS was such a great help to me in getting things going once we decided to form an organization.

□□

### **Haley Priest, Massachusetts:**

First I set up a date and place for the first exploratory meeting of bluebirders interested in supporting an organization. The meeting will help you find out who and how many other bluebirders are interested in helping out. I happened to talk to two other local bluebirders who said they would be glad to help get the first meeting going, so if you can find others to help, that would be great right off the bat.

### **Dean Sheldon, Ohio:**

I want to point out that your group does NOT need to be called (state name) Bluebird Society. It is not a requirement. I remember when Bluebirds Over Georgia came along...I just thought that was very refreshing, as is Bluebirds Across Nebraska. If you check the Affiliate Section of the NABS web page, there are a whole lot of ideas set out.

### **Steve Eno, Nebraska:**

The one bit of advice I would give anyone running a bluebird organization is to make sure everyone involved is enjoying what they are doing. When people start seeing it as WORK, that's when you start losing people. Members will come back and volunteer to take on workloads if they feel good about what they're doing and who they're working with. That was always my number one goal when running a meeting -- make sure people have time to share their bluebird experiences and stories and that they have a good time.

## I. FIRST STEPS: MISSION STATEMENT

*The following are mission statements from NABS and two affiliate organizations that can serve as samples as your organization develops its own statement of purpose:*

### **North American Bluebird Society (NABS)**

The North American Bluebird Society is a non-profit conservation, education, and research organization that promotes the recovery of bluebirds and other native cavity-nesting bird species.

### **North Carolina Bluebird Society, Inc.**

The North Carolina Bluebird Society, inc. is a non-profit organization formed in Greensboro, NC. in 1986. It is dedicated to ensuring the future of the Eastern Bluebird and other cavity-nesting birds native to North Carolina. The Society will work toward its goals by promoting bluebird conservation projects among its members and other interested groups in the state, conducting educational programs and workshops, distributing educational materials, collecting and sharing nesting data, encouraging and aiding in the development of nestbox trails and undertaking any other endeavors that will aid our native cavity-nesting birds.

### **Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin, Inc.**

The Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin (BRAW) is a non-profit organization incorporated under the laws of Wisconsin. The purpose and mission of BRAW is to monitor and increase the production of the Eastern bluebird and other native cavity-nesting birds through a coordinated statewide nestbox construction and monitoring program.

. . . BRAW seeks to expand knowledge and enthusiasm for the Eastern Bluebird so that a growing number of people will have the desire to aid bluebirds and have the knowledge about how to best accomplish this in their own communities.

## I. FIRST STEPS: FINDING MONEY

*Where will I find the money to help us get started?*

Answers:

**Tena Taylor, Mississippi:**

Our dues are right low, \$7.50 for an individual and \$15.00 for a family membership. But we are managing to keep our heads up now. The only expenses we have are printing for the newsletter, etc. and postage. We have volunteers to bring refreshments to our meetings, and have all the door prizes donated.

**Joan Harmet, Illinois:**

Big budgets come with big affiliates -- and then there are expenses for awards, coordinators materials, newsletters, supplies, you name it. But when you are getting started, sell bluebird nestboxes that were made by volunteers or bought inexpensively at a Senior Citizen Center. Then charge for the boxes and the income starts to come in. (And you've put boxes in the hands of new members). We have a rule that if the people aren't at the workshop or get the material and instruction from us - or won't make a commitment to monitor - we won't sell them a box.

## I. FIRST STEPS: FINDING MONEY

### *GETTING THAT ESSENTIAL FINANCIAL START*

1. Look for cooperation/ support/ publicity from state Department of Natural Resources (Fish and Game or nongame division, wildlife ministry). They may be willing to help in many ways.
2. Look to your local, provincial or state conservation groups, such as National Audubon Society or Soil and Water Conservation District.
3. Consider being a part of a larger local conservation group. You will be able to utilize the “perks” from an established governmental or non-profit group, such as bulk-rate, non-profit mailing costs, sales tax exemption, tax-deductible donations, and by-laws.
4. Ask for dues and Lifetime membership contributions from a core of the founding members.
5. Sponsor raffles of donated items or sale of volunteer-built bluebird boxes.
6. Apply for grants or contributions from local businesses. Establish a bluebird trail at a local business “campus” in exchange for support.
7. When a group is an established Affiliate, they are eligible for up to \$500 in seed money from NABS for special projects destined to strengthen the group. This money is sometimes repaid at a later date to help finance another new group. Contact NABS headquarters if you wish to receive a grant application.
8. Note: Why is money important? You will need money for membership and trail costs, mailing labels, newsletter printing, record keeping and postage. A contact telephone number and a computer will eventually be helpful, though a volunteer might offer to provide both of these.
9. Register your group on [guidestar.org](http://guidestar.org). It’s free and someone “out there” may want to help you. See website <[www.guidestar](http://www.guidestar)> for instructions.

## II. ORGANIZING: NON-PROFIT STATUS

*I want to affiliate with NABS, so I have to be a non-profit organization, or working toward that goal. How does that happen?*

### **Haley Priest, Massachusetts:**

We have a lawyer who happens to be a member and is willing to volunteer her precious time to help! With her help we are also able to clarify some of the points of the by-laws. The advantage of non-profit status is EVERYTHING. You cannot become a NABS affiliate if you do not have non-profit status. Another advantage is that donation□□□ to your organization can be tax-deductible.

I put together most of our by-laws by looking through by-laws from other NABS affiliates and took what I liked. The lawyer put them all together and is fine-tuning them. It sounds really hard, but actually, if you use what has already been done, you will find it won't be difficult.

### **Joan Harmet, Illinois:**

One way to have non-profit status instantly is to be a committee or sub-group of an organization with that status. Some suggestions: a state or local chapter of National Audubon Society, a wildlife club, local Soil and Water Conservation District. You can do your own thing but under the larger umbrella. Illinois has two affiliate groups; one is part of the state National Audubon Society and the other is a county organization, a bluebird group that is a committee of the Soil and Water Conservation District.□□□□

## II. ORGANIZING: NON-PROFIT STATUS

### OBTAINING INDEPENDENT NON-PROFIT STATUS (eg: 501(C)(3))

Because of the differences from state to state, and in Canada, we recommend that you utilize a volunteer attorney or accountant to get this valuable assistance and advice.

### CONSTITUTIONS AND BY-LAWS

These are important to your group for two basic reasons:

- 1) They give evidence of the legal standing of a group as being formally organized and operational.
- 2) They spell out the basic organizational details necessary for the practical functioning of the group (i.e., who presides, who keeps a journal of the group's proceedings, who manages the money, etc.). Constitutions and By-Laws (practically speaking one and the same document) are a basic part of the organizational structure of the group.

The Constitution states the basic principals according to which a group is governed. The By-Laws are the rules to govern. (For example: the Constitution states there will be a treasurer; the By-Laws spell out the duties of the treasurer.)

BY-LAWS OF THE  
OHIO BLUEBIRD SOCIETY, INC.

ARTICLE I: NAME

Section 1.01. This organization shall be known as the Ohio Bluebird Society, Inc.

ARTICLE II: OBJECTIVE

Section 2.01. The Ohio Bluebird Society, Inc. (OBS) was formed in 1987 for the purpose of fostering the return and the perpetuation of the Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) and other native cavity nesting birds in Ohio. To this end OBS will strive for the best methods to use, conserve and create habitat for the protection of such species.

Section 2.02. OBS is not organized, nor shall it be operated for pecuniary gain or profit, nor does it contemplate the distribution of gains, profits or dividends to the members thereof or to private individual, partnership, association, group or corporation. The property, assets, profits and net income of OBS are irrevocably dedicated to charitable purposes and no part of the property, assets, profits or net income of OBS shall ever inure to the benefit of any private individual, partnership, association, group or corporation.

Section 2.03. Upon dissolution, or upon abandonment, the assets of OBS remaining after payment of or provision for all debts and liabilities of OBS, shall be donated to such corporation or corporations, association or associations, fund or funds, or foundation or foundations, having similar objectives and purposes as OBS, as the board of trustees of OBS may designate, provided that none of these assets shall be donated to any organization other than one organized and operated exclusively for charitable purposes as presently set forth in Section 501 (c) (3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code.

Section 2.04. No substantial part of OBS's activities shall consist of carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, nor shall OBS participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing of distributing or statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

ARTICLE III : MEMBERSHIP

Section 3.01. Any person interested in the objective of the OBS and who shall pay dues at such times and intervals and in such classifications as specified by the board of trustees is

Section 4.03 . All voting members' meetings shall be held at such place or places, within or without the State of Ohio, as may from time to time be fixed by the board of trustees.

Section 4.04. Except as otherwise expressly required by law, notice of each voting members' meeting, whether annual or special, shall be given not more than 60 days and not less than seven days before the date specified for the meeting by the president or secretary, or, in case of their refusal or failure to do so, by the person or persons entitled to call such meeting, to each voting member by delivering a written notice of the meeting to the voting member personally or by mailing it to the voting member at the voting member's address as it appears on the records of OBS. Except when expressly required by law, no publication of any notice of a voting members' meeting shall be required. Every notice of a voting members' meeting, besides stating the time and place of the meeting, shall state briefly the purpose of the meeting as may be specified by the person or persons requesting or calling the meeting. Notice of the adjournment of a meeting need not be given if the time and place to which it is adjourned are fixed and announced at such meeting.

§4.05 Quorum: Vote Requirement. Except where the Ohio Non-profit Corporation Law or other applicable law, the articles, or other provisions of these regulations designate or require a different proportion of the voting power of OBS with respect to any matter to be acted upon by voting members, a simple majority of the voting members present at any voting members' meeting shall be sufficient to constitute a quorum for the transaction of all matters of business, and action with respect to each matter properly submitted to the voting members at such meeting may be authorized or taken.

