

Sialia

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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-ahl'-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. 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 juvenal 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.

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About Bluebirds

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COVER

A bluebird monitor inspects a box on his trail as depicted by Art Editor M. Suzanne Probst.

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 Graeoloch Road, Laurel, Maryland 20723.

Presidential Points

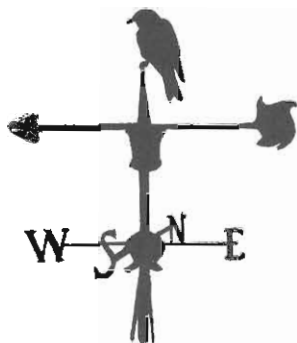
Charlotte Jernigan

The Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the North American Bluebird Society is now a pleasant memory from which attendees will draw inspiration for a long time. Hosted by the Golden Eagle Audubon Society and the Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, the meeting was ably guided from morning to night by Al and Hilda Larson.

Boise, Idaho is rated among the safest cities in the nation, is touched by all four seasons, and is nestled along a river where the desert meets the Rocky Mountains. The city appears to be at peace with its natural environment, and the great outdoors was waiting for us just a few miles away.

Al's bluebirds, both Mountain and Western, were clearly the objects of attention on his trails all day Friday. There were many in our group who were excited about the prospect of seeing these species for the first time. Seeing the scenic beauty on this long, long trail drew us close to much of what nature had to offer on this special day.

Wild lupines and yarrow combined to attract attention to the hillsides. Lovely pink wild roses, Oregon sunshine, balsam root, and Indian paintbrush nodded all along the way. We learned that syringa, a shrub, is the state flower of Idaho. Dick Hjort, of Minnesota, demonstrated an intriguing characteristic of rubber rabbit's-foot. The leaves of this narrow-leaved plant have a great deal



of elasticity. When carefully pulled, they stretch like a rubber band. Lovers of wildflowers often wandered a short distance away to check or get a better look at plants that competed with the birds for attention.

Owls in broad daylight took us by surprise. A Lazuli Bunting, a Calliope Hummingbird, and a MacGillivray's Warbler got their share of admiration too.

Our programs and field trips were too numerous to mention individually here, but every planned minute left its mark. The Snake River Birds of Prey Area is a wildlife refuge that protects one of the world's densest concentrations of these birds. Eagles, falcons, other hawks, and owls hunt, nest, and fledge young there every spring and summer. Our visit to the World Center for Birds of Prey on Sunday was a unique experience that added to our appreciation of these amazing birds.

We do thank our hosts and all who helped them for this brief and wonderful visit to a corner of our country that exists in the shadow of the Rocky Mountains. It points toward the pride taken by Boiseans over decades to sustain the life of a city that extends to visitors a true hometown feeling. We were blessed! ■

Eastern Bluebird Banding: 1900-1920

T. David Pitts

Dr. Joseph J. Hickey (1943) wrote, "Bird study in America has witnessed two revolutions within the past half century." The first of these revolutions was "...the substitution of field glasses for the collector's gun." The second was the "...inauguration of systematic bird banding about 1920." Few, if any, ornithologists of today would disagree with Dr. Hickey. While newer techniques, such as radio-telemetry, radar, and DNA fingerprinting, are now routinely used to study birds, banding is still an essential part of many bird studies.

I have often wondered about the first banded Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*). Who banded it? When was it banded? Where was it banded? How was it captured? What was its fate? While I was not able to definitively answer any of these questions, I did learn that bluebirds were among the first species of birds banded in the United States, and that recoveries of banded bluebirds helped gain support for banding as a tool to study avian biology. When reviewing the literature that described the activities of pioneering bird banders, I realized that the history of bluebird banding could best be appreciated by reviewing the banding history of all species. I believe the information about bluebird banding is more meaningful when considered in relation to other banding activities taking place at the time. A review of some conservation efforts of that era also seems appropriate because many bird banders played a major role in such efforts and because of the impact of conservation legislation on bird banding.

Early Attempts at Bird Banding

People have occasionally been able to identify a particular bird as the result of some deformity or unusual plumage characteristic. John Bachman (1836), for example, mentioned a distinctively marked bluebird that for several years nested in a Purple Martin (*Progne subis*) house. In order to systematically study individual birds, however, it is necessary to apply some unique marker to the bird rather than wait for birds with odd plumages or deformities to appear.

Possibly the earliest banders were medieval falconers who placed rings or other markers on the legs of their captive falcons. One of the first wild birds to be banded and recovered was a heron. It was banded in Turkey on an unknown date and was recovered in Germany in 1710 (Lincoln 1921). About 1830, John J. Audubon tied silver threads around the legs of some nestling Eastern Phoebes (*Sayornis phoebe*); the next year he identified two of these birds, each with its

silver bracelet, nesting near their banding site (Cole 1909; Cottam 1956). The scientific and systematic use of numbered leg bands for bird study began in Denmark in 1899 (Lincoln 1921).

Chronology of Banding in the United States: 1900-1920

In 1901 Dr. Leon J. Cole proposed a system of tagging birds in the United States; however, no action was taken on this proposal (Cole 1909). The first use of numbered bands in the United States occurred in 1902 and 1903 when Dr. Paul Bartsch banded approximately 100 Black-crowned Night-Herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) in Washington, D.C. Dr. Bartsch published a report in 1904 in which he described his activities and some results (Bartsch 1904). Dr. Bartsch was a conchologist and his banding studies did not come to the attention of ornithologists, such as Dr. Cole, until several years later.

In 1904, Mr. Paul Taverner of Detroit, Michigan, proposed the use of aluminum leg bands for bird study (Anonymous 1904); obviously, Mr. Taverner was not aware of the banding work already done by Dr. Bartsch. One of Mr. Taverner's bands was placed on a Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*) in Iowa in 1905. The band was recovered from the bird in Louisiana later that year (Taverner 1906). Mr. Taverner (1906) commented on the need for a single distributing point for bands so as to avoid confusion and expedite record keeping. He agreed to take on this responsibility. While I can find no record of the number of bands Mr. Taverner distributed, apparently only a few of them were actually used (Cole 1909). Several persons were manufacturing bands and placing them on birds at this time, without the knowledge or permission of any biological agencies. While this was legal, it did create problems. For example, two ducks killed in New Jersey in 1907 each possessed a band with letters and a number, but no address (Oldys 1908; Woodruff 1908). At that time Mr. Henry Oldys was Acting in Charge of Game Protection of the Bureau of Biological Survey in Washington, D.C. This agency was the predecessor of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Mr. Oldys and his colleagues must have been frustrated because no agency coordinated waterfowl banding, and it was difficult, if not impossible, to determine who was banding waterfowl and for what reasons.

In 1908 the New Haven, Connecticut, Bird Club purchased and distributed to interested persons a series of numbered aluminum bird bands (Cole 1910). Because the members could not band large numbers of birds, the club enlisted the help of the American Ornithologists' Union (A.O.U.). Dr. Leon Cole, who had proposed the use of numbered leg bands in 1901, was placed in charge of the project. In 1909 over 5,000 bands were distributed, but only about 1,000 were placed on birds in 1909 (Cole 1910). According to Cleaves (1913) the bands

were distributed late in the 1909 nesting season. Apparently none of the records pertaining to these bands still exist (Fred Sibley, pers. comm.). Although I could not determine the exact number, some of these bands were placed on Eastern Bluebirds in 1909. This is the earliest documented record of bluebird banding that I found. Dr. Cole, in his report on 1909 activities (Cole 1910), mentioned in a footnote that a bluebird banded near Portland, Maine, had been killed in Rutherford County, North Carolina. No details were given about the persons who banded and recovered the bird or the dates. This is the first record that I found that describes the recovery of a banded bluebird.

Another Eastern Bluebird banded in 1909 was recovered, but not until 1912. A detailed account of this recovery was published by Cleaves (1913). August Schilling, a farmer of Evansville, Illinois, was walking in his fields on 1 April 1912 when he flushed a shrike from a fence post. The shrike had been feeding on a bluebird, which, to Mr. Schilling's amazement, bore an aluminum band on one leg. Mr. Schilling wrote to the address on the band ("The Auk, New York") and gave the band number and details of his observations. Records showed that the bird had been banded as a nestling on 5 July 1909 by Dr. R.M. Strong at West Allis, Wisconsin. The band had been carried by the bluebird for two years and nine months. *The Auk* is the publication of the A.O.U. I do not know why their address was used on the band, although at this time the A.O.U. was involved in coordination of banding activities. Evansville, Illinois, is 35 miles SSE of St. Louis, Missouri, and approximately 400 miles south of West Allis, Wisconsin, which is now in the southwestern part of the Milwaukee metropolitan area. Very likely the bluebird had wintered farther south and was passing through Illinois when captured by the shrike. The shrike is identified as a Northern Shrike (*Lanius excubitor*) (Cleaves 1913). However, Graber *et al.* (1973) were not convinced

that any published accounts of Northern Shrikes in southern Illinois were accurate. Most likely the bluebird was killed by a Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), which, like the Northern Shrike, frequently captures smaller birds.

The American Bird Banding Association was founded in 1909. Most of the approximately 30 charter members were also members of the A.O.U. which was meeting in New York at that time. Dr. Leon Cole was elected president. This was the first organization in the United States with the primary objective of banding wild birds and recording accurate data on their movements (Cole 1910). During 1910 and 1911, the association accomplished little (Cleaves 1913), although some of the bands previously distributed were being placed on birds.

One of the birds banded in 1911 was an Eastern Bluebird. A nestling banded by Mr. E.H. Baynes on 3 June 1911 at Meriden, New Hampshire, was shot by a boy at Berlin, Maryland, on 20 January 1912 (Cleaves 1912). Meriden is about 40 miles northwest of Concord, New Hampshire. Berlin, Maryland, is on the Delmarva Peninsula, about 20 miles inland from the Atlantic Ocean. The distance between the two towns is approximately 400 miles. Not only was this bird shot, but it was, "Shot together with others of a flock of Bluebirds," (Cleaves 1913). Indiscriminate shooting of birds was common, and not illegal in most states, at this time. Bluebirds were apparently prized targets. In some areas the gunners tied their "harvested" bluebirds to a string which was suspended from the waist of the gunner. Hunting success was measured by the length of the string of dead bluebirds (Lawrence 1889).

In the fall of 1911, the Linnaean Society of New York offered to assist the banding association. The offer was accepted (Cleaves 1913), and the involvement of the Linnaean Society continued until 1920. In 1912 approximately 800 bands from the banding association were placed on birds; 16 of the birds were Eastern Bluebirds. Banders were encouraged to band

nestlings (Cleaves 1913), which I suspect is the age at which most of the bluebirds were banded. During 1912, two banded bluebirds were recovered. As described above, one of these had been banded in 1909 in Wisconsin and the other in 1911 in New Hampshire.

Two other points made by Cleaves in his 1913 article should be emphasized here. First, he noted that even though the bluebird found by Mr. Schilling in Illinois had carried the band for nearly three years, the band had apparently caused "no inconvenience" to the bird. Several persons, including some prominent biologists, had objected to the use of bands on the legs of birds for fear of physical abrasions, slower and less agile flight due to the added weight, or other possible problems. While we now know, with the hindsight gained from the records of millions of banded birds, that properly applied leg bands rarely cause the bird a problem, this was a logical cause for concern in 1910. Mr. Cleaves used this recovery of a bluebird (which, even though small, was familiar to most people) to demonstrate the safety of banding.

The other point I want to emphasize from Cleaves' 1913 article deals with the letter of Mr. Schilling who found the dead bluebird. Mr. Schilling wrote, "Please let me know when the band was put on. There are lots of people [sic] would like to know." In 1912 relatively few people, including biologists, in the United States had seen a bird band, much less found a dead bird with a band on its leg. In addition to his question about when the bluebird had been banded, Mr. Schilling no doubt had questions about how and where the bird had been captured and who banded it. This fascination of the general public, as well as of biologists, remains today. Even in our technological age, people are still curious about the behavior and movements of individual birds.

