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Bluebird

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Our exciting new Bluebird Sampler — see center pages



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From the President

By Ray Harris

By mid-October the Mountain Bluebirds had left Alberta for warmer climes even though our fall weather had been very mild. I completed my banding records and submitted them to that great eastern computer for number crunching. With that work behind me, I looked forward to the NABS directors' meeting in Madison, Wisconsin. It was the largest turnout of directors, committee chairpersons and NABS members ever. The present board is one of our strongest, many of its members serving second terms, bringing experience and continuity to the board. Similarly, most committee chairpersons are former directors. The enthusiasm was most evident around the table as members willingly volunteered to be on committees or to do other tasks.

The Saturday of that late October weekend, board members met to set goals and objectives for the next several years. Sunday, we carried on with a business meeting. The board approved two projects which you will read about in the future. One is the Transcontinental Bluebird Trail Network, which we hope will stretch across the continent. The second is to launch a capital campaign to raise several hundred thousand dollars to build a Bluebird Interpretive Centre in Darlington, Wisconsin, or the immediate vicinity. Focus of the centre will include bluebirds and other native cavity-nesting birds. NABS offices will be housed in the facility.

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology has invited one of our directors, Dean Sheldon, to participate in their Nest Box Network project. This link will benefit both Cornell and NABS.

Good news: NABS membership has increased 14 percent from one year ago, thus reversing recent annual reductions.

Chuck Finley (Nebraska) was introduced as our new treasurer, and Darlene Sellick as the new chairperson of the Education Committee.

Two long-time board members were honored as they relinquished their duties, Charlotte Jernigan, immediate past president, and Bill Davis, retiring treasurer and director. They were each presented with splendid Longaberger luxury gift baskets as gifts from NABS members.

This issue of Bluebird marks another of the many changes for NABS. It has a new format, a new name, and a new editor, Jim Williams. You also will notice our new merchandise catalogue in the center of this publication. You will see this handsome presentation of NABS merchandise twice a year. New items will appear to match seasonal demands.

Our planning meeting was held at the International Crane Centre at Baraboo, Wisconsin. Prior to the meeting, we were given a tour of this splendid facility created to assist the 15 world crane species.

At the conclusion of the day we toured the Aldo Leopold "shack," the famous Sand County cabin and land about which he wrote. Barbara Stinson, one of our directors, did her graduate studies with Aldo Leopold. She was a frequent guest at this place. It was a rare treat to listen to Barbara relate the history of the location, the man, and his family.

Thanks to those state and provincial affiliates for adding my name to their mailing lists. It is a pleasure to know the happenings in Ohio, Wisconsin, Montana, Alberta, and British Columbia.

The next board meeting will be held in conjunction with our NABS Annual Convention in Great Falls Montana in June. See you there.

Join us in Montana this summer

Montana, the land of vast prairies and magnificent mountain ranges, will host NABS 22nd Annual Meeting. It will be June 17-20 at the Heritage Inn in Great Falls, on the banks of the Missouri River in the heart of "Big Sky Country".

Montana is known as one of the most productive areas in the United States for Mountain Bluebirds,

and the area around Great Falls has 25 to 30 percent of Montana's fledglings in each of the last 10 years.

While all three species of bluebirds (Mountain, Eastern, and Western) nest in Montana, the Mountain Bluebird is king.

The four-day event will include treks along two bluebird trails which produce 500 to 700 fledglings a year.

DAY ONE

The first field trip is planned for Thursday morning, June 17, to an area southwest of Great Falls along the Rocky Mountain Front. Just below the continental divide, the mountains meet the prairies here, creating a diverse habitat which is home to a wide variety of birds and native plants. Over 190 species of birds have been sighted along this Front. The tour will travel through the Missouri River Canyon of Lewis and Clark fame to visit a large bluebird trail; Western Bluebirds have been known to nest along it.

This trip will continue to the historic Blacktail Ranch, a dude ranch nestled next to the mountains; it is known for the large number of hummingbirds which summer there, as well as the wide variety of native plants on the ranch and in its gardens. The ranch has a small historical museum, and a short hike up the mountain there are Native American caves.

A continental breakfast will be

served along the bluebird trail, and lunch will be served at the ranch.

DAY TWO

Friday will be filled with speakers on a variety of subjects, panel

discussions, and small group sessions on bluebird topics interspersed with a few Montana-related presentations which everyone should

find interesting. Breakfast, lunch, and a banquet dinner will be served. The day's activities will take place at the Heritage Inn.

DAY THREE

A field trip on Saturday will take participants to a second bluebird trail, along the north slope of the Little Belt Mountains. This is the country Charles M. Russell made famous in his Western art; 13 sites Mr. Russell depicted in his paintings will be seen. The rolling prairie pastures and scattered pines and aspens along the edge of the mountains are perfect Mountain Bluebird habitat. Mountain wildflowers should be in full bloom here, so bring your camera!

A continental breakfast will be served along the way, and lunch will be served at the X-2 Ranch.

DAY FOUR

A Sunday-morning visit to Giant Springs State Park is planned. This is intended to be a leisurely morning of birding in one of the premier bird-watching areas in the state and home of one of Montana's newest and most-modern trout hatcheries.

Participants may tour the park visitors' center, relax beside the spring, visit the hatchery, and walk (in a few seconds) the entire length of the Roe River. The Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center is a few hundred yards upstream, just below Black Eagle Falls.

**NABS 22nd
annual meeting,
in Great Falls**

Capt. Meriwether Lewis sighted June 19, 1805 what he called "the largest fountain I ever saw and doubt if it is not the largest in America." Today Giant Springs produces 7.9 million gallons of water per hour; originating in the Little Belt Mountains, the water has been carbon dated at 3,000 years old.

Clark also observed the shortest river in the world, but apparently didn't realize it at the time. It was in 1987 that a Great Falls fifth grade class measured it and named it (Roe River, after the roe that comes from the nearby hatchery). The Roe River appears in the Guinness Book of World Records as the world's shortest river: It is 59 feet long.

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Extend your visit

Great Falls is located between Yellowstone National Park and Glacier National Park and in the heart of Charles M. Russell country. Many people might want to plan their own extended, self-guided tour before or after the NABS annual meeting. Bob Niebuhr and the 1999 annual meeting committee can help.

Whether you want to do additional hiking, bird watching, visit other historic sites, camp, fish, or simply relax by a mountain stream or lake, the committee can provide you with general or specific information and brochures. If that information

doesn't answer your questions, the committee will put you in touch with people you can personally talk to in Big Sky Country.

Just contact Bob Niebuhr at the telephone or fax numbers or e-mail address provided in an accompanying box and tell him what you have in mind. He will have information sent to you, pronto.

If communicating by fax or e-mail, or if you leave a telephone message, be sure to clearly provide your name, address with ZIP code and your telephone number with area code.

— meeting

From page 3

A continental breakfast will be served at the park.