§4.06 Organization. At each voting members' meeting the chair of the meeting shall be the president, or in the absence thereof such person or alternate as may be designated by the board of trustees; or, in the absence of all of the foregoing, a chair chosen by a majority of the voting members present. The secretary of OBS, or, in the secretary's absence any person whom the chair of the meeting appoints for such meeting, shall act as secretary of each voting members' meeting.

§4.07 Order of Business. The order of business at each voting members' meeting shall be as determined by the chair of the meeting, except that the order of business at any meeting may be changed by the vote of a majority of those voting members present. Unless otherwise fixed by the chair or the voting members as provided above, the order of business at each such voting members' meeting shall be as follows:

office prior to the expiration of that trustee's term of office. The last number of trustees fixed as provided herein shall constitute the number of trustees unless and until subsequently so fixed at a different number. Unless and until otherwise so fixed by the articles or by resolution of the voting members, the number of trustees shall be nine.

Section 5.02. The board of trustees shall direct the organization towards its objective.

Section 5.03. Of those trustees first elected to the board of trustees of OBS: three shall serve for one year, three shall serve for two years, and three shall serve for three years.

Section 5.04. A majority of the board of trustees shall constitute a quorum at any board meeting. The act of a majority of the trustees present at any meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the trustees. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of those present may adjourn a meeting until a quorum is obtained. Notice of an adjourned meeting need not be given. The trustees shall act only as a board. Individual trustees shall have no power as such.

Section 5.05. The trustees shall meet at least twice annually; in conjunction with the annual meeting, and during the summer. It may meet at other times at the call of the president.

Section 5.06. The trustees shall determine the rules of procedure for the conduct of the OBS's business. Meetings may be held at a location agreed upon by the trustees when it is possible to assemble a quorum. When a quorum is not possible, all business will be postponed until the next scheduled meeting. Votes of the trustees shall never be held by mail except to implement Section 11.01.

Section 5.07. Every trustee shall furnish the secretary of OBS with an address at which notices of meetings and all other corporate notices may be served on or mailed to him or her. Unless waived before, at, or after the meeting as hereinafter provided, notice of each board meeting shall be given by the president, the secretary, an assistant secretary, or the persons calling such meeting to each trustee in any of the following ways:

- (a) By orally informing the trustee of the meeting in person or by telephone not later than 48 hours before the time of the meeting.
- (b) By personal delivery of written notice of the meeting to the trustee not later than 48 hours before the time of the meeting.
- (c) By the establishment of a regularly occurring time and place of the meeting and giving notice to the trustee as provided in (a) or (b) above of the time and place of any such regularly occurring meeting.

Section 6.03. Any officer may be removed, either with or without cause, at any time, by the board of trustees.

Section 6.04. Any officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the board of trustees, the president, or the secretary. Any such resignation shall take effect at the time specified therein. Unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

Section 6.05. Vacancies among elected officers after installation shall be by appointment of the board of trustees. The appointees shall finish the term of the officers they are replacing.

## ARTICLE VII: DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 7.01. The president shall preside at all meetings of the voting members and of the trustees. The president shall have such other duties and authority as may be assigned or delegated to him or her from time to time by the board of trustees. The president shall from time to time report to the board of trustees all matters within his/her knowledge which the interest of OBS may require to be brought to the notice of the board of trustees. At such time as no executive director is appointed, the president shall also exercise the duties and authority of the executive director as specified in Article VIII.

Section 7.02. Subject to the control of the board of trustees and unless as otherwise determined by the board of trustees, the executive director shall be the chief executive officer of OBS, shall superintend and manage the business of OBS, shall act as the official representative of OBS in all public affairs, and shall coordinate and supervise the work of its other officers. Either personally or through other officers or employees of OBS, the executive director shall perform all functions of a general manager of OBS's business. The executive director may execute and deliver in the name of OBS all deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, and other instruments either when specially authorized by the board of trustees or when required or deemed necessary or advisable by the executive director in the ordinary conduct of OBS's normal business, except in cases where the execution thereof shall be expressly delegated by these regulations or by the board of trustees to some other officer or agent of OBS or shall be required by law or otherwise to be executed by some other officer or agent. The executive director may cause the seal of OBS, if any, to be fixed to any instrument. The executive director shall, in general, perform all duties and have all authority incident to the office of the executive director and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to the executive director by the board of trustees.

Section 7.03. The vice president shall assist the president in the carrying out of his/her duties and shall preside at all meetings in the absence of the president.

## ARTICLE X : COMMITTEES

Section 10.01. Chairpersons for the following standing committees shall be appointed by the president annually and can be changed or rearranged by the board of trustees:

- Education
- Historical
- Membership
- Nominating
- Research
- Newsletter
- Program Chairperson

Section 10.02. Special committees shall be appointed by the president, with approval from the board of trustees, as are needed to accomplish objectives, programs, etc.

Section 10.03. Chairpersons shall appoint their own committee members. Terms of office shall be for one year, or until successors are appointed. Standing committees shall be composed of not less than three members. Each chairperson will keep a written record of the activities of the committee and see that it is passed onto the next chairperson.

Section 10.04. The State of Ohio shall be divided into six districts which shall conform to the wildlife districts set forth by Ohio Division Of Wildlife. A county coordinator will function as a committee chairperson of the geographic area that the coordinator represents, and will promote the objectives of the OBS within his/her counties. Their committee members shall volunteer to promote the OBS's objectives within their county or immediate community.

Section 10.05. A member may serve on a committee any time after payment of the current year's dues.

## ARTICLE XI : NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Section 11.01. Not less than ninety (90) days prior to the date of the annual meeting of the voting members, the president of OBS, with the approval of the board of trustees, shall appoint a nominating committee consisting of five (5) voting members of OBS, at least three of whom shall be trustees, and the chair of which committee shall be a trustee. The nominating committee shall select candidates for election to membership on the board of trustees, such candidates to be elected at the ensuing annual meeting. The nominating committee shall obtain the consent either orally or in writing of all candidates to have their names submitted for election. The nominating committee shall, by a majority vote, submit to

### ARTICLE XIII : AMENDMENTS TO BY-LAWS

Section 13.01. These regulations may be amended, repealed or superseded by new by-laws by a two-thirds majority action of the board of trustees at any meeting, but any such changes made to these regulations by the board of trustees may be amended, repealed or superseded by a majority action of the voting members at any annual or special meeting of the voting members. Any change made to these by-laws by the board of trustees must be set forth in the notice of the next meeting of the voting members stating the items so changed, together with a concise statement of the changes made.

Section 13.01. The By-laws of the OBS may be amended at any annual meeting, by a majority vote of the board of trustees, or a majority vote of the members at the annual meeting.

Section 13.02. Any voting member of OBS may propose amendments to these by-laws to the board of trustees. Proposed amendments must be referenced by Article and Section number, and must contain the complete desired rewording of the section number involved.

Section 13.04. The president shall cause the suggested change to be published and distributed to the membership prior to the annual meeting. He/she shall provide a concise summary of the requested change and may express his opinion on the desirability of the change. He/she shall advise members that they may cast a ballot, expressing their opinion regarding the change, said ballot to be mailed to the recording/corresponding secretary and treated as required by Section 12.02.

Section 13.05. The results of the ballot on the suggested amendment to the Constitution or By-laws shall be published in the next newsletter or journal of the OBS following the annual meeting.

### ARTICLE XIV: CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Section 14.01. If any trustee of OBS has a conflict of or duality of interest that could possibly cause him or her to act in other than the best interest of OBS, that trustee should make disclosure of such conflict to the other trustees. Such trustee should not vote or use his or her personal influence on the matter, but he or she may be counted in determining the quorum for the meeting. The minutes of the meeting should reflect the making of the disclosure, the abstention from voting, and the quorum situation.

Section 14.02. If any officer of OBS has a conflict or duality of interest on any matter before such officer for administrative action, he or she shall report such conflict to the president or, in the case of the president, to the secretary and shall abstain from taking any administrative action on such matter.

## II. ORGANIZING: GENERATING PUBLICITY

*What is the most effective way to publicize our group?*

**Answers:**

**Tena Taylor, Mississippi:**

My advice is talk, talk, talk---and you're starting off the right way. I put ads in newspapers and on radio stations that do public service announcements.

**Dean Sheldon, Ohio:**

I'd make a contact with every Audubon chapter in the state, with every college and university biology department in the area...and every newspaper (daily or otherwise)... and every nature center, park district or arboretum and tell them:

"On (date) we are going to hold an exploratory meeting for those people who may have a possible interest in developing a bluebird organization in our part of the state (region, province). The meeting will be held \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_. As an outgrowth of this initial meeting, and given sufficient interest, we are hoping to develop a steering committee to guide the creation of such an organization."

**Kathy Clark, Pennsylvania:**

I got a phone call from an Audubon member who had heard about us and is now one of our board members. She had a list of people she had been in contact with that wanted to get together to chat about bluebirding. We got together at a local library... and decided to continue.

I think the most important thing is to find your core group, and just an informal gathering works well. Let the people come and enjoy each other's company... and see if they keep returning.

*What is the most effective way to publicize our group?*

Answers (continued):

**Haley Priest, Massachusetts:**

We sent a mailing out to every nature center we could think of and we also asked Jim Williams (the editor of NABS BLUEBIRD) to post a note. We also went on-line to the Bluebird-L listserve.

**David Silla, North Carolina:**

Develop a display for the local library. We are encouraged to try anything that will build an interest in bluebirding.

