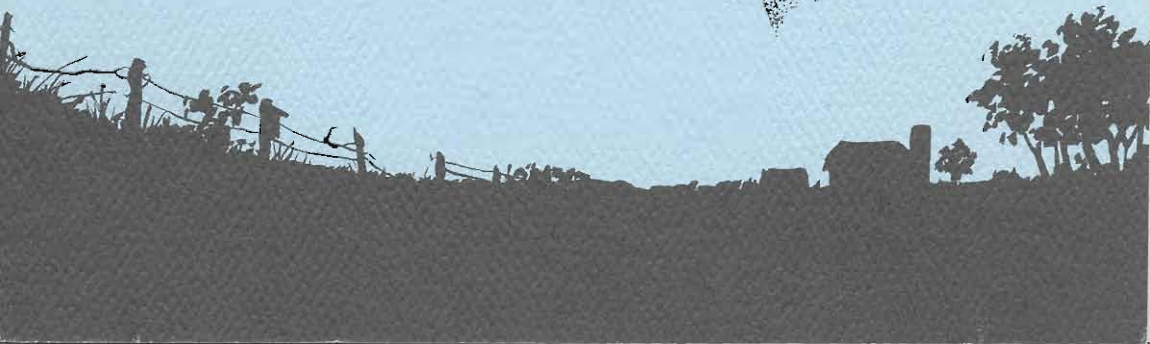
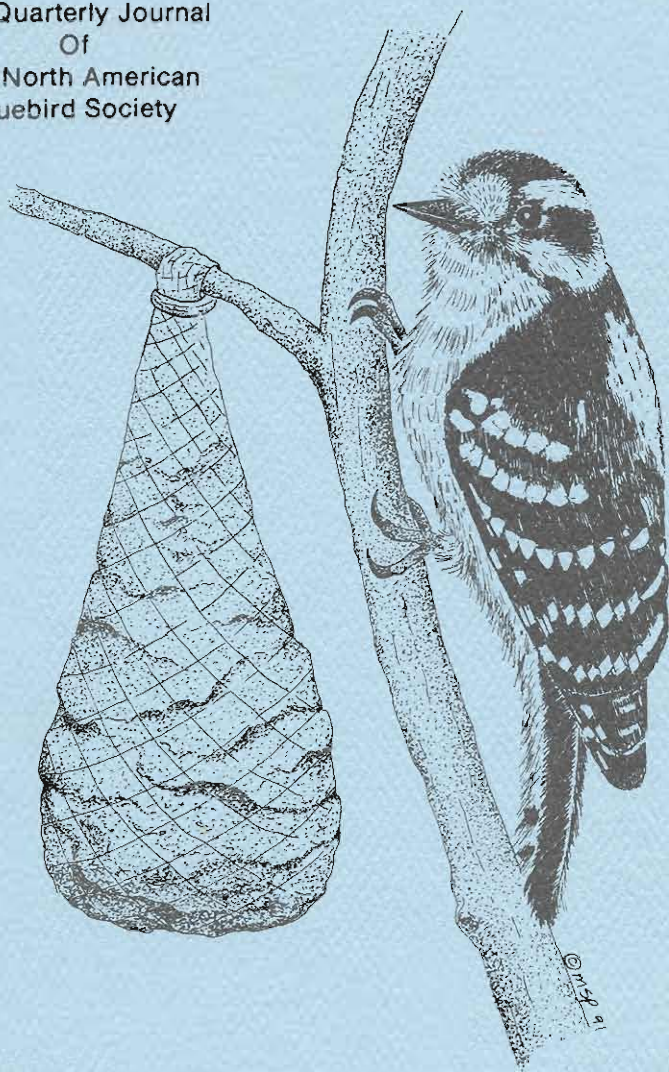


Sialia

Volume 14, Number 1
Winter 1992
Pages 1-40

The Quarterly Journal
Of
The North American
Bluebird Society



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Sialia means bluebirds. Hence the title of this journal. Technically, *sialia* is the Latinized, neuter plural version of the Greek word *sialia*, a noun meaning a "kind of bird." Since the Eastern Bluebird was the first bluebird classified by Carolus Linnaeus (1707-1778), he gave it the species name *sialis*, though he placed it in the genus *Motacilla* which is now reserved for the wagtails. It was William Swainson (1789-1855), who, in 1827, decided that the bluebirds needed a genus of their own within the thrush family (*Turdidae*). He selected the generic name *Sialia* which he simply adapted from the species name *sialis* which Linnaeus had used. Therefore, the scientific name for the Eastern Bluebird is *Sialia sialis* (pronounced see-ah'-ee-ah see'-ahl-iss). Similarly, the Western Bluebird and Mountain Bluebird, the two other species within the genus, were named *Sialia mexicana* and *Sialia currucoides* (coo-roo-coy-dees) respectively. Their species names are descriptive of their locations. All three bluebird species are native only to the North American continent, although each inhabits different regions generally separated by the Rocky Mountains and by altitudinal preferences.

While the adult birds all show differing plumages, the young of all three species look remarkably alike, prominently displaying spotted breasts and large white eye rings. This similarity in plumage was the principal reason the Society chose the juvenile bluebird for its logo. Since bluebirds almost always choose to raise their young in small enclosed cavities, a young bluebird sitting near a nesting box seemed to symbolize our mission. The hope of any species resides in its young. Because of bluebird nesting preferences, the survival of their young may depend on the nesting box, especially since natural cavities, for a variety of reasons, are disappearing rapidly. The theme of bluebird young nurtured in man-made structures will be a recurring one in our art and literature. We hope that this theme will remind all about the plight of the bluebird, and will stimulate action which will allow this beautiful creature to prosper.

Sialia is published quarterly by the North American Bluebird Society, Box 6295, Silver Spring, MD 20916-6295. Subscription price is included in annual membership dues. Single copies: \$2.50. Write for information about bulk quantities. Checks and money orders should be made payable to North American Bluebird Society and should be in United States funds. Issues are dated Winter, Spring, Summer and Autumn and appear approximately on the fifteenth of January, April, July and October respectively. Deadline for submission of material is three months prior to date of publication; dated items only, two months.



Sialia

The Quarterly Journal
About Bluebirds

Volume 14, Number 1
Winter 1992
Pages 1-40

EDITOR
Joanne K. Solem
**CONTRIBUTING
EDITOR**
Lawrence Zeleny
ART EDITOR
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COVER

A male Downy Woodpecker near a
suet bag is the subject Art Editor
M. Suzanne Probst has chosen for
the cover.

Sialia welcomes original articles, art and photographs for publication. Although this journal is named for the bluebird, material relating to all native cavity nesting species will be considered. Manuscripts should be typed neatly and double-spaced. All material submitted is subject to editing or rewriting. Submit the original manuscript plus a duplicate copy if you wish to proof the material before publication. If the article has been submitted elsewhere (or previously published) that fact must be stated at the time of submission. All manuscripts will be acknowledged. Black and white glossy photographs are preferred. Print the subject, names of individuals pictured, photographer and return address on the back of each photograph. Art is welcome and should be in black pen-and-ink. We do not assume responsibility for manuscripts, photographs or art submitted. The editor's address is 10617 Graeoch Road, Laurel, Maryland 20723.

Presidential Points

Sadie Dorber

Bluebirders from 19 states and four Canadian provinces converged on the Bermuda Biological Station 10 October 1991, to attend the fourteenth meeting of the NABS. On Thursday afternoon, a steady stream of taxis dropped off bluebirders, nest boxes, and luggage, then returned to the airport for the next incoming flight to get another group.

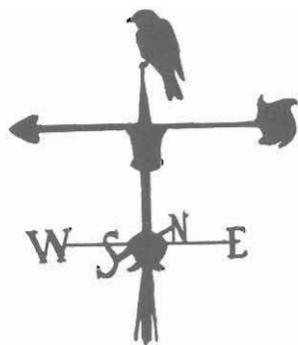
The U.S. Naval Base, located at the airport, is near the Bio Station. The sound of many jet airplanes breaking the sound barrier gave me cause for concern when Lil Files informed me the Naval Base was having NATO practice which often continued through the night. Fortunately for all of us, the practice ended at sundown.

The Bio Station hosted a wine and cheese party on Thursday evening before dinner and, as if on cue, five bluebirds started feeding on the front lawn while all of us were attending the party. Most of the bluebirders were in the lobby, so I walked to the door and announced, "Bluebirds are in the front lawn." I realized the importance of getting out of the way quickly.

We all moved on to the cafeteria for dinner. As dusk settled in, the chorus of whistling toads greeted us. Those bluebirders with accommodations near water found it a little difficult to get to sleep that night because of the loud songs from the toads.

Also, new to most of us were the harmless lizards that seemed to be everywhere. A door left open was an invitation for them to enter your cottage. Lil Files and I shared the same bedroom the first night, but after Lil found a lizard in the room she slept on a day bed in the hall. Fortunately for Lil, the lizard wasn't seen again.

Friday dawned sunny and windy. The Bio Station reported to me that the boat ride to Nonsuch Island would be a little "lumpy," but there shouldn't be any problems with taking the boat out to the island. When that group left, the rest of us boarded a bus for our trip to



the aquarium. We returned from the field trips at lunch time. Both trips were received so enthusiastically that bluebirders looked forward to Sunday when the same trips would be repeated.

Governor Sir Desmond Langley and Lady Langley hosted a tea at Government House on Friday afternoon for all the bluebirders. Taxis let our people at the bottom of the path that winds up to Government House so they could walk through the lovely flower gardens. Once again the weatherman cooperated by giving us sunny skies.

Saturday's speakers not only covered bluebird topics, but also included a presentation on the role nest boxes are playing in helping the Barn Owl. The Bio Station provided two excellent speakers that explained coral reefs and the ocean's role in global change. The students from St. David's Primary School delighted all of us with a bluebird song that had been composed by the children. One of their bluebird houses, made from the gourd-like fruit of the calabash tree, now adorns my fireplace mantel.

David Wingate had us on the edge of our chairs for his presentation Saturday night "Turning The Clock Back on Nonsuch Island." His devotion to and love of this little island of paradise was touching to us all.

Mr. Ebersol Gaines, the American Consul, and his wife, Sheila, hosted a luncheon on Sunday afternoon for all of us. The most active bluebird box on the grounds was visible from the living room window. Mr. Gaines reported that when President Bush was a recent

(Continued on page 13)

Two Female Eastern Bluebirds Raise Brood of Eight in One Box

Mary F. Reed

Life had been going along rather smoothly here in Wildwood and along the bluebird trail. All peace was shattered on our block in early July when a handsome male bluebird began keeping company with two of the neighborhood females at the same time. Feathers flew more than once as the females fought for the attentions of the male.

We wondered who would win. Our wonder turned to amazement when both females worked together building a nest in a chosen box. When eggs appeared in the box, two a day until there were eight of them, we began to believe anything could happen. During the period of egg laying, the male sang from his perch on a nearby wire.

The eggs appeared to be incu-

bated mostly by one female, but that may have been imagination on the part of several of us observing. How many of the eggs would hatch? We were most curious. Imagine our delight when *all* of the eggs hatched and eight tiny young somehow found space in the nest.

In due time, two exhausted bluebirds, one male and one female, supervised the fledging. Perhaps nearby was another female helping casually.

It appeared that the female who did most of the incubating also did most of the feeding with the aid of the male. At first they buzzed us when we went near the box, but gradually they stopped.



Eight eggs laid by two females in a single Eastern Bluebird nest on a trail in Wildwood, Texas.



Photographs by Mary F. Reed

All eight eggs hatched so that even the small nestlings pictured fill the nest. All fledged successfully.

P.O. Box 816
Wildwood, TX 77663

Hoepfners Receive Conservation Award for Bluebird Work

Don and Marcy Hoepfner, of Metamora, Illinois, were honored by the Isaak Walton League of America on 17 July 1991. The Conservation Award given them was in recognition of their work with Eastern Bluebirds. Within the last two years, the Hoepfners have erected 40 nest boxes, mostly on Woodford County prairie owned by the Izaak Walton League of America. Their boxes are planned and built by Don. Marcy monitors their pipe-mounted boxes on a Honda scooter she has dubbed the "Bluebird Express."

On 14 September, they hosted a bluebird informational potluck at the Izaak Walton Club grounds near Metamora, Illinois. The group of 22 exchanged questions and ideas and re-

ceived handouts prepared by the Hoepfners. Featured music was the tape, "Bluebird, Fly." A tour of a portion of their trail completed the day. Don and Marcy hope to make this bluebird picnic an annual event.

NABS SLIDE SHOW

The NABS slide show is available for rental at \$10.00 or purchase at \$55.00. The show consists of 141 collated, cardboard-framed 35 mm slides and a printed script (no slide tray). If a cassette narration is desired add \$5.00 to the purchase price.

To rent or purchase the bluebird slide show, write to the following address: NABS Slides, Box 6295, Silver Spring, MD 20916-6295. Please allow a month for delivery and, if possible, specify several dates.

Comments on Herbicides, Dead Tree Swallows and Nest Box Specifications

Donald J. Stiles

Three articles in a recent issue of Sialia gave me new insights, as a trail monitor, on the subjects described below.