TWO EXTENSION TRIPS

There are two extension trips planned after the meeting. A three-day birding trip along the Rocky Mountain Front (10 to 20 people) and a five-day tour of historic southwest Montana and Yellowstone Park (20-40 people). These tours will be provided by outside firms. Information is available on the reverse side of the registration form included with this magazine. You also can find it on the NABS web site or by contacting Bob Niebuhr (see addresses and phone numbers accompanying this article).

REGISTRATION AND RESERVATIONS

A registration form for the annual meeting is included in this issue of *Bluebird* and is available on the NABS web site (see address elsewhere on this page).

June is a busy tourist season in Montana, so reservations for accommodations should be made early—now would be a good time, in fact.

Sixty rooms have been reserved at the Heritage Inn for NABS attendees; be sure to identify yourself as such when making your reservation. The toll-free telephone number for Heritage Inn is 1-800-528-1234.

RV parks nearby

If you will be traveling to the NABS Annual Meeting in an RV or with a camper in tow, there are two RV parks in Great Falls which would be convenient to the Heritage Inn meeting site.

Dick's RV Park is two blocks away; telephone (406) 452-0333.

K.O.A. is a 10-minute drive from the inn; telephone toll-free 1-800-562-6584.

June is high tourist season, so make your plans now.

Annual-meeting Web site, fax and telephone numbers

For additional registration forms and lots of other information about the annual meeting, field trips, extension tours, and historic and present-day Montana, visit the NABS web site:

<http://www.cobleskill.edu/nabs/>

or contact 1999 NABS Annual Meeting Chairman **Bob Niebuhr** by telephone: (406) 453-5143 (work) or (406) 761-5842 (home); or by fax: (406) 453-3840; or by e-mail: BluBrdBob@prodigy.net

Western Bluebird numbers up

Twenty years ago the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks was deeply concerned about the decline of the Western Bluebird, but the Mountain Bluebird Trails nest box program has dramatically increased the Western Bluebird's numbers. Today the Western Bluebird makes up about 15 to 20 per cent of the bluebird fledglings reported in the state.

Art Aylesworth has a 95-box

bluebird trail almost entirely inhabited by Western Bluebirds, which are producing 700 to 1,000 fledglings each year.

If you'd like to visit this trail and others which have Western Bluebirds, contact Art Aylesworth via e-mail at ayleswor@ronan.com or by telephone at (406) 676-0300. He can give you excellent directions and possibly even a guided tour.

Montana weather: Expect it all

Weatherman Bob Niebuhr predicts "sunny, daytime highs in the 70s and 80s and nights in the 40s, with a chance of evening showers." He advises visitors to bring a sweater and windbreaker for the evenings.

Mr. Niebuhr lives in Great Falls, where, he says, the average rainfall is 14.1 inches, the sun shines more than 320 days a year, the average humidity is less than 50 percent, and in the last 30 years he has "never seen over two feet of snow on the ground, and a good Chinook wind can melt most of that in 24 hours. Great Falls is a city of 50,000 people, and it only has two snow plows. The street I live on has never been plowed."

It can, however, experience surprising shifts in temperature in startlingly short amounts of time: On Jan. 23-24, 1916, the temperature dropped from 44° above zero to 56° below zero in 24 hours; on Jan. 11, 1980, the temperature rose from 32° below zero to 15° above zero in seven minutes.

On June 6, 1996, Mr. Niebuhr inventoried his bluebird trail. He recalls, "It had rained for four days, snowed the night of the 5th, and then the temperature dropped to 30° above zero. I lost over 200 baby bluebirds that day. One house I opened had a female sitting on five eggs with snow all around her. She hatched and fledged all five."

Mr. Niebuhr has "mowed my lawn on New Year's Eve and watched it snow on a 4th of July parade."

A few years ago I attended a bluebird conference where a well-known bluebirder talked about the importance of having a tree or bush nearby for nestlings to fly to on their initial flight from the box. He told me that if a fledgling lands on the ground rather than an elevated perch of some sort, it cannot take flight from the ground but must reach an elevated position to take off again.

This year, another person told me about seeing a bluebird fledgling

land on the ground right after leaving the box and that it could not regain its flight. He said he watched the fledgling walk to a small tree, climb up the tree to a low branch, and from there it was able to fly again.

And then just recently I found a fledgling that had left its box and landed in our front yard. As hard as it tried, it could not take flight. I thought it might have fledged prematurely so I put it back into the box and plugged the entrance hole until it calmed down. About an hour later I uncovered the hole and shortly thereafter I watched the same bird fly approximately 75 feet to the safety of a tree.

My question is this: **Has it ever been proven that fledglings cannot regain flight if they land on the ground during their initial flight from the box? If so, it would give more importance to having a bush or tree for the fledgling to fly to on its initial flight.**

— Steve Eno, Raymond, Nebraska

The answer comes from Dorene Scriven, bluebird expert and author from Minneapolis. She says:

Not one of the many experienced long-time bluebirders I know has actually seen an upward flight from the ground. We have seen the young birds flutter a few inches off the ground to the next drop down. Of course, the possibility is strongly influenced by the type of ground

cover (i.e., low smooth lawn would be much easier to take off from than tall grass). All in all, one can make a good argument for some kind of perch within 100 feet of the nest box.

Ms. Scriven included this information from an article entitled "How You Can Help Its' Flight for Survival," by Lawrence Zelleney, 1978:

"When the young birds first leave the opening of the nesting cavity or

box they attempt to fly directly to the nearest tree, shrub, fence, or any other point where they can alight some distance

off the ground. They are usually strong enough to fly from 50 to 100 feet on the first attempt. ...

"Shortly after their first flight young bluebirds work their way by means of short flights and hops up into the higher branches of nearby trees. They usually remain well up off the ground for several days, flying from tree to tree while they gain strength and perfect their flying skill."

Q: We have counted 16 bluebirds in a single flock. Is this kind of concentration unusual?

A: During the fall migration period, family groups of bluebirds will join other groups to form loose flocks. These often remain intact on wintering grounds until late winter or early spring. Years ago, these flocks often numbered 100 or more birds. Flocks of much small size now are more common.

Q: Will bluebirds eat chopped nut meats or hamburger during the winter?

A: Both chopped nuts and raw hamburger as well as beef suet are good winter foods for bluebirds. The birds are likely to ignore such food, though, when natural foods are readily available. You also might try offering raisins and other dried fruits at your feeders. Bluebirds readily will take such fruit in times of stress.

Q&A

Starlings and oval-holed nest boxes

By Kevin Berner
NABS Research Chairman

Many researchers have experienced greater success in attracting bluebirds to Peterson nest boxes than standard nest boxes. My field tests determined that it is the oval hole of a Peterson box and not its wedge-shaped design that most attracts Eastern Bluebirds. W. H. Davis, in a 1997 paper, also identified the oval hole as being preferred over other entrances, such as slots and round holes.