## II. ORGANIZING: GENERATING PUBLICITY

### INITIAL LARGE PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN

1. Write a local press release featuring a bluebird story on a local trail (pictures are nice!), with contact for more information about your meeting and your group. Invite a reporter out to see the results. Get to know your local editors and reporters. Personal contacts help.
2. You can get state and provincial-wide newspaper addresses from the library. Include radio and TV stations.
3. Ask your local wildlife agency for help with contacts and support.
4. Request other conservation groups to tell their members about your new group and meeting. Write them an item for their newsletter. Ask if you can be a speaker at one of their meetings.
5. Utilize the World Wide Web (internet) and on-line contacts. Post a message on BLUEBIRD-L.
6. Once your affiliate registration is complete, NABS can provide mailing labels of current NABS members in your area for a one-time publicity mailing. Contact NABS headquarters for more information.
7. Send announcements to state and provincial parks, recreation associations, local; and regional park districts, arboretums, and the biology or natural history departments of the state colleges and universities.
8. Place a simple, attention-getting classified ad (BLUEBIRDS, ANYONE? CALL -----) in a farm journal or newspaper have a large rural circulation.
9. Arrange for a display table at a state, provincial, or local fair.
10. Once you have become a NABS affiliate and are supporting the Transcontinental Bluebird Trail (TBT), request the free media action kit from headquarters, complete with tips and sample press releases for use in promoting your TBT program.

**NOTICE OF NEXT MEETING  
OF  
BLUEBIRDS ACROSS NEBRASKA**

**DATE:** Sunday, May 15, 1994

**TIME:** 1:00 Lunch at the Park Restaurant (Optional)  
2:00 Meeting starts

**PLACE:** Mahoney State Park - Kiewit Lodge, The Meadowlark Room  
Location of room will be posted on a marquee in the lobby  
(Same room as last meeting)

**REMINDER:** A park permit is required for entry into the park and may be purchased upon arrival at the park. Daily permits are \$2.50. Annual permits are \$14.00. In addition, \$1.00 will be collected to cover the cost of the meeting room.

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**AGENDA**

1. Approval of minutes of February 27, 1994 meeting.
2. Old Business
  - Status of 501(c)(3) application and Abel grant
  - Report on Raffle
  - Committee Reports
    - Finance - Larry Fletcher
    - Membership - Amy Polivka & Jackie Howe
    - Newsletter - Ann DeVries
    - Promotion - Joyce Schiermann & Barb Rivers
    - Research - Phil Marvin & Dwane Zimmerman
    - Others
3. New Business
  - Reports
    - Norris School project
    - Rowe Sanctuary project
  - Discussion
    - Purchase of research materials
    - Mailing packets to other state groups
    - Sale of bluebird items
    - Honorary membership to Doreen Scriven
    - Date for annual general meeting
    - Dates for Board of Directors meetings
    - Other
  - Exchange of bluebird trail reports & stories
4. Set date and location of next meeting
5. Adjournment

## II. ORGANIZING: BUILDING MEMBERSHIP

1. Create an introductory and informative brochure, using another group's for inspiration. Print on recycled paper. Call NABS for assistance to find such sources of paper.
2. Sponsor workshops for adults or families to build boxes together and hear the bluebird recovery story. Have membership application forms available, maybe a free "gift" (a bluebird postcard?) if they join up.
3. Work through nature centers, nature/book stores, libraries, bird and garden clubs, senior centers, vocational schools with woodworking shops, community and local colleges, or continuing education groups. They may well be glad to be co-sponsor and help get it organized.
4. □□ At the workshop, have slides or a video to show. (NABS has a rental slide show. See the NABS website or enclosed catalog for rental information.) Handouts go over very big - educational materials, NABS brochure, your local brochure, finished nest boxes or kits, predator guards, lists of monitor "dos and don'ts". (See Annual Membership Meeting for more ideas.)
5. Get additional support for materials from local lumber yards, building sites, senior centers or high school shop classes.
6. Establish a county coordinator or local membership help as soon as possible. People often have bluebird questions and want to know the name of a personal contact.
7. NABS maintains a Speakers Bureau of bluebirders willing to volunteer to give bluebird presentations. Contact NABS headquarters to see if there is Speakers Bureau member in your area.



Dear Fellow Bluebirder:

Thank you for joining BLUEBIRDS ACROSS NEBRASKA. We are pleased to have you as a member.

Enclosed you will find: The most recent issue of the BLUEBIRDS ACROSS NEBRASKA newsletter, the Bluebird Basics information booklet, and a Nebraska Bluebird Directory Nest Box Survey Form. Besides making these publications possible, your membership contribution will also help to support these other activities:

1. Nest box and predation research studies
2. Workshops
3. Answers and advice regarding bluebirds and bluebird trails
4. Educational booths and exhibits
5. Development of workshop kits (slides, videos, nesting boxes, etc.) for use by members wishing to present a workshop in their community
6. Future statewide bluebird conferences

We look forward to hearing from you again should you have any questions or comments regarding bluebird monitoring. Again, thank you for joining and we hope you have a fun and productive bluebird season.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Steve Eno".

Steve Eno, President  
BLUEBIRDS ACROSS NEBRASKA

P.S. You can help us spread the word about our new organization by giving the enclosed membership brochures to friends or family who share an interest in bluebirds and the efforts being made to increase their population across Nebraska.

## II. ORGANIZING: COUNTY COORDINATORS

*Would you tell me what a County Coordinator does?*

**Answers:**

**David Silla, North Carolina:**

As a County coordinator, I am representative of the NCBS to my county and “local ambassador” to promote bluebird awareness. It is my job to provide information, training and encouragement that will inspire prospective bluebirders to build and monitor nestboxes. The primary means of achieving this is to send press releases to the local papers, encouraging people to call for advice and information.

**Dean Sheldon, Ohio:**

The Ohio Bluebird Society wanted a multi-county approach to answering “hotline” questions or providing information to bluebirders across the state. So we turned to a single county approach, headed by a county coordinator. There is no one job description because it is handled in different ways depending on the interests/skills of the coordinator.

Virtually all the coordinators act as “hotline” respondents, answering questions and trouble shooting bluebird problems in their area. Others help interested bluebirders start up new trails or offer county bluebird workshops. The OBS provides the coordinator with a complete kit of educational material and they meet annually for a half-day training session. In Ohio, the OBS Vice-President oversees the activities of the coordinators.

## II. ORGANIZING: NEWSLETTERS

### CREATING A NEWSLETTER - ESSENTIAL FOR MAINTAINING CONTACT

1. Find a cost efficient way to get the newsletter printed:
  - contact local vocational high school
  - solicit discount from local copiers or printers
  - use volunteer business connections
2. The newsletter is your main communication with members. Include:
  - membership application in each newsletter
  - names and numbers for all people that can provide information
  - web site addresses for bluebird information
  - articles written by local wildlife persons
3. All affiliates are listed in BLUEBIRD. Put them on your mailing list. It is a fine courtesy, and liable to reap big informational benefits. Put Vice-President of NABS on your mailing list as well (Affiliate chairman). You may use material received in this way; adding, of course, an acknowledgment of from where it came.
4. Here is where your non-profit status, or that of your sponsoring organization, is very important. Learn the bulk-rate rules from your local postmaster.
5. Given our shared conservation interests, please try to print your materials on recycled paper, using the highest percentage of post-consumer waste possible. Call NABS for assistance with sources of such paper.

## II. ORGANIZING: ANNUAL MEETING

*Give me some suggestions about holding an annual meeting.*

**Answers:**

**Dean Sheldon, Ohio:**

If you do not have a productive, interesting, and imaginative annual program, people will lose interest and membership will dwindle. Bluebirders like to TALK SHOP and this is their annual chance to do that. It is fun to see old friends and share experiences. But it is the educational part of it that is at the heart of the concept. Bringing in resource people and changing the location and format from year to year keeps it fresh. Some groups have a banquet as a part of the activity -- others lunch together.

## II. ORGANIZING: NEWSLETTERS

*Any secrets about a really good newsletter? I know we need to have a way to communicate with our members.*

**Answers:**

**Dean Sheldon, Ohio:**

What you really need is someone who knows the printing business and who'd be willing to edit a newsletter. At least, you need someone who knows how to write and edit the work of others. What you REALLY need is a printing company or copy store that will donate the layout/printing of your periodical...all being done for the good will generated. Also go on the Net and "Ask Jeeves " about developing newsletters and see if someone hasn't already established guidelines for this. The newsletter really does a great job of bringing everyone together with a commonality of purpose.

**Haley Priest, Massachusetts:**

You can copy nearly anyone's newsletter formats and also get articles to reprint. All the bluebirders are very kind with helping each other out.

**Joan Harmet, Illinois:**

Since our group is county-wide and part of a larger organization (with a newsletter), we send out a two page letter several times a year -- in the winter to wake everyone up and to announce our March workshop plans, in May with helpful hints and encouragement, and in late August with report forms and reminders to send in their nestbox data.

## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING (WORKSHOP)

1. Advance Planning:

Plan months in advance, to be able to secure location and speakers.

2. Location:

Make it a central location, easy to reach. Later you can move it around the state or province. Look for inexpensive rentals in schools, churches, wildlife centers or parks, or campuses.

3. Speakers:

Balance basic "Bluebirding 101" with technical advice regarding nestboxes, predator guards, etc. Ask naturalists, established successful bluebirders, researchers to give a presentation. Use audio-visual aids as much as possible. Use the NABS Bluebird Slide show or one of several available videos. (Be sure you have looked it all over carefully first.) Major focus should be on bluebirds and/or other cavity nesting species and closely related topics. Contact NABS about a Speaker's Bureau member in your area.

4. Question and Answer Time:

Perhaps try for a panel of experts to help out here.

5. Build in time for coffee breaks and lunch. Socializing strengthens the club bonds, and better yet it let's people have time to talk about their favorite subject, bluebirds.

6. Field Trips:

Do you have time for a field trip? Walk a bluebird trail with the monitor, visit a birdbander and see a demonstration, organize a bird watching walk before the day's sessions begin.

7. Fundraising Product Sales:

On hand and part of the activities should be nestboxes or kits for sale, and other items you may have designed. Many groups design t-shirts, caps, or pins with their logo. Have plenty of copies of the NABS merchandise catalog to pass out; contact NABS for availability.

8. Membership & Educational Materials:

Handouts are very important - people want to take information home. Don't forget to help sell NABS membership as well.

9. Raffles & Auctions:

Some groups have raffles or auctions to raise funds at their meeting.