Herbicides

On 11 July 1991, I found two nests of dead Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucooides*) nestlings near each end of my 13 mile (20.9 km), 30 box Red Deer Lake Trail. The birds in each nest were about 8 to 10 days old and bloated. In each case, the roadside was turning brown, evidence of a recent application of herbicides. Fortunately, this was late in the season when most of the bluebirds had already fledged. There was also one Tree Swallow (*Tachycineta bicolor*) nestling in a clutch of about the same age that was bloated. I removed it; however, the remainder of the nestlings later died. I did not find any other Tree Swallow nest affected.

Shortly after this incident, I read Richard Tuttle's article (*Sialia* 3(3): 83-87) and particularly noted his description of bluebird nestlings dead at 8 to 10 days due to herbicides. I immediately saw a link between the recent herbicide application and the dead bluebird nestlings on my trail. In a telephone conversation, the author explained his theory that herbicides affect the metabolism of the young as they change from coldblooded to warmblooded at about 8 to 10 days of age. Tuttle reported that he no longer had any dead young of this type once he persuaded Delaware State Park to stop using herbicides in parking lots and around signs and swing sets. We will try to persuade the municipality here to stop using herbicides, at least in the vicinity of nest boxes.

Bluebird trail operators in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba interested in monitoring the effects of herbicides and/or insecticides can get in touch with Louise Horstman, Prairie Nest Box Monitoring Program, Box 1919, Morinville, Alberta TOG 1P0.

Louise and her husband, Ted Code, operate the program which covers the parkland and prairie regions of the three provinces named. It is sponsored by the Canadian Wildlife Service and the World Wildlife Toxicology Fund. Nest boxes should be monitored once a week. Trails beside cropland are of the greatest interest, as that is where herbicides or insecticides are commonly used. The information provided will be used to look at the effects of location, weather, herbicides, and insecticides on the nesting success of the various species of birds using the nest boxes. The operators also would be interested in hearing from anyone in the Mountain Bluebird breeding area in the United States with a special interest in this subject.

Dead Adult Tree Swallows in Early Spring

I also asked Richard Tuttle about dead adult Tree Swallows in empty nest boxes early in the season. An article in *Sialia* by Steven Gilbertson (13(3):93-97) mentions this topic and suggests that shallow boxes will prevent these deaths. His preference was 4 1/2 inches (11.4 cm) from the floor to the base of the entrance hole.

Tuttle mentioned that he had been given five boxes one year and had encountered this problem of dead Tree Swallows early in the season. He explained that it was because Tree Swallows were weak from migrating and had been resting in the boxes while the weather was bad. When the weather improved and they tried to leave in order to begin feeding, they were unable to exit due to the slick nest box front which did not give them a toe hold. The birds starved to death—the evidence of which is a yellowish sub-

stance present around their vents due to the production of bile. He later solved the problem by using hardware cloth inside the front of each nest box to allow the birds a toe hold.

I immediately realized that this was the problem on my trail. I had been given nine new nest boxes. It was in them that the problems occurred. Four of the nine new boxes had had dead Tree Swallows in them, one had had a dead bluebird. All were early in the season, there was no nesting material in the boxes, and the telltale yellowish vents were evident. In one box I had found two dead Tree Swallow adults on each of three different dates: 20 May, 1 June, and 12 June, after which I gave up on it. Two of the nest boxes later fledged Tree Swallows, one fledged bluebirds. One box had dead bluebird young due to herbicides as mentioned above. The remainder had two House Wrens (*Troglodytes aedon*) and/or four House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) whose nests were cleaned out. One box was unused. Clearly, I will have to put some hardware cloth or equivalent material inside these nest boxes before the next breeding season. I will also move a few to avoid House Sparrows and House Wrens.

Nest Box Specifications

Formerly, when I received a request for bluebird trail information from a prospective new monitor, I sent out an informational bulletin from the Ellis Bird Farm called "Setting Up a Mountain Bluebird Trail." In addition to much useful information about bluebirds and monitoring bluebird trails, it provides two nest box plans, one for side opening and one for top opening (Figures 1 and 2). These have been adapted from NABS plans with a floor plan of 5 in. x 5 in. (12.7 cm x 12.7 cm) to accommodate the Mountain Bluebird. In addition, I suggested that all nest boxes should have the following, in case users decided to amend the plans:

1. Hole size: 19/16 in. (4 cm)
2. Drainage holes. Cut off the corners of the floor.
3. A vent near the top or holes to

allow for ventilation

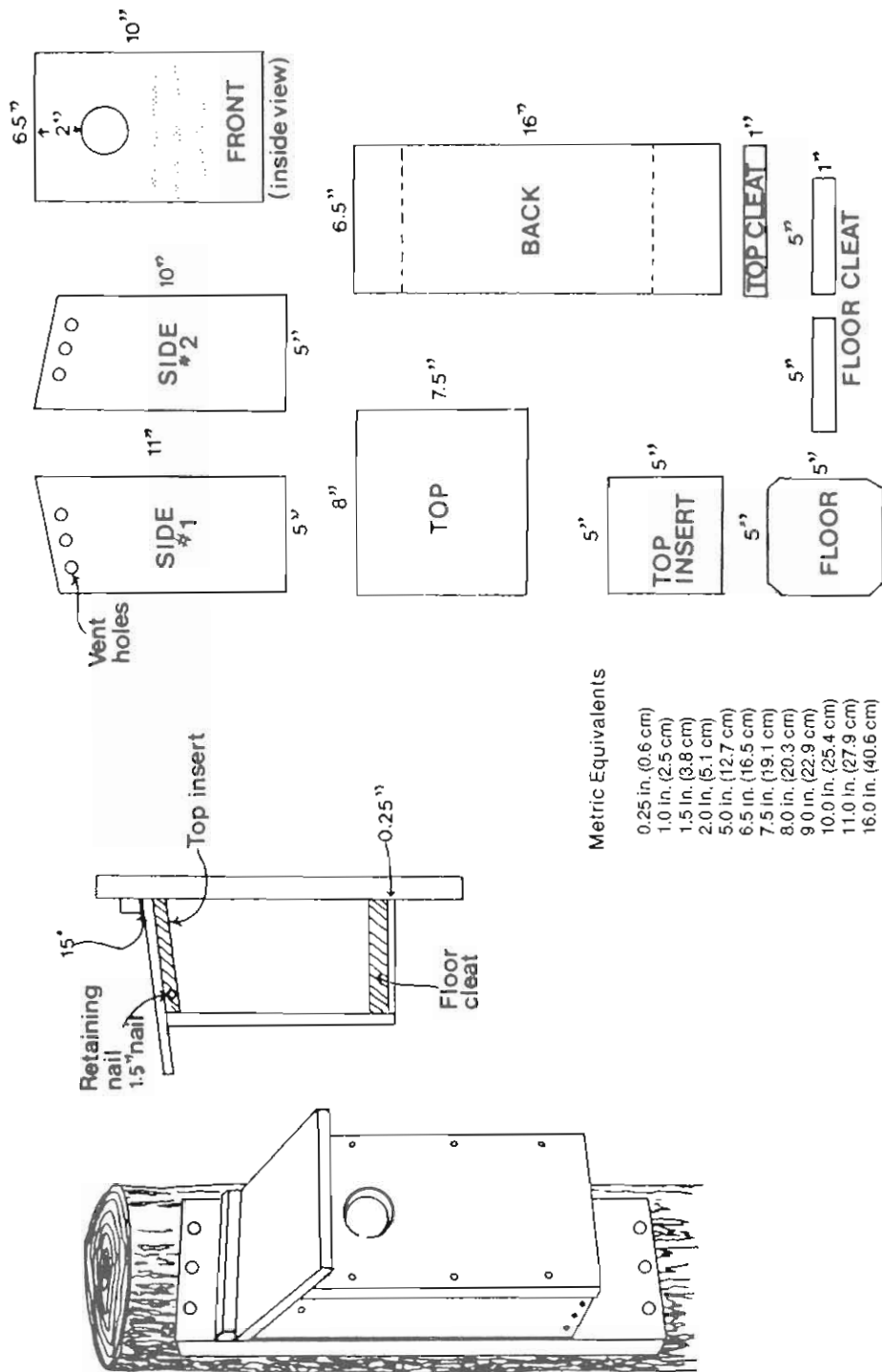
4. A method of opening the nest box (either top, side, or front) to examine the contents. A number of monitors use a top opening design with the top secured by an aluminum wire tied around short screws in both sides. Another innovation we recommend for top opening boxes is a removable bottom set on flanges. Top opening nest boxes are slightly better for examining the contents, while side or front opening are slightly better for cleaning. All of these features are shown on the Ellis Bird Farm plans as well as saw cuts (kerfs) for toe holds.

In the future, for better results, I will add the following:

1. Toe holds. I checked boxes made by two of our primary nest box builders, Zoltan Gulyas and George Loades, and they both use toe holds, either saw cuts (kerfs) or a flange between the floor and the opening. George Loades has been building 200 boxes for our trails for the last several years under a grant from the Sarcee Fish and Game Association. He builds either top opening or side opening (hinge at the top), whichever the monitor orders. George prefers a large nest box with floor dimensions of 5 in. x 7 in. (12.7 cm x 17.8 cm). He feels this allows the birds to have the largest brood of which they are capable. He also finds this handy for banding, as he can easily put the banded young in a corner of the box away from the nest.

2. A thick roof with a large overhang. *Sialia* 13(3):89-90 "Avian Predation of Bluebird Nestlings" by Myrna Pearman outlines predation on nestlings by Black-billed Magpies. The author describes methods used to prevent this type of predation by stapling aluminum sheets to the roofs and fronts of nest boxes which had lacked a significant front overhang. Pearman believes an extended roof overhang could prevent or greatly reduce magpie or similar predation. Changes in Ellis Bird Farm box design will increase this overhang. For example, one dimension of the roof size in Figure 1 could be changed from 8 in. to 9 in. (20.3 cm to 22.9 cm) allowing a 4 in.

Figure 1. Ellis Bird Farm Top Opening Nest Box.



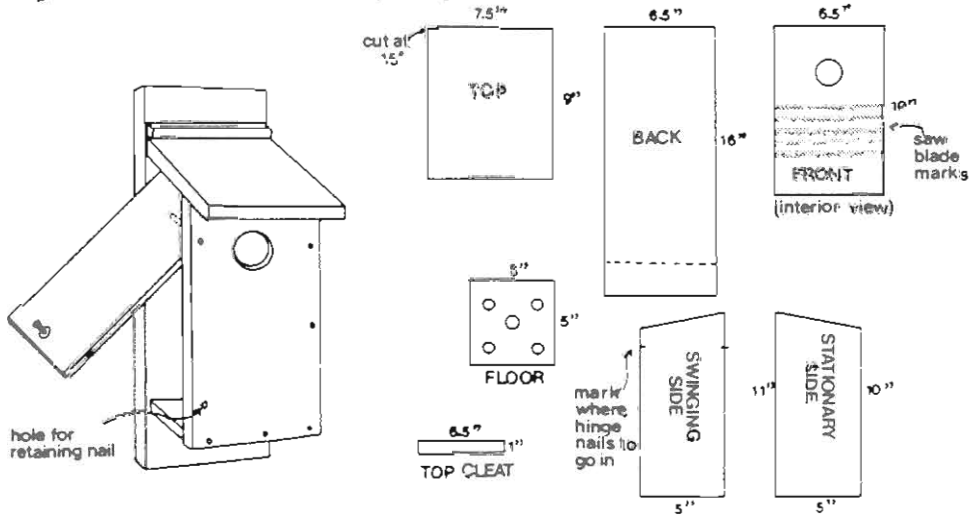
(10.2 cm) overhang. Thick roofs of 3/4 in. (1.9 cm) plywood would help to prevent the death of nestlings during hot spells.

Richard Tuttle believes that *Sialia* is valuable as a forum for exchanging

bluebird trail ideas. The insights gained from just one issue as presented here bear this out. ■

20 Lake Wapta Rise SE
 Calgary, Alberta
 Canada T2J 2M9

Figure 2. Ellis Bird Farm Side Opening Nest Box.



Figures from Information Bulletin Vol. 2, No. 1, "Setting Up a Mountain Bluebird Trail," Used with permission of Ellis Bird Farm, Ltd.



Boyse B. Harral, a retired sheetmetal worker, has been volunteering in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade art classes at the Wilburn School, Wilburn, Arkansas. He has been helping students make bird houses of his own design. The school cook saves gallon cans which Harral takes home and paints white to reflect heat, hood and hanging straps are added, the inside is lined with corrugated cardboard, and a front (without perch) is added. Students also receive a lesson in bluebird conservation.

A Perch for Bluebirds

Svante Humbla

Introduction

The importance of a perch located near a bluebird box should not be underestimated. When a nearby tree or utility line is not available, an artificial perch may be a valuable asset to the bluebirds for guarding the nest, caring for the family, or as a stopover for the fledglings on their first flight to the nearest tree.

I have established trails for Eastern Bluebirds (*Sialia sialis*) in two local parks. As has been the experience of most other bluebirders, I have had problems with both House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) and House Wrens (*Troglodytes aedon*).

Prototype Artificial Perch Appreciated

In one of the parks, where sparrow and wren problems have been persistent, I have moved the boxes farther and farther away from cover. This resulted in a pair of bluebirds nesting in a Peterson box previously favored by sparrows. Five babies were fledged at the end of May.

After the fledging of the first brood, the pair re-nested in a box some 110 yards (100 m) away and laid one egg. This nest was promptly usurped by a wren. A week later the bluebirds went back and built a new nest in the original box and laid one more egg. It too was usurped by a wren.