There are, however, several advantages of standard nest boxes over Peterson boxes. First they are much simpler to build for someone with limited construction skills because they don't require cutting wood at unusual angles. They are also much lighter and do not require as rugged a mounting post as does the Peterson box.

While uncommon, on occasion European Starlings will use Peterson boxes. D. M. Lehmann wrote in 1997 of controlled tests which determined that starlings can readily escape a simulated nest box with a 1 3/8-inch by 2-inch oval hole. I suspect that although starlings can negotiate these oval entrances, they are reluctant to do so because of the cramped interior space of a Peterson box. If oval holes were used on the larger standard nest boxes, it would be expected that starlings would be more likely to attempt to nest in these boxes. In fact, starlings have nested in several oval-holed standard shaped boxes along the Route 20 Research Trail in New York State.

My goal was to determine if there is a size of oval hole preferred by bluebirds over round holes that also minimizes the chance that starlings can pass through it.

METHODS

In the spring of 1998, I captured six starlings and placed each of them in a box with both 1 3/8-inch and 1

1/4-inch-wide oval escape holes. Both holes were two inches tall. Starlings were allowed to escape through the wider hole before attempting passage through the narrower hole.

I also converted all of my research nest boxes to pairs of standard nest boxes with oval holes. Each pair included one nest box with a 1 3/8-inch-wide hole and the other with a 1 1/4-inch-wide oval hole to determine if bluebirds would disof that size. There is a greater motivation to escape a box after being handled than to enter a cavity to use as a nest site.

Bluebirds did show a strong preference for the wider 1 3/8-inch hole, using those boxes for 36 of 40 nesting attempts (a nesting attempt is defined as a building a nest and laying at least one egg). Swallows

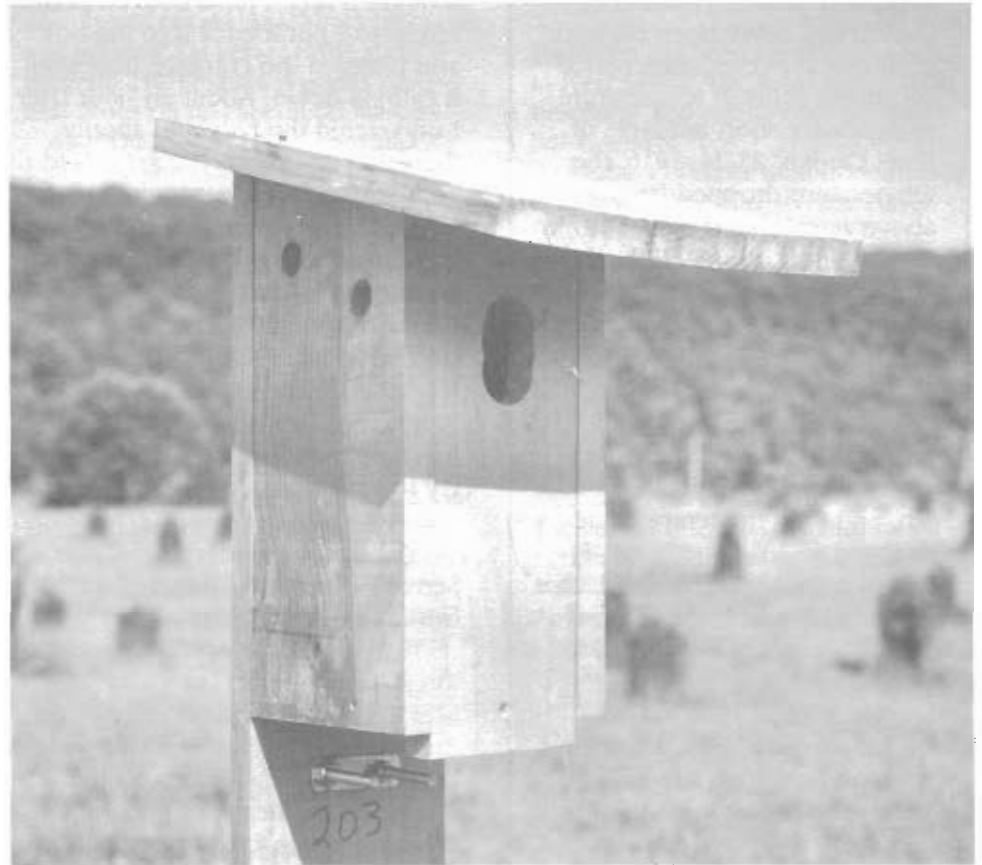
used more of the narrow-holed boxes. Starlings did build a nest and lay two eggs in one of the nest boxes with the wider hole. House Sparrows and House Wrens were a minor presence in these tests (see table).

DISCUSSION

These tests show that starlings can use standard nest boxes with the Peterson-size oval hole. I have had many of these boxes in the field over several years with only one starling nest attempt to date, although I have watched starlings easily enter and examine these boxes on several occasions. A slightly smaller oval hole may reduce the chances of starling use.

As expected, bluebirds showed a strong preference for the larger oval holes. Bluebirds have consistently

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The kind of nest box used in the test.

Species	Number of nesting attempts	
	1 3/8 in. x 2 1/4 in.	1 1/4 in. x 2 1/4 in.
Eastern Bluebird	36	4
Tree Swallow	24	35
House Wren	0	3
House Sparrow	2	0
European Starling	1	0

Results of field tests of standard and narrow oval holed nest boxes.

— oval holes

From page 6

shown a preference for oval holes over the 1 1/2-inch round holes that have a smaller overall size. A few bluebirds did successfully nest in the narrower oval as well.

A better test might have been to compare the narrow oval to round holes to see if bluebirds still preferred the oval hole shape. My ultimate goal is to determine if there is an oval hole size that is preferred over a round hole while eliminating use by starlings. A 1 1/2-inch or 1 9/16-inch round hole is effective at excluding starlings from nest boxes.

At this point, I would still recommend oval-holed standard nest boxes as long as the boxes are monitored regularly to ensure that starlings are not allowed to use the boxes. If regular monitoring is not possible, then a round hole would be preferable.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

All the boxes used in this study were built by Herman Bressler and paid for by the New York Bluebird Society. The Bluebird Recovery Program in Minnesota covered my transportation expenses.

Literature consulted for this article:

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(Mr. Berner teaches at the State University of New York, Cobleskill, N.Y.)

Lots of meal worms

How many meal worms can a bluebird eat? Ask Connie and Chuck Finley of Nebraska City. At last count, they have fed 35,000 meal worms to three pairs of bluebirds on their acreage. Each pair had its own feeding dish at different locations on the deck around their house.

Connie has been feeding bluebirds for several years, and, according to her records, her mealworm fed bluebirds have fledged in about 16 days instead of the usual 18 to 20.

Last year the Finleys had a pair of bluebirds that would tap on their window panes when their mealworm dish was empty.

(This item appeared in *Bluebirds Across Nebraska, summer 1998*. It is used with permission.)