## NABS Affiliate Start-Up Handbook

### 10. Door prizes:

Have local wildlife posters on hand (from your natural resource people) to give to the children that may be present. Ask local wildlife businesses and your own members to donate small prizes, such as note cards, bird seed, whatever.

### 11. Publicity:

None of this will work without PUBLICITY. Local, state, and provincial-wide press release (see publicity). Post notices in the local area, and ask others to do the same.

### 12. Annual NABS Convention:

Remember that NABS has an annual convention for your members, officers, and friends. Don't miss it!

## II. ORGANIZING: ANNUAL MEETING

*Give me some suggestions about holding an annual meeting.*

### Answers:

#### Dean Sheldon, Ohio:

If you do not have a productive, interesting, and imaginative annual program, people will lose interest and membership will dwindle. Bluebirders like to TALK SHOP and this is their annual chance to do that. It is fun to see old friends and share experiences. But it is the educational part of it that is at the heart of the concept. Bringing in resource people and changing the location and format from year to year keeps it fresh. Some groups have a banquet as a part of the activity -- others lunch together.

# Bluebird Workshop



**Come Join us!!!!**

There will be a workshop on attracting bluebirds and maintaining nest boxes for them.

This workshop will include a video and the opportunity to assemble a pre-cut bluebird nest box to take home and put up. A registration fee of \$6.00 per person covers the programs and all workshop materials, including the pre-cut nest box.

Please come and help bring back our  
**"GEMS OF BLUE"**

Registration deadline is Sept. 10, 2000.

Send Name, address, Phone Number, and a \$6.00 check made payable to:-

IAS/IBP

to--- : Loren Hughes  
1234 Tucker Beach Rd.  
Paris, IL 61944

For additional information, call Mr. Hughes at  
217-463-7175 or E-mail [suziq@comwares.net](mailto:suziq@comwares.net)

**MILLCREEK PARK DISTRICT  
NEAR MARSHALL, IL.  
SATURDAY, SEPT. 16, 2000  
1:00 PM TILL ??????????**

**IN COOPERATION WITH THE  
ILLINOIS AUDUBON AND THE  
ILLINOIS BLUEBIRD PROJECT**





## Annual Meeting Schedule

8:00-9:00 am Registration

9:00-9:15 am President Carol McDaniel's Welcome

9:15-10:00 am Joe O'Halloran, Data Collection and Analysis, "We (BRAW) already doubled our bluebird production. Want to go for more?"

10:00-10:45 am Sumner Mattison, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Endangered Resources Liaison to BRAW and President of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, "Wisconsin Trumpeter Swan Recovery Program"

10:45 am Break

11:00-12:00 Bluebird Panel—Question and Answer Session

12:00-1:00 pm Lunch

1:00-1:15 Election of Officers by the Membership

1:15-2:00 pm Gary Gaard, BRAW Board Member, "Bluebirds in Public Places—Selling Environmental Responsibility."

2:00-3:00 pm Doug LaVasseur, President, North American Bluebird Society

3:00-3:15 Break

3:15-4:00 pm "Tails From the Trails"—Informal Exchange of Bluebird Stories

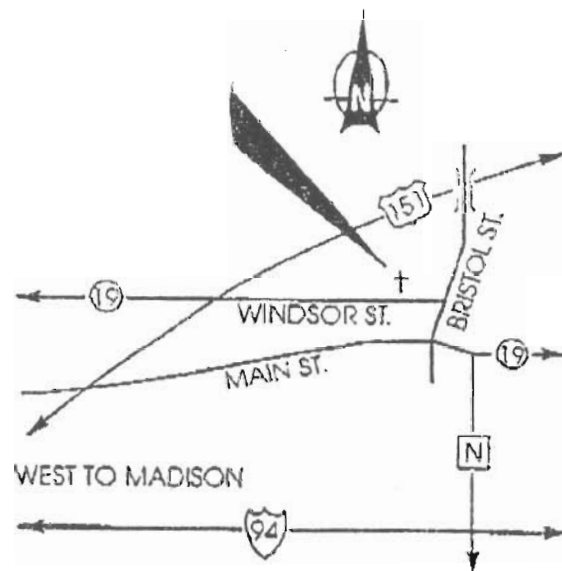
See the Registration Form on the back of the blue subscription form at the center of this issue.

## The Fifteenth Annual BRAW Membership Meeting

Saturday, September 16th, 2000

Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall  
2323 Windsor Street  
Sun Prairie, WI

The only cost is \$6.00 per person for lunch.



### Sun Prairie Hotel/Motel listings

AmeriHost Inn, 105 Business Park Dr. 608-834-9889

Days Inn -Madison N.E., 6311 Rostad Dr, Windsor  
608-846-7473

East Towne Suites, 4801 Annamark, Madison  
608-244-2020

McGovern's Motel, 820 W. Main St. 608-837-7321

Super 8 Motel, 10033 Emerald Terrace 608-837-8889

Woodfield Suites, 5217 E.Terrace Dr., Madison  
608-245-0123

Dane County Parks Office 608-246-3896

Sun Prairie Chamber of Commerce

608-837-4547

### III. RESOURCES: NABS PROGRAMS

*The following provides brief background on several key NABS programs for affiliates to get involved with. Please see the NABS website <[www.nabluebirdsociety.org](http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org)> for more detailed information.*

#### **Transcontinental Bluebird Trail (TBT):**

The NABS-initiated Transcontinental Bluebird Trail (TBT), or TBT, was established to guide the continuing bluebird trail development on the grassroots level and to plan, develop, establish and manage new Adopt-A-Box Sponsored bluebird trails. By working with the direct involvement of affiliate organizations, NABS is able to more effectively guide the development of bluebird trails while looking to NABS affiliated state or provincial organizations for their expertise on local issues. Affiliates are responsible for all trail planning and development for the newly created Adopt-A-Box trails. In addition, these groups will be responsible for the establishment, management and monitoring of the trails under their supervision.

#### **Nest box approval process:**

Recognizing the need for clear standards for bluebird nestbox design as well as a consumer education program to assist bluebirders with the installation of the nestboxes, NABS established a bluebird nest box approval process. Hundreds of retailers, manufacturers, and distributors have already received NABS' approval of the nestboxes they sell or manufacture. Several affiliates have also had their boxes go through the NABS approval process so that these boxes could officially be sold as NABS approved boxes.

The nestbox approval process includes an examination of the design, materials, and dimensions of the boxes to better insure that they help--not hinder--bluebirds. Hole size, thickness of wood, and ventilation are among the factors considered. Additionally, the manufacturers and retailers are expected to help spread the word about sound bluebird conservation practices by including a NABS-created information sheet "Getting Started with Bluebirds" and NABS brochure inside the nestboxes. Approval recognition comes in the form of a label placed on the nest box. Signs are available to retailers wishing to let customers know that such boxes are available in their stores. How to submit bluebird nestboxes for review:

For manufacturers or retailers interested in having their nest boxes reviewed, a sample nest box and/or detailed plans can be sent to Attn.: Steve Eno 2500 West James Dr., Raymond NE 68428 (shipping reference tel.: (402) 783-3011).

The process takes about four weeks. The company or individual will be notified regarding the decision and supporting materials will be sent upon approval. There is no cost for the nestbox review, but retailers and

## NABS Affiliate Start-Up Handbook

manufacturers are expected to make a commitment to bluebird education by agreeing to insert the NABS information sheet and brochure inside each nestbox.

Unless return postage is included, the submitted materials become the property of NABS.

### **Speakers Bureau:**

Join over 350 NABS Speakers Bureau members across the continent who support the bluebird conservation mission of NABS in their community, state or province by giving thousands of talks, workshops, or presentations annually. Many of the Speakers Bureau members are actively involved with their local affiliate groups. Drawing on years of experience in the field or extending their backgrounds in education or park management, these dedicated individuals volunteer to share their knowledge with others hoping to attract bluebirds or start their own bluebird trail. Speakers Bureau members present at a diverse array of venues, including garden shows, bluebird festivals, schools, and bluebird or conservation conferences.

When NABS receives a request at HQ for a speaker in a part of the country where there are Speaker Bureau members, NABS forwards these individual names to the person making the inquiry, often a birding club, nature group or school teacher. These presentations are also great ways to help publicize local affiliate activities.

To join the NABS Speakers' Bureau and request a questionnaire, send your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address to:

Ron Kingston  
Chairman, NABS Speakers Bureau  
3690 Courty Lane  
Charlottesville VA 22903-7636  
E-mail: [kingston@cstone.net](mailto:kingston@cstone.net)

### **NABS Board of Directors:**

NABS is always on the lookout for potential new members for its Board of Directors. Application deadline is in September and terms start right after the June Annual Meeting. The following outlines guidelines for Board Member selection:

#### **CRITERIA/EXPECTATIONS FOR NEW BOARD MEMBERS:**

(Directors 3 yr. term/Officers 1 yr)

\*Attend new Board Member Orientation

\*Attend a minimum of 4 out of 6 meetings over the 3 yr. term

\*Work on at least one project/committee

\*Have internet access/e-mail (A simple computer can be provided by the society, if needed).

**AREAS OF EXPERIENCE USEFUL TO THE BOARD**

- \*Financial Planning
- \*Fund-raising
- \*Service on other boards
- \*Birding industry
- \*Education
- \*Academic training (scientific methodology/statistics)
- \*Partnering organizations (Fish & Wildlife Service/Cornell Lab/etc.)
- \*Legal
- \*Marketing

If someone in your affiliate organization is interested in applying for a Board position, please send a resume/bio to:

Ervin Davis  
Nominating Committee Chair  
604 N. Main  
Charlo, MT 59824  
e-mail: ervdavis@blackfoot.net  
406-644-2740 (phone)

**Bluebird Awards Nominees**

NABS annually makes awards for outstanding contributions to bluebird conservation. If your group (or an individual within your group) wishes to nominate an individual, a group, or someone involved in research for an award, please forward the following information to (award deadline is typically March 1 for awards given out at that year's annual meeting)

Barbara Stinson  
Awards Committee Chair  
25 N. Chestnut Street  
Warrenton, VA 20186  
e-mail: bstinson@webtv.net  
540-347-2476 (phone)

Individual

1. Name, address, county, state and telephone number.
2. Affiliation(s) with bluebird group(s) or other bird or conservation societies with bluebird programs. Describe the individual's involvement and activities.
3. Number of years active with bluebird/cavity nester conservation (minimum of seven years necessary except for Youth Award nominee)
4. If nominee has a trail, describe its location, when established, number of boxes, production, record-keeping techniques, etc.