Early in the spring of 1991, after reading Richard M. Tuttle's report on Eastern Bluebirds and Tree Swallows (*Tachycineta bicolor*) in the Winter 1991 issue of *Sialia* (13(1):3-13), I installed a pair of nest boxes in a savannah-like field a considerable distance away from shrubs and trees.

On 24 July I discovered that a bluebird pair had now nested in one of these new boxes. The female laid three eggs, all of which hatched. This brood was fledged during the last week of

August.

The passageway to these boxes and the immediate area around them was being mowed every other week. The only trouble was that there was no perch nearby. Immediately after the nesting I designed and made a bluebird perch as shown in Figures 1 and 2. I installed it approximately 10 ft. (3 m) in front of the pair of boxes.

When I returned the next time and approached the boxes, both the male and the female flew to the perch as if they wanted to say, "Thanks a lot." The photograph shows a male bluebird and fledgling on the perch.

Perch Construction

Figures 1 and 2 are self-explanatory. I painted the conduit and the wooden perch with some leftover earthtone acrylic house paint. I gave the dowel one coat of paint before installing it in the 3/8 in. (1 cm) hole.

Depending on the exact diameter of the dowel, the hole may have to be enlarged somewhat with a reamer or round file. The dowel should, however, fit snugly so it does not wiggle. If the hole is too large put some electrical tape around the dowel. A second coat of paint was applied after the dowel had been inserted and secured with a small nail or tack.

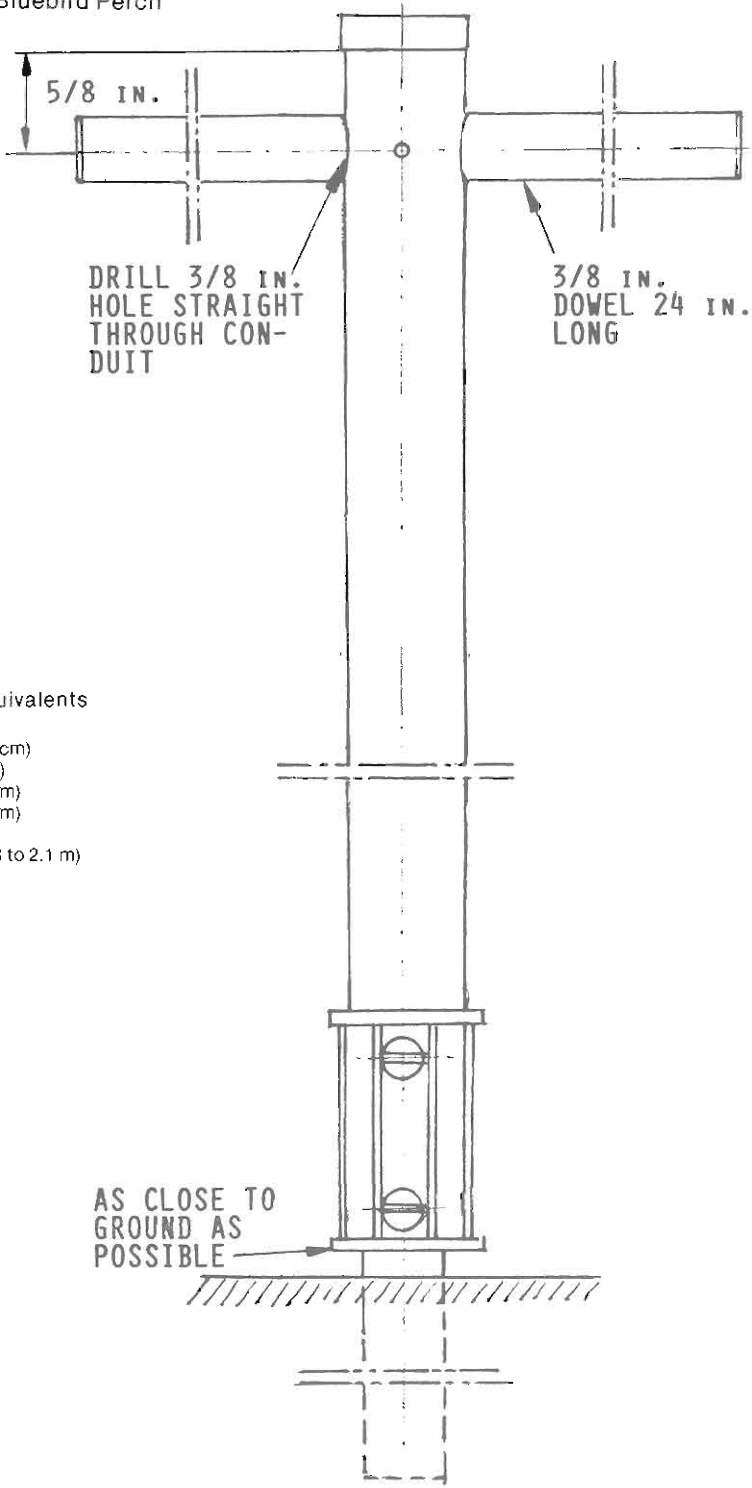
The purpose of the coupling is to prevent the perch from turning or readily being lifted off its supporting rebar. One of the screws in the coupling had to be replaced with a longer one (10/24 x 1/2 in. [1.3 cm]) in order to make contact with the rebar.

Concrete reinforcing bar (rebar) is normally stocked in 20 ft. (6.1 m) lengths and is sold by the foot. Electrical conduit is normally stocked in 10 foot (3 m) lengths.

The total material cost for one perch is between \$5.00 and \$6.00 in local hardware stores in my area at the present time.

(Text continued on page 12)

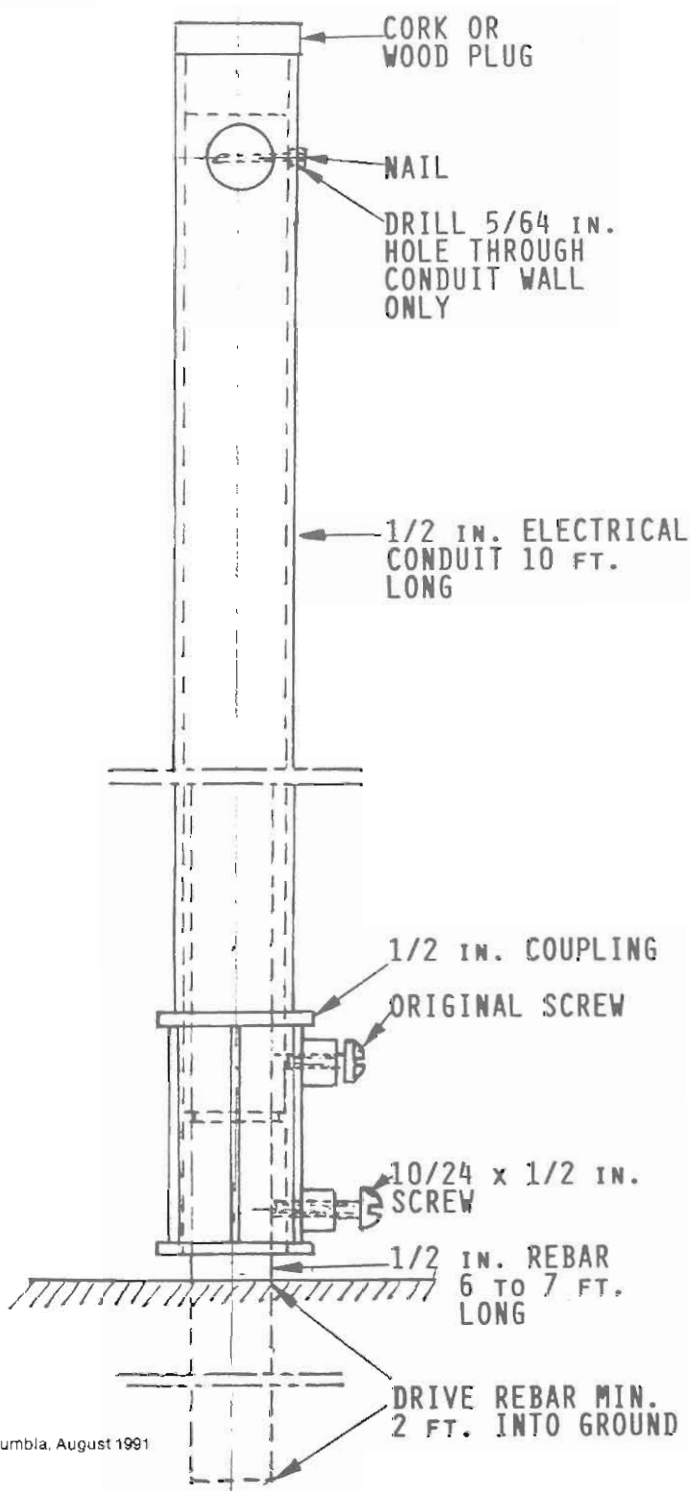
Figure 1. Bluebird Perch



Metric Equivalents

- 5/64 in. (0.2 cm)
- 3/8 in. (1 cm)
- 1/2 in. (1.3 cm)
- 5/8 in. (1.6 cm)
- 2 ft. (60 cm)
- 6 to 7 ft. (1.8 to 2.1 m)

Figure 2. Bluebird Perch



Diagrams by Svante Humbla, August 1991
First angle projection

Perching Observations

Now back to the importance of the perch. This spring I installed a Peterson box outside our kitchen window for the purpose of trapping House Sparrows. The morning of 27 April I could hardly believe my eyes when I saw a pair of bluebirds sitting on the telephone line above the box. They stayed and built a nest but had laid only two eggs by 10 May. By 22 May two babies were hatched. At this point a male sparrow started to harass the bluebirds.

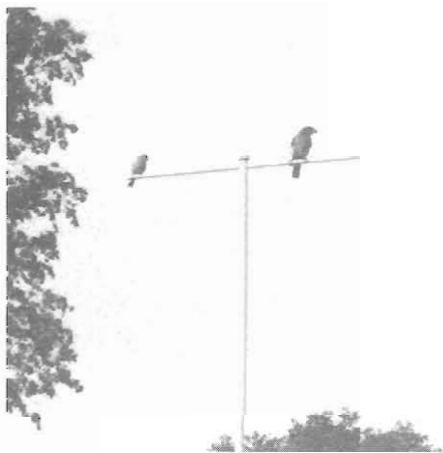
I then erected another box approximately 100 feet (30.5 m) away, also under the telephone line, in the hope that the sparrow would go there instead. The surprising result, however, was that the male bluebird now started to perch above the new box, neglecting his guard duty at the box which contained the nestlings. The sparrows became more aggressive; I even had to chase away the sparrow female which was sitting in the hole of the box with the bluebird babies.

In desperation I called Dorene Scriven in Minneapolis, Minnesota to ask her what to do. She suggested that I move the new box close to the original one so that the male bluebird could watch both boxes from the same perch. I promptly did that and within minutes the male was back above his family residence chasing the sparrows.

The two babies were successfully fledged on the eighteenth day after hatching. Within three days a new nest was built in the new box, but several days passed without any eggs being laid. The wrens, which had already fledged their first brood at another corner of the property, joined the sparrows in harassing the bluebirds.

On 22 June the sparrows started a nest in the original box. On 23 June the bluebirds were gone. On 24 June I trapped the male sparrow with the Peterson sparrow trap, which has proven to be very effective.

Although I am sad because the bluebirds have departed, the breeding season has been a wonderful experience for me as a relatively new blue-



Male bluebird with food in its beak and fledgling on one of author's bluebird perches.

birder. To be able to observe the bluebirds at close range for almost six weeks makes me feel very fortunate. I hope they will return nest year. ■

7701 Surreyhill Lane
Indian Hill
Cincinnati, OH 45243

Historian's Request

Please send newspaper and magazine articles about bluebirds to Historian Jane Williams, Box 123, Ware Neck, VA 23178. Be sure name and address of publication, volume and date are included. Photographs of members engaged in publicizing bluebirds or those documenting some unusual occurrence are also welcome. They will be added to scrapbooks which are a permanent record of activity on behalf of bluebirds and other cavity nesters.

Bluebird Nest Boxes on Church Grounds

John Findlay, III

Bluebirds are non-denominational! My slide program audiences are always amused by this statement as I show bluebird nest boxes placed on church properties. For a number of good reasons, churches have become favorites of mine for placement of nesting boxes.

To date, I have active bluebird nest boxes at 15 area churches representing ten denominations in Shelby County just southeast of Birmingham, Alabama. Among them are Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopal, Christian, Roman Catholic, Church of Christ, and Church of the Latter Day Saints. Some locations have been used most of the 13 years I have maintained a trail, now consisting of 170 boxes.

What are the practical reasons for favoring church properties with bluebird boxes? That the bluebirds are non-denominational certainly helps. They will readily accept properly placed boxes in acceptable habitat. Rural, open, sparrow-free church properties are the best ones to consider, of course.

A good reason for such box placement near a church is high visibility. More people can see and enjoy bluebirds—often for the very first time. Good public relations always helps our educational efforts, and it often enlists others in our restoration program.

The survival rate for nest boxes at

churches has been much greater than at any other public locations. At Oak Mountain State Park where most of my trail boxes have been placed, I have had an average of a dozen a year “appropriated.” With as many as 15 shopping centers impacting my trail in Alabama’s fastest growing county, many more of my boxes have been lost or have had to be removed. *At church sites, I have yet to lose a single box!*

Checking boxes every week to ten days, as I routinely do, can be done much more safely and more pleasantly with less traffic at church sites than along busy highways if done on weekdays.