Banding activities during 1913-1920 are not as well documented as in the period from 1900-1912. The American Bird Banding Association remained functional

until it was taken over by the Bureau of Biological Survey of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in early 1920. The takeover was one of the consequences of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918.

In 1916 the United States and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland signed a convention for the protection of migratory birds in the United States and Canada. This convention was approved by the Senate and House of Representatives on 3 July 1918 and became known as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, one of the most important acts of conservation legislation in the United States. Most people who are familiar with the history of conservation efforts in the United States correctly think of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act as the beginning of federal control over waterfowl hunting. The act regulated hunting dates and bag limits, and closed hunting seasons altogether for species such as Wood Ducks (*Aix sponsa*). Also included among the provisions of this act, however, was the statement that, "...it shall be unlawful to...capture...any migratory bird...included in the terms of the convention..." While the act has been amended and the list of species included has varied slightly, the act established federal control over bird banding in the United States. A federal banding permit was now required to capture and band birds, and one agency, the Bureau of Biological Survey, had the authority to regulate banding, to dispense bands, and to administer the records (Nelson 1919).

Summary

Numbered bird bands were first used in the United States in 1902 on Black-crowned Night-Herons. Some Eastern Bluebirds were banded in 1909; this may have been the first year any bluebirds were banded. Two bluebirds banded in 1909 were later recovered, one the same year and one in 1912. The survival of a bird so small as a bluebird for almost three years even when carrying a leg band helped convince skeptics that bird bands were not harmful. The recovery of

a band from a bluebird that had been shot focused attention on the indiscriminate shooting of birds and helped mold public opinion which was instrumental in the passage of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. ■

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to Nancy Schilling and Allene Becker of Evansville, Illinois, for assisting my efforts to learn about August Schilling and the banded bluebird he found in 1912. I thank Fred C. Sibley, former president of the New Haven Bird Club, for his attempts to locate early banding records. Janet Hinshaw, Van Tyne Memorial Library, University of Michigan, located early records of the Linnaean Society of New York. Most of all, I wish to publicly thank Joanne Solem, editor of *Sialia*, for her assistance and patience (the first draft of this manuscript was prepared in 1991!).

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Orientation and Spacing of Nesting Boxes Used by Eastern Bluebirds and Tree Swallows

Steven G. Parren

Introduction

I examined the direction nesting boxes face (orientation) and spacing between boxes used by Eastern Bluebirds (*Sialia sialis*) and Tree Swallows (*Tachycineta bicolor*) in Vermont. A wide range of nesting box orientations and spacing was provided (see Parren 1992 for more information on study areas and methods). The notion that nesting boxes for bluebirds (and, to a lesser degree, for swallows) should face to the south persists, but convincing evidence for this approach appears to be lacking. Spacing of nesting boxes is an important component of nesting box management. If appropriate distances are chosen, bluebird and Tree Swallow nesting success can be enhanced. Bluebirds will not usually nest closer than 300 feet (91.4 m) to another pair of bluebirds, but swallows will nest much closer than this to bluebirds and to other Tree Swallows. Having some pairs of boxes 20 to 25 feet (6.1 to 7.6 m) apart is commonly recommended to allow bluebirds and Tree Swallows to nest together while preventing Tree Swallows from occupying all boxes.

Orientation of Nesting Boxes

Pinkowski (1976 p. 550) stated that "significantly more cavities (22) opened at 135° N and 150° N than would be expected by chance ($\chi^2 = 7.7$, $P < 0.01$)" in his study of Eastern Bluebirds nesting in trees. His article probably contributed to the belief that bluebird nesting boxes should face in a southerly or southeasterly direction to enhance nesting even though he stated that the southeastern exposure was probably due to a random selection of available woodpecker cavities in Michigan.

Using information from my study of nesting boxes in Vermont, I found that Eastern Bluebirds did not choose boxes facing in a southerly direction (90° N to 270° N) more than chance ($\chi^2 = 0.14$, $P = 0.705$). Only 30 of the 78 occupied boxes faced in a southerly direction. Narrowing my search to the 135° N to 150° N range reported by Pinkowski (1976), and using Yates' correction for small cell size, this southeastern

orientation did not appear to be used more than chance ($\chi^2 = 1.58$, $P = 0.211$). Only six boxes used by bluebirds faced to the southeast. Lumsden (1986) reported that two of three bluebird pairs nested in boxes which faced north in Ontario, and bluebirds have used north-facing boxes on my property in Vermont.

Based on 59 Tree Swallow nestings in his paired box study in Ontario, Lumsden (1986) concluded that Tree Swallows preferred to nest in south-facing boxes. He observed that 39 (66.1%) of the nestings occurred in boxes facing south. In my study, 84 (63.6%) of the 132 Tree Swallow nestings were in boxes that faced in a southerly direction (90° N to 270° N). When the fact that 60.9% of all available boxes faced in a southerly direction was factored in, selection of south-facing boxes by Tree Swallows was not significantly different from chance ($\chi^2 = 0.60$, $P = 0.443$). Like Munro and Rounds (1985) and Rendell and Robertson (1989), I found that Tree Swallows displayed a lot of variability in their choice of nest sites.

The idea that south-facing boxes are most beneficial to nesting bluebirds and Tree Swallows seems to be a waning, though persistent belief. Local conditions that might influence the impact of nesting box orientation, such as a prevailing wind, are likely to vary among locations. In general, using good judgment based on knowledge of local conditions is probably the most prudent action. When in doubt, I recommend facing boxes toward open habitat, but not roads, and in directions that aid monitoring of nesting.

Spacing of Nesting Boxes

Spacing of nesting boxes that accounts for territorial behavior and nesting site competition by bluebirds and swallows has been successfully employed in many areas. Several authors have reported on the value of using paired nesting boxes (Prigge 1981, 1982; Prescott 1982; Gardiner and Stiles 1985). The Bluebirds Across Vermont network recommends spacing boxes for bluebirds 300 feet apart to lessen bluebird-bluebird conflict, and pairing of boxes 20 to 25 feet to manage bluebird-swallow competition. The (Minneapolis) Bluebird Recovery Program offers similar recommendations. Their 1986 Bluebird Directory states that "Tree Swallows will not normally nest closer than 50 to 70 feet (15.2 to 21.3 m) apart." Rendell and Robertson (1989) calculated that 89 feet (27.1 m) was the average distance between nesting Tree Swallows in their Ontario study.

There is widespread agreement that bluebirds will not usually nest closer than 300 feet to another nesting bluebird pair. I have seen recommendations, however, for nesting box spacing of only 100 feet (30.5 m). Because swallows are more likely to tolerate other swallows within 100 feet, this could potentially allow swallows to occupy all boxes.

I examined nesting box spacing for distances of 1000 feet (304.8 m) or less in an attempt to verify some of the recommendations above. It is clear from Table 1 that bluebirds do generally separate themselves by 300 feet or more

(average: 574 feet [175.0 m]). Only four boxes occupied by bluebirds were closer than 300 feet. Two were 270 feet (82.3 m) apart, and two were 110 feet (33.5 m) apart and partially separated by a building. Tree Swallows often nested within 300 feet of other Tree Swallows and bluebirds, and nested within 100 feet half of the time. Since bluebirds did not nest within 100 feet of another bluebird pair, spacing boxes 100 feet apart would give Tree Swallows a competitive edge.

Within 50 feet (15.2 m) of nesting Tree Swallows, 18.3% of bluebirds but only 6.5% of Tree Swallows nested (Table 1). This rate of nest occupancy was significantly different using Yates' correction ($\chi^2 = 3.98$, $P = 0.047$). Only a single pair of Tree Swallows nested within 25 feet (7.6 m), whereas four bluebird nestings were within 25 feet of a nesting Tree Swallow. I have received reports, however, of Tree Swallows nesting quite close, which may be the result of limited nesting sites.

Conclusions

The direction a nesting box faces does not seem to affect use by Eastern Bluebirds or Tree Swallows. Nesting box orientation should be decided based on knowledge of local conditions and ease of observation. Bluebirds did usually nest at least 300 feet from another bluebird pair. Pairing nesting boxes within 50 feet should help to discourage Tree Swallows from using all available boxes. Current recommendations of 20 to 25 foot pairing of boxes to manage bluebird-swallow competition and placement of boxes (or pairs of boxes) at 300 foot intervals to limit competition among nesting bluebirds seems appropriate. If nesting boxes are placed about 100 feet apart, Tree Swallows will have more nesting site choices than bluebirds. ■

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank the North American Bluebird Society and Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department for past support of a nesting box habitat study, information from which allowed me to develop this article.

Table 1. Numbers of nesting boxes occupied by Eastern Bluebirds (BB) and Tree Swallows (TS) in Vermont by distance.

Species pairing	Distance between nesting boxes			
	≤25 ft	≤50 ft	≤100 ft	≤300 ft
BB-BB (n = 14)	0	0	0	4
TS-TS (n = 92)	2	6	41	83
BB-TS (n = 60)	4	11	31	48

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(BANDING--Continued from page 126)

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A Bird in the Bush

Karen Blackburn

Donna Murphy of Herndon, Virginia, recently wrote to NABS with a word of warning concerning Leylandi Cypress (*Cupressocyparis leylandi*). Much to Donna's dismay, she has found that the hedgerow of Leylandi Cypress, which she had planted as a privacy screen, has grown up into a major attraction for House Sparrows. Donna states: "These plants are a virtual rookery for the House Sparrow...the foliage is so dense and the sparrows nest so high up that it is impossible to remove their nests by hand." Due to her experiences with Leylandi Cypress, Donna's desire is to discourage the planting of this exotic species. "I am concerned that the widespread planting of this vigorous tree is going to be the final nail in the coffin of our bluebirds...it's time to tell people." And so we have, by passing along Donna's observations and warnings concerning these trees.

On a lighter note, I would like to share a report about one of our desirable cavity nesters--the Tree Swallow. Many years ago I had read that these swallows delight in swooping down to take white feathers which are tossed up in the air for them. In the spring of this year, thanks to the industrious efforts of the House Sparrows that kept trying to nest in our boxes, I ended up with a plentiful supply of beautiful white feathers. I have no idea where the sparrows found all these feathers, but each time I cleaned out their nests from the boxes, I would save the feathers in case swallows eventually came to nest. And come they did, not only to build their nest, but also to pluck from the air the white feathers that I tossed to them. It was a wonderfully joyful experience as the swallows swooped around me gathering feathers from the air and returning to their nest box with their prizes! So, thanks to the House Sparrows



for providing all those white feathers and special moments spent with swallows.

As always, we invite you to send your observations on plant use by wildlife. Tell us about your plantings too--what has worked (or not worked) in your wildlife garden? Please send your reports to Karen Blackburn, 185 Mica Hill Rd., Durham, CT 06422. Our thanks to Donna Murphy for sharing her observations with all of us. ■

Songwriter Walter Kent Dies

The AP wire service reported in early March that songwriter Walter Kent died in Los Angeles at the age of 82. For bluebirders, especially those able to recall the songs of the World War II era, one of his songs was memorable. He wrote the inspiring "Blue Birds Over the White Cliffs of Dover" which became the symbol of hope and resistance during the dark days in the European theater before the successful invasion of the continent. The poetic license that was involved did not bother most of the people who sang the song.

Correction

The photograph in *Sialia* 16(2):69 of the Mountain Bluebird was erroneously credited. The picture was taken south of Stanford, Montana by Dave Maloney. We regret the error.

Bluebird Exchange

This feature extracts items from the newsletters of bluebird organizations and the periodic reports of groups with bluebird or cavity nester projects. Please be sure this editor or NABS is on your mailing list. We want to include your material!