5. Describe any ways in which nominee has publicized or aided bluebird/cavity-nester conservation. Examples might include (but not limited to) speaking before groups; working with young people; obtaining publicity in newspapers, radio or television; working at nature centers, workshops or fairs' inventing or improving box or trap designs; designing and producing publications; plantings, etc.
6. Anything else you feel is relevant to understanding the outstanding commitment to bluebird/cavity-nester conservation of the nominee.
7. NABS encourages the recognition of young people who are active in the bluebird/cavity-nester conservation efforts.

#### Group

1. Complete name, address, location, current president or other officer or contact (for governmental agency).
2. Specific information about bluebird program: printed information (enclose samples), workshops, number of boxes, increase in bluebird production, methods of recruiting monitors, successful fledglings, etc. (Program must have been in place for a minimum of five years).

#### Research

1. Name, address, telephone number and academic affiliation.
2. Briefly summarize research completed (and in progress) involving bluebirds/cavity nesters.
3. Bibliographic citations of articles published about bluebirds or other North American cavity nesters (copies of articles or abstracts are desirable).

#### **Research Grants**

NABS offers annual research grants to students, professionals and individuals engaged in avian cavity-nesting species research. Projects are supported on a one year basis as determined by availability of funds. Three grant categories totaling up to \$7,000 are available annually consisting of varying amounts. Multiple awards may be designated for one or all of the grant categories depending on the quality of the proposals. Generally grants of up to \$1,000 are awarded and include:

**STUDENT RESEARCH GRANT** - Available to a full-time college or university student for a research project focused on any North American avian cavity-nesting species.

## NABS Affiliate Start-Up Handbook

**BLUEBIRD RESEARCH GRANT** - Available to student, professional and individual researchers for a research project focused on any of the three species of bluebird from the genus *Sialia*.

**GENERAL RESEARCH GRANT** - Available to student, professional and individual researchers for a research project focused on any North American cavity-nesting bird species.

### Purpose of Grants

NABS Research Grants were developed to promote research on cavity-nesting birds with an emphasis on the bluebird genus *Sialia*. Grants are provided to defray the expenses incurred in the course of research. Grants may cover travel, supplies and equipment, but shall not include salaries or overhead charges to institutions or agencies.

### Administration of Grants

The research grants are administered by the NABS Research Committee. The Research Committee is selected by the NABS President during the annual meeting and is confirmed by the NABS Board of Directors. The Research Committee is then formed by the Research Chairman and consists of four to six members. The committee members review all application proposals for research grants and make their recommendation to the committee chairman.

Committee members numerically rate each proposal on a point scale determined by a maximum value, parenthesis below, for each category with the following criteria (55 representing the highest score):

1. Project design (25)
2. Quality of presentation (15)
3. Relevance of topic (10)
4. Ability of the applicant (5)

Individual ratings of the committee are combined by the committee chairman who selects the grantees for each category with the highest scores. If by the Research Committee standards no worthwhile application proposals are received for any or all grant categories, no grant or grants will be awarded that year.

### Application Procedures

Applications should be mailed directly to the Research Committee Chairman (address at end). Applicants must complete a Research Grant Application Summary providing all pertinent information including the designation of which grant or grants are being applied for. Beyond this, no formal application forms are provided. Instead we request a brief proposal that should include the following:

1. Title: A brief and descriptive designation of your project.
2. Summary: One page or less review

3. Justification: A concise statement of the importance of the problem and the ways in which the anticipated results of the project may contribute to bluebird or other cavity-nesting bird conservation.
4. Objectives: A concise statement of the specific objectives of your project.
5. Background: A brief summary or discussion covering previous research on the problem, both yours and that of other investigators, the status of your current project, and related projects that may bear on your own.
6. Methodology: An explanation of just how you plan to carry out your project. Outline the stages of your project, where the work will be done, and what facilities and equipment are available.
7. Schedule: Time period required to complete the study.
8. Budget: A detailed outline of all anticipated costs.
9. Institutions: The college, university, agency or other affiliation.
10. Cooperation: What kind of approvals or work permits are necessary for you to perform the work? Have you obtained these approvals and permits?
11. Resume/vita: describing your qualifications to conduct the proposed research

Care should be taken to keep the proposal as brief and concise as possible. Past NABS grant recipients should include a summary of work done with NABS funding. Individuals receiving grants from NABS are required to submit annual progress reports to the Research Committee and an article for publication in BLUEBIRD, formerly SIALIA. Individuals failing to do so may be excluded from consideration for further grants.

#### Acceptance Procedures

The Research Chairman will notify all committee members of successful applicants. All applicants will be notified by mail of winning applicants with titles of proposed studies. An announcement of Research Grants selection will be published in the NABS journal Bluebird.

#### Stipulations

Successful applicants will be required to sign a Grant Acceptance Form prior to the award of a grant. The acceptance includes the following stipulations:

1. An itemized budget with a breakdown of expenditures must be submitted to the Research Chairman by February 15th of the first year after funding and each additional year until the funding is exhausted or the study is complete.
2. A report of progress and accomplishments during the past year after funding must be submitted to the Research Committee February 15th of each year until the study is complete. During the first year of research ten slides will be submitted with the progress report depicting various aspects of your research and a slide of yourself. A final report will be submitted by February 15th of the year after completion.

## NABS Affiliate Start-Up Handbook

3. One paper about the project must be submitted to the NABS journal BLUEBIRD, formerly SIALIA. It should be sent directly to the editor.
4. Proper credit for financial support by NABS shall be given in all publications using information obtained from Society funding.
5. A copy of each publication or report resulting from research aided by NABS will be sent to the Research Committee Chairman.
6. Any portion of the grant which is not used for the intended research shall be returned to NABS, unless the Research Committee consents to some other disposition.
7. The grantee understands that the award of a research grant does not constitute any employment by or formal affiliation with NABS. The Research Committee may elect to waive or modify any or all of these stipulations.

### Deadline

Deadline for submission of application material is December 1. Funding awards will be announced by January 15.

Submit five paper copies of your research proposal/vita and summary sheet to:

Kevin L. Berner  
Research Committee Chairman, NABS  
State University of New York  
Cobleskill, NY 12043

For further information contact Kevin at the following e-mail address:  
bernerkl@cobleskill.edu

## I. FIRST STEPS: START-UP LOG OF A NEW BLUEBIRD GROUP

*The following notes are shared by Tena Taylor in Mississippi. This is her step-by step log how they recently organized an affiliate group there.*

1. I found another person interested in forming a state organization. (Actually, I found two!)
2. Talked, talked, talked - to anybody that would listen. Kept a list of people who expressed interest.
3. Contacted NABS for start-up package. (A wealth of information.)
4. Contacted Secretary of State for the State of Mississippi to get info on nonprofit organizations.
5. Asked NABS to notify Mississippi members of our efforts and posted on Bluebird-L.
6. My New Year's Resolution was to have that first meeting in January, 2000. We had talked to a Park Ranger at Grenada Lake and he had offered us the conference room there, at no charge. Reserved it for 1/22/00. We chose this date because it was on a Saturday afternoon and we thought people would be more able to come... had it from 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm, giving people time to get there that lived in other towns, and to get home before too late.
7. Developed a list of newspapers and radio stations for public service announcements.
8. Copied handouts from NABS. Contacted Cornell U. to send handouts. Gathered up all magazines and publications I had for display purposes.
9. Sent announcement to all newspapers in a 100 mile radius. (This was a mistake - it should have gone state-wide.)
10. Contacted area newspapers to do a feature story, two positive replies.
11. Sent Public Service announcement to area radio stations.
12. One week before the meeting I mailed an announcement to those people who had expressed interest.
13. Asked a long-time bluebirder, Dr. Tom Holden, to give us a presentation on getting our nest boxes ready for the 2000 nesting season.

(Dr. Holden became our charter president.) Asked the Park Ranger to give a brief presentation on the huge trail at Grenada Lake.

14. The NABS packet contained by-laws from other state organizations. I diligently picked out parts of them and put together a draft of by-laws that I thought would be relevant to our state.

15. Checked out facilities and bought coffee, cookies, soft drinks, and pretzels for refreshments.

16. Contacted two local feed stores and one interested builder to donate door prizes. Results: 25 lb. sack of Black Oil Sunflower Seeds and two nest boxes. We also gave a year's membership as a door prize.

17. Prepared agenda and registration sheet. Prayed that someone would show up!

18. Nervously went to the meeting. As we turned into the Ranger Station Drive, I said to my husband, "What if nobody comes?"

19. 29 people appeared! WOW! Then the work really started!

-The assembled group agreed to the name of MISSISSIPPI BLUEBIRDS.

- They agreed to meet quarterly - January, April, July and October, with our annual meeting in January.

-Set dues at \$7.50 individual, \$15.00 family.

-After going over the draft by-laws almost word for word (and getting lots of feedback and discussion from those present who were "in the know", we adopted by-laws as amended.

-By unanimous vote, officers were elected as per by-laws.

(President, Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer and two Directors. These first officers were on an almost volunteer basis with a little prodding.

- On motion and acceptance, we agreed to affiliate with NABS, and I designated liaison.

- Ranger Kevin May gave us a really good presentation on bluebird habitat and the Grenada Lake Trail.

-Dr. Tom Holden presented an interesting program with a general round-table discussion on selecting nest boxes, monitoring, etc.