There is a spiritual reason to consider when placing bluebird boxes near churches. The intangible gifts of God—love, happiness, and renewed hope—are the same desirable qualities we associate with our beloved bluebird.

A final statistical note that you may wish to ponder. I will refrain from an opinion. My yearly records reveal that the so-called fundamentalist churches have had a greater production rate than the main line churches. ■

2749 Millbrook Rd.
Birmingham, AL 35243

This article first appeared in Bluebird News Volume 2, Edition 12, page 1. It is reprinted with permission.

(PRESIDENTIAL POINTS—Continued from page 2)

house guest, Mrs. Gaines was always directing him to look at her bluebirds.

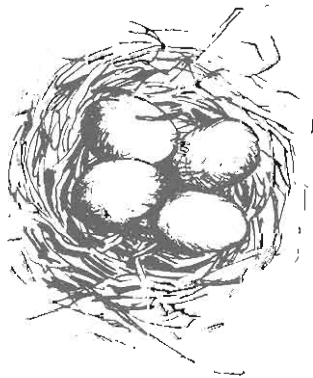
Active birders in the group started early Monday morning for a birding trip to Spittel Pond Nature Preserve. To the delight of many, the migrating warblers had started coming through. A few very lucky people sighted a single longtail. A common sight during the summer, most had already left the area for the

winter months.

I’m sure by the time I left for Bermuda, my husband was tired of hearing my comment, “I just hope we get good weather for the field trips.” Angela Outerbridge whispered to me on Thursday evening that the forecast for the weekend was torrential rain. Imagine my sigh of relief on Monday. The meeting had ended and the weatherman’s predictions had proven wrong! ■

QUESTION CORNER

Lawrence Zeleny



I operate a 40 box bluebird trail in Michigan's Island Lake Recreation Area. Most of the boxes are near roads, parking lots, or picnic areas. This year, for the first time, several female bluebirds abandoned clutches before the eggs hatched. Why would they do this? I monitor the boxes once a week. What would you say in the process of monitoring constitutes harassment?

Cathryn H. Kurtagh
Highland Park, Michigan

It is very unlikely that monitoring your bluebird nesting boxes in a normal manner once a week would cause any of the birds to abandon their unhatched eggs. The most common causes of such abandonment are (1) infertility of the eggs and (2) death of the female bird. The male bluebird is incapable of incubating the eggs. Another cause of abandonment is excessive human or animal activity close to the nest causing the female bird to stay away from her nest long enough for the eggs in the nest to become chilled.

Since many of your boxes are close to picnic or parking areas, I would guess that human activity very close to such boxes for extended periods of time may have kept some of the birds away from their nests too long. Then, too, there is always the chance of deliberate human interference when nesting boxes are in plain view of large numbers of uninformed people. Keep in mind that the female bluebird while incubating will often remain on her nest when the box is opened for observation. There is no way of knowing what some unscrupulous person might do when making an unauthorized observation.

It would be my suggestion that you

move to quieter and less conspicuous locations those boxes that are closest to excessive human activity. But, even with the losses you encountered, it would appear that you had a reasonably successful year with your trail. Some losses are almost inevitable but should, of course, be prevented when possible.

On 11 May I had one box in which bluebirds had built three nests, one on top of another with eggs in each of them. Four other boxes had a second nest atop a nest with eggs. There were additional empty boxes nearby. Why didn't they use them? Can the female tell if the eggs she has laid are not fertile?

Mark Oakley
Westfield, North Carolina

Observations such as you describe are fairly common. It appears that the female bluebird is sometimes able to detect a nonviable clutch of eggs after only a few days of incubation, perhaps by failure to detect the very slight movements of the developing embryos that occur in viable eggs.

No one knows why the bird would build a new nest on top of the old one rather than move to a nearby vacant nesting box. ■



Dining with Bluebirds

Nancy S. McFarland

It's always a treat to get back home to New Castle, Pennsylvania, not only to visit my parents, Ken and Pearl Stoner, but also to see their bluebirds. Although I have many bluebirds on my trail of 28 boxes here in Wisconsin, I have yet to have the pleasure of dining with them.

At Mom and Dad's, however, it is a common occurrence to be eating a meal and to have a bluebird or two land on the sill at the nearby dining room window. The bluebirds come to eat the currants in the half-moon suction cup feeder mounted on the glass. Bluebirds come and go throughout the day. Usually early morning is the busiest feeding time, perhaps because they know that their breakfast is ready and waiting!

For several years now, the feeder has been used by bluebird families. At first, the fledglings huddle either on

the brick ledge below or on the spout-ing above the feeder, making quite a clamor as they beg for food. Meanwhile, one of the adult bluebirds has carefully picked up a mouthful of fruit, just enough so that each fledgling receives one currant. It isn't long, though, before the young ones are eagerly helping themselves to their own fruit. Accommodations are full when three bluebirds at a time are having a meal.

Bluebirds have been invited guests at Mom and Dad's for more than 15 years now. By providing nesting boxes, food, and water, these beautiful birds are attracted to a spacious lawn setting. A favorite nest site is a box mounted on Mom's clothesline post, where, for the past several years three broods of bluebirds have been raised each nesting season. Quite a variety of other birds are found on their property, but,



Photograph by Nancy S. McFarland

Male Eastern Bluebird stopping in for currants at Ken and Pearl Stoner's dining room window.

Of all the birds that are there to see
It's hard to compare to the thrill
Of starting each brand new day
Having bluebirds at your window sill. ■

E9916 Trophy Trail
Reedsburg, WI 53959

W.H.F. Ruritan Club Continues to Promote Bluebirds

Fred Sahl

The Wilson-Hebron-Ford Ruritan Club continues to build and sell bluebird nest boxes both as a conservation measure and as a fund raising project. During 1990, they built and sold 700 nest boxes through local Ukrop's Super Markets and a few feed and seed outlets. Not only has this project generated a tremendous enthusiasm for bluebird preservation in Dinwiddie County, but profits from the sale of boxes have enabled the club to support a number of community projects.

In February 1990, the club sponsored a countywide workshop which drew 75 people. Items with bluebird themes were awarded as door prizes. Mr. & Mrs. Charles Tibbet were given a bluebird print in recognition of having rescued and raised two broods of bluebirds. NABS patches were given to young people whose boxes had fledged at least one brood of bluebirds successfully during the previous year. The NABS slide show was also presented.

As chairman of the bluebird committee, I presented several slide programs and demonstrations during the year to local garden clubs and Scout troops. In December of 1990, I spoke to classes at Rohoic and Midway Elementary Schools using a nest box, an old nest, and some infertile eggs to help students visualize what they might find on a trail. I helped install two boxes at Rohoic

and one at Midway. By the end of May 1991, each school had fledged one bluebird brood of four. Enthusiasm was unusually high which delighted principals and teachers. The ripple effect from the initial presentations was particularly dramatic. Many children participated in school projects about bluebirds, some of them asked for nest boxes for Christmas, and parents and grandparents became involved through erecting and monitoring boxes.

In February 1991 the club held another bluebird workshop. And, again, during the year I scheduled bluebird presentations to garden clubs and community groups. Feature articles in several area newspapers during the last two years have also sparked widespread interest.

The W.H.F. Ruritan Club of Church Road sold more than 900 nest boxes in February 1991 and ran short. In the past three years we have made and dispersed more than 2000 nest boxes. A copy of the NABS brochure, "Where Have All the Bluebirds Gone?" is placed inside of each. Our aim is to make Dinwiddie County, Virginia, the Bluebird Capital of the Southeast. We believe we are well on our way to reaching that goal! ■

5815 Trinity Church Rd.
Church Road, VA 23833

New Bluebirders Watch Fledging

Terry and Paul Andrews

The third brood of our bluebirds fledged yesterday, 10 August. Since they did not send invitations to their coming out, we began watching in shifts from early morning until dusk on the seventeenth and eighteenth days after hatching. We were rewarded for our patience, for we witnessed the maiden flight of three of the four.

They spent the first of the two days popping their heads out every few minutes looking as though they would soon be on their way. The parents continued to feed them and clean the nest. At one point the female brought a twig to the hole as though she were trying to start another nest. Around 10:00 a.m. on the eighteenth day, one nestling stuck his head out and then continued to push out of the hole. There he perched precariously. The adult female sat on top of the box while the adult male was in a nearby tree. The first nestling spent some time looking around and then took wing, made a sharp right turn, and landed on the side of a large tree behind the nesting box. There he clung for dear life. The female came over and chirped at him. Then as he changed his position slightly, she flew off, brought back a bug, and offered it to him. Finally he flew to a near branch, settled himself, and then flew gracefully 100 yards northeast to the higher branches where he was no longer visible.

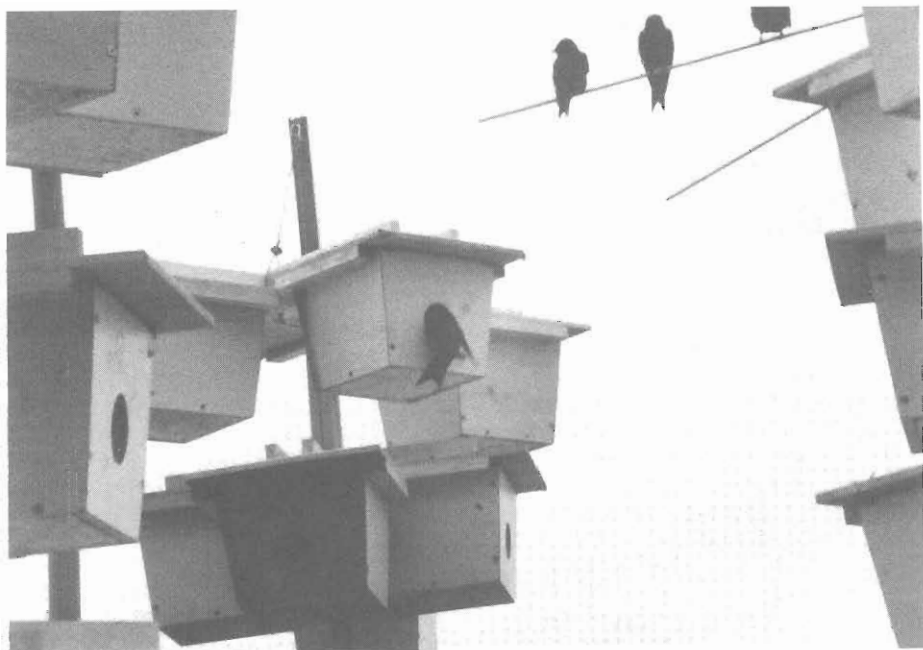
Excitedly we waited for the others. At 7:30 p.m. the other nestlings were still doing what they had been doing for two days—sticking their heads out and plaintively calling to their parents. The latter would come faithfully. At times the parents would not feed them and, occasionally, would try to entice them out with a morsel, but eventually they would feed the little ones. At dusk, just as we were giving up hope, the next baby stepped on stage. He had a difficult time getting into the perched position in the entrance and even more difficulty spreading his wings, but he

managed to fly to a tree at the side of the box entrance. The parents were not visible during this period. Again this fledgling clung to the side of the tree, gaining strength and/or composure. Then, with apparent ease, he flew up into higher branches and out of sight.

As he took wing I noticed movement out the corner of my eye. Sure enough, another bluebird was out of the box, but he was on the ground immediately behind it. There he stood not moving. There was still no sight of the parents. Finally, he began to hop forward and then flew up landing upon the fence. But he flew with much difficulty. He could not fly straight. Once on the fence he rested, then began his plaintive call. The female appeared. She landed next to him and tenderly put her beak in his. Then she flew to a branch near by. He hopped to the top of the fence post. There he sat, head up, watching Mom. She flew off. He began to call her again, but she did not appear. Eventually he took wing. Again he couldn't fly well. He landed in an area where the trees are small and close together. We watched helplessly as he fell through the leafy branches. Finally, about three feet from the ground, he stopped. There he remained. At this point it was almost dark. Finally we walked over to the area. After some time he hopped to the ground and we lost sight of him.

As we sat on the deck organizing our thoughts, the female appeared at the box with a twig. She flew off. A little later the male came and peered inside the box. Then he flew off. We could not tell where they went because there was not enough light. We checked the box and found it empty. How had we missed one fledging? I believe one bird left right after the first one, just as the fourth nestling left immediately after the third. We speculated that we didn't see the second be-

(Continued on page 33)



Purple Martins use wooden nesting boxes designed by Don Wilkins of Park Rapids, Minnesota. Each box slides forward like a drawer leaving the roof mounted on the pole. In 1991 he had 82 of his 104 compartments occupied. A total of 317 Purple Martins fledged.

The Phobia and the Fledgling

Joan D. Lackey

The sound of fluttering wings from birds above my head sends panic through me. I feel an icy quiver down my spine, a palpitation of my heart, and a catch in my breathing. It's a deep-seated phobia that I've had as long as I can remember.

When I was 10 or 11 years old, a bat got into my bedroom one dark, summer night. The flutter of wings awakened and frightened me. Beginning with that experience and continuing throughout the rest of my life, I have avoided or shunned situations that could trigger this uncontrollable fear.