ALBERTA--*Ellis Bird Farm, Ltd.*, Spring-Summer 1994

Duncan Mackintosh received the nineteenth Loran L. Goulden Memorial Award for outstanding work on the natural history of Alberta. His dedication to the conservation of Mountain Bluebirds is well known. The success of Mountain Bluebird Trails in Canada and the United States is testament to his hard work and shared knowledge. He has also been active for many years in the Lethbridge Naturalists' Society.

Alec and Liz Bilesky of Sherwood Park reported that they have been able to drastically reduce the problem of birds striking windows by covering problem windows with window screening. The screening is attached with duct tape which is effective even in cold temperatures. Tape top first, then bottom and then sides. The tape makes for easy screen installation and removal.

Editor Myrna Pearman notes that there have been reports of reduced funding for bluebird conservation in some parts of North America. Budgetary constraints are certainly one of the reasons for cutbacks. Ironically, the very success of bluebird conservation efforts is another. This comes at a time when some other cavity nesting species continue to decline. Myrna challenges all bluebirders to accommodate at least one other native cavity nesting species [other than House Wrens, we presume] on any trail.

Brown-headed Cowbirds always lay their eggs in the nests of other birds; recent research reported in the *Wilson Bulletin* indicates European Starlings may exhibit this same behavior. Thirty-six out of 241 starling nests examined were parasitized by another starling.

--*Ellis Bird Farm, Ltd.*

BERMUDA--Letter

The Bermuda Bluebird Society has been renamed the Bluebird and Longtail Society with a new slogan, "Conservation Over Land and Sea." Tommy Outerbridge continues to monitor his 60 box bluebird trail but lacks able-bodied, enthusiastic volunteers. Problems for bluebirds on this small island are legion. Tommy has recently started a crusade to trap starlings and sparrows. Only partly tongue-in-cheek he asks if anyone has a recipe for cooking sparrows. "I find it's the best way to get the locals interested, when you mention they are good to eat."

--*Tommy Outerbridge*

IOWA--*Wings*, Spring 1994

Barbara Boyce addresses the topic of cutting walnut trees in state parks. Flood damage was the reason given for the urgency in removing and selling 86 walnut trees from Ledges State Park. Trees in other parks not subject to flood damage were also sold and removed. Mature trees necessary to maintain the biodiversity found only in old-growth forests are frequently looked on solely as a crop or are seen as "old and deteriorating" by commercial interests and some governmental agencies. [This is not a problem limited to Iowa.]

Kathy Cuddeback details her horrifying experience with a case of Lyme disease which was undiagnosed for as long as 15 years. Diagnosis clues and treatment are detailed. Most bluebirders are at least vaguely aware of the risks from infected ticks. Knowing proper precautions and possible symptoms should be the responsibility of all monitors.

Lon Drake discusses habitats for wildlife. Included in his article are suggestions about planting trees, creating food plots and flower patches, establishing grit supplies, and providing water.

--*Johnson County Songbird Project*

MAINE--Downeast Bluebird, Spring 1994

The membership of the Bluebird Association of Maine (BAM) now stands at about 350 in its fourth year. As might be expected, growth is a two-sided coin and has created some logistical problems. There is ample opportunity for enthusiastic volunteers to fill a variety of offices.

BAM member Fred Gralenski of Pembroke was presented with Schoodic Audubon Society's Conservation Award for his enthusiastic bluebirding efforts.

Beakless Bluebirds and Featherless Penguins is reviewed by LP. It is the story of two bluebirds who were severely wounded by House Sparrows and then rescued by an Episcopal nun, Sister Barbara Ann. She raised the birds (with permits) and described the joy they brought to her and her community.

The 1993 bluebird census results for the state are summarized. About 300 bluebirds were fledged from 87 nestings out of 689 boxes monitored. Problems with monitoring, reporting, and compiling are being addressed for the 1994 season.

A chart entitled "Bluebird Vocabulary" is reproduced in which various songs and vocalizations are described and defined in context. No author is listed.

Linda Janilla's Bluebird Banquet is reproduced without credit.

A list of licensed bird banders and sources for bluebird boxes is included.

--Bluebird Association of Maine

MINNESOTA--Bluebird News, May 1994

A warning about the danger of bird baths in *extremely* cold temperatures is detailed. The Spring 1994 *Loon* reported that Mourning Doves had been observed with iced tails which hindered flight; they also had nail and toe losses. Various methods can be utilized to allow birds to drink from a birdbath without getting into the water during periods of abnormally low temperatures.

The index for July 1989-February 1994 appears in this issue.

Dick Peterson has come up with another way to adjust the entrance hole size of his nest box under different conditions. A piece of 5 3/4 in. spring steel bent at right angles mounted below the entrance can be set in one of three grooves cut into the wood. A long fishline attached to the top of the wire allows the monitor to operate the wire to change the open position to closed in order to trap a House Sparrow after it enters the box. The middle position allows the young to be fed while preventing their early fledging.

--Bluebird Recovery Program

MONTANA--Montana Bluebird Trails 1993 Fledging Report

Art Aylesworth reported that Mountain Bluebird Trails in 1993 fledged 16,118 bluebirds, an all-time high. The trails included 4,793 boxes of which 3,030 contained active nests. Those boxes produced a total of 12,852 Mountain Bluebirds and 3,266 Western Bluebirds. Each of the last two years has seen more than 16,000 bluebirds fledge. Almost 100 bluebirders in western Montana, northern Idaho, and Nevada cooperated in monitoring these productive trails.

--Mountain Bluebird Trails

NEBRASKA--Bluebirds Across Nebraska Newsletter, Spring 1994

Welcome to a new state organization which has been formed to aid the bluebird! Bluebirds Across Nebraska (BAN) is an incorporated, non-profit organization made up of "concerned citizens dedicated to increasing the population of bluebirds and other native cavity nesting birds in Nebraska." They have the encouragement and support of the Nongame Wildlife Program of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

BAN has benefited from the experience and advice of nearby bluebird groups, particularly the Bluebird Recovery Program. BAN has a one page handout, an informational booklet describing "bluebird basics," an introductory letter to new members from President Steve Eno, and a quarterly newsletter. They will take over compilation and publication of Nebraska's Bluebird Directory.

Nebraska contains both Eastern Bluebirds and Mountain Bluebirds. BAN plans to hold statewide conferences as well as regional workshops.

--*Bluebirds Across Nebraska*

NEW YORK--*Bluebird News*, Spring '94

Although the format for this year's Northeast Great Outdoors Show was changed, results were the same for bluebirding. It was a highly successful way to encourage interest in bluebirds and other New York state wildlife.

Kevin Berner summarized the life history and management of one of the most frequent users of nest boxes: Tree Swallows.

The Route 20 Project is updated. This ambitious trail is in its beginning stages.

Ray Arendt details bluebird recovery on Long Island. Members of the South Forks Natural History Society have been actively encouraging bluebird conservation since 1986. Their promotional efforts seem to be paying off in ever-increasing interest. Larry Penny says that on the east end of Long Island, "People out here are competing for bluebirds. They want bluebirds badly, more than a swimming pool or tennis court."

Ed Tuthill of Essex County, New York was presented with a Recognition Award by NYSBS President Ray Briggs on 5 March 1994 at the Essex County Bluebird Seminar in Westport in recognition of Ed's bluebird conservation efforts.

Ray Arendt describes nest box mounting alternatives addressing height, direction, posts, and attachment.

--*New York State Bluebird Society*

---*B.C.N. NEWS*, June 1994

This mailing includes a survey form for reporting Broome County nest box results. It also includes one page signs that can be posted on bulletin boards. The bottom of the computer-generated poster includes a dozen labels that can be removed for the convenience of anyone interested in reporting results or requesting a summary form.

--*Broome County Nestbox Network*

----*Schoharie County Bluebird Society Newsletter*, March 1994

Kevin Berner summarizes the 1993 nest box results. As predicted, bluebird results were down substantially; in fact, fledging rates were the lowest since 1988. Two cold springs and the "Blizzard of 1993" were the likely major causes. All native cavity nesters also showed declines. A White-breasted Nuthatch nest with young in a hollow log nest box in Cobleskill was noteworthy. The young did not fledge, unfortunately, due to raccoon predation.

Nan Stolzenburg summarizes habits of "The Jenny Wren" which is the common, often pesky, House Wren. She discusses habitat, nesting activities, competition, and recommendations. The latter follow: make sure you have an adequate number of nest boxes so any cavity nesters have a choice, place boxes in correct habitat, and don't count on removing "dummy" wren nests in order to give bluebirds a chance. Do not forget that wrens are protected by law.

--*Schoharie County Bluebird Society*

NORTH DAKOTA

The Bluebird Recovery Project is sponsored by the North Dakota Nongame Wildlife

Program and the North Dakota chapter of The Wildlife Society.

The North Dakota Bluebird Directory 1993-1994 was published in March 1994. It includes a wealth of information about establishing, maintaining, and monitoring boxes and dealing with predators. Included is a survey form, a list of items for sale, and the names, addresses and fledging totals of bluebird cooperators.

--*Bluebird Recovery Project*

OHIO--*Bluebird Monitor*, Summer 1994

Membership Chairperson Joan Lackey is heading an undertaking dubbed "Each member gets a member" to increase Ohio Bluebird Society membership.

In his column Dean Sheldon makes the case for monitoring nest boxes.

An article reprinted from the *Jack Pine Warbler* by Allen Bower describes his success in building a flicker nest box and fledging those woodpeckers.

Wayne Davis suggests that erecting new nest boxes should probably be done in the fall. The weather is pleasant, the ground is not frozen, and additional boxes allow wintering bluebirds more roosting options.

--*Ohio Bluebird Society*

ONTARIO--*The Curlew*, 1993 Bluebird Report

Hazel Bird summarizes the 1993 bluebird report for the Willow Beach Field Naturalists' Bluebird Project near Harwood.

Bluebirds were again hard hit. In 1992 many young were lost in the wake of the Mt. Pinatubo eruption. In 1993 the major March blizzard along the East Coast caught many migrating bluebirds who thus did not return to their breeding areas in Ontario. Tree Swallows, on the other hand, did exceptionally well.

Two interesting notes for the season. Hazel Bird reported finding a Little Brown Bat on 7 May sleeping inside a bluebird box. She also watched a Loggerhead Shrike attack a flock of bluebirds. The predator and bluebirds disappeared from view so the outcome was unknown. [In some parts of North America, this shrike is in more need of protection than bluebirds. If only shrikes would develop a taste for some pest species...]

--*Willow Beach Field Naturalists'*

OREGON--*Western Bluebird Newsletter*, April 1994

Monitors are reminded to caulk ventilation slots with paper towels during early cold, wet spells. Mealworms should be used as a supplement when insects are scarce.

Earl Gillis reported the Barn Owls in his barn had nested a month earlier than usual. The pair had seven owlets.

--*Hubert Prescott Western Bluebird Recovery Project*

VERMONT--*Bluebirds Across Vermont Newsletter*, Spring 1994

Publicity has been good with several articles generating over 100 inquiries. The 1993 nest box results showed 783 Eastern Bluebirds fledged, 1066 Tree Swallows, 61 House Wrens, and 81 Black-capped Chickadees. A total of 160 members returned forms covering 1248 boxes.

Greg Hennemuth reported on the Lake Region Union Bluebird Trail. He started with one box in 1987. His biology classes began building and erecting boxes so that the trail now consists of 144 boxes. Consistent monitoring is the biggest problem. The community and the science students are seeing the benefits in a definite increase in bluebirds.

Comments were reported from the annual survey forms. Where there were questions of widespread interest, they were answered.