Nebraska bluebird meeting, Sandhill Crane watch set for March 27

Bluebirds Across Nebraska will hold its fifth annual conference at the Ramada Inn, Kearney, Neb., Saturday, March 27. Check-in begins at 8 a.m., the conference running from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Speakers include Myrna Pearman, a wildlife biologist at the Ellis Bird Farm in Alberta, and Kevin Berner, wildlife biologist at the State University of New York, Cobleskill. Ms. Pearman is chair of the nominating committee of the North American Bluebird Society; Mr. Berner is head of its research committee. Ms. Pearman will discuss her 450-box bluebird trail. Mr. Berner will share results of his bluebird research projects.

The meeting is scheduled to coincide (hopefully) with the migration of Sandhill Cranes and other waterfowl through the area. This migration can be spectacular with tens of thousands of birds to be seen and heard.

Pre-registration is recommended, particularly for those wishing to visit Sandhill Crane blinds at the Lillian Rowe crane sanctuary Friday afternoon or Sunday morning. Those not wishing to use the blinds may see the cranes simply by driving through the surrounding countryside, assuming weather hasn't affected migration timing.

All are welcome, with a special invitation extended to NABS members. Contact Connie Finley for reservations, nominal charges, and information. E-Mail to <bbcdf@hotmail.com> or postal mail to RR3, Box 241C, Nebraska City, NE 68410.

In the poem "North of Boston, Mending Wall," Robert Frost quotes his neighbor: "Good fences make good neighbors," says the man. Dee Warenycia, a member of the California Bluebird Recovery Program (CBRP), has discovered that old fences make good nesting boxes and provide nesting opportunities for a wide variety of bird species, including bluebirds.

Ms. Warenycia began, as many of us do, with one nesting box in her backyard. She read the Stokes book about nest boxes, entitled "The Complete Birdhouse Book," then built that first box herself. "Even though I put it up late in the season," she said during a recent visit, "I had a pair of Oak Titmice (formerly Plain Titmouse) nesting within a week. They brought off eight young, and I was hooked."

Ms. Warenycia lives in Roseville, just outside of Sacramento. She has moved her nest-box activities

beyond her yard, onto a ranch, onto corporate land, and onto a city-owned golf course, placing boxes on and beneath the Blue, Valley, and Live oaks that line creeks and water-courses in her part of the country.

The fences? She keeps an eye open for property owners who are dismantling or replacing backyard fences, since many of those in California are built from 3/4-inch x 5 1/2-inch boards six to seven feet long. "Each board equals a nest box," she said.

At the time those first young titmice were fledging, Ms. Warenycia met the local CBRP county coordinator, Lesa McDonald-Chan, on a fall Audubon birding trip.

"The following spring (1995), she contacted me and gave me the name of June Schellhaus who already maintained a trail of her own on a ranch that she and her husband own. The Schellhaus Ranch is lightly grazed grassland with a permanent



This is the Live Oak habitat in which Ms. Warenycia maintains her boxes.

Seven species nest on trail

By Jim Williams

stream and several seasonal streams running through it, ideal bluebird habitat," said Ms. Warenycia. The streams are bordered by large, mature oaks.

"Lesla provided me with 20 nest boxes, built by a volunteer woodworker, and June and I made friends as we walked around the property putting up the nest boxes," Ms. Warenycia said.

From that beginning, Ms. Warenycia now monitors about 80 nesting boxes.

"I use the NABS side-opening design," she said. "I have built most of the houses myself, all with 1 1/2-inch entrance holes. In 1997, I added three Wood Duck nest boxes, and I am adding three more next year."

She builds her Wood Duck houses from 3/4-inch plywood, three houses from one four-by-eight sheet of plywood. "So far, this is the only wood I have purchased," she said, "and I have no need to buy other

wood because of the network of woodworking volunteers who build boxes for our program.

"Most of my nest boxes are mounted on oak trees, and they are positioned in all different directions," she said. "I do have some along a fence line, and most of those are faced north, the preferred direction here. Our summer temps often exceed 100 degrees."

This past season she had nesting success with Western Bluebird, Tree Swallow, Oak Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Ash-throated Flycatcher, and House Wren. Violet-green Swallow and Bewick's Wren are also possibilities, she said. Wood Ducks use the duck nest boxes, and Barn Owls and kestrels could as well.

"I am managing for tree-hole nesters of any species," she explained. "All of them are suffering. I am really concerned with all of the neotropical migrants, particularly, here,

with Ash-throated Flycatchers. Our flycatchers have low success compared with the number of attempts at nesting. They seem to abandon their nests during the egg-laying period. I don't know why that is," she said.

After building that first bluebird house, she said, "I started looking at every vacant lot as potential nest box habitat! Along those lines, I encouraged my county coordinator to approach the city of Roseville about putting up nest boxes at Woodcreek Golf Course, which was only a year old, full of oak trees separated by fairways. This was perfect bluebird habitat!

"At the same time," she said, "I was pestering my husband to ask Hewlett-Packard (where he works) if I could install boxes on their property, 640 acres adjacent to the golf course.

She succeeded, eventually placing 30 nest boxes on that land, adding

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— California

Continued from page 8

Wood Duck houses at the company's request. Most of her species variety is realized here.

Does she have predation problems? "I use extra-thick entrances on the bluebird nest boxes," she said "but predation hasn't been a big problem for me. I do have occasional problems with House Wrens poking holes in the eggs in some nest boxes. And, I have had problems with House Sparrows in one area," she said. Her solution to that has been to move the nest box.

"I expected problems at H-P," she said. "I found out that a small cat colony was being maintained there, but my nest boxes are a distance away from the feeding station. I suspect some raccoon predation occurred with those houses. That is tough to solve, since my nest boxes are nailed to trees."

Ms. Warenycia paired some of her houses last year. "That really raised the percentage of nest boxes occupied," she said, with more bluebirds in particular.

In one location, she tried two boxes each on single utility poles, and found only one box of each pair used. At H-P, she paired at a distance of 25 feet. This produced better results, both boxes usually used by two different species. She has found bluebirds and titmice sharing paired boxes, and Tree Swallows plus bluebirds, and bluebirds plus Ash-throated Flycatchers.

"We start monitoring our houses at the beginning of March, and we're usually done by the end of July, when the weather turns really hot and insect activity drops off," she said. "Also, our bluebirds usually nest two and sometimes three times."

She bands her birds as well, working with a master bander. Both nestlings and adult birds are banded, all caught in the nest boxes, no mist nets used. "It's pretty easy to catch

adults in the box when they're feeding young," she said.

"Several of us in adjoining counties are attempting to study the dispersal of the tree-hole nesters we monitor," she explained. "So far, it looks as though the birds tend to return to the same area *and* the same nest box, if it is available. It will take a few years to get any real results," she added.

Ms. Warenycia works for the California Department of Game and Fish, gathering and processing information on rare, threatened, and endangered species in that state. She and her husband have two children. She has a degree in biology.