NOTE: Tena followed up this meeting by opening a checking account, mailing information to all interested people on her list, and now has over 43 members! The Vice-President has a copier that they use. She has designed a logo, a newsletter, and hopes to build a web site soon. The group supports the Transcontinental Bluebird Trail by managing the 108-box Adopt-A-Box sponsored trail (number 16) at Grenada Lake.

### III. RESOURCES: NABS MATERIALS/HANDOUTS FOR PHOTOCOPYING

Feel free to photo-copy any of the attached NABS documents for your newsletters and events. Text versions of these documents are available on the NABS website: [www.nabluebirdsociety.org](http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org)

### III. RESOURCES: KEY CONTACT INFO & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

#### CONTACT NAMES:

Joan Harmet  
E-mail: [joandick@aeroinc.net](mailto:joandick@aeroinc.net)  
NABS Vice-President and Affiliate Chairman

Lisa Bulick  
E-mail: [lisabulick@nabluebirdsociety.org](mailto:lisabulick@nabluebirdsociety.org)  
NABS Executive Director

Special thanks for contributions made to this handbook to:

Kathy Clark, Pennsylvania  
Bill Davis, Ohio  
Steve Eno, Nebraska  
Joan Harmet, Illinois  
Ray Harris, Alberta, Canada  
Haley Priest, Massachusetts  
Dorene Scriven, Minnesota  
Dean Sheldon, Ohio  
David Silla, North Carolina  
Tena Taylor, Mississippi

This booklet and its development has been made by the generous support and underwriting from the JoDavies Co., IL Natural Area Guardians, which by hosting the NABS Convention in 2000 and raising funds, has been able to support this and other projects and programs for both their group and the North American Bluebird Society.

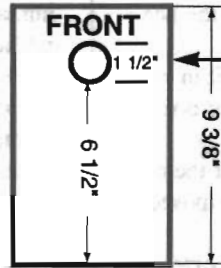
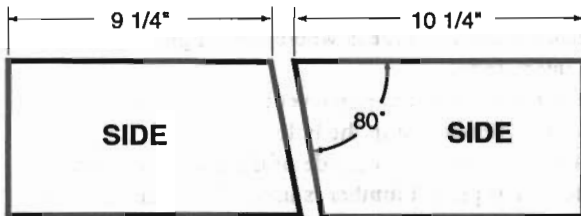
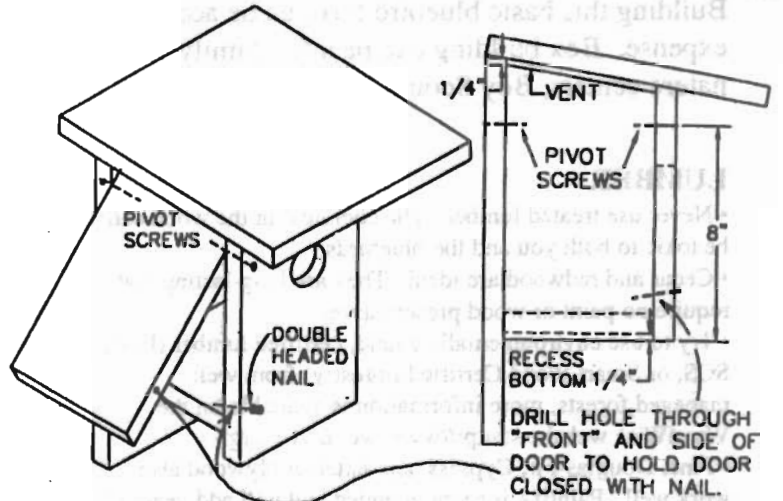
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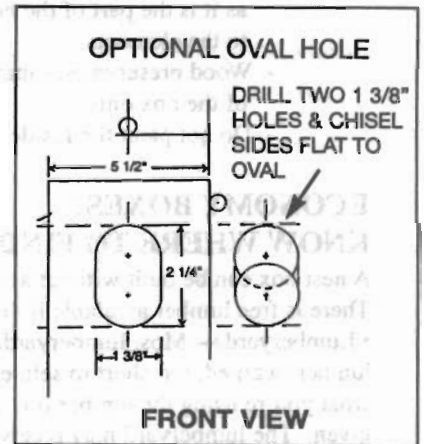
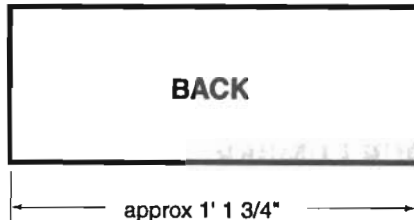
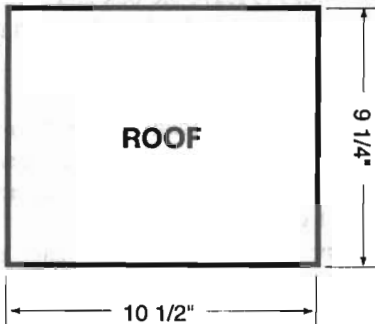
# The North American Bluebird Society Eastern/Western Bluebird Nest Box

## MATERIALS LIST

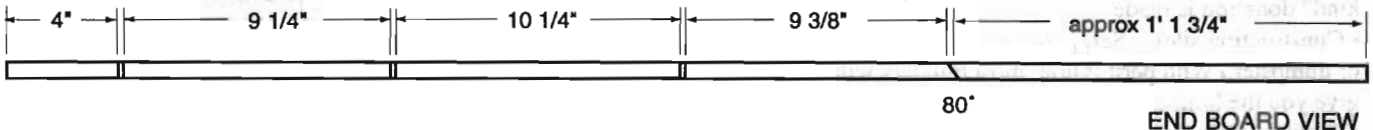
- STANDARD BOARD 1" x 6" - 4 FEET LONG
- STANDARD BOARD 1" x 10" - 10 1/2" LONG
- 1 3/4" GALVANIZED NAILS OR SCREWS - APPROX. 20
- 1 3/4" GALVANIZED SCREW FOR PIVOT POINT - 2
- DOUBLE HEADED NAIL FOR HOLDING DOOR CLOSED - 1



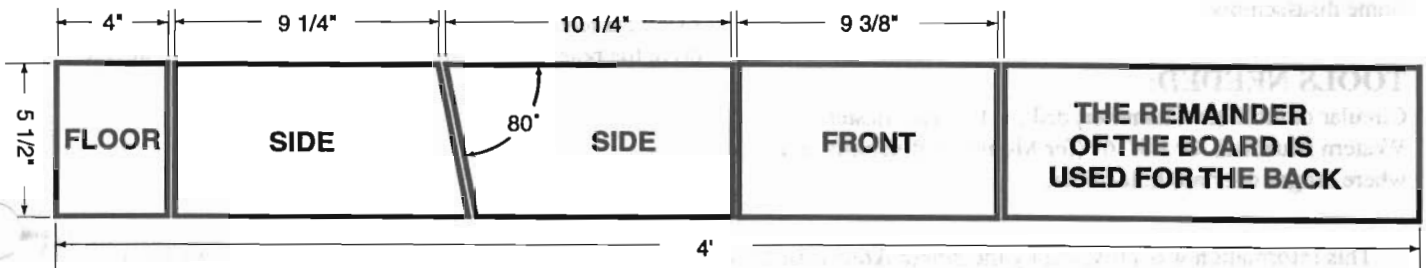
**SPECIAL NOTE: A 1 9/16" HOLE SHOULD BE USED WHERE THE RANGES FOR EASTERN OR WESTERN BLUEBIRDS OVERLAP WITH THE MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRDS.**



START CUTTING AT THE "FLOOR" AND WORK TOWARDS THE "BACK" SINCE THE "BACK" DIMENSION IS THE LEAST CRITICAL

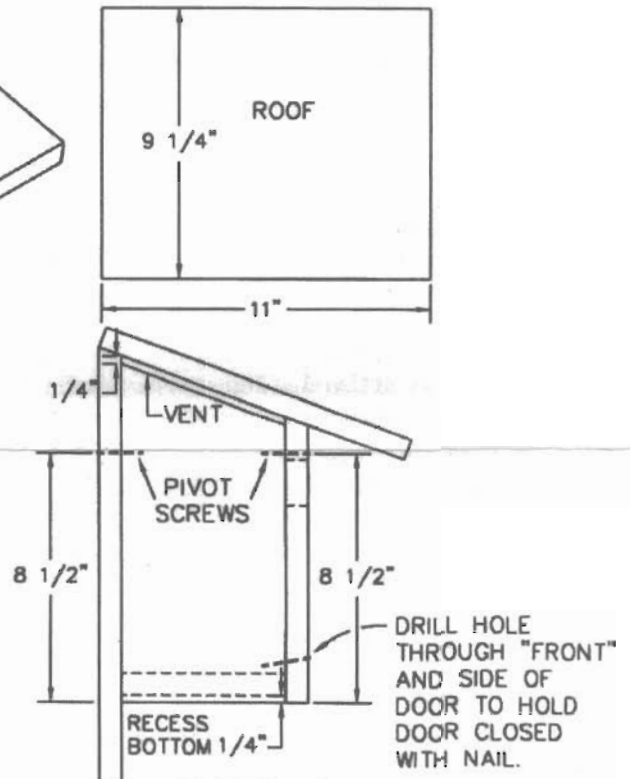
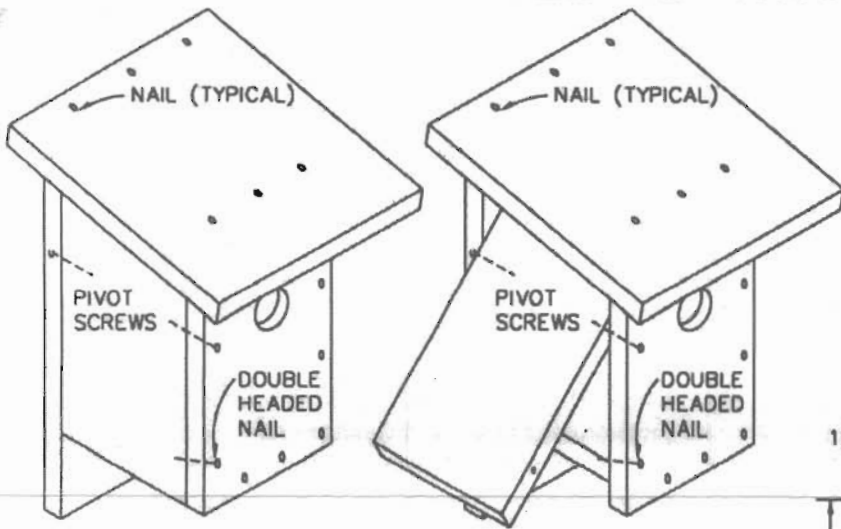