--*Bluebirds Across Vermont*

1993 SPEAKERS' BUREAU REPORT

Ron Kingston

In January 1994, 315 questionnaires were sent to individuals and organizations of the NABS Speakers' Bureau. Some of the questions asked were the following: What props do you use? What brochures do you hand out? What slides, videos, or films do you use? What works for you? What doesn't work for you? To what organizations do you present your programs? What is the age of your audience? One hundred and three forms were returned. A total of 534 programs were given in 1993.

Some of the props speakers are using are these: the tape of the bluebird song; the Noel guard; photos of a Blue Jay, bluebird, and Indigo Bunting; a variety of nest boxes and plans; bluebird feeders; books; roosting boxes; a Huber sparrow trap; posters of Little Brother--Little Sister; natural foods; wood carvings; and pictures of a bluebird killed by a House Sparrow.

Forty states, six provinces, and Bermuda all have speakers. We could always use more, especially in the southwestern part of the United States. Please contact NABS if you are speaking about bluebirds or know anyone who is if their name does not appear on the list in this article.

Each state and its number of speakers is listed below: Alabama-5; Arkansas-3; California-1; Connecticut-7; Florida-4; Georgia-20; Iowa-8; Idaho-4; Illinois-26; Indiana-5; Kansas-3; Louisiana-1; Massachusetts-3; Maryland-13; Maine-5; Michigan-5; Minnesota-3; Missouri-2; Mississippi-4; Montana-10; North Carolina-8; North Dakota-1; Nebraska-1; New Jersey-6; Nevada-1; New York-40; Ohio-16; Oklahoma-6; Oregon-4; Pennsylvania-25; South Carolina-2; South Dakota-2; Tennessee-5; Texas-7; Virginia-20; Vermont-4; Washington-2; Wisconsin-6; West Virginia-4; Wyoming-2.

Speakers in the Canadian provinces are Alberta-4; British Columbia-3; Manitoba-2; Ontario-8; Quebec-1; Saskatchewan-2.

Bermuda has one speaker.

Comments made by some of the speakers which I thought were of interest are as follows:

Lorna Beasley of Live Oak, FL stated that she uses training aids. She passes

around books (*The Bluebird*, *National Geographic* field guide, Roger Tory Peterson's bird guide) and also hands out the brochures that NABS sends to her. She also does cavity nester programs using her own slides. She especially likes the one with two baby screech-owls looking out of the box at the same time.

Karen Lippy of the Codorus State Park campground in Hanover, PA always posts her weekly monitoring and invites campers to accompany her on the trail. Sometimes she has as many as 20 people accompany her. She gives out old *Sialia* magazines, NABS literature, and PA Bluebird Trails in State Parks pamphlets. She gives programs at Codorus Park, the Earth Day Celebration, and to retirement homes. The Earth Day Celebration brought in over 2000 people.

Art Kennell of Fairfield, PA has organized a birdathon for all fifth grades in his county. He has a slide program in which he teaches bird identification. The winner in each room gets a bird identification guide--or book. The big winner gets a pair of binoculars. His slides pertain to cavity nesters.

Marion Smith and Vern Johnson, founders of the six year old 200 member Southern Interior Bluebird Trail Soc. of Oliver, B.C., Canada, use the NABS slide program, "Where Have All The Bluebirds Gone?" along with display boards, boxes, and old nests. They state that most videos are too long for their needs.

The Genesee Country Nature Center of Mumfordsville, NY has a day-long event in which they show their own slide program. They display nest boxes, different nests, sparrow traps, and predator guards. They hand out NABS and New York State Bluebird Society brochures.

Carbon County Environmental Education Center of Jim Thorpe, PA uses the NABS slide program and the video, "Profiles of Nature: Bluebirds" from the Discovery channel, each year in April for the annual

nest box building program. More than 60 people of all ages participate and the program is very well received.

Mary Reed of Wildwood, TX uses bird houses, suet recipes, pictures, and posters along with her own slides to tell the bluebird story. She says that she enjoys what she does very much and also enjoys the varied ages of people interested in bluebirds.

Myrna Pearman of the Ellis Bird Farm, Ltd. in Lacombe, Alberta, Canada gives numerous programs on the Mountain Bluebird to schools, scouts, guides, junior forest wardens, and adults. She uses free-standing displays and slides taken at Ellis Bird Farm.

John Rogers gives programs in Brewerton, NY where he says, "One very successful format for a one and a half hour program for young people has been a 45 minute slide program followed by 45 minutes of nest box construction from pre fab lumber."

Betty Nichols of Middletown, MD writes, "Young people are high on my list of priorities but I enjoy addressing all age groups. My presentation is one of my own creations--'Bluebird Adventures,' which includes trail establishment, and, most importantly, the monitoring of boxes. I have found that people enjoy putting up boxes, but they have little or no knowledge of close observation. These are the people I need to address. My talk is spiced with good humor and stories about my bluebirds."

John Kiser of Raphine, VA uses bluebird nesting boxes, various plans and his Augusta County Bird Club flyers along with the NABS slide program to present many programs to scouts, young birders, Ruritan Clubs, church groups, and the Farm Women Club of Augusta County. He sometimes uses the video "Profiles of Nature--Bluebirds."

Hobart Ellifritt of Clarksburg, WV shows the video "Bluebirds--Bring Them Back" followed by a lengthy question and answer session at which he explains the bluebird story and gives away bluebird boxes. He gave away 125 boxes to school children last year.

Dorene Scriven of Minneapolis, MN shows one of her many videos and has the Minnesota Bluebird Recovery Program display along with their brochures as well as NABS', many nest boxes, nests and eggs displays, traps, and newsletters. She especially likes to be at the Earth Day Fair, Environmental Fair and the State Fair.

Susan Fisher of Columbia, SC uses nest boxes as props and shows the video "Bluebirds--Bring Them Back." She enjoys senior citizen groups and school children. She's doing her best to drum up bluebird excitement in South Carolina.

Stephen Garr of Mt. Juliet, TN states that he uses NABS brochures, recipes for bluebird food, plants for bluebirds and shows a video while people are waiting for the slide program to start. He says, "A large number of my audience is interested in maintaining one or two bluebird houses. A slide presentation that would cover natural foods to plant in their yard to make a nature sanctuary, I believe, would be very beneficial."

Brenda McGowan of Sherwood, OR says that she uses maps, slides of different types of boxes, slides of the Western Bluebirds, and deals with habitat, diet, predation, and differences in the three species. A question and answer period always follows the lecture and slide show.

Jean Buchanan of the Owl's Hill Nature Ctr. in Brentwood, TN displays nest boxes, a tree section with woodpecker holes, nests, eggs, and feathers. Her 80 slides are half from NABS and half from the grounds at the nature center. The third Saturday of January is a Bluebird Day which is enjoyed by people of all ages.

Robert D. Williams of Markleville, IN brings bluebird boxes, some of his own bluebird paintings, and personal tips for birders to his programs. He shows the NABS slide program and was very successful last year in reaching more than 1,000 people. He is a retired physician with 15 years of bluebird experience and says that he is booked with programs into 1995.

Ken Jankowski of Valparaiso, IN brings

a PVC box, a slot box, a one gallon jug box, and a Bauldry box to his programs and shows a video. He tells his audience that he puts chopped peanuts, raisins, peanut butter, and mealworms out for his bluebirds in the winter. He works the Porter County Fair and the Spring Fever Outdoor Show with great success.

Marcy Hoepfner of Metamora, IL hands out the words to the "Bluebird Song" so the audience can sing along with the tape. She says, "This is always a big hit." She displays books that she recommends for people to read and learn much more than she can possibly tell them in the usual allotted time of one hour or forty-five minutes. She says that if she can just reach one person out of a group of twenty or so she feels like it was well worth her effort. She thinks the NABS slide program is great and uses the audio

tape with it sometimes.

Kenneth Schar, who also lives in IL, gives programs in and around Libertyville to the Lake Forest Open Lands Workshop and many other groups. He has on display Peterson, slot, PVC, tree branch, and four by four boxes. He also has House Sparrow and starling eggs to show the eggs which are not protected by law.

Lorne Smith of Owen Sound, Ontario, Canada shows the NABS slide program and is delighted to give the program to the Ontario Eastern Bluebird Society and the attendees of the Folk Festival.

Joe Sedlacek of Johnson City, NY near Binghamton sums it up best when he wrote on his form, "Hopefully these [programs] will educate the public and produce many bluebirds for all of us to enjoy."

The following speakers returned their 1993 questionnaires, which helps us ascertain what is going on in their area, what works well in programs and what doesn't. We want to thank all the speakers for their hard work and stalwart effort to educate the public about bluebirds. The 1994 questionnaires will be sent in January 1995, so please keep a log of your 1994 programs and send the forms back as soon as possible. Thanks for all your work and help on behalf of the bluebirds.

Diane Allison	Stephen Garr	Thomas Meyer
David Alpert	Geauga Park District	Jill Miller
Art Aylesworth	Genesee Country Nature Ctr.	Mary Miller
Lorna Beasley	Mary Jo Gibson	Theodore Morus, Jr.
Kevin Berner	Elma Goodman	Jerry Newman
Bob Bodine	Ed Gray	Betty Nichols
Rosemarie Borges	Chuch Gregory	Myrna Pearman
Alan Boulton	Donna Hagerman	Mary Reed
Karen Brady	Richard and Marlys Hjort	Evelyn Rifenburg
Beatrice Broughton	Marcy Hoepfner	John Rogers
Jean Buchanan	Svante Humbia	Larry Rohrbaugh
Scott Butterworth	Jerry Hunefeld	Derrell Rush
Carbon Co. Environmental Educ. Ctr.	Ken Jankowski	Jean Rutan
Chas. B. Cooper	Charlotte Jernigan	Mona Rutger
LuAnn Craighton	Patricia Johnston	William Ryan
Elaine Crossley	Barbara Joyce	Fred Sahl
Mary Cutler	Art Kennell	Kenneth Schar
Francis Dorer	Gord Kingsmill	Pat Schlarbaum
Nancy Duncan	John Kiser	Dorene Scriven
Eleanor Dunham	Gary Knipling	Joseph Sedlacek
Hobart Ellifritt	Randy Kreil	Rev. Hal & Helen Simpkins
Elsie Eltzroth	Donna Legare	Ann Smith
Michael Farrell	Karen Lippy	Lorne Smith
Lillian Files	Jean Lister	Marion Smith
John Findlay, III	Duncan Mackintosh	Trudy Smith
Susan Fisher	Joan Marmet	Barbara Stinson
Patricia Folley	Charles Mauldin	Wayne Svoboda
Max Forbes	Kevin McCurdy	Barbara Teiber
Mary Ford	O.D. McDaniel	Jean Tierney
Warren Frey	Brenda McGowan	Henderson Traylor

Laurance Sawyer

Laurance Sawyer, of Ringgold, Georgia, the Bluebird Man in the Bluebird Van, and his beloved wife Adelaide roamed many a mile promoting bluebird housing before Laurance succumbed to his final illness on 31 March 1994 at the age of 83. He was a poet as well as a bluebirder and had composed a poem for use at his memorial service. He inspired audiences using good-humored banter when discussing his favorite subject: birds. Laurance had perfected tools so that his trademark bluebird nest boxes and feeders could be made from hollowed logs. He was interested in photography and sometimes produced "trick" photos displayed wherever bluebirds gathered. He was featured in television programs and worked continuously to help cavity nesters. His tinkering with box design resulted in a box with multiple entrances and a nesting stub for Prothonotary Warblers. Several articles he wrote appeared in *Sialia*. On 13 July 1985 he was given an award for bluebird conservation by the North American Bluebird Society and on 11 October 1992 received recognition as the Bluebird Man of the Year in Georgia given by Bluebirds Over Georgia, Inc.