One special feature of her nest-box trails is occasional bluebird nesting in natural cavities. "One pair nested in a hole in the same tree where I put up a box," she said. The box stayed empty. She added that European Starlings seem to dominate use of the natural nesting sites.

Which makes her devoted efforts to nest boxes all the more important.

Nationwide bird count needs you

Birders with access to the Internet are being invited to participate in a national backyard bird count Feb. 19-22. Sponsored by the Cornell Laboratory for Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, the count follows a very successful introductory count last year.

Birdwatchers are asked to count the birds they see at their feeders, local parks, or other areas.

Reports are made online, through BirdSource at <http://birdsource.cornell.edu/>.

This is a state-of-the-art website, a joint project of Cornell and Audubon. It will enable you to chart your local results and compare them with the findings of counters across North America.

Over 14,000 birdwatchers participated last year.

The organizers want you to report the species and the number of individuals of each species seen.



Bluebird eggs smaller than a dime were found in a nest this summer by Andrew Hartley of Batesburg, S.C. Mr. Hartley said he has been monitoring nest boxes for 10 years, never before seeing such tiny eggs. He said that the eggs were about half the size of a normal Eastern Bluebird egg. Mr. Hartley wondered, in jest, if the eggs were the hybrid product of a bluebird/hummingbird mating. Mr. Hartley took the photo.

NABS grant recipients

Seven research grants were given by NABS in 1998, all directed to graduate students developing careers related to wildlife management.

Announcement of the grants was made by Kevin Berner, NABS research committee chairman.

He pointed out that all of the 12

Bluebird seminar in Indiana March 20

Bluebird conservation in the Ohio River Valley region of southwest Indiana is getting a boost from a local utility. Southern Indiana Gas & Electric Co. (SIGECO) will sponsor a bluebird preservation seminar March 20 in Evansville, Ind.

Among those scheduled to attend are John Ivanko and Lisa Kivirist, co-executive directors of the North American Bluebird Society (NABS); Dean Sheldon, NABS board member; Dr. Wayne Davis, retired faculty member, University of Kentucky School of Biological Sciences; Frank Hnat, wildlife artist from Hickory, Pa.; Scott Kramer, program director at Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve, Evansville; and representatives of the Indiana Bluebird Society.

The seminar will begin at 9 a.m. at SIGECO's Wagner Operation Center, 1 N. Main St., Evansville. Lunch will be served. For reservations and information, call Ginger Bitter, (812) 464-4524.

SIGECO is working with NABS to develop educational materials for use in classrooms (K-6) across the U.S.

Insert in this issue

NABS Nomination Committee report (side 1) and registration form for the 1999 NABS conference (side 2). Please use the absentee ballot if you will not be attending the conference.

grant requests received were for cavity-nesting species other than bluebirds.

"We promote the conservation of all cavity-nesting birds," he told the board of directors. "Many of these species are much less understood and studied than bluebirds, so the potential for improving the management of these species may be greater than for the most-studied bluebird species."

The recipients are:

- Pamela Freeman, North Dakota State University, for a project entitled "Analysis of Variation in Barred Owl Vocalizations."

- Michael Husak, Mississippi State University, for a project entitled "Comparative Niche Structure and Function of Red-bellied and Golden-fronted Woodpeckers."

- Keith Kimmerle, Mississippi State University, for a project entitled "The Effect of Habitat Quality on Avian Recruitment in Fragmented Habitats."

- Hugh Powell, University of Montana, for a project entitled "Factors Affecting Black-backed Woodpecker Distribution Across a Recent Stand-replacement Burned Forest Patch."

- Isabella Scheiber, University of Albany, State University of New York, for a project entitled "Female Choice and the Mating System of a Population of House Wrens, a Monomorphic Passerine."

- Dawn Wilkins, Mississippi State University, for a project entitled "The Winter Foraging Ecology of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers in Central Mississippi."

- Larry Wood, University of Georgia, for a project entitled "Densities and Turnover Rates of Cavities and Their Effect on the Breeding Biology of the Prothonotary Warbler."

Puzzle

Here are 11 words taken from the names of cavity-nesting birds mentioned in stories in this issue of Bluebird. Fill in the missing letters to complete the word. *Answers are on page 11.*

T _ T _ O _ S _
_ W _ L _ O _
E _ S _ E _ N _
_ E _ T _ R _
B _ U _ B _ R _
_ U _ H _ T _ H _
K _ S _ R _ L _
_ R _ N _
S _ A _ R _ W _
_ A _ T _ N _
W _ O _ P _ C _ E _

BluebirdQuiz

1. To what family of birds do bluebirds belong?

Sparrow
Wren
Thrush
Blackbird

2. How many species of thrushes have been recorded in North America?

6
16
26
36

3. Which of our three species of bluebirds has been known to nest in holes in cliffs or dirt banks?

Eastern Bluebird
Western Bluebird
Mountain Bluebird

Answers are on page 11.

Nest-box approval process needs your help

By John D. Ivanko
and Lisa Kivirist

Hundreds of retailers, manufacturers, and distributors of bluebird nest boxes have received NABS' approval of the bluebird nest boxes they sell or manufacture, including Wild Birds Unlimited, Wild Bird Centers, Lucky Penny, and WoodLink.

Recognizing the need for clear standards for bluebird nest-box design as well as a consumer education program to assist bluebirders with the installation of the nest boxes, the North American Bluebird Society (NABS) established a bluebird nest-box approval process in January 1998. Since its launch, the process has been featured in National Wildlife and WildBird magazines, and Winging It, the newsletter of the American Birding Association.

In order to ensure that the boxes approved continue to meet the requirements of properly designed nest boxes, we need our members to be watchful of boxes that do not appear to meet these criteria or misuse the NABS-Approved labels on their boxes. If you see a questionable nest box for sale, please send NABS a note with the manufacturer's name, address, and all relevant contact information (including the store

where it was sold). NABS will take it from there.

Together with the keen eyes and experience of our members continent-wide, NABS can make sure that these companies profit responsibly. The widespread support and positive reaction on the part of the business community to this process is an exciting step toward more effective conservation efforts — and successful bluebirding results.

The nest-box approval process includes an examination of the design, materials, and dimensions of the boxes to better ensure that they help — not hinder — bluebirds. Hole size, thickness of wood, and ventilation are among the factors considered. Approval recognition comes in the form of a NABS-approved label placed on the nest box. The criteria and process was featured in the Spring 1998 "Sialia" (Vol. 20, Number 2).

"Not all boxes are equal," says Kevin Berner, chair of NABS Research Committee and ornithologist at SUNY, Cobleskill, N.Y. "Designs vary in their attractiveness to various species and in their ability to protect their inhabitants from predators, inclement weather, and introduced competitors. NABS has worked for

years to identify the nest box designs that are the most effective in successfully producing young bluebirds," he said.