In my mature years, I became interested in watching birds. With the encouragement of my eldest daughter, I enjoyed the variety and abundance of species we could identify, by sight and sound, in Ohio's state parks. It seemed a paradox that, as a birdwatcher, I was prone to this unrelenting phobia. Nevertheless, I studied my field guide and found recreation with my daughters in this hobby.

Five years ago Bill Davis got me involved in bluebird conservation. He had a few nesting boxes placed in the rural areas of Preble County. I stood back, learned about bluebirds, kept the records, and enjoyed his enthusiasm for the Eastern Bluebird. Before the end of the breeding season, I was hooked on bluebirding.

The Davis trail grew to 123 boxes by the spring of 1991. Bill and I regularly left our city homes to check the boxes in the fresh air of country roadways and rolling farmlands. But my annoying phobia had not been left behind in Dayton. The sound of nearby wings still made me squeamish.

The test came in early August. Blowflies were becoming a threat to the nestlings in the second clutches on our trail. Bill habitually carried a sack of clean, dried grass in the trunk of his

car. On this particular day he made fresh substitute nests for those that were infested with blowflies. To make the transfer easier on the nestlings, Bill asked me to hold them in a cardboard berry box with my gloved hand placed over the top. Holding the three-day-old birds was not too traumatic, especially because they were not yet very active.

The next nest box was a different matter, however, for the nestlings were 16 days old. I was very apprehensive so we used a piece of wood (from box parts in the trunk) to lay over the top of the berry box. The first bluebird that Bill gently lifted out of the nest box was fully feathered, a gorgeous blue. In the pint berry box, he moved about looking for a way out, fluttering those blue wings. My anxiety peaked when the bird tried to exit through the gap along the corner. Alarmed, I called to Bill who put his hand over the edge of the berry box, ready to retrieve the chick.

But this one was ready to go! As soon as an opening was made by sliding the slab aside, he took off. The chick had fledged right out of my hand-held berry box to the sapling by the creek where his parents waited.

The afternoon sun on that early August day beamed down on those magnificent bluebirds. It was then that I realized what had happened—the electrifying thrill of that fledging had surpassed the emotion of a nagging phobia. It was an incredible experience. Had that bluebird fledging cured my phobia? I really doubt it; however, I now know that the two opposing emotions are tolerable, if not compatible. And that's enough for me right now. ■

1642 Humphrey Ave.
Dayton, OH 45410

Student Becomes Bluebirder

Tom A. Barber

Bluebirders have used golf courses, cemeteries, church yards, and playgrounds as locations for bluebird trails, but how many have used state hospital grounds? In *Sialia* 11(4): 148-149, "Patients Experience Nature Through Bluebirds," described the first two years of a trail in that location. Now I would like to update the journal's readers as to what has happened since that time.

The 1988 trail of 13 boxes grew to 26 boxes by 1991. Boxes that were battlegrounds between bluebirds and sparrows have been moved to a field where no House Sparrows have nested. In 1989, more than 29 sparrows were trapped which by 1990 had dropped to 13. In 1991, no sparrows were trapped, as boxes with sparrow problems were moved. Because of the sparrow problem, Joe Huber had been contacted. We used his highly effective in-box trap.

The population of bluebirds has grown on this trail every year since the beginning in 1987 when one bluebird fledged from a single box. By 1988, 26 bluebirds fledged from 13 boxes; in 1989, 59 from 20 boxes; in 1990, 80 fledged from 26 boxes; and in 1991, 92 bluebirds fledged from 26 boxes.

In 1991, our county (Guernsey) experienced a drought that started in May. By August our rainfall was six inches below normal. For this reason, raccoons became a problem for the first time on this trail. All the boxes at the Cambridge Mental Health Developmental Center are pipe-mounted with PVC guards. Upon checking this trail on 18 May, four boxes in a large field were monitored. Box 45 had Tree Swallow eggs, box 46 had two nestling bluebirds and three eggs about to hatch, box 47 had four three-day-old bluebirds, and box 48 had Tree Swallow eggs. All four of these boxes were Peterson boxes and were close to

Wills Creek. I have been bluebirding for eight years and in the seven years prior to 1991 had never had a raccoon problem on any of my trails. When I checked the same four boxes one week later on 27 May, all had been predated by a raccoon with nesting material hanging out of the entrance of each box. I was very upset, so I went to an auto supply store and got grease. I greased all poles and the PVC guards of boxes that contained eggs or young. When I checked box 46 on 15 June, the raccoon had returned. He had climbed the PVC guard and had gotten to the top of the box where he had left greasy paw prints, but the four eggs inside were untouched. Apparently he had disliked the feel of the grease on his paws so much that he just gave up the meal. There was no further raccoon predation on that trail. I learned a valuable lesson, and will always grease all my poles and guards in the future.

Speaking of success. One of my students at the hospital left in August of 1990 to start a life of his own. In the spring of 1991, I had a meeting out at "The Wilds" near Cumberland, Ohio, where a trail of 106 bluebird boxes is located. We were trying to find people to monitor four different trails on this animal reserve. Charlie Hamilton (a former student) came to the meeting. After it was over, he told me he wanted a trail to monitor. He was given a trail of 16 boxes which he has faithfully monitored, keeping very good records of everything that has happened on "his" trail.

What an evolutionary process has taken place! Not only with the bluebird trail at the hospital, but also with the success of getting a former student involved and turning him into a true bluebirder.

As a reward for his hard work, I got Charlie a Ohio Bluebird Association

patch that he can wear on a blue hat to show everyone that he is a bluebirder.

You can see that a state hospital grounds can be a great place to have a

bluebird trail.

60406 Stewart Rd.
Cambridge, OH 43725



Photograph by Tom A. Barber

Charles Hamilton checking one of his 16 bluebird boxes near Cumberland, Ohio.

BLUEBIRD BOOSTERS

Appearing on the inside back cover is a list of those individuals who have made a financial commitment to bluebirds and cavity nesters over and above their annual dues. Such support is essential in maintaining a stable dues structure. We thank the individuals, organizations, and businesses for their generosity.

You, too, can become a Bluebird Booster. For a donation of \$25.00 per issue or \$75.00 per four issues, you can

be designated as an Eastern, Western or Mountain Bluebird Booster (your choice); for \$15.00 per issue or \$50.00 per four issues, be a Fledgling Booster; while \$10.00 per issue or \$25.00 per four issues makes you a Nestling Booster.

All contributions are tax deductible. Mail your check to NABS Boosters, P.O. Box 6295, Silver Spring, MD 20916-6295.

"My" Bird

Judy M. Bland

Everything had been going well on my small bluebird trail so far this year. I had finally defeated the flying squirrels by relocating a few boxes, and 50 nestlings had already fledged. As I drove down my driveway past the fence-row that held several of my boxes, I decided to stop at the last one to see how the five 11-day-olds it held were doing. It was early June and the pair of birds that had claimed this box already had their second brood well on the way to fledging.

When I reached the box, I couldn't believe what I was seeing. A snake? No, not in one of *my* boxes! But it was, and I knew what it was doing in there. I headed back to my house for a hoe.

When I returned, I could see the parent birds hovering in front of the nesting box, trying to see inside. There was nothing they could do. The snake was now completely inside the box. I opened the box from the side and propped it open. The snake had the last of the five nestlings in his mouth. I jabbed at him with the hoe and he dropped the baby bird and began to strike at me. I was able to pin his head against the front of the box and he fell to the ground and coiled. He was a rather large snake, and he was not too happy.

I had never killed a snake before, and I have always criticized people who kill snakes just to be killing snakes. But I knew that if I didn't do away with this one, he would come back again.

With the snake out of the way, I checked on the bird that he had dropped from his mouth when I opened the box. I could hardly believe it, but he was still alive. He was wet, in shock, and his wings seemed to be damaged. I didn't hold much hope for his survival, but I put the nest back together, straightened his feathers, and placed him back in the box. Then I prayed that the parent birds would accept him after

such an ordeal.

I checked on him often that day. He would keep his head buried in the bottom of the nest, still terrified. When I touched him to make sure he was still alive, he would jump in fear. I never saw the parents enter the box, but it became apparent that, since he was alive and the nest was clean, they had been taking care of him.

The next day he seemed much better and was sitting in the nest normally. Now my biggest concern was whether or not he would be able to fly.

Two days after the attack I went back to check on him. I opened the box—it was empty. "After all he's been through, not another snake. Please!" Then I noticed that the nest was dirty. He had fledged!

I looked around the area to see if I could find him. Only 13 days old, with possible wing damage. Could he really have made it? Then I spotted all three bluebirds in the top of an old dead tree. The fledgling had obviously flown a little, but evidently not enough to suit the parents. The female was flying around him, trying to entice him into the air. Then she landed in a nearby tree and called to him. He wouldn't budge, except to move closer to the male who was still with him in the dead tree. Finally, the adult male flew off and landed on a branch about 100 feet away. The fledgling left his perch, fluttered his wings several times, and dropped about ten feet before composing himself and flying to his father. I held my breath as he made this clumsy attempt at flight, then jumped in elation at its successful completion.

I have always called the bluebirds born in my nesting boxes "my birds", but as I watched this particular bird taking his first flying lessons, I felt that

he truly was "my" bird. Again I was feeling the joy that my involvement with the Eastern Bluebird has brought to me so often. The rewards of helping even a single bird are so simple, yet so great.

I saw him again just yesterday, swooping down from atop a fencepost

to catch a bug on the ground. I paused to watch him as I was working on the box where he was hatched and almost died. I was nailing carpet-tack strips to the fencepost—to keep snakes out. ■

2343 Constantine Rd.
Cecilia, KY 42724

Bluebirds Spread Happiness

Lorie-Rose Bean

Late in the summer of 1990, I purchased two bluebird nest boxes. In the fall my brother put them up for me in the yard just south of my house so I could observe them from the kitchen windows.

Early this spring I noticed sparrows starting to accumulate dry grasses and twigs in the east bluebird box. Consequently, every noon when I walked down the lane to get my mail, I'd always stop first at that box, open it up, and pull out all the makings of the nest that the sparrows were working on. They were very determined to make their nest there. Each day they would start over after I'd clean out the previous day's nesting material.

Then on 18 April 1991, I experienced a big thrill. I saw a bird fly into the west bluebird box. I quickly got my binoculars focused—to my delight a bluebird had arrived. Needless to say, the pair was very busy during the following days making a nest and preparing to start a family.

I debated whether I should let the sparrows take over the east box since they were so persistent, even after I kept taking out the nesting material. I decided I'd allow them to build their nest since I had bluebirds in the other box.

On 20 May for the first time I attended the meeting of a local bird club which was a potluck picnic supper and a chance to bird on Heron Lake. I told my story to my fellow birders and they said, "The sparrows should go!" I really felt guilty destroying their nest and young, but maybe, with luck, another pair of bluebirds might move into the east box.

On 28 May I noticed that the adult bluebirds were flying around more frequently than usual. Two baby bluebirds were on the ground near the house. I wondered if I should try to pick them up and place them back in their box. As I continued to observe them from the window, I noticed that the adults were keeping an eye on them, feeding them insects, and prodding them on. The babies would hop a little farther each time. Later in the day, one of them flew onto a low branch of the cherry tree.

I hadn't seen bluebirds since I was a little girl so it is great that they are making a comeback. I hope I can continue to do my part to achieve that goal. ■

Rt. 2, Box 151
Jackson, MN 56143

Sentimental Journey

William C. Harris

Often we are asked, "Where to this year?" It is taken for granted that we'll be traveling and looking for new birds.

Last year was just a bit different. Yes, we were going to California, but, we insisted, it was not a birding trip as such. We were going to visit our son's home to await the arrival of our second grandchild. We didn't bother to add that we planned to go a week early because we wanted to explore the Columbia River from Portland, Oregon to at least the Bonneville Dam area.

Within an hour of landing in Portland we had found a new bird, the Northwestern Crow. Many a day would pass before we got another "lifer"!

The drive along the Columbia River provided breathtaking scenery. Bonneville Dam lived up to expectations and Mt. Hood didn't disappoint us. By now we were anticipating our visit to Mt. St. Helens. This was the first year that the public could drive to the new visitor center. After good views of Mt. Adams, we headed up the long new road toward the crater. Despite what we'd read about the devastation, we weren't prepared for this. Mile after mile we climbed seeing millions of downed trees partially buried in mud and lava. In some areas the trees had fallen like a pile of match sticks. In other areas the trees lay in orderly rows for miles on end. It is impossible to fully comprehend just what happened here in May of 1980.

Still miles from the top, we stopped to look at a miner's wrecked car. The story goes that three men were working in a mine on that fateful day. No highway accident could have produced a more grisly sight. While the men in the mine may have met a quick and merciful death, the car was to meet a truly violent end. It was tossed down the mountain side amidst a torrent of twisted trees, hot lava, rocks, and waves of hot searing winds.

About the time we were viewing the car, a flock of blue caught our eyes. Then it moved and we realized we were looking at a male Mountain Bluebird. What was he doing here? We soon concluded that somewhere in this awful mess a mate was apparently nesting.

I tried taking a few pictures, but he kept flying away. When I returned to the road, invariably he was right back there, too. We wondered if there was a nest in the car. With the tourist season in full swing we wondered if they'd fledge young.