END BOARD VIEW



For membership information, send a note and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: North American Bluebird Society, P.O. Box 74, Darlington, WI 53530-0074. For bluebirding information, visit the NABS website at <<http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org/>>

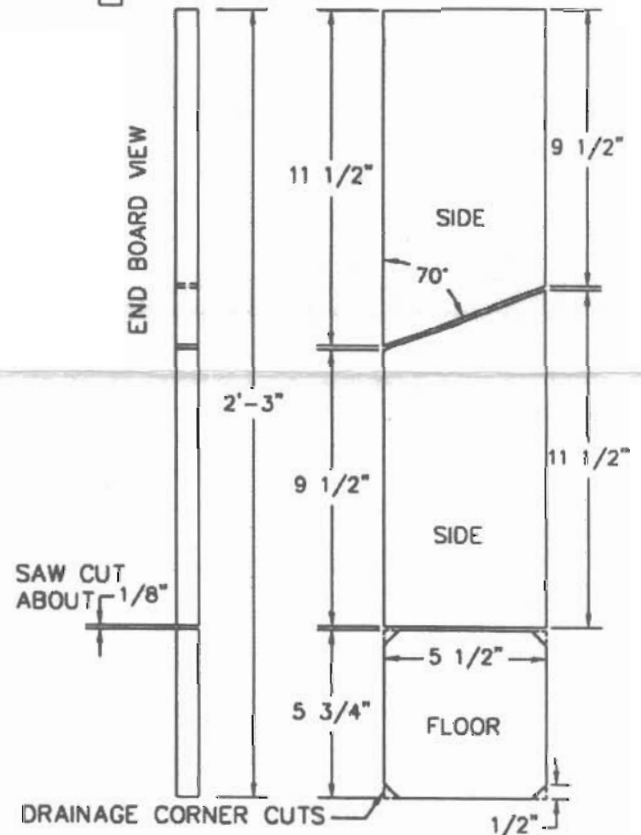
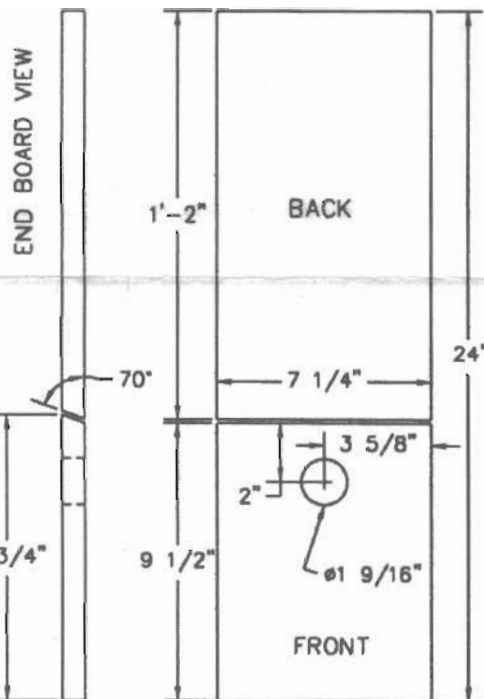
# MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD NEST BOX (Western/Eastern Bluebird also where ranges overlap.)



## MATERIALS LIST

- STANDARD BOARD 1" X 6" NOMINAL - 27" LONG (ACTUAL SIZE 3/4" X 5 1/2")
- STANDARD BOARD 1" X 8" NOMINAL - 24" LONG (ACTUAL SIZE 3/4" X 7 1/4")
- STANDARD BOARD 1" X 10" NOMINAL - 11" LONG (ACTUAL SIZE 3/4" X 9 1/4")
- HOLE CUTTER 1 9/16" DIAMETER
- 1 3/4" GALVANIZED NAILS OR SCREWS - APPROX. 20
- 1 3/4" GALVANIZED SCREW FOR PIVOT POINT - 2
- DOUBLE HEADED NAIL FOR HOLDING DOOR CLOSED - 1

BELOW ENTRANCE ON BOTH SIDES MAKE SCRATCHES INTO WOOD WITH NAIL FOR CLIMBING TRACTION.



For membership information, send a note and a self addressed stamped envelope to: North American Bluebird Society, P.O. Box 74, Darlington, WI 53530-0074. For questions send e-mail to [nabluebird@aol.com](mailto:nabluebird@aol.com) or visit NABS' website at <http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org/>.



## Fact Sheet: Getting Started with Bluebirds

Over the years, land has been cleared for housing and industrial developments, shopping malls, highways, and cropland; many old trees have been cut down for firewood. Wooden fence posts that provided nesting cavities have now been replaced with metal posts. With modernization, the supply of natural nesting cavities for bluebirds and other native cavity nesters has been greatly reduced.

Compounding the problem of habitat loss has been the introduction into North America of two imported species - the House Sparrow and the European Starling. Both starlings and sparrows are cavity nesters, and both are very aggressive. House Sparrows are small enough to enter any hole that a bluebird can, and are so aggressive that they will chase away the more timid bluebird. Starlings can be excluded from bluebird boxes by using the correct size entrance hole, but will out-compete bluebirds for woodpecker holes and other natural nesting cavities.

During the summer, bluebirds feed mainly on insects. In the winter, bluebirds depend on many kinds of wild berries for their food supply. However, the supply of wild berries has also decreased over the years. The few berries that remain are often stripped quickly by large flocks of starlings.

Even though the bluebird population has greatly decreased, the future can still be promising for them. The most important step we can take to help bring back the bluebird is to provide nesting sites by setting out a bluebird box or starting a bluebird trail. A bluebird trail is a series of bluebird boxes placed along a prescribed route. In areas where nesting boxes have been put up in suitable habitat, bluebird populations are increasing. Bluebirding is a great environmental, hands-on project that people of all ages can enjoy. By following the instructions below, chances are good that you will be able to attract and enjoy bluebirds.

### THE BLUEBIRD NESTING BOX

- A good bluebird box should be well ventilated, watertight, have drainage holes, be easy to monitor, and easy to clean.
- Cedar and redwood are ideal, although plywood and other types of wood can be used. Boxes can be painted or stained if a light color is used.
- Treated lumber should not be used because of its toxic content.
- A bluebird box should never have a perch. Sparrows and wrens are attracted to perches.
- Boxes for Eastern Bluebirds should have a round entrance hole of 1 1/2"; Mountain Bluebirds need an entrance hole of 1 9/16"; Western Bluebirds will use a 1 1/2" hole, but a 1 9/16" hole should be used where the Western & Mountain Bluebird ranges overlap.
- Oval holes should measure 1 3/8" x 2 1/4" for the Eastern Bluebird.

### MOUNTING THE BLUEBIRD NESTING BOX

- Smooth round pipe is probably the best and simplest mounting system to use -- 3/4" electrical conduit works well, but any smooth scrap round pipe will also work.
- Coating the pole with grease will also help to keep predators off the box.
- Hardware cloth placed under a box helps to prevent snake predation.
- Unless your trail is in an area where raccoons are not present, avoid mounting bluebird boxes on a fence line or on trees. Raccoons are known to walk fence lines and may find your boxes.

### SETTING UP A BLUEBIRD TRAIL

- Habitat is the key factor to consider when setting up a bluebird trail. Open rural country with scattered trees and low or sparse ground cover is best. Suitable habitat should include perch sites, such as a fence line, wires, or tree branches where bluebirds may perch to search for food. Look for these when you are selecting a location for your nesting boxes. If bluebirds do not like the habitat, they probably will not use your boxes.
- Pastureland, acreage's, parks away from human traffic, and mowed areas such as cemeteries, golf courses are all good locations for a bluebird trail (provided pesticides are not used).



## Fact Sheet: Monitoring Bluebird Nest Boxes

### WHY MONITOR YOUR NEST BOX?

It is very important that bluebird nest boxes be actively monitored (checked) at least once a week. Doing so increases the chances of success for bluebirds using the box and also is valuable for determining population trends. A box that is not monitored may be more harmful than helpful to bluebirds. All bluebird boxes should be built so that they can be opened either from the side, front, or top.

Monitoring nest boxes will alert you to problems the birds may be having with blowfly parasitism. Uncontrolled, the larvae of this species may weaken or possibly even kill the nestling bluebirds. If you identify larvae in the nest, you should replace all the nest material with dried lawn clippings in a shape similar to that of the original nest. This will increase the chance that the chicks will survive. Many bluebird enthusiasts replace all nests holding chicks periodically even before the blowfly larvae are visible. You should also replace any nest with young birds that has been saturated following rainfall. This is especially important during cold periods.

Being aware of what species is using the box is also beneficial. Bluebird societies would like you to monitor and report all species using your nest boxes, not just bluebirds. Species such as bluebirds, tree swallows, house wrens, and chickadees are all native and beneficial birds. Mail survey forms submitted at the end of the nesting season allow the identification of population trends in each species.

House (English) sparrows and European starlings are non-native species introduced from Europe and their aggressive seizure of cavity nest sites is the main reason for the rarity of bluebirds today. Starlings nest in many of the natural nest sites but can be excluded from nest boxes by only using 1/2 or 1 9/16 inch entrance holes. House sparrows can readily enter bluebird nest boxes and frequently kill bluebirds, destroy their eggs, or drive them from their nests. At no time should they be allowed to successfully nest in bluebird boxes. Doing so will increase the house sparrow population and further reduce the number of the bluebirds.