Manufacturers or retailers can have their nest boxes reviewed, as the process is on-going. A sample nest box and/or detailed plans can be sent to Attn.: Steve Eno, 2500 West James Dr., Raymond, NE 68428, telephone (402) 783-3011. The process takes about four weeks. The company will be notified regarding the decision, and supporting materials will be sent upon approval.

There is no cost for the nest box review, but retailers and manufacturers are expected to make a commitment toward bluebird education by agreeing to insert the NABS information sheet and brochure inside each nest box. Unless return postage is included, the submitted materials become the property of NABS.

More information on the nest box approval process is available by writing to NABS; e-mail: <nabluebird@aol.com>; or on NABS' website: <<http://www.cobleskill.edu/nabs/>>.

Minnesota Bluebird Conference April 17 in Winona

Minnesota's 20th annual Bluebird Conference will be April 17 in Winona, Minnesota, a charming city on the Mississippi River in the southeast corner of the state. Events begin at 9 a.m. and continue until 4 p.m. at the Winona High School. An optional trip to a bluebird trail follows the program. This event is sponsored by the Bluebird Recovery Program of Minnesota (BBRP).

Several excellent speakers will make presentations. Subjects include Prothonotary Warblers, beginning bluebirding, how engineering

changes in the upper Mississippi River have affected birds, habitat of the Bluff Region of Minnesota, and an explanation of federal initiatives to provide non-game wildlife funding to the states.

Registration information is available by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to BBRP Conference, Box 3801, Minneapolis, MN 55403. You will get registration forms, a map, and complete program information. Registration deadline is April 5.

The conference is free. The

conference luncheon, at \$7.50 per person, does require reservations.

Contact Dorene Scriven for additional information. Her telephone number is (612) 922-4586, e-mail at <scriv001@maroon.tc.umn.edu>.

Attendees are to make their own accommodation arrangements. The Winona Convention and Visitors Bureau will send information about places to stay. Call toll-free (800) 657-4972.

House Wrens and open-topped nest boxes

By Kevin Berner
NABS Research Chairman

For years many bluebird enthusiasts have attempted to minimize the chance that House Wrens will occupy nest boxes intended for bluebirds. Although people enjoy the bubbly song of wrens, this species also has the habit of usurping bluebird nests. Tell-tale signs of this are finding bluebird eggs on the ground with a small hole, from a wren's bill, in each egg, and sticks on top of the bluebird nest.

My tests of a variety of nest-box styles have indicated that wrens appear to be less discriminating than

bluebirds and swallows, and will use nearly any style of nest box. The House Wren's small size eliminates the possibility of exclusion with small hole sizes.

To date, the best recommendation for avoiding wren use of nest boxes has been to move nest boxes as far as possible from brushy habitat, keeping them in very open spaces. Discussions at many NABS meetings have confirmed that wrens are moving progressively greater distances from brush to nest. It may be that the preferred brushy habitats are all occupied, and less dominant birds are moving into poorer quality (more open) habitats.

Open-topped nest boxes have been used successfully by Vince Bauldrey in Wisconsin for well over two decades, and it has been suggested that they may deter House Sparrows and House Wrens. Many bluebird enthusiasts have been reluctant to endorse a box with the top directly exposing occupants to precipitation. B. Orthwein in Ohio has suggested adding a raised roof above an open-topped box. This modification would give the advantage of the well-illuminated box which may discourage some species' use of the nest box while still providing protection from precipitation.

I have conducted limited tests since 1996 to determine if the open topped, raised roofed nest boxes do indeed deter use by House Wrens. My nine test boxes were standard nest boxes with 4 inch by 4 1/2 inch floors. The box tops were removed and replaced with 1/2-inch hardware cloth. A solid roof was placed 4 inches over the wire roof. Individual nest boxes were placed at sites where House Wrens had nested in recent years. A thin board with a 1 1/8-inch diameter entry hole was placed over the original 1 1/2-inch diameter hole to exclude bluebirds. This was done to ensure that blue-



Standard nest boxes were rebuilt to create a raised roof above an open-top design. Half-inch hardware cloth replaced the original roof to deter predators.

birds would not be attracted to the sites to nest, only to have their nests destroyed by wrens.

Between four and six experimental boxes were used by wrens each year. Chickadees nested in one of the boxes during two years and in one box during another year. Overall, wrens used six of the nine boxes at least one year.

It does not appear that open-topped raised roofed nest boxes provide a significant deterrent to House Wrens. I believe that proper location of nest boxes remains the best wren deterrent. If individuals do not want wrens using their nest boxes, they should move boxes further from brushy sites, or if necessary remove any boxes from sites persistently used by wrens. I have found that by moving nest boxes from sites of historic wren use to new sites, I have been able to almost completely eliminate wren predation of bluebird nests.

Continued on page 13

Answers

The answers to the Puzzle on page 11 are:

- Titmouse
- Swallow
- Eastern
- Western
- Bluebird
- Nuthatch
- Kestrel
- Wren
- Sparrow
- Martin
- Woodpecker

Quiz answers:

1. Thrush
2. Twenty-six species of thrushes have been recorded in North America, including the Aleutian Islands. They are Siberian Rubythroat, Bluethroat, Siberian Blue Robin, Red-flanked Bluetail, Northern Wheatear, Stonechat, Eastern, Western, and Mountain bluebirds, Townsend's Solitaire, Veery, Gray-cheeked, Bicknell's, Swainson's, Hermit, Wood, Eyebrowed, Varied, Aztec and Dusky thrushes, Fieldfare, Redwing, Clay-colored, White-throated, Rufous-backed, and American robins.
3. Mountain Bluebird

Web site pays NABS money

If you use the World Wide Web you can earn money for the North American Bluebird Society in a very simple way. Just set your web browser to open on the start page maintained by an organization called Eyegive.

Eyegive sells advertising on that web page, and your participation creates the exposure to potential customers that advertisers seek. Revenue from those ads is shared with NABS.

The address of this start web page is <www.eyegive.com>.

Visitors to that site also will learn the Web address for NABS, something you might want to bookmark if you haven't already done so. The NABS address is <www.cobleskill.edu/nabs/>.

— House Wrens

Continued from page 12

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The nest boxes used in this study were all built by Herman Bressler. Joseph Therrien, a SUNY Cobleskill student, modified the boxes to the open-roofed design. This work was supported by the Bluebird Recovery Program, based in Minnesota, and the NABS.

Literature consulted for this article:

Orthwein, B. 1995. An experimental House Sparrow and House Wren resistant box. *Ohio Bluebird Monitor* 10(4): 4-5.

Radunzel, L. A., D.M. Muschitz, V. M. Bauldrey, and P. Arcese. 1997. A long-term study of the breeding success of Eastern Bluebirds by year and cavity type. *Journal of Field Ornithology*, 68:7-18.

(Mr. Berner teaches at the State University of New York, Cobleskill, N.Y.)