--Mary D. Janetatos

NORTH AMERICAN BLUEBIRD SOCIETY RESEARCH GRANTS

The North American Bluebird Society announces the twelfth annual grants-in-aid for ornithological research directed toward North American cavity nesting species with emphasis on the genus *Sialia*. Single or multiple awards may be made within the following three categories.

Bluebird Research Grant--Available to student, professional, or individual researchers for a suitable research project focused on any of the three species in the genus *Sialia*.

General Research Grant--Available to student, professional, and individual researchers for a suitable research project focused on a North American cavity nesting species.

Student Research Grant--Available to full-time college or university students for a suitable research project focused on a North American cavity nesting species.

Further guidelines and application materials are available upon request from Kevin L. Berner, Research Committee Chairman, State University of New York, Cobleskill, NY 12043. Completed applications must be received by 1 December 1994; decisions will be announced by 15 January 1995.

A Heavy Load for a Parent Bluebird

Richard M. Tuttle

On 17 July 1992, I placed U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service aluminum leg bands on three 12 day old Eastern Bluebird nestlings in box #23 in Delaware State Park [Ohio]. Two of the birds were undersized, wet, cold, and they gaped for food, oblivious to my presence. Normal nestlings at 12 days will lie flat and point their heads into the nest. I predicted that both birds would die. The third nestling appeared normal and "played possum" as expected.

As I approached the box three days later, I found one of the banded undersized nestlings dead at my feet. There were no fly eggs on the corpse, but flies had started to land on it. I surmised that the young bird had died on the fifteenth day after hatching, and one of its parents had just plucked it from the nest. It was exactly six feet from the base of the mounting pole. Only the healthy sibling remained in the nest. I searched for the third nestling but failed to locate it. Perhaps it had been discarded earlier and had been consumed by a scavenger.

I wrapped the dead nestling in tissues and took it to my car, sealed it in a ziploc® plastic bag, and transferred it to my freezer (I have the proper permits to do this). Several weeks later I used a triple beam balance (a scale) to weigh it; the nestling weighed 20.0 grams, which is the normal mass for a seven day old nestling. According to Pinkowski (1975) a normal 15 day old nestling should approach 28 grams. Adult bluebirds tip the scales at 30 grams, and 90% of the adult weight is reached by the time a nestling is 12 days old.

I learned several things by retrieving a dead bluebird nestling and weighing it. First, it is possible for bluebird parents to extract a dead nestling with the normal weight of a seven day old. If I count

healthy nestlings before day seven, and one or more are missing from an active nest a week later, then they probably died and were lifted from the nest by a parent.

Second, a parent must have been flying as it pulled the dead nestling from the nest to six feet in front of the mounting pole. It must have been quite an effort for a 30 gram bird to have flown while pulling a load equaling two-thirds of its own weight. Of course, I did not witness this act. Therefore the parent might not have flown while holding on to its dead offspring. But what else could have happened?

I band bluebird nestlings between 7 and 12 days. When I band normal weight young that later die, I find them in the nest. They are probably too heavy to be lifted from the nest by a parent. In most cases, I count a "missing" banded bluebird as "fledged" if 16 days or more have elapsed between hatching and my removal of the used nest from the nest chamber. Now, if nestlings are old enough to be banded but appear underdeveloped, the nest box should be checked and all nestlings counted several days before the projected fledging date to record the most accurate data about true fledges. This insures that no evicted corpses are counted as fledglings. (Older nestlings near fledging can be safely counted while using a penlight and mirror to see inside a nest box.)

Bluebird age weights are credited to the following classic study: Pinkowski, B.C. 1975. Growth of Eastern Bluebirds. *Bird Banding*. 46:(4):273-289.

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This article is reprinted with permission from Bluebird Monitor, the newsletter of the Ohio Bluebird Society 7(3):7.

A Bluebird Family

Hubert Brandenburg located an Eastern Bluebird nest in a fence post a few miles north of Hagerstown, Maryland. The photographs on these two pages show the pair (below) as the female arrives with food. On the facing page (top), the male feeds a hungry nestling while below, one of the brood examines its surroundings.





Foster Parents

Tom A Barber

While checking box number two, I noticed that one nestling appeared to be about three days behind the development of the other three nestlings in the box. Early in the spring I had found a similar circumstance in another box with a brood of five. In that situation three nestlings were well-developed with the other two much smaller. When I checked that box the following week, only the three larger chicks remained. Evidently the parents had carried out the smaller two which had perished.

The same thing seemed to be happening again, but now we were in the summer nesting phase. I had a plan that might work since the clutch size was smaller. My idea was to move the one small nestling to a box that had only two nestlings that were close to its size. Since I have a trail of 60 boxes, finding chicks of similar size was not a problem. My daughter, Kyna, who was helping me monitor my trails, held the chick in her hands to keep it warm while we transported it to its new family.

On arriving at the nest with two chicks, I checked for blowfly parasites. This was in July and they were quite evident in many nests this time of the summer. Although I found only a few blowflies, I removed the old nest and made a nest out of dried grass collected in the spring from grass clippings. Kyna added the new chick along with its two new siblings. I wish I had marked the extra chick with fingernail polish on its leg so we could have identified it later. Kyna and I left the nest box and went on with our monitoring.

The next day we returned to the box to check the progress of the new nestling. I looked in, neither Kyna nor I could tell the chicks apart. They all looked great.

On 19 July we checked them again. This was seven days after the transfer. By this time the three nestlings were fully feathered.

On 27 July Kyna and I expected to find an empty nest at this site with a success story to our credit, but we were somewhat disappointed. Two of the nestlings had indeed fledged, but the third was in the box dead. Was it the nestling we had moved? We will never know because I don't band, and I didn't mark the bird. Was this nature's natural selection process at work, that only the strong survive? I have to think it was. This chick must have been so retarded from its weak beginning that it would not overcome that later when it came to fledging.

This story does have a message. It was worth the try even though the move did not seem to have worked. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. ■

60406 Stewart Road
Cambridge, OH 43725

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.

MEMORIAL GIFTS

Each year the spring issue of *Sialia* carries a list of memorial gifts which have been received by the North American Bluebird Society during the preceding year. Contributions can be made as general donations to the Society or can be specified for research, education, or gift memberships.



Middletown Park Bluebird Trail

Elizabeth B. Nichols

The Middletown Park Bluebird Trail, Frederick County, Maryland, is only one of the trails I have initiated and monitor, but it is the most successful in helping many people learn about bluebirds. This county park is adjacent to the Middletown school complex which is an additional advantage.

After receiving permission from the County Bureau of Parks and Recreation to erect a trail at this location, the project received publicity in the local *Middletown Valley Citizen*, a weekly newspaper, in early 1993. My hope was that individual citizens would purchase a nest box for \$12.00. Each box (and its owner) would be assigned a number. Owners could visit their box and/or receive regular progress reports by telephoning me. That way even shut-ins could participate.

A total of 14 boxes were installed and a map showing where each was located was posted on the bulletin board at the park entrance. Six of the boxes were placed so that they were accessible to the handicapped. One box has been adopted by a disabled individual.

Local Boy Scout Troop 476 assisted in the weekly monitoring earning service project points toward a conservation badge. The boys also carried bags to help beautify the park by picking up litter.

Four boxes had Tree Swallow nests. I helped the nesting process by tearing apart a feather pillow and scattering the contents on the ground. To aid both bluebirds and swallows I also provided "miracle meal" and mealworms when weather conditions required it.



Middletown Park, site of Nichols' community bluebird trail, is located in Frederick County, Maryland. Note bluebird box on right near the low fence and the extensive attractive habitat.



Betty Nichols at bulletin board in Middletown Park. Information about bluebirds is posted along with a map showing the location of each box.

In that first breeding season the Middletown Park Bluebird Trail fledged 17 Eastern Bluebirds and 11 Tree Swallows. ■

14 Linden Blvd.
Middletown, MD 21769

Note: Betty Nichols became involved with bluebirds when she responded in 1979 to a letter in the Frederick News-Post by Lucille Beale of Emmitsburg, Maryland, who issued an invitation to tour the trail on her farm and view the NABS slide show. Since that initial introduction, Betty has become strongly

committed to bluebird conservation. In addition to the Middletown Park Trail, she has one at Resthaven Memorial Gardens (sponsored by the Garden Clubs of Frederick County) and another on the farm she and her husband own near Thurmont, Maryland. In 1993, she presented programs to more than 425 people including scout troops, garden clubs, nature camps, school groups, and others. *Sialia* readers will remember her story "The Summer of the Bluebird" in the Spring 1994 issue (16(2):63-67) as well as the part she played in the mystery on Mark Raabe's trail, described in "Orphans at Antietam" (12(2):57-59).

(photograph next page)

Instructions to Authors

Authors planning to submit articles for publication in *Sialia* are encouraged to obtain "Instructions to Authors," a page which summarizes manuscript requirements.

Address requests to the editor at 10617 Grae Loch Rd., Laurel, MD 20723.

Getting to Know...Bluebirds!

See the enclosed picture catalogue for information concerning the 36 page educator's packet produced by the NABS Education Committee. Designed to be used in grades four through six, the material can be adjusted for use with younger or older students.



Betty Nichois assists Keegan Tabor in inspecting her box in Middletown Park. Citizens were invited to sponsor a box for a one-time fee and were then encouraged to monitor nesting progress. Keegan found four bluebird eggs in this box when the photograph was taken on 3 June 1993. All fledged on 5 July.

EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NORTH AMERICAN BLUEBIRD SOCIETY

The Eighteenth Annual Meeting of the North American Bluebird Society will be held in Jackson, Michigan, March 3-5, 1995. It is planned to coincide with the annual bluebird festival held in that location.

The sponsor of the meeting will be the Dahlem Environmental Education Center.

Questions should be directed to the following address:

Tom Hodgson
7117 S. Jackson Rd.
Jackson, MI 49201

Ivy Garden Club's Bluebird Project Wins National Honors

Edwina Hahn

A bluebird project, launched by the Ivy Garden Club of Columbus, Georgia, has received national honors. It was recognized by the National Council of State Garden Clubs, Inc. as one of the five top bird conservation efforts in America. The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. (state organization) and the Deep South Region (six state regional organization) also bestowed first place awards for Ivy's endeavor which was entitled "Saving the Eastern Bluebird from Extinction."

Ivy President Mrs. Tennent Smith accepted the awards at the annual Georgia convention in Savannah. Mrs. Robert Hahn was Project Chairman and Mrs. Franklyn Lambert served as Awards Chairman.

The goal of the Ivy Garden Club's project is to accelerate Georgian's understanding and participation in the vital role the South must play in bluebird survival. Bluebirds are native only to the United States and Canada. Their numbers in past decades have declined by as much as 90%. Many of the bluebirds which breed in the northern parts of the United States and southern Canada return to the South in the fall and winter due to extreme weather conditions and lack of food. The South, once a paradise, must again become a haven for these birds where they can obtain adequate food and water, along with suitable habitat which will allow them to survive and flourish.

Aware of the problems facing bluebirds, a few naturalists banded together in the early 1970s to try to rescue all three species. Ivy Garden Club joined this crusade in January 1990. At that time it committed to a long range continuing project to save this secondary cavity nester.

Beginning in 1990 with a trail of 12 nest boxes at Cooper Creek Park, the Ivy

Garden Club has continued to expand its activities within the community. It has established trails in eight locations: Cooper Creek Park, Muscogee Manor, Cobis Nursing Home, Brookstone School, Green Island Country Club Golf Course, Alchemy, Parkhill Cemetery, and Bull Creek Golf Course. A total of 47 nest boxes as well as four permanent and four portable feeders have been pinpointed near young people (schools), the middle-aged (parks, golf courses), and elderly citizens (nursing homes). Money raised at an annual November auction plus member donations facilitate the funding of this project. Ivy supports Columbus Audubon Society, the North American Bluebird Society, and Bluebirds Over Georgia, Inc., of which it is a charter member.