Having been members of the North American Bluebird Society for many years, you can understand our feelings. Just about the time we were almost overwhelmed by the awful havoc, a bluebird provided promise. Here, so it seemed, was a beautiful bird telling the world to build and start anew. Surely, other birds would follow as well as grass, flowers, and small trees.

Eventually, we reached our son's home in Paso Robles, California. When we discovered Western Bluebirds in the area, we promptly put up a nesting box. In the meantime, we added a Lewis' Woodpecker to our life list.

On 2 August, after the birth of our granddaughter, we were relaxing in the back yard when six Western Bluebirds appeared. They played and bathed in the mist of a garden sprinkler. Not only was it a beautiful sight, but they truly seemed to be "the bluebirds of happiness."

Although this trip didn't yield us many life birds, how many of us are able to see all three species of bluebirds within a few short weeks? Sentimental journey? You bet your life! ■

15 Cloverleaf Dr.
Nashua, NH 03062

Fourteenth Annual Meeting Report

Mary D. Janetatos

The Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the North American Bluebird Society was held October 11-13, 1991, at the Bermuda Biological Station for Research, Inc., Ferry Reach, Bermuda. The Bermuda Bluebird Society was the host. Approximately 75 people attended from many states and provinces.

Preliminary proceedings began on Thursday evening with a reception and dinner. These were followed by a slide program, "Why Preserve Bermuda?" presented by Dr. Wolfgang Sterrer, curator of Bermuda's Museum of Natural History. The question proved to be rhetorical as the unique features and beauty of the island were described.

Two field trips were offered on Friday morning which were repeated on Sunday morning. One trip went to Non-such Island by boat. Participants walked the small acreage as Government Conservation Officer David Wingate related his efforts to return the native flora and fauna to what it had been before Bermuda became a British colony. It is a story of governmental mistakes and ecological errors, such as the introduction of non-native species. Slowly, progress is being made. The second field trip went to the aquarium and the zoo. The aviary at the zoo was of special interest.

Following lunch, there was a fascinating tour of the Bio Station. The intricacies of the research were explained, the sea-going lab floating at the dock was examined, and a wave machine which washed sea water over the sample coral species in a trough-like container was observed.

Friday afternoon continued with tea at Government House, the residence of the Queen's representative and his wife, Lord and Lady Langley. Lady Langley is a patron of the Ber-

muda Bluebird Society. The spacious grounds contain several bluebird boxes which have been used successfully. Some of the trees on the grounds were also of interest as several had been planted by famous visitors such as Winston Churchill and H.R.H. Princess Margaret.

Friday evening the group was treated to the documentary film "Happiness Is a Bluebird" produced by Bermuda Bluebird Society President Tommy Outerbridge and Reimar Fiedler. This poignant film recalls the days before Tommy's crippling accident, when he succeeded in stimulating widespread interest in bluebird conservation through the force of his personality and the inspiration of "Mr. Bluebird Blue," a plaintive song he wrote.

Tommy again inspired the gathering on Saturday when he issued the official welcome and led the group in prayer. Edward Wright, principal of St. David's Primary School, proved an able master of ceremonies. David Wingate started the presentations with "Bermuda's Bluebirds." Questions such as how bluebirds got to Bermuda may be answered eventually by examining fossil remains in the abundant limestone caves. When farming began on the island, native bluebirds benefited. The inevitable starlings came and also the House Sparrow, both aggressive competitors for nest boxes. Today, bluebirds are totally dependent upon human help in order to survive on the shrinking open space afforded by golf courses and farms. Dr. Wingate continues to champion the bluebird with the help of the National Trust. Steven De Silva, David Wingate's conservation field staff assistant, described his enthusiastic involvement in implementing the bluebird program outlined by his boss.

(Text continued on page 28)



Photograph by Jill Rubinchak

Government Conservation Officer David Wingate made several presentations describing his efforts to preserve Bermuda's native flora and fauna.



Photograph by Jill Rubinchak

American Consul Mr. Ebersole Gaines, Tommy Outerbridge, and Mrs. Gaines, who is holding a porcelain bluebird presented to them by the Bermuda Bluebird Society. The presentation was made during the luncheon held at their home, "Chelston."



Photograph by Jill Rubinchak

Recording Secretary Doug LeVasseur and his wife, Ethel, accept Bermuda cedar wedding cup in honor of their 25th wedding anniversary.



Photograph by Jill Rubinchak

NABS President Sadie Dorber, Bermuda Bluebird Society President Tommy Outerbridge (seated), Dr. Richard Williams, and Lady Langley, wife of Governor Sir Desmond Langley, at Government House.

Andre Dion of St. Placide, Quebec, recounted his efforts to control House Sparrows in his home area. "Bird Control Versus Birth Control" outlined for the audience how his sparrow trapping efforts nearly landed him in jail thanks to zealous but uninformed bird lovers. Following coffee, NABS Research Chairman Kevin L. Berner, assistant professor of Fisheries and Wildlife Technology at SUNY, Cobleskill, New York, reported on research he has been conducting on various types of nest boxes. Interesting findings included a preference by bluebirds for the Peterson nest box (the triangular box designed by Dick Peterson of Brooklyn Center, Minnesota), as well as the use of the shallow experimental Bermudez box by House Finches.

"Ellis Bird Farm: Bluebirds, Bo vines and Big Business" was the intriguing material covered by Myrna Pearman, naturalist at Ellis Bird Farm, Red Deer, Alberta. Myrna's beautiful photography and often humorous narrative covered the founding of the Ellis Bird Farm. Charlie and Winnie Ellis sold their acreage to Union Carbide and cut a deal whereby the farm would remain home to bluebirds and cows—but not to sparrows and starlings.

Dr. Anthony Michaels, resident scientist at the Bermuda Biological Station, described "The Ocean's Role in Global Change." His research, and that of others, is based upon samples taken from the waters near Bermuda which is one of two good sites for studying the ocean, the other being Hawaii. Their findings so far indicate that, although the concentration of carbon dioxide has been rising, earth's inhabitants need not be alarmed because only the "enhanced" greenhouse effect is dangerous and this has not been conclusively proven. Prudence would indicate, however, that we should cut down on the use of fossil fuels.

Following the NABS business meeting, Edward Cattell, one of their past presidents, made a presentation about the "Bermuda Zoological Society and Its Activities." Later, children

from St. David's Primary School displayed their talent by singing an original bluebird song. The bluebird nest boxes on the school ground trail were recycled calabash gourds. They were given a Certificate of Appreciation for their bluebird efforts. The enthusiastic audience response was evidence that with these and other young bluebirders there was hope for the future.

"The Barn Owl in Bermuda: Its Survival on an Oceanic Island" was described by Jeremy Medeiros, trainee park superintendent. Recalling the Barn Owls at his parents' home, he chronicled its tribulations as Bermuda's only raptor. He detailed its beneficial diet of rats, starlings, and sparrows and pointed out that it now often dies as a result of injecting poisons.

"Coral Reef—Symbiosis in an Ocean Desert," by Dr. Clayton Cook, resident scientist at the Bermuda Biological Station, was the final presentation of the afternoon. This talk revealed how enormously productive the reefs are. The water around Bermuda is clear, but the abundant life in the reef is like an oasis in the oceanic desert. Reefs protect the shoreline by breaking the force of the waves. This results in the pink sands which serve as Bermuda's trademark.

David Wingate returned after dinner to recount "Turning the Clock Back on Nonsuch Island." The non-tiring efforts of this conservation giant made a fitting close to the day and the program.

Sunday included an elegant luncheon at the American Consul's home, "Chelston" by the kind invitation of Mrs. Ebersole Gaines. This tiny enclave of the U.S. had its own bluebird population raised in nearby nest boxes.

Monday morning there was a final fascinating look at the flora and fauna of Bermuda as David Wingate led the attendees around Spittal Pond in a post conference field trip. When the conference adjourned, it was with the invitation to meet next year, in September in Minnieapolis, Minnesota at the Fifteenth Annual Meeting. ■

Awards Presented

The North American Bluebird Society annually recognizes individuals and groups who have made major contributions to bluebird conservation. The following award plaques were presented on 12 October 1991 at the Fourteenth Annual Meeting in Bermuda.

Friends of the Bluebirds
Patricia Adain Gowaty
Gerald Hartley
Charlotte Jernigan
L.A. Smith
St. David's Primary School

Friends of the Bluebirds-Group Award

This group was formed in 1975 to carry on the work of the late John Lane and his Brandon Junior Birders. More than 100 trails are spread out across southwestern Manitoba which are maintained by 200 volunteers. Yearly reports are received on 2,000 nest boxes. The Mountain Bluebird is the predominant species, but increasing numbers of Eastern Bluebirds have been exciting for this group.

Patricia Adair Gowaty-Research Award

Patricia has spent approximately 10 years conducting research on the Eastern Bluebird. She has studied monogamy, male parental care, and nest parasitism to nest site density. Many organizations have recognized her extensive research work. The Wilson Ornithological Society presented her the L.A. Fuertes Award for best student proposal on "The evolution of monogamy in Eastern Bluebirds." Ms. Gowaty is a professor at Clemson University.

Charlotte Jernigan-Individual Award

Charlotte, of Wagoner, Oklahoma, has been a devoted bluebirder for more than 10 years. She is a past board member and is now serving on the nominating committee. Her trail around the Fort Huron Lake area is monitored regularly and nestlings are banded. A member of the Speakers Bureau, she travels a three state area presenting programs about bluebirds. In 1986, she was named Wildlife Conservationist of the year by the Oklahoma Wildlife Department. The Jernigans have developed their lawn to assist all birds and wildlife. As a result of their hard work, the grounds are certified by the National Wildlife Federation as an official backyard habitat.

L.A. Smith-Individual Award

Leo, of Brantford, Ontario, has been a bluebirder for about 30 years. He maintains a trail of 512 boxes around southern Ontario. He first started by using farmers' fence posts, but eventually started installing his own sturdy posts. Leo's posts are soaked in creosote and wrapped with metal to discourage predators. Because he lost so many nestlings in cold weather, he designed an insulated box which has been successful in keeping the young birds alive. Monitoring this extensive trail over many miles keeps Leo very busy during the summer, but he's determined to save the Eastern Bluebird.

Gerald Hartley-Individual Award

Gerald Hartley's father was a naturalist who influenced Jerry throughout his childhood to appreciate nature. When Jerry finished his Army duties in 1976, it seemed only natural to try to help the troubled bluebird. With the formation of NABS, Jerry joined the society and has worked faithfully to help the bluebird. He

(Text continued on page 32)



L.A. Smith, of Brantford, Ontario, received an award for bluebird conservation for his exhaustive efforts and innovative techniques.



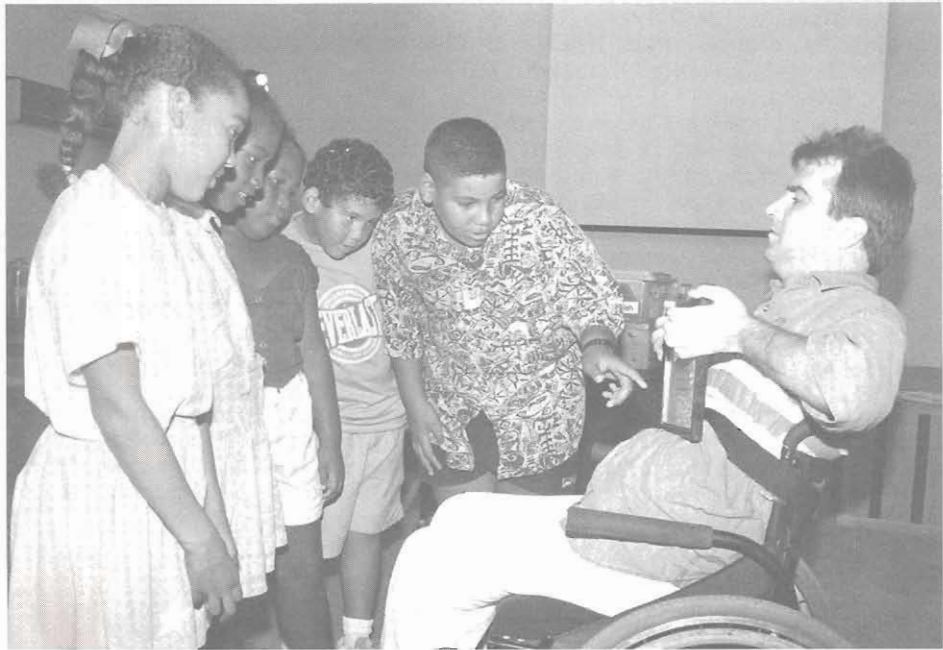
Photograph by Jill Rubinchak

Hazel Skuce, Manitoba, accepts award on behalf of Friends of the Bluebirds from Tommy Outerbridge.



Photograph by Jill Rubinchak

Charlotte Jernigan, of Wagoner, Oklahoma, receives bluebird conservation award from Tommy Outerbridge.



Photograph by Jill Rubinchak

Students of St. David's Primary School receive framed Certificate of Appreciation from Tommy Outerbridge.

served on the Board of Directors and is a member of the Speakers Bureau. He manages a trail of 75 boxes around the New Brockton, Alabama area. He says his biggest contribution and greatest personal enjoyment comes from getting other people involved in the bluebird movement.