A start page is nothing more than the first page your computer makes available to you when you enter the web. You can move from this page to your target sites as easily as from the page you currently use. The only difference is that your participation produces revenue for NABS.

For more information, visit the Eyegive website at <www.eyegive.com>. Register (for free), and designate NABS as the benefiting non-profit organization.

Corrections

On page 123 of the Autumn 1998 issue of "Sialia," Vol. 20, No. 4, in the article "Mountain Bluebird Productivity Near Saskatoon, Saskatchewan," a measurement was incorrectly stated. In the section entitled "Study Areas and Methods," the size of the entry hole should be 3.8 cm, not 2.4 cm. The size as stated in inches (1.5) is correct.

On page 147 of the same issue, in the article entitled "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," in the third paragraph of the second column, the word "chitin" should be "keratin."

Bluebirds are back! Thanks to people like you.

Scientists at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology need your help to learn more about the breeding biology of bluebirds and other cavity-nesting birds.

Let's work together toward a common goal: the conservation of bluebirds and other native cavity-nesting birds.

- ◆ The Cornell Nest Box Network is a citizen-science project of the Lab of Ornithology in which people of ages across North America help study cavity-nesting birds by collecting scientific data from their nest boxes.
- ◆ Results from the research you help conduct are reported directly to you in the Lab's quarterly newsletter, *Birdscope*.
- ◆ Participants receive a research kit, data-entry software, data forms, use of a participant listserv, and a subscription to *Birdscope*.



*North American Bluebird Society
members pay only \$15, a 25% savings.*

CNBN is funded by
participant fees
and a grant from the
National Science Foundation

For more information and to sign up
Call 1-800-843-BIRD

E-mail <cornellbirds@cornell.edu>

Web site <<http://birds.cornell.edu>>.

Don't forget to tell us you get a NABS discount!



*The Cornell Lab of Ornithology is a non-profit
membership institute dedicated to the study,
appreciation, and conservation of birds.*





Letters to the editor



To the Editor,

I am a climate-change researcher who studies the potential impacts of climate change on birds. Currently I am looking for long-term data sets that might be used to indicate whether birds have already responded to measured changes in climate.

Some changes that have already been noted in birds include: arriving up to 21 days earlier (one study in Michigan), shifting their ranges almost 100 km farther north (one study in the U.S.), and breeding 10 days earlier (one study in the UK). Bluebird trails that have been run for 20 or more years (or even 10 to 15 years) might be an excellent source of data for this type of study.

Do you have any recommendation on who I might contact to obtain this type of information? I am willing to share authorship credit on any publications that directly come out of use of the data.

This study will be part of a wildlife/ecosystem modeling and assessment program. Current work includes effects of climate change on breeding duck populations, changes in the summer distributions of birds, and sea-level rise and shorebird habitats.

Jeff Price, Ph.D.

*Director of Climate Change
Impact Studies, American Bird
Conservancy*

*6525 Gunpark Drive, Suite 150-
146*

Boulder, CO 80301

Phone: 303-530-7239

Fax: 303-530-7604

E-mail: <jprice@mbo.net>

(Persons willing to share information with Mr. Price can contact him at the address shown.)

To the Editor,

I belong to the Ottawa Duck Club which currently maintains over 175 duck nesting boxes. The club has been active for 32 years. Most of the boxes are only checked in the winter time, and we have been estimating success by counting the egg membranes left in the box.

Every year we tend to have lots of discussion about how to record the results. The first question is whether (nesting was) a success or not. Normally, if there's evidence of a hatch, it can be declared a success.

The next question is how successful? To answer this, we try to count the egg membranes and, along with the quantity of shell fragments, make an estimate of hatch success in the ranges of 4 to 6, 6 to 10, 10 to 14. This probably would be fairly accurate if the boxes were checked right after the nesting season.

However, as we're doing this in the wintertime, is it possible that rodents or snakes could get into the boxes and eat both shell and membrane? Would it be better to simply indicate a success or not, and use a hatch figure of 12 to 14 for each success? Would lots of down found in a box but no shell or membrane indicate a success?

We would appreciate information on any protocols used to record results when checking duck boxes. It would be interesting to hear how other groups record their results?

In order to help us with this question, last year we began checking some 30 boxes weekly, and this year we hope to check up to 50.

Dale Crook

98 Renfrew Ave.

Ottawa, Ontario

K1S 1Z8 Canada

bq969@freenet.carleton.ca

Dear Colleagues,

Next spring I will start a study in which I intend to compare nest predation in nest boxes and open nests. I will use quail eggs as baits in both cases. I believe that I will not have any problems with the open nests, but I'm not sure how to avoid cavity nesters using the nest boxes. This can be a problem, in the way that it may cause a bias in the data since comparisons between quail eggs with no parents in open nests and eggs defended by parents in nest boxes may not be valid.

Does anyone have any suggestion on how to build nest boxes that will not be occupied by birds but that predators won't avoid? I really would like to know about your ideas, even if they seem bizarre.

Thank you.

Joao F. Almeida

Universidade de Evora, Portugal

R. Diogo Couto, lote 12, 10 dto.

7000 EVORA, PORTUGAL

E-mail:

<mop53359@mail.telepac.pt>

Odds and ends

Here is a list of odds and ends from **Grace Storch** of the **Bluebird Recovery Program of JoDaviess County in Illinois**.

- Rethink and relocate your box if not successful for two seasons.

- A little sulphur powder in the bottom of the box deters bird mites and possibly blow-fly larvae. Small birds find shelter from the elements (in some boxes) during the winter, but if you resent mice harboring there, leave the box open.

- Apple juice and steel wool make a natural stain for the exterior of boxes.

- Aluminum foil on top of a box will reflect heat.

Minimum diameter for House Sparrow entry

By Frank Navratil

Back in 1995 I constructed wooden bird houses based upon drawings for a slot-entry style. These are very sturdy and easy to build. I still use some in the field, and bluebirds continue to nest successfully in them. A feature was that the 1 1/8-inch high horizontal entry slot would exclude House Sparrows.

I guess Chicago-area House Sparrows are somewhat smaller in size, because they readily nested in these boxes.

Curious as to what dimensions an entry must be to really exclude House Sparrows, I tried various sizes of round, horizontal, and vertical entry holes.

First, I allowed the sparrows to build nests and lay eggs in five wooden NABS houses with their 1 1/2-inch (3.8 cm) round holes. Now that the sparrows were motivated to re-enter the houses, I narrowed the openings day by day. (Sounds diabolical, doesn't it?)

I varied the entry size by screwing squares of 1/8-inch plywood with different hole sizes over the original 1 1/2-inch round entry hole. The slots were made by cutting two holes using the appropriate diameter hole saw, then carefully filing out the space between these holes.

Here are the results:

ROUND

1 1/4-inch (3.2 cm) diameter still allows entry.

1 1/8-inch (2.9 cm) diameter stops entry.

HORIZONTAL SLOT

1 1/2-inch by 1 inch (3.8x2.5 cm) slot still allows entry.