To aid birds in general and bluebirds in particular, the Ivy Garden Club's educational and community efforts increase each year. In 1993 alone, the group carried out the following activities:

1. Developed and launched a VCR program entitled *Bluebirds*. This program has been presented to church and professional groups, school classes, and garden clubs. Tours of bluebird trails have been given to children and adults. College students have been hired and trained to monitor nest boxes.
2. Created the original recipe *Peanut Butter Yummy* for bluebirds and other birds. The recipe is given out at all speaking engagements.
3. Planted bluebirds' favorite trees and shrubs at trail locations. A list of berry-producing plants attractive to bluebirds is provided to each person at all speaking engagements.
4. Donated *Audubon Adventures* to a public and a private grade school.
5. Hosted state Bluebirds Over Georgia meeting in Columbus; donated permanent

banners, signs, and displays.

6. Conceived themes for Arbor Day: *Creating Wildlife Habitats: Planting Trees for Wildlife*. Coordinated activities of Columbus Council of Garden Club members and that of 70 schools.

7. Maintained existing bluebird trails. Fed bluebirds and other birds, especially under stressful weather conditions. Fed Elderly Day Care Center's birds.

8. Erected its eighth trail at Bull Creek Public Golf Course.

9. Coordinated and expedited the North American Bluebird Society's Sixteenth Annual Meeting at Callaway Gardens, Pine Mountain, Georgia.

Bluebirds have responded enthusiastically to the trails. Their population has increased in the Columbus area and residents are now seeing bluebirds, sometimes for the first time in their lives. Many people have become happily supportive of the Ivy Garden Club's vigorous efforts on behalf of the Eastern Bluebird.

Freezing Wasps for Removal

One of the problems we sometimes run

into when monitoring nest boxes is finding nests of wasps. The following technique for safe removal was tried with the support of Charlie Morgan. Jim Williams lent me a CO₂ fire extinguisher.

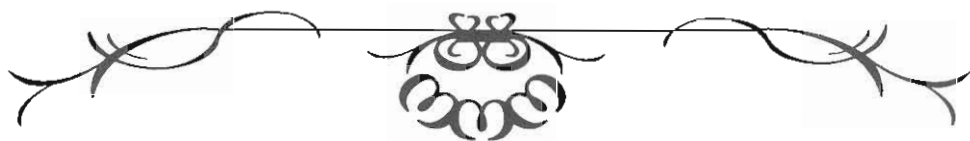
Knock gently on the outside of the box; wait to allow escape of any creature. Inspect the inside and monitor any bluebird or other nests. If box contains only wasps or their nest, close the door. Put the hose of the extinguisher at the entrance hole and blast the interior with CO₂. The insects are frozen instantly and are easily (and safely) removed.

In a single case we found a brooding bluebird female in a box with a wasp nest containing one wasp. This is the first time I have seen them share a box. In this situation we could not freeze the insects but, instead, knocked the nest out with a stick. This freezing technique may be equally effective against a heavy ant or mite infestation, but I have not tried it. ■

1328 Wynnton Rd.
Columbia, GA 31906



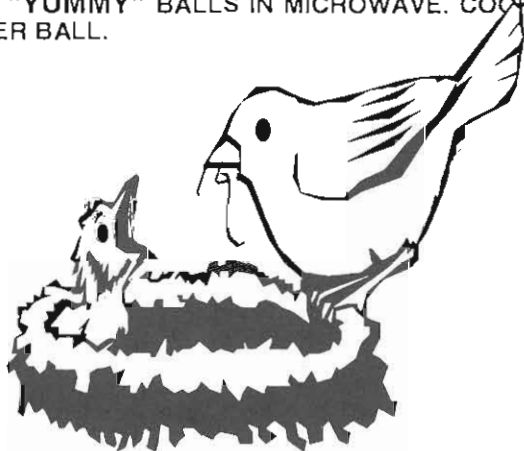
Leaders of the Ivy Garden Club, Columbus, Georgia, shown with one of their nest boxes. Left to right: President Tibby Scarbrough, Project Chairman Edwina Hahn, Awards Chairman Lucile Lambert, and Ruth Gilbert.



PEANUT BUTTER YUMMY
(FOOD FOR BABY BIRD'S TUMMIES)

4 CUPS PLAIN CORNMEAL
2 CUPS PLAIN FLOUR
1 CUP SOLID CRISCO
1 CUP CREAMY PEANUT BUTTER

USING A MIXER, COMBINE CORN MEAL AND FLOUR. WITH THE MIXER RUNNING, ADD CRISCO BY THE TABLESPOON. THEN ADD PEANUT BUTTER BY THE TABLESPOON. **GOAL:** A MIXTURE THAT IS NOT STICKY OR TOO CRUMBLY, WHICH YOU CAN SQUEEZE INTO BALLS WITH YOUR HAND. PUT THESE BALLS IN A ZIPLOCK BAG AND POP INTO FREEZER. WHEN READY TO SERVE, PUT "YUMMY" BALLS IN MICROWAVE. COOK ON HIGH. ALLOW 10 SECONDS PER BALL.



EDWINA HAHN

Seventeenth Annual Meeting Report

Mary D. Janetatos

The Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the North American Bluebird Society took place June 9-12, 1994 at the Red Lion Riverside Hotel, Boise, Idaho. Hosts for the meeting were the Golden Eagle Audubon Society, Inc., and the Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

Registrants were greeted by NABS Board Member Al Larson and his wife, Hilda, on Thursday evening. Colleen Harden of Golden Eagle Audubon led the group in a prayer of thanksgiving and invoked God's guidance over the proceedings. Al's welcome to Boise and the West was combined with a stimulating slide program which he originated. It was beautifully introduced by Hilda's painting of a Mountain Bluebird pair.

Friday's field trip began with a 7:00 a.m. departure in two buses which led a caravan of other motor vehicles. Everyone took in the wondrous Idaho scenery as Al's trail was monitored, with Al banding Western as well as Mountain Bluebird nestlings. In addition to the bluebirds and numerous glorious wildflowers, some of the Easterners added new birds to their life lists: Lazuli Bunting, MacGillivray's Warbler, American Dipper, Prairie Falcon, and Chukar. The lunch site was a lovely spot where the delicious box lunches were enjoyed in the cool clear air, and the excellent birding continued.

Friday evening provided more time for visiting with friends or examining and purchasing bluebird items in the display room. Two live birds of prey were on



Photograph by Shirley Adams

Board member Al Larson, Boise, Idaho, who arranged the Seventeenth Annual Meeting, welcomes bluebirders.

hand for examination: Peregrine Falcon and Northern Saw-whet Owl.

Coleen Sweeney expanded on the foundation laid by Al as she spoke about "Bluebird Country." Again, the ideal bluebird habitat in Idaho and expert photography impressed listeners.

On Saturday, following an early morning bird walk, presentations began at 9:00 a.m. with Al Larson augmenting his talk of the previous evening. He explained how his interest in bluebirds was inspired by the Larry Zeleny article in *National Geographic* magazine (June 1977) and the Joan Rattner Heilman's article in the November 1978 issue of *Parade Magazine*. Al watched a pair of Mountain Bluebirds nesting in a 14 foot high natural cavity--so he put all 70 boxes on his first trail at that same height! He explained that he has no hang-up on the size of the entrance hole, yet pointed out that starlings can be excluded by using a hole size too small for them to enter.

"The Horizontal Tree Branch Bluebird House" was Frank Zuern's topic. He opened with a Winnebago Oshkosh Indian greeting and also cited Robert Frost's poem describing that a farmer plowed a field but left a "tuft of flowers" in its midst still standing. He also claimed that half of his applause "goes to *Sialia* Editor Jo Solem, because through her diligent persistence, my *Sialia* article really shaped up." His innovative nest box mimics a horizontal tree branch. Frank finds the nest box very successful in thwarting four-legged predators such as cats, raccoons, etc. He claimed that because raccoons are very smart he added a sign to his nest box reading, "Property of the U.S. Post Office."

Sharon Ritter's talk, "Partners in Flight," described the Idaho program which seeks to track migrant songbirds and birds of prey. Many discoveries have been made including the annual 14,000 mile round trip to Argentina made by the Swainson's Hawk and the rapid rate of decline of MacGillivray's Warbler. Among the many and complex reasons for the decline are problems on the wintering grounds. These

areas often suffer from "slash and burn" deforestation. The use of DDT and other pesticides harmful to birds is another problem. DDT is still manufactured in the United States (although its use is banned) and is exported to tropical and subtropical countries. On the breeding grounds, nest parasitism in the form of Brown-headed Cowbirds laying their eggs in warblers' nests for the host to raise is also a major problem. In 1990 agencies and individuals became involved in the Idaho Partners in Flight Program.

"Breeding Biology of the Northern Saw-whet Owl" was addressed by Charley Rains, Master's candidate of the University of Idaho in Boise. These tiny owls used nest boxes as early as 1986. Their food is mainly small rodents. This owl is a real charmer and was one of the live birds present at the annual meeting.

"Raptors of the Birds of Prey Conservation Area" were described by John Doremus, biologist who is a manager of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The total area in Idaho for which he is responsible is 12 million acres. Much of it is riparian habitat consisting of high plateaus and deep river gorges. Nesting Golden Eagles, the dominant bird, feed on mule deer and pronghorn antelope. Red-tailed Hawks and American Kestrels are also plentiful. Birds tend to nest on cliff ledges and get their food on the flat areas, carrying it to the cliffs to feed their young. The main duty of the BLM is to maintain the area in such a way that species will be plentiful and thus will not need to be listed on "threatened" or "endangered" lists.

Following a noon lunch break, the annual business meeting was held, chaired by President Charlotte Jernigan. Sadie Dorber, chairwoman of the Nominating Committee, had presented a slate, presented to the membership in her absence by Speakers' Bureau Chairman Ron Kingston: President Charlotte Jernigan, Vice President Thomas Tait, Treasurer Delos C. Dupree, Recording Secretary Doug LeVasseur, and Corresponding Secretary Joseph Tait. The

four Directors nominated were Joan Harmet, Ray Harris, John T. Monroe, and Art Rusnell. The slate was elected.

NABS Executive Director Mary Janetatos described the day to day operations at headquarters. Her report concluded with recognition of all former NABS officers, board members, and life members in attendance. Charlotte conveyed sincere appreciation to Al Larson for running a terrific meeting; she also took a count of attendees by state and province. An afternoon break followed.

"Post Nesting Behavior of the Eastern Screech-Owl" was discussed by Jim Belthoff, biology professor at Boise State University. In his South Carolina undergrad studies, he had become acquainted with prominent bluebirder and biology professor Patty Gowaty. He proceeded to describe the habits of screech-owls. These cavity nesting birds subsist on a varied diet and are known to consume rodents, songbirds as large as cardinals and Blue Jays, insects, crayfish, etc. The red coloring is dominant, with gray recessive. The smaller male and larger female are together only at breeding time. The female incubates the eggs as the male "provisions" her. At eight to nine weeks after fledging, the young owls begin dispersal. In studying movement after fledging, it was determined that dispersal is genetically, not externally caused.