St. David's Primary School-Certificate of Appreciation

The encouragement of principal Eddie Wright has resulted in both the students and staff of St. David's Primary School becoming involved in the bluebird movement. Bermuda has a large House Sparrow population and the school has encouraged the use of the large fruit from calabash trees for nesting boxes. When hung in trees, the sparrows won't use the gourds, but the bluebirds readily accept them for nesting cavities. The students have composed their own bluebird song which is presented to the public on many occasions. ■

—Sadie Dorber

SPEAKERS BUREAU REPORT: WEST

Ron Kingston

Oregon: Elsie Eitzroth and Earl Gillis

Elsie Eitzroth of Corvallis and Earl Gillis of Newberg are in an all-out battle to keep the Western Bluebird from becoming a threatened species.

Elsie, a bird rehabilitator and licensed master bander, makes presentations to garden clubs, Audubon meetings, bluebird workshops, and other organizations which request her expertise. She uses NABS slides with some adaptations for the Western Bluebird. The Corvallis *Gazette-Times* reported that the count of Western Bluebirds has dropped dramatically with the number of breeding pairs down from 49 to 16. They also reported that about 130 fledglings survived in 1991 including six orphans Elsie raised.

Fifty miles north in Newberg, Earl Gillis, with help from Brenda McGowan and Pat Johnston, is presenting programs, clinics, and trail walks to attempt to halt the decline of the Western and Mountain Bluebirds. Earl combines NABS slides with some of Hubert Prescott's in his presentations to Scouts, church groups, biologists, Campfire Girls and elementary school students about bluebirds and Barn Owls. Using slides, hands-on workshops, and trail walks, Earl and his friends are reaching out in northwest Oregon to spread the word about bluebirds.

Over 600 people were reached in one year by these staunch supporters whose combined experience in speaking about bluebirds totals 30 years. Thanks to their dedication, help for the Western and Mountain Bluebird is rapidly multiplying.

NOTE: If you received an annual report form for the Speakers Bureau, please return it by the requested 31 January 1992 date. If you did not receive a form and you made one or more bluebird/cavity nester presentations during 1991, please request one immediately from Ron Kingston, Chairman, 3690 Country Lane, Charlottesville, VA 22903-7636. If you prefer, you may telephone your request: (804) 293-5173. ■

Art Credits

Jon E. Boone: 2, 36
Suzanne Pennell: 14 (both), 33, 38

(FLEDGING—Continued from page 17)

cause his maiden flight was stronger than that of the fourth. We walked to the area in which we last saw the fourth fledgling. Since we could not spot him on the ground or in the brush, we feel he made it into the trees.

For two more weeks the fledglings will stay in the trees. They will let their parents and siblings know where they are by their plaintive calls. They will have to be fed for the entire two weeks. The third week they will begin to catch bugs on their own. Siblings from the other two broods may help the parents feed these youngest ones. We saw individuals from earlier broods yesterday. And they were helping. ■

12046 Vale Rd.
Oakton, VA 22124

(TALES—Continued from page 39)

getting closer each year. Three years ago a pair nested across the street from us.

"Last year we had a pair arrive late in the spring and finally nest in a box in the orchard right out from the back door to Audubon's home. The male was double banded, with a standard Fish & Wildlife Service band on his right leg and a red color-band on his left leg. We were unable to catch him to record the number. I assumed they were a young pair because they were very unattentive to the nest. They fledged one young and that was it for the year.

"This year the same male and a mate returned and set up housekeeping in a box that is more isolated from the public. They have raised one brood so far this spring and are now on their second nesting. The bluebirds have indeed returned to John James Audubon's Mill Grove!"

(I can tell Alan is a new "bluebird nut" because his joyful news was followed by 10 exclamation points!) Still, it does make sense, when we realize the joy brought by these wonderful gifts of God's creation. May there be many bluebirds in your life in 1992! ■



Lightning Strikes Tree, Destroys Bluebird Box

In April 1991 we had a bluebird pair with four nestlings in a nest box on a large loblolly pine tree in Scooba (Kemper County), Mississippi. Lightning struck the tree (see photograph). The box was blown apart. Much of it landed about 12 ft. [3.7 m] from the tree. We found the female and two nestlings dead on the ground. A third nestling was alive. We repaired the box, put it back on the tree, and returned the nestling to the box. The male bluebird attempted to feed the nestling, but it soon died. *George Hurst, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, P.O. Drawer LW, Mississippi State, MS 39762-5917.*



Photograph by George Hurst

Box in which Eastern Bluebirds were nesting when lightning struck the loblolly pine tree on which box was mounted.

True Blue

How do you define a bluebird's blue?
Cerulean, powder, sky?
Lazuli, periwinkle, sapphire?
Blues in the night?
Blue in the face?
Blue moon.
Deep blue sea?
Eyes of blue?
True blue.
Delphinium blue?
Lips are blue?
Blue flag?
Violets are blue?
The wind blew?
Blue ribbon.

It almost seems ostentatious;
Such a blue
And a red vest, too?

Lee Billips

God's Comfort

She gave up on people,
gave up on thank yous that were never said,
gave up on loans that were never paid,
gave up on invitations that never came.

She grew tired of other people's claims to God,
replaced Sunday mornings in the pew
with walks down dusty country lanes.

She takes the time she once gave to people,
gives instead to her cobalt fledglings
who show her no fear:
she accepts it as a show of faith.

She thinks,
all that's left of humanity,
all that's left of God is here,
my bluebirds,
paused in the sky,
blue against blue.

She calls the pair "Michael, Gabriel":
God's archangels
sent to keep her company.

Alex Grayton

Blue Feather Award

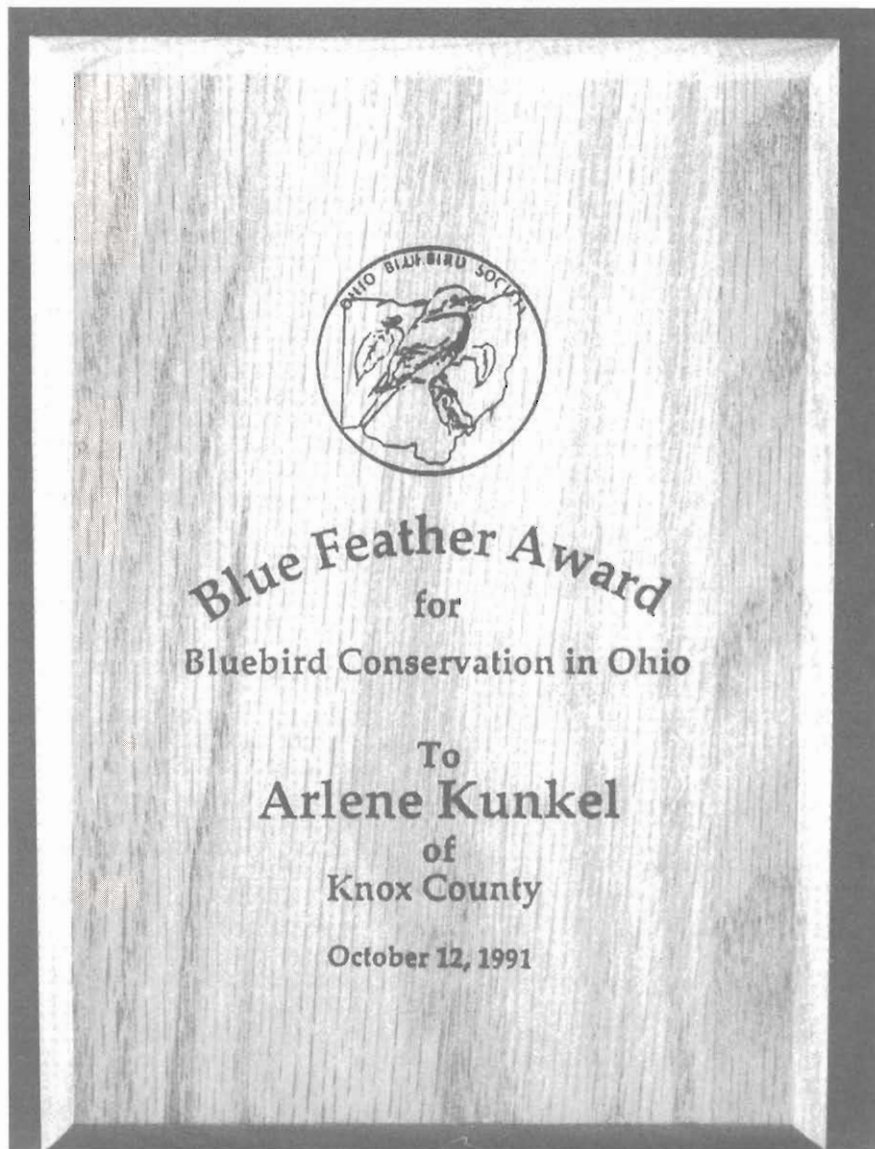
The Board of Directors of the Ohio Bluebird Society initiated the Blue Feather Award to recognize outstanding contributions to Ohio bluebirding.

The Award consists of two parts:

- a laser-incised white oak plaque;
- a hand-carved and painted bluebird primary feather lapel pin.

The recognition was first given this year at the annual meeting of the Ohio Bluebird Society held at Dawes Arboretum in Newark on 12 October. The initial recipient was long-time Ohio bluebirder, Arlene Kunkel, of Ankenytown in Knox County.

—Dean E. Sheldon, Jr.
Greenwich, Ohio



BLUEBIRD EXPRESS

SIALIA welcomes the correspondence of its membership. Bluebird Express should become a forum for all who are interested in communicating their ideas and actions concerning bluebird conservation. We will attempt to publish a wide range of views in a responsible manner. Keep your letters coming!



Dear Editor:

This is a note of gratitude to someone I do not know. A few days ago my husband and I visited Glacier National Park in Montana and the adjoining Waterton Lake National Park in Alberta. In Waterton, we were fortunate to see two pairs of Mountain Bluebirds occupying nesting boxes near a bison paddock. For years I had thought it would be wonderful to be able to see a Mountain Bluebird, but it seemed an impossible dream (in South Carolina!).

To say those beautiful birds "made our day" is an understatement; they "made" the whole trip! The Rocky Mountains and the parks were splendid, but the bluebirds were the icing on the cake. I don't think I will ever forget seeing them. So I am saying "Thank you!" to the bluebird lover who installed the nesting boxes on that fence near the paddock.

Carol Ratzlaff
P.O. Box 2604
Spartanburg, SC 29304

Dear Editor:

In 1990 we put up our first bluebird box in the backyard, attracted a pair of bluebirds, but lost the young birds in a heat wave.

The pair was back in 1991 much to our joy. The box is in full view of our kitchen window. We kept binoculars handy and were rewarded with four fledglings flying for the first time di-

rectly toward our binoculars to land in a small tree nearby.

We have only seen them once since that day. The female, who is nesting again, came back to the box after feeding and was followed by two of her young—a male and a female. The adult female went into the box and the young tried to follow. The female flew to the top of the box, and with her mouth wide open while making a loud hissing sound, she drove the young away.

We are now waiting to see if they will be allowed to help feed the new family after the eggs hatch.

Such beautiful birds!

Clarence and Betty Acker
2145 Richvale Rd.
Nashport, OH 43830

Dear Editor:

I have always been a bluebird enthusiast and started building my own houses when I was a boy over 50 years ago in West Virginia. Since then I have erected houses in other states where I have lived: Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Maryland. Now I am living in Texas. I had not seen a bluebird in the last 14 years; that is, until last summer [1990] when I was at my brother's farm in Tennessee for a family reunion.

There were no bluebird boxes in the area so, during the winter, I built three cedar houses. I sent them to my brother who put them up and immediately got occupants in April. A couple more pairs were flying around. I built

and sent him three more boxes. By the middle of May, two of the new boxes had been occupied and the first nestlings had fledged from the first boxes. He can't recall seeing bluebirds around before and now he has five nesting pairs. He hasn't spaced the houses the recommended distance. Some are quite close, but they have been accepted.

The Eastern Bluebird is supposed to be a winter visitor to Houston. I hope I am lucky enough to see one sometime.

Larry Caudill
16803 Great Glen Dr.
Houston, TX 77084

Dear Editor:

I see a lot of people are trying to eliminate House Sparrows by putting up nest boxes of a shorter design. I feel this is a major mistake. The whole point of the tall nest box was to prevent other predators from entering. Sparrows can be seen during the day and trapped. Raccoons and other animals that are out at night are more of a problem. Even other birds can reach the young birds in these shorter nest boxes.

I am also concerned that some people will lose sight of one major fact about plastic bird houses. They do not decay and rot back into the soil if they fall off a post. Let's not upset ranchers and farmers by putting up future problems. I would hope all boxes would be frequently monitored to locate fallen boxes but that may be wishful thinking.

Glenn F. Savage
940 W. Quarry Rd.
Littleton, CO 80124

Dear Editor:

The Spring 1991 issue contained a fine submission by John Flindlay, III entitled "Photographing Birds—Bluebirds, Too!" (13:69-70). Our own experience along this line is limited by time and equipment.

We have developed a system using two hinged shutters with matching edges of irregular contour where they

meet to get double exposures with full background and no noticeable dividing line. In this way we show a person at arm's length from a bird at its box or on a twig. The latter shot is easy. Just mount a twig on a pole near a feeder, focus on a bunched-up handkerchief at the spot on the twig where you want the bird to pose. Remove the hanky. Sooner or later the bird you want will be there. No problem, but you *do* need a long remote shutter control so you can be at your window or in your car when the bird arrives. Of course, your camera is mounted on a tripod.