After any nesting effort has ended, either due to nest failure or successful fledging of the young, the nest should be removed from the box. If a bluebird nest was successful, re-nesting in the same box will be encouraged if the first nest is removed. This should be done when all chicks have left the nest.

### WHAT TO MONITOR

Whenever you monitor a box you should determine what species is using it by examining the nesting material and eggs. You should record the date, and the number of eggs or young that you have observed. Knowing when the eggs were laid will help you determine if they are infertile, or when they should hatch and when the young would be expected to leave the nest. In the case of bluebirds, the eggs are laid one each day until the entire clutch is complete. Incubation will then begin and will last approximately 13-14 days. After hatching the chicks will remain in the nest for 17-18 days. Your monitoring should be limited to viewing from a distance after the 13th day or the chicks might fly from the box prematurely.

# BLUEBIRD NESTBOX SPECIFICATIONS

Fact sheet provided by the North American Bluebird Society.  
[www.nabluebirdsociety.org](http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org)



## Materials:

- 3/4-inch wooden boards or PVC pipe with attachable wooden roofs are commonly used for bluebird boxes. Peterson boxes often use 2" x 4" boards.
- do not use pressure treated wood because of its toxic compounds
- paper milk carton style or corrugated cardboard boxes are unacceptable
- woods such as redwood and cedar are long-lasting even when left natural
- try to use more environmentally sound certified lumber (FSC, SmartWood) from sustainably managed forests; see <[www.foreststewardship.org](http://www.foreststewardship.org)>.
- pine, douglas-fir, cypress, and exterior plywood are also acceptable

## Entry Holes:

- Eastern Bluebirds use 1-1/2-inch round holes, 1-3/8-inch x 2-1/4-inch vertical oval holes, or 1-1/8-inch horizontal slot entrances
- Mountain Bluebirds use 1-9/16-inch round openings
- where Mountain Bluebird range overlaps with the other two species, use 1-9/16-inch round openings
- oval holes should only be used in Eastern Bluebird boxes with moderate to small dimensioned boxes to reduce the possibility of starling use

## Floor Sizes:

- Eastern Bluebirds: floors in wooden boxes should be approximately 4" x 4" or 5" x 5". Peterson style boxes are somewhat smaller. Floors of circular boxes (such as PVC pipe) should be approximately 4" in diameter.
- Western or Mountain Bluebirds: floors in wooden boxes should be 5" x 5" to accommodate larger clutch sizes

## Access:

- all bluebird nestboxes must open readily from the side, front, or top to facilitate box monitoring and cleaning
- a screw or angled nail in a pre-drilled hole should be provided to ensure that predators (cats or raccoons) can not readily open the nestbox
- a screw or angled nail in a pre-drilled hole should be provided to ensure that predators (raccoons or cats) can not readily open the nestbox

## Colors:

- natural wood is acceptable
- if painted or stained, use light colors to minimize having the box overheat during warm weather in areas where overheating is likely

## Water-resistance & Drainage:

- drainage holes must be provided in the box bottom to allow any rain entering the box to drain from the box and to provide air circulation to keep nesting material dry
- the box should be watertight
- the roof should provide sufficient overhang beyond box entrance or vent holes to minimize the possibility of rain entering these openings



## Fact Sheet: Feeding Mealworms

Mealworms are not really worms at all but are the larval form of the darkling beetle (*Tenebrio molitor*). They are clean, easy to raise, do not carry human diseases and most importantly are a nutritious food supplement readily accepted by bluebirds.

### WHY FEED MEALWORMS TO BLUEBIRDS?

They will:

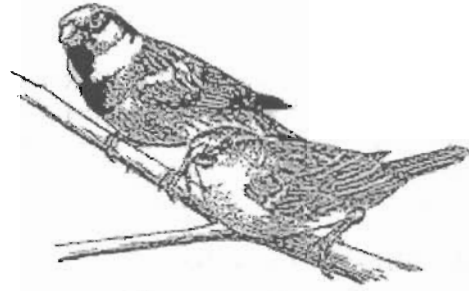
- Entice them to use a nest box
- Assist the incubating female to find food quickly so she does not have to leave her eggs for long periods of time
- Act as supplementary food for nestlings if food becomes scarce when weather conditions prevent the parents from finding insects
- Help them survive during spells of severe winter weather

### CARE OF MEALWORMS:

Mealworms are easy to raise, requiring only a grain source such as wheat bran, cornmeal, chicken mash or oatmeal. Add a piece of potato, apple or banana peel on a piece of paper towel or cardboard about once a week to provide moisture. Avoid letting the meal itself become too moist. Mealworms can be kept in a shallow plastic container with a capacity of 2 - 5 gallons, which is covered with a lid that provides good air circulation (a cover of screen or perforated metal can be used). Keep the container in the dark, because as the name darkling beetle implies, they prefer darkness. If you plan on raising mealworms, a piece of cloth can be placed over a portion of the grain to provide a surface on which the adult beetles can lay their eggs. The mealworms will burrow below the surface of the grain and undergo a series of molts. Their development is most rapid at the optimum temperature of 80° F. After the last molt, the larvae come to the surface and metamorphose into naked white pupae for 6 - 18 days and then into beetles. Adult beetles have wings but rarely fly. They lay their eggs 9 - 20 days after emergence and then die. Egg incubation is 4-19 days. Eventually, waste products or "frass" will build up and a slight odor of ammonia will be detected. At this time, the grain needs to be sifted through to separate the worms and adult beetles from the old grain; the container washed and new grain added. Dry cat food can be added to the grain to enhance the protein value of the mealworms for the bluebirds. Mealworm metabolism can be slowed down by keeping them in the refrigerator for a few weeks, up to several months (remove the vegetable matter first).

### FEEDING MEALWORMS TO BLUEBIRDS:

Perhaps the biggest challenge is to try to attract bluebirds to your yard with mealworms. If you already have bluebirds and just want to ensure they stay, mealworms can be an effective enticement. If you have never or rarely seen a bluebird in your yard, chances are they will not show up because you have put out mealworms. What will happen is that other birds in your yard will find them and quickly consume the entire offering. So unless you have bluebirds around, it could be a costly and unrewarding venture to offer



## Fact Sheet: House Sparrow Control

The North American Bluebird Society is providing this information on House Sparrow control to let you know that there are options available when dealing with sparrow problems. Given the widespread problems caused by House Sparrows, NABS advises that it is the responsibility of every nest box trail operator to ensure that no House Sparrows fledge from their boxes. It is better to not have a nest box than to have one that fledges sparrows.

House Sparrows are the most abundant songbirds in North America and the most widely distributed birds on the planet. House Sparrows are not actually sparrows, but are Old World Weaver Finches, a family of birds noted for their ingenious nest-building abilities.

### HISTORY

House Sparrows were introduced into North America from England in the 1850s on the mistaken premise that they would help reduce crop insect pests. At first, the new immigrants welcomed this little bird of their homeland. Within 25 years, however, they realized the seriousness of their mistake: the House Sparrow population had increased at an explosive and alarming rate, and the birds were causing extensive damage to crops and fruit trees. They were also taking over the nesting sites of native cavity-nesting birds.

### LIFE AND HABITS

The breeding season for House Sparrows begins early in the spring or even in midwinter, and each pair may produce up to four broods a season. The male House Sparrow's bond with his nest site is stronger than his bond with a mate he may lose a mate, but he won't give up his nest site. Although they usually prefer to nest in a cavity, House Sparrows will settle for any nook or cranny they can find. They will also occasionally nest in coniferous trees and in the nests of Cliff Swallows and Northern Orioles.

The male constructs a bulky, dome-shaped nest of coarse grasses, weeds, hair, and feathers. The female lays three to five white/brown speckled eggs and incubates for 11-14 days. The young sparrows fledge after 14-16 days. They are not migratory, but flocks of birds move about within a 1.5-2mi. area. House Sparrows are primarily seed-eaters, although they eat some insects during the summer. They will also dine on garbage. Feedlots and farmsteads are particularly attractive to sparrows as they provide an abundant source of food, as well as shelter and plenty of nesting sites.

### SPARROW CONTROL ON A BLUEBIRD TRAIL

Control of sparrows on a bluebird trail can be either **PASSIVE** (taking preventative measure when placing the box to deter sparrow use) or **AGGRESSIVE** (taking measures after the box is in place and sparrows are using it).

## PASSIVE CONTROL

### 1. BOX LOCATION

Box location is the most crucial factor in controlling sparrows on a bluebird trail. The House Sparrow's Latin name, *Passer domesticus*, aptly describes its preferred nesting habits - around houses. Avoid placing boxes near farmsteads, feedlots, barns, old out-buildings, etc. Boxes placed in or around villages, towns or cities will likely be claimed by House Sparrows. If sparrows do take up residence, one option is to relocate the box to a site farther away from human occupation.

Sparrows may avoid a nesting site if the box is placed too low to the ground (3 to 5 feet). However, since boxes placed this low run the risk of being predated by raccoons, cats, or other climbing predators this is a feasible option where there are no climbing predators.

### 2. PLUGGING THE ENTRANCE HOLE

Plugging the entrance hole of a box taken over by sparrows will prevent the male from using that specific box, and might even encourage him to move elsewhere. Some bluebird trail operators plug the entrance hole at the end of the nesting season and leave it plugged until the bluebirds arrive in the spring. This will prevent sparrows from roosting in the box during the winter, and then staking an early claim in the spring.

### 3. USE OF GILBERTSON PVC BOXES

Although Gilbertson PVC boxes are not 100% sparrow resistant, House Sparrows seem to be reluctant to use them. If PVC boxes are paired with a wooden box, sparrows tend to choose the wooden box. If you are trying to attract bluebirds in an area where you suspect sparrow problems, it might be wise to start off with the PVC box.