Wayne Melquist, program supervisor in Idaho, spoke on the "Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program." Wayne described funding for the program. The Mountain Bluebird was chosen as the official State Bird by school children in the 1930s. Idaho now has several vanity license plates, one of which features the Mountain Bluebird. Proceeds from the sale of the bluebird plates have been recently dedicated for use in furthering bluebird conservation. Other funding is available through a checkoff box on state income tax forms. All of these programs benefit the threatened Peregrine Falcon. Bluebird trails can be encouraged and maintained

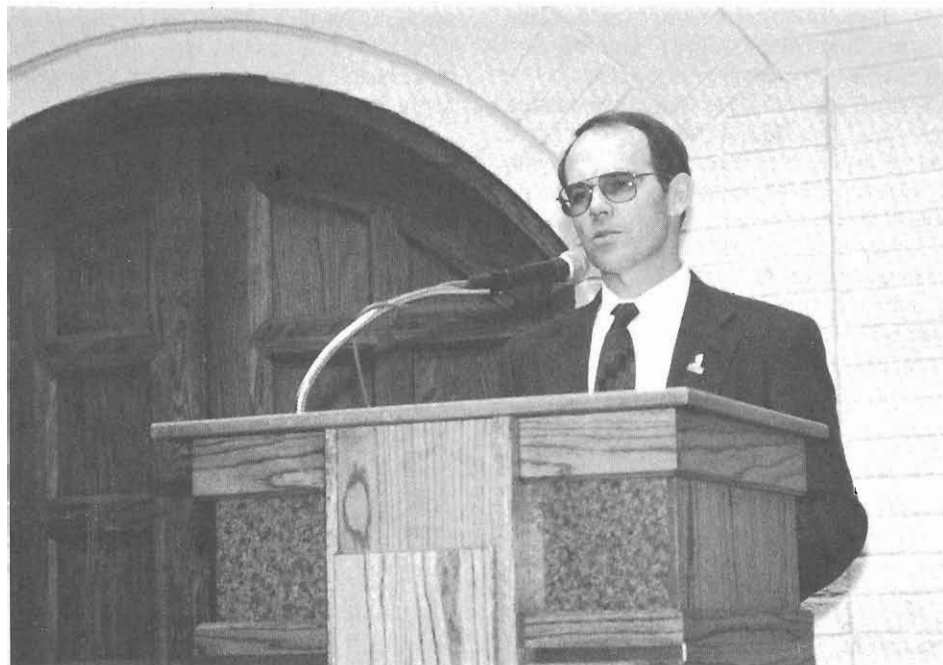
through Wayne's office. This praiseworthy project is another example of the successful environmental efforts taking place in Idaho.

The final presentation of the afternoon was "Urban Wildlife" given by Bruce Haak. He described education efforts which result in involvement of segments of the public from youth groups to retirees. His one on one expertise was evidenced when exhibiting his live saw-whet owl specimen. This program has proven to be very popular.

Saturday evening's banquet was spent at tables decorated with tiny bluebird nest boxes carved by our host Al Larson. Doorprize drawings provided suspense and fun. President Charlotte Jernigan presented individual bluebird conservation awards. The featured speaker was Bill Burnham, president of the Peregrine Fund and CEO of the World Center for Birds of Prey. His illustrated talk described the life cycle of the strikingly beautiful Peregrine and human efforts to propagate it. The need for human help is crucial, as this bird of prey is one of those most seriously impacted by DDT. The acreage and buildings which comprise the World Center for Birds of Prey facilitate the restoration of many birds of prey.

The final field trips were Sunday morning to the MK Nature Center and to the World Center for Birds of Prey, a short distance from downtown Boise. Having been well prepared by Bill Burnham's presentation the evening before, attendees enjoyed the introductory film, the live exhibits, and the specimens of birds of prey from both hemispheres.

Following these field trips we returned to the hotel and the meeting was adjourned. The sponsors of this Seventeenth Annual Meeting added a final note on the program: "It has been a pleasure to prepare and present the programs and agenda for a special group of people. We wish you Godspeed on your return home. May visions of 'bluebirds' guide you every mile of the way." ■



Photograph by Shirey Adams

Bill Burnham, president of the Peregrine Fund and CEO of the World Center for Birds of Prey was the featured speaker at the Saturday night banquet.

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 11 June 1994 at the Seventeenth Annual Meeting in Boise, Idaho.

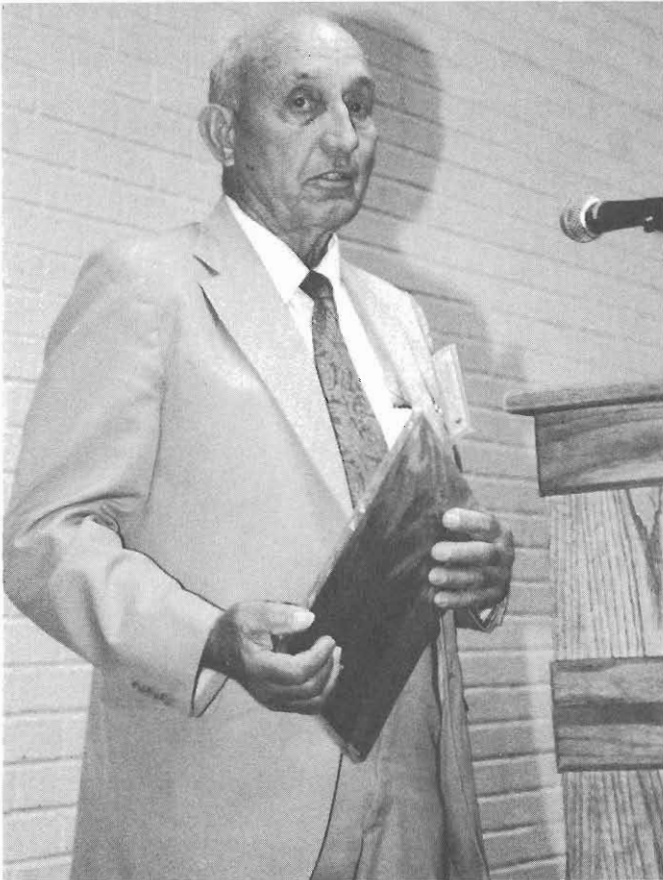
Willard A. Cash
Sadie Dorber
Dean E. Sheldon, Jr.
Dick Walker

Willard A. Cash, Goldsboro, North Carolina—Individual Award

Willard Cash has been a bluebird conservationist for 25 years so it's no surprise that he was a charter member of the North Carolina Bluebird Society and has been a NABS member for a decade. He has four major trails totaling several hundred boxes including those located at the Seymour-Johnson Air Force Base, The Cherry Hospital-O'Berry Center, and the North Carolina Forestry Tree Farm in Bladen County. He has worked with garden clubs in encouraging bluebird conservation; they, in turn, supported his successful effort in having the Eastern Bluebird named Wayne County's official bird. Willard has presented programs to youth groups such as junior gardeners and 4-H clubs. Several times he has appeared on local television programs discussing bluebird conservation. He participates in the "Keep Wayne County Beautiful" campaign and has provided nest boxes for its 16 recycling sites. He helped prepare the General Thomas D. White Natural Resources Conservation Award brochure. The program for which it was prepared was named best in the Air Force.

Sadie Dorber, Vestal, New York--Individual Award

Soon after moving to the country in 1965, Sadie's husband Malcolm built three bluebird boxes and put them up. Since they were successful in attracting bluebirds, Sadie thought that was all that was necessary. An elusive voice in the woods, an Ovenbird, was the bird that really got her hooked as a birder. As her interest in birds grew, she came to the realization that bluebirds were having a particularly tough time. When she heard on a radio program that an organization had been formed to help the species, she quickly decided to join, thereby becoming a charter member of NABS. Her increasing commitment to bluebirds included starting a trail at the Waterman Center near her home where she was a volunteer and later a board member. Sadie is a bird bander and is also responsible for about 65 bluebird boxes. She helped to lobby New York State officials successfully to declare a bluebird week each spring to publicize the New York state bird, the Eastern Bluebird. She is a committee member of the New York State Bluebird Society (NYSBS) and is active in the Schoharie County Bluebird Society. For many years she assisted the school system during annual Conservation Field Days. She now helps publicize bluebirds at major wildlife expositions in the state whenever the NYSBS staffs a booth. She has served as a board member of the North American Bluebird Society and as its president from 1984 to 1992. As past-president she currently chairs the Nominating Committee. Following her retirement as president, she chaired the Education Committee. Under her capable direction,



Photograph by Shirley Adams

Willard Cash's award for bluebird conservation is accepted on his behalf by Jack Finch of the North Carolina Bluebird Society.

the committee completed the first NABS education packet, "Getting to Know...Bluebirds!" Her efforts on behalf of bluebird conservation have been longstanding and prodigious!

Dean E. Sheldon, Jr., Greenwich, Ohio—Individual Award

Dean is deeply involved in conservation activities. Although he has successful bluebird trails, which in 1993 produced 340 bluebirds and 111 Tree Swallows, he is equally well-known for his work in promoting other cavity nesters. For 40 years he has actively aided Wood Ducks, American Kestrels, Eastern Screech-Owls, Barn Owls, and Tree Swallows in addition to bluebirds. Dean has been a member of NABS for a dozen years and is extremely active in the Ohio Bluebird Society. He has served that organization as program chairman and workshop representative. His column, "Ohio Blue Tips," appears as a regular feature in *Bluebird Monitor*, the society's newsletter. He has also had articles published in *Sialia*. His long and intense involvement in conservation has brought him several awards.

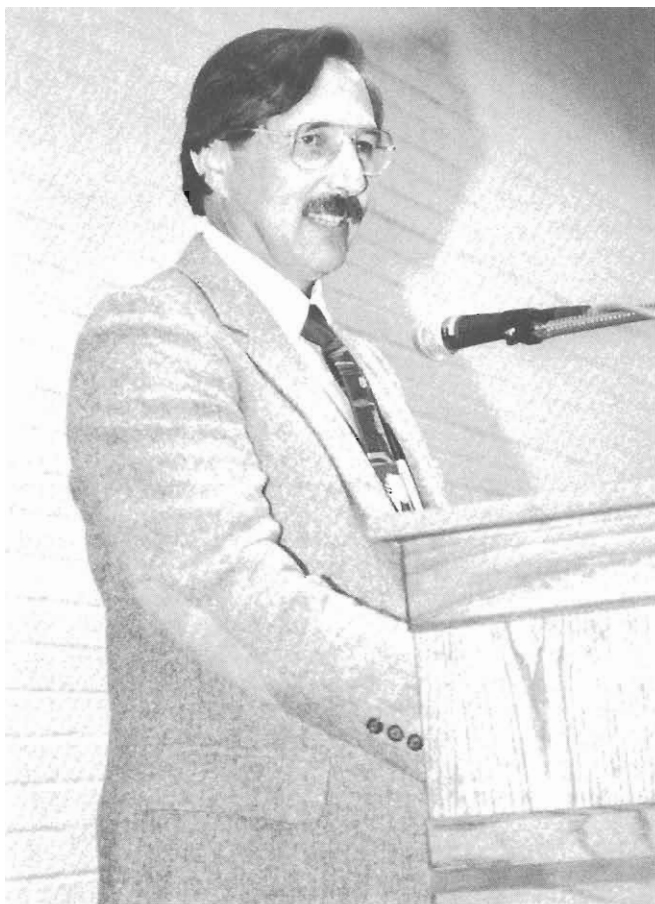
Dick Walker, Loogootee, Indiana—Individual Award

Dick has been an avid bluebirder for many years. His love for bluebirds has been a means of attracting people to conservation for he freely shares his enthusiasm and expertise. In order to reach as many people as possible, he publishes a birding newsletter for people in the southern part of the state. He encourages children in their bluebird conservation efforts and is known as the "birdman" of the area. Dick's trail of 150 boxes fledged 566 bluebirds in 1993. Like most avid monitors, he constantly attempts to improve the nest box design and has spent some time working on PVC box improvement. ■



Photograph by Shirley Adams

President Charlotte Jernigan presents Sadie Dorber's award for bluebird conservation to Research Chairman Kevin Berner, a fellow member of the Schoharie County [New York] Bluebird Society and the New York State Bluebird Society.



Photograph by Shirley Adams

Dean E. Sheldon, Jr.'s award for bluebird conservation was accepted by fellow Ohio Bluebird Society member Doug LeVasseur, NABS' recording secretary.