We have found that most unusual shots of cavity nesting birds are available if the nest box is moved by stages to a selected background at the most convenient height. An adjustable portable pedestal is indispensable for this. We move the nest box to the desired position just outside our open window and snap the scene with no trouble.

Laurance Sawyer
Rt. 1, Bluebird Lane
Ringgold, GA 30736

Dear Editor:

It has been brought to my attention that in my article, "A Study of Bluebird Organizations and Their Accomplishments," *Sialia* 13(4):123-127, I included inaccurate information. I stated that Keith Kridler had started "Project Bluebird: Trails Across Texas," when, in fact, it was more of a group project inspired by Robert McKinney. I would like to apologize for my inaccurate interpretation of research material.

Joby C. Lawson
1401 Floodman Rd.
Palmyra, NY 14522

Dear Editor:

Please be sure that I get the fall issue of *Sialia*. I do not want to miss out on any issue. I am looking forward to feeding my bluebirds this winter.

Annie L. Ward
Rt. #3, Box 442
Pilot Mountain, NC 27041

Bluebird Tales

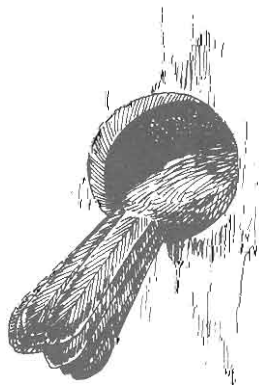
Mary D. Janetatos

Gazing out across the rolling terrain of Bermuda's Government House brought back memories of several years ago when **Tommy Outerbridge** erected the first bluebird nest box on the lovely grounds and a bluebird swooped down immediately to claim it. That event ushered in the Bermuda Bluebird Society. Now NABS' Fourteenth Annual Meeting was convening on the beautiful subtropical isle with the pink sand and turquoise sea. All of us thoroughly enjoyed making the acquaintance of **Lord and Lady Langley** at the tea for which Lady Langley was the hostess, and we enjoyed the reunion of the bluebirders who came to the annual meeting. My roommate was **Betty Phelps** of Elkhart, IN, who had written NABS saying, "Thank you for the help *Sialia* has been bringing us with our new trail of 13 houses. What therapy for a battered ego! We've fledged this season at least one brood, have one house with five half-grown birds, and have three other houses each with eggs." Betty uses an innovative method of communicating by postcard: her photographs become her postcards. It is an effective way to advertise her bluebirding activities.

Bob and Lois Rager, of Rockford, OH, were among the attendees. Bob had written saying: "After much thought I decided to use country roadways and minor state highways in my area. These roads vary from 8 ft. to 15 ft. and crops of corn, soybeans, wheat, and oats are grown in the surrounding fields. NOT prime bluebird territory according to the book. We have electric wires and telephone wires running along some roads but very few small bushes or trees for perches even for fledglings. However, here is my bluebird record for 1991—130 boxes with 284 bluebirds fledged. I have built over 400 boxes. Some are in six different states. I've gotten around 80 other people interested in bluebirds. Also hope to have one of my boxes in Bermuda soon."

Joan Lackey and **Bill Davis**, both of Dayton, OH, and both retired from their State of Ohio Jobs, were enjoying the meeting. Joan had told of their bluebird efforts. "We have really enjoyed the ample time to monitor the 123 nesting boxes on the farms and roads in this area. We've made friends and recruits in the country setting, and to city-dwellers like we are, that's important to our success with our trails."

Other veteran attendees included **Jack and Ruby Finch** of Bailey, NC. Jack is a past



NABS board member who founded Homes for Bluebirds long before NABS came on the scene. Jack is credited with halting bluebird deaths resulting from bluebirds' use of tobacco drying-shed flues. The flue openings were covered at Jack's behest and the problem ceased.

Lillian Files of Tyngsboro, MA, a past president and currently chairwoman of the Nominating Committee, was present. Lil is a prolific bluebird publicist and was chuckling over the success of her story which appeared in *Countryside Magazine's* summer 1991 issue. **Chris Jerome**, also a bluebird, from western Massachusetts, wrote the article entitled "Rebirth of the Blues." It did generate many requests for NABS information as have other "Lil Files" articles. Lil and NABS President **Sadie Dorber** were rooming together. Sadie was doing some relaxing after the months of planning and coordinating she had been through in preparation for the successful Bermuda meeting.

Murilla and Bob Furcolow of Arlington, VA, appreciated the meeting and the chance to compare notes with other bluebirders. In some cases family members came along to enjoy the unique setting as well as the informative talks. This was true of **Charlotte Jernigan**, of Wagoner, OK, whose daughter, **Debbie Falk**, a teacher in Manhattan, KS, was enthralled with Bermuda and with bluebirds. **Dick and Phyllis Williams** of East Moline, IL, entered enthusiastically into the events. Dick at one point questioned the contamination quotient present when bluebirders clean out nests. As a retired veterinarian, Dick has a genuine concern that bluebirders may neglect sanitary precautions and, unwittingly, fall victim to diseases spread to humans from wild birds.

A delightful event at the meeting was the celebration of the 25th wedding anniversary of NABS Recording Secretary **Doug LeVasseur** of Senecaville, OH, and his wife

Ethel Marie. Their gift was a goblet made from Bermuda cedar encircled by two cedar rings carved from the same block of wood but freely circling the stem. What a touching memento!

Grant and Enid Riggle, now of Harrisonburg, VA, were reminiscing about their part in answering the avalanche of mail which resulted from the *Parade Magazine* bluebird article in November 1979. Reunions and new acquaintances were made throughout the meeting and, as with other meetings, the group and the place combined to create a lovely bluebird memory.

Back to the mailbag. Writing last summer, **Dottie Miller** of Graterford, PA, described waiting, watching, waiting, watching for bluebird occupancy of their nest box through late winter, spring, and early summer. Finally, **JULY 22nd**, a male and female appeared. "Delighted! Same day two other females came to the box. Male flew away. They followed. First female and male arrived around noon. Immediately started making nest. Finished on 7/23. Today July 25th, 4 days after arriving, first egg laid. Couldn't believe it. Usually procedure takes longer. My husband and I are so happy. Thought we'd been skipped this year."

A "bad news, good news" item was reported by **Helen Hess** of Goshen, OH: "Our Purple Martins deserted us after 17 years, but fortunately our lovely bluebirds love our 10 acres and have successfully raised at least four young that I know of."

Bluebirds are often "all in the family" and longtime NABS member **Joan Hersey** of Lebanon, PA, initiated her sister **Kathleen** and Kathleen's husband **Jim** into the world of bluebirds. Jim lists their address as Woodbridge, VA, but wrote, "I have three active bluebird trails, one each in Pennsylvania, Springfield and Woodbridge, Virginia. I can account for 132 bluebirds that I've raised since 1983. We are quite active here in Woodbridge and, at least weekly, I am copying info on bluebirds to pass to neighbors and friends. I am amazed at how little so many people know about our bluebird friends!"

Virginia scores again with bluebirders as **Frank M. Winston** wrote from Giles County, VA: "I want you to know that this summer we have had many, many bluebirds on our farm in the mountains of Giles County, Virginia. We have 28 boxes and raised at least seven families of new bluebirds this spring and summer. They seem to be well established now. Five years ago we had none. They seem to be all over the farm area even one-half mile from the nearest nesting box. Perhaps the word has spread that ours

is a nice location to be around. We have an orchard, large garden, pasture fields, two creeks, and plenty of woods. Perhaps the whole combination of things there is attractive to them. We can count five or six of them flying around at most any time of the day."

Moving south to Asheville, NC, **Louise Willmot** described an idyllic retirement picture, "I've enjoyed the Brother and Sister print and one of the signed Pennell Turner prints in my dining area in our spacious retirement home on a small mountain six miles from downtown Asheville. But, to my astonishment, one day last fall, I saw *real* bluebirds in the tree off my dining deck. Then a neighbor put up a novelty bird house, a white church with a blue roof and red windows and door. The birds already had a correct, though unused, standard bluebird house on a wooden pole. Well, the bluebirds moved into the church, nested, and all that. You see, I've never seen bluebirds before—have two pairs of cobalt blue glass ones, but no real ones. Boy, we're so lucky."

Richard and Jean Gilbert of Hatfield, MA, found an aluminum band on a male bluebird killed by a cat. Information they later received indicated that the bird had been banded at "...a federal project [in] Maryland!"

Norman and Zeldia Beth, of Erie, KS, tried coping with cats: "This year we put a plastic drain pipe down over the fencepost and the nest on top, a little higher than I like. But it has whipped the neighbor's cats. So we were real happy."

Barbara Vander Wall phoned NABS from the Duke Power Co. in Huntersville, NC, where she was writing a curriculum for a nature trail. Visitors to the nuclear power plant number 200 persons a day all year and bluebirds figure prominently in the nature trail.

From naturalist **Alan Gehret** at the John James Audubon Sanctuary near Morristown, PA, came this jubilant report: "We finally have bluebirds at the first home in America of John James Audubon! Last year was the first time bluebirds have nested here since Audubon's home and the grounds were purchased as a historic site and wildlife sanctuary by Montgomery County in 1951. Thirty years without these beautiful pieces of sunshine to brighten the fields of Mill Grove.

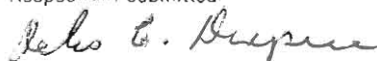
"We have been seriously putting up bluebird boxes for the past five years in an attempt to bring them to the sanctuary. We have been steadily receiving more reports of bluebirds in our area with these reports

(Continued on page 33)

North American Bluebird Society, Inc.
Statement of Cash Receipts and Disbursements
November 1, 1990 through October 31, 1991

Cash Balance November 1, 1990		\$3 506 94
Add		
Cash Received		
Sale of <i>Sialia</i> Magazine	\$25,878 00	
Sale of boxes, books, stationery etc.	44,627 92	
Contributions	31,222 17	
Membership Dues	28,259 40	
Sales Tax Collected	337 28	
Annual Meeting	31 00	
		130 355 77
Less:		133,862 71
Cash Disbursements		
<i>Sialia</i> Magazine	23,915 42	
Boxes, books, stationery, etc.	38,440 06	
Educational material	2,671 31	
Membership fulfillment	12,189 50	
Research	5,932 23	
Salaries	14,607 22	
Expense accounts	4,149 68	
Office supplies	931 31	
Maryland sales tax remitted	320 16	
Annual Meeting	834 95	
Rent	7,000 00	
Federal Withholding tax	1,491 88	
State Withholding tax	926 53	
FICA	2,767 93	
Unemployment tax	249 49	
Bank charges	30 00	
		116,457 67
Cash Balance October 31, 1991		17,405 04
Assets:		
Checking account (Citizens Bank & Trust)	17,405 04	
Savings account (Maryland National Bank)	3,574 70	
Value of Inventory 10-31-91	26,316 59	
Investments-Dean Witter Reynolds Market value 9-30-91	20,027 17	
Net Worth		67,323 50

Respectfully submitted.



Delos C. Dupree, Treasurer NABS

(BOOSTERS—Continued from inside back cover)

William Woodworth
Jeannie Wright

Mrs. Frankie T. Hudson
Harry H. Jelly, Jr.
Mrs. Robert T. Shane

Nestlings

Mrs. Donald Smith
Mary Smith
Gayle Vitale

Mrs. Sara S. Capps

Life Members

Lillian Lund Files
Mrs. Irene S. Frantz
Clark W. Hart
Charlotte Jernigan
Dr. Eugene I. Majerowicz
Barbara L. Matlock
Katrina Renouf
John H. Rogers
Lawrence Zeleny

Mountain Bluebird

J.D. Farr

Western Bluebird

Duncan Mills Restorations
Mrs. A.G. Andrews
Barbara Moore

Eastern Bluebird

Sarkis Acopian
John F. Adams, Jr.
Douglas Allara, D.V.M.
Raymond L. Allison
James Anasiewicz
Robert H. Batchelor, D.V.M.
Hans Beacham
Bella Vista Bluebird Society
Anne Bent
Gary Black, Jr.
Judy Bland
Robert P. Bodine
Warwick P. Bonsal, Jr.
Edith F. Camp
Doris Casper
Cathy Cleaveland
Dr. Angeline S. Cromack
Kristine Crutch
Sophie L. Dangtran
Susan Davens
June Dunn Davis
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Davis
Mrs. Coleman Donaldson
D.K. Douden
Jean G. Eakin
Eastalco Aluminum Co.
Peter Eiger
George Elkins
Peter & Theresa Elmendorf
James A. Fish, Jr.
Elwood L. Fisher
Pat Givens
Ms. Vivian Glenn
George N. Grant
Dennis Grindman
George Gurda
Mr. & Mrs. A.F. Hall
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Founded in 1978, THE NORTH AMERICAN BLUEBIRD SOCIETY is an incorporated non-profit organization determined to increase the populations of the three species of bluebirds on this continent. Inasmuch as the populations of these birds have diminished due to the maladroit actions of human beings, as well as natural disasters, the primary objective of the Society is to educate all who will listen about the importance of preserving these singular creatures in their native environment.

Toward this end, the Society will work, within the bounds of effective conservation, to study those obstacles impeding bluebird recovery; to publish results of those studies; to promote ideas and actions which might reduce the effect of those obstacles; and to obtain a more complete knowledge about bluebird ecology, in the hope of learning more about the ecology of humankind.

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