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.

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:

A huge thank you to Al Larson and all who made the Idaho NABS convention so enjoyable. The school bus trip was memorable for many reasons: gorgeous scenery, bluebird trail, cattle drive, and Barbara, our able bus driver, who finally announced "Ladies right, men left." Thanks, Al, too, for the tip on where to find Burrowing Owls, a lifer for us from northwestern Illinois. Keep up the good work. You are great!

Grace Storch & Joan Harmet
Jo Daviess Co. Natural Area Guardians
15 Cedar Run Trail
Galena, IL 61036

Dear Editor:

I have found a great source of mounting poles for bluebird boxes. I discovered that when overhead garage doors are replaced, the old garage door assemblies are usually thrown away by the company installing the new door. The discarded assemblies usually include an 8 foot or 16 foot piece of 1 inch pipe.

In a period of two months, I have supplied Wachiska Audubon with over 100 mounting poles made from pipe salvaged from just three overhead door companies in Lincoln, Nebraska. The three businesses were more than happy to give me access to their scrap pipe. The poles have been used for placing and replacing

boxes on Wachiska's 13 bluebird trails, and they will be a continuing source for maintaining and improving the trails. As well as being lighter and easier for a trail volunteer to carry distances to remote box locations, these smooth lightweight poles make it more difficult for raccoons to reach a bluebird box than the conventional T-posts.

Connie Conover
4100 N. 44
Lincoln, NE 68504

Dear Editor:

Recently we purchased a 1 9/16 in. hole saw through a local hardware outlet to use in building nest boxes. We had always previously been informed by retailers that that size hole saw was not made.

The saw and the hole saw arbor were produced by the Milwaukee Electric Tool Corp., 13135 West Lisbon Road, Brookfield, WI 53005.

Andy & Lee Angel
P.O. Box 48
St. Helena, CA 94574

Dear Editor:

Comment on "OK! Premature Fledging" 16(2):52-53. Why open an inhabited box? How about making one side of clear

plastic which is normally covered with wood and just open the wood panel to look without going in?

Fran Walters
5704 Kingswood Rd.
Bethesda, MD 20814

owe much to him for his pioneer work in creating interest in and solid support for bluebirds.

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

Ed. Note: *Kenn Kaufman's first name was misspelled in the original review.*

Dear Editor:

First, I want to thank Elizabeth Nichols for chronicling her adventures in nurturing the lone survivor of an ill-fated bluebird family. I doubt that *Sialia* has ever printed an account that was more beautifully written or more breath-taking either. I must add that I envy her skills and her poise throughout the experience.

Last weekend we journeyed to Utah to visit Arches and Canyonlands parks. After leaving, we stopped at Dead Horse State Park. Near that park we glimpsed a lone bird sitting on a post by the roadside. My husband said, "Did you see THAT?" I replied, "Yes, a Horned Lark, I think." He shouted, "That was no Horned Lark, it was bright blue!" He turned around in the middle of the road--fortunately ours was the only car present. Isn't it a blessing bluebirds are so tame? This one posed for some minutes. My husband thought it was really an Indigo Bunting, but I was sure only the bluebird had white underparts. Then the bird flew even closer to us. Let me tell you, he "made" the entire weekend trip for me!

We continued to puzzle over the fact that he was a much more intense blue than we had ever seen in our bird books. But I want to tell you that all my uncertainties were put to rest for good when I read T. David Pitts' review (16(2):59) of Kenn Kaufman's comments about the uncertainties of identifying bluebirds if one relies solely on the few characteristics listed in most field guides. I know now that there can be--and indeed IS--a wide variety of shades of blue in these beautiful little creatures.

I do miss Lawrence Zeleny's regular question and answer column. All of us

Dear Editor:

Enjoyed the recent article on the "Tree Branch Bluebird Box (16(1):13-19). I've made contact with Frank Zuern and we hope to put up several tree branch boxes on our trail.

Diane Freezee
2275 Edwards Rd.
Waterloo, NY 13165

Dear Editor:

I enjoyed the article "Tree Branch Bluebird Box." It is the talk of the nest box circuit this spring.

David W. Heidenreich
RR 1, Box 55
Colton, NY 13625

Dear Editor:

When I was a child, we played a game called, "My bird is a pretty bird. What kind is yours?" One player would choose the name of a bird and tell it to only one player. The rest of us would keep guessing until we guessed the right bird.

I have no way of knowing if playing this game sparked a great interest in birds for me. Because we were young, our knowledge of birds was limited but it was fun. Through the years I've studied birds with the bluebird becoming my favorite.

Edna B. Willis
1338 Big Bethel Rd.
Hampton, VA 23666

Bluebird Tales

Mary D. Janetatos

Two Illinois bluebirders, women not previously acquainted, were seatmates on the flight to Boise for the annual meeting last June. In conversation one mentioned her destination as the Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the North American Bluebird Society at the Red Lion Riverside Hotel. It was the same as the other woman's destination--she proudly proclaimed that her license plate read SIALIA 2. "I have no idea who has SIALIA 1," she said. "Well, I have SIALIA 1," said NABS Board Member **Marcy Hoepfner**. Thus did **Shirley Adams** of Alton, IL and **Marcy Hoepfner** of Metamora, IL, begin a fascinating conversation about their love of bluebirds.

As the group gathered in Boise and the greetings multiplied, **Al** and **Hilda Larson**, our hosts, circulated and made sure everyone was settling in satisfactorily.

Following dinner in the hotel, the evening program began with a moving invocation by **Colleen E. Harden** of the Golden Eagle Audubon Society.

Al Larson took time to explain the next day's field trip. This proved to be an awesome bus trip through the Idaho countryside, stopping along the way to watch Al monitor his trail and band young Western and Mountain bluebirds. There were cows, mounted cowboys, soaring hawks and eagles, perched owls, as well as hummingbirds, a MacGillivray's Warbler, a Lazuli Bunting, an American Dipper, and Western Tanagers to be seen. The excellent views of the two species of bluebirds were applauded by all. The camaraderie of the group was a highlight.

Throughout the weekend it was fun to greet the seasoned bluebirders and nice to meet new ones.

Christine Ammons and her mother, **Alla Briscoe**, of Union Mills, NC, related that Christine's position as postmistress of Union Mills provided many interesting situations other than bluebirding. Collectors of postmarks have a fascinating hobby, as do collectors of stamps. **John**



and **Frances Davis**, of Dickerson, MD, conduct their bluebirding efforts in sight of the impressive Sugarloaf Mountain near Frederick, MD.

Marlys and NABS Board Member **Dick Hjort**, of Chisago City, MN, take their bluebirding "on the road" with them as they spread the message of bluebird conservation according to the Bluebird Recovery Program, utilizing the distinctive Peterson nest box.

Dick and **Phyllis Williams**, bluebirders from E. Moline, IL, are veteran attendees at the annual meeting. **Barbara Stinson**, of Warrenton, VA, covers much territory, even in western states, and is always prepared for opportunities to speak to groups, especially young people, about bluebird conservation. **Nancy Trevor** involved husband **Bronson** and two sons in her Syosset, NY, bluebird activities.

Newly elected NABS Board Members **Joan Harmet**, of Elizabeth, IL, and **Ray Harris**, of Porcupine Hills, AB and his co-bluebirding wife, **Ardell**, were all enthusiastic attendees.

It was a pleasant surprise to learn that two Dayton, OH bluebirders had "tied the knot" since the last annual meeting when **Joan Lackey** became Mrs. **Bill Davis**.

Lois and **Vic Harder**, of Oak Harbor, OH, were enjoying the program. Lois had become involved in bluebirding some years ago, but when they placed their farm in the local Conservation Reserve Program, they were able to augment their bluebird trails.

Donna Hagerman, of Reno, NV, and **Deni Hershberger**, of Spokane, WA, accomplished a reunion with our group. **Jean Perkins**, of Bozeman, MT, presided over the lovely works of art she creates using diverse media. I love her bluebird needlepoint pillows and, once again, added to my collection of them.

Al Perry, of Boise, ID, told the poignant story of losing his wife, **Mary**, and experiencing many adverse economic setbacks. He is hopeful for his beloved bluebirds, however, because **George Shearer**, photographer and Audubon member also of Boise, has come forward to continue Al's prodigious labor of love with his extensive trail.

Frank and Nancy McBerty, of Oxford, PA, who have attended other annual meetings provided contrast to new attendees from across the continent among whom were **Katie and Richard Purvis** of Anaheim, CA, and **Edith and William Ryan** of Yakima, WA. Interesting continuity was provided through the attendance of several persons who were instrumental in the success of the 1993 meeting, especially **Edwina Hahn** and her husband, **Bob**, of Columbus, GA. **Susan Fisher**, radio announcer from Columbia, SC, also attended.

Good wishes and good ideas abounded, spiced with good humor. A tall, mysterious "bluebird" at one point roamed the proceedings. Close scrutiny revealed a voice very much like Marcy Hoepfner's with further evidence being the close proximity of Marcy's husband, **Don**.

Shirley Adams' roaming cameras captured the scene. Her video camera has yielded a very charming one hour video, 30 minutes of which cover the meeting and the remainder highlights her bluebirding on her Illinois farm. Her succinct monologue nicely enhances the video. Shirley would be happy to share this video with others. Contact NABS for details.

I enjoyed attending St. John Evangelist Cathedral for Saturday evening mass and was delighted to accept a ride back to the hotel from attendees **John and Jane**

Francis, of Boise, and their two sons. John's parents **Fred and Helen Francis** had been my first Boise contact, when they telephoned my hotel room Thursday evening inquiring about my roommate, NABS President **Charlotte Jernigan's** arrival.

The happy ambiance of the Seventeenth Annual Meeting of NABS was a great tribute to Al and Hilda Larson's hospitality and planning. They even extended an impromptu invitation to any attendees who had transportation to visit their cozy "home away from home" outside Boise on Sunday afternoon. Cookies, soft drinks, hummingbirds, etc., were enjoyed along with the delightful companionship of all present.

Yet we know our work as bluebird conservationists is cut out for us still, as we reflect on another story told by NABS Research Chairman **Kevin Berner**, of Richmondville, NY and attested to by other New York State attendees **Joe Sedlacek** and **Tamra Mako**, both of Johnson City. One of them had mentioned to the flight attendant on the plane to Boise that several passengers were attending the Seventeenth Annual Meeting of NABS. She then announced over the public address system: "And we want to welcome on this flight members of the North American Blue JAY Society!"

So--keep on "keeping on," dear bluebirders! And remember: the most beautiful bluebird is the one you're looking at! ■

NABS SLIDE SHOW

The NABS slide show is available for rental at \$10.00 or purchase at \$65.00. 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 one month for delivery and, if possible, specify several dates for rental.

Message

Once I saw a little bird
Sitting on a wire.
He sang a song,
I don't know what it was.
It was beautiful.
I waited until he was done.
He flew away.
But I kept his song
in my head.

—Amber, Jeff and John
Grade 2, Westview Elementary School
Olathe, Kansas

Bluebirds, who sent you here?
Did Someone know
I needed you--
Your cheerful chortle,
Your flash-blue wings?
Did Someone up beyond the blue
tell you
"Go! The bluebird box she just put out
is ready,"
"Send her the message,
blue-winged gentle one
that I love her!"

--Marion Maxson^o

(BOOSTERS--Continued from inside back cover)

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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.

Membership: Student (under 21) \$10.00; Senior (over 60) \$10.00; Regular \$15; Family \$25; Sustaining \$30; Supporting \$50; Contributing \$100; Corporate \$100; Donor \$250; Life \$500. Add \$2.00 per year for Canada and Mexico and \$3.00 per year for other countries (surface mail). U.S. funds only, please. Amounts over \$6.00 are tax deductible.

**Address:
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