1 1/2-inch by 7/8-inch (3.8x2.2 cm) stops entry.

VERTICAL SLOT

1 by 1 1/2-inch (2.5x3.8 cm) slot still allows entry.

7/8-inch by 1 1/2-inch (2.2x3.8 cm) slot stops entry.

I was really surprised by the small

opening required to exclude the sparrows, especially in the slot configuration. As far as House Sparrow motivation is concerned, it seems they are always motivated. I have watched sparrows try to enter a tiny wren house with a 1-inch (2.5 cm) diameter entry hole for days at a

time. Not too bright, I guess, but based on their breeding success that persistence must be a good characteristic.

(2323 S. 14th Ave., North Riverside, Illinois, [708] 447-4378, e-mail at <frnavrat@concentric.net>.)

Do you have e-mail? Subscribe to the new bluebird e-mail network

An e-mail exchange network for persons interested in bluebirds has been established and is available for free subscription. This listserv, as such networks are called, is a cooperative venture of the North American Bluebird Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

Messages sent to this network are distributed automatically to all net members. Subscribers receive and send messages as e-mail via their designated e-mail provider. Picture the network as a mailing list of persons interested in bluebirds: If you put your name on the list you share mail with other members.

It is anticipated that the net will be a popular place for exchange of

information about bluebirds. The immediacy of e-mail makes it possible to ask a question of net members or make a comment and receive answers or replies not more than minutes later, should another member choose to respond.

To subscribe to this net, known as BLUEBIRD-L, send an e-mail message to:

listproc@cornell.edu
containing this single line of text: SUBSCRIBE BLUEBIRD-L
(your name)

As: SUBSCRIBE BLUEBIRD-L JOE JONES

You must send this mail from the e-mail address on which you normally receive e-mail.

Once you have subscribed, the Cornell network management center will send you a set of instructions for use of this network.

The Cornell Lab also offers a similar network — the NESTBOX-L mailing list — to facilitate communication between people who are involved the Cornell Nest Box Network (CNBN). It is available to persons joining the CNBN. For information, contact Cornell Nest Box Network/NYAU, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, PO Box 11, Ithaca, NY 14851-0011.

Eastern Bluebird diet

Animals items in the diet of Eastern Bluebirds, in order of use:

1. Grasshoppers, crickets, katydids
2. Beetles
3. Caterpillars (and a few moths)
4. Ants
5. Bugs (Hemiptera)
6. Other insects, spiders, sowbugs, snails, angleworms, lizards, and tree frogs.

In this analysis of the stomach contents of 855 birds, such food was found to be 68 percent of the total diet. The remainder was vegetable matter, largely fruit and mostly wild.

(From "Life Histories of North American Thrushes, Kinglets, and Their Allies," By Arthur Cleveland Bent, published by the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C.)

Recipes for your backyard birds

Marvel Meal

1 cup peanut butter
1 cup vegetable shortening,
melted beef suet, or bacon drippings
4 cups yellow cornmeal
1 cup white flour

Directions: Makes a soft, doughy food that can be offered in suet feeders, nylon mesh bags, or rolled into balls and offered in an open dish.

Miracle Meal

4 cups yellow cornmeal
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup lard or melted suet/grease
1 teaspoon corn oil

Directions: Melt lard and stir in sunflower hearts, peanut hearts, chopped soaked raisins (and items listed above). Let this set up, and then cut into chunks and serve in a suet feeder or in an open dish.

Bluebird Meal

5 parts old-fashioned rolled oatmeal
1 part corn syrup
1 part peanut butter
1 part bacon grease, melted suet, or lard

Directions: Mix well and smear into one-inch holes drilled into a suspended log suet feeder. All birds like this recipe.

(These recipes appeared in Backyard Bird News, Vol. 1, No. 5, Fall 1998. It is used with permission.)



The Kestrel originally nested in this box, its hole enlarged by another bird, probably a Northern Flicker.



When the Kestrel chicks were about eight days old, they were transferred to a new and larger nest box.

Kestrels use bluebird box

By Donna R. Hagerman

Since setting out my first bluebird boxes 15 years ago, I've enjoyed raising thousands of Mountain and Western bluebirds. As an occasional added bonus Ash-throated Flycatchers, Plain Titmice, Tree Swallows, Mountain Chickadees, White-breasted Nuthatches, House Wrens, and Bewick's Wrens have successfully used the nesting boxes. This year I was in for a new experience.

While monitoring boxes in late May, I came upon one where the entrance hole had been pecked open to about 2.5 inches by 3.25 inches, presumably by a Northern Flicker. Upon opening the lid, I found one nearly chicken-sized American Kestrel egg. After a week, there were four eggs, with Mrs. Kestrel remaining in the box to have her picture taken. All four eggs hatched one month later.

The 5.25 inch by 5.5 inch floor

dimensions of the bluebird box offered very cramped quarters for the adult kestrel and would not allow sufficient space for four growing kestrel chicks. So when the chicks were eight or nine days old, I transferred them into a kestrel box nearly twice the size of their original box. The new box was mounted in the same position as the original, with the box floor just under four feet from the ground. The parents watched from perches about 100 yards away and readily accepted the larger accommodations. All four kestrels successfully fledged in late July.

(Ms. Hagerman does her bluebirding in Reno, Nevada.)

NPR interview opens PR gate

Bluebird recovery efforts, particularly in the state of New York, received wonderful national radio and television coverage last summer. It all began in May when National Public Radio reporter Melissa Block traveled to Schoharie County, New York, to observe local bluebird work.

Ms. Block was enticed by the Route 20 trail that crosses New York from the Massachusetts border to the Pennsylvania state line south of Buffalo. This trail, the dream of Carlisle resident Ray Briggs, was originated in Schoharie County. The trail has 1700 boxes. It is hard to travel anywhere along Route 20 without seeing these uniformly colored golden, pine nest boxes.

As past president of the New York State Bluebird Society, Mr. Briggs spearheaded the effort to establish this trail. Joe Therrien, a State University of New York (SUNY) Cobleskill student studying wildlife management, is the statewide coordinator of the trail. As an intern, he placed hundreds of boxes in the field and worked with volunteers across the state to make the trail a reality.

Ms. Block came from New York City to interview Mr. Briggs, Kevin Berner, and Mr. Therrien. Her first stop was Mr. Berner's house where he whistled and immediately called a pair of bluebirds to a mealworm feeder. She observed two pairs of nesting bluebirds and their nests at that site before traveling along the Route 20 trail within Schoharie County and visiting a variety of occupied nest sites over a nearly six-hour period.

Ms. Block's report was broadcast nationwide June 8 on the show "Morning Edition." (You can listen to the report on your computer by visiting the NPR web site or by connecting through the North American Bluebird Society at <http://www.cobleskill.edu/nabs/>.)

The NPR report led to inquiries

from the CBS and ABC television networks. Harry Smith of CBS Evening News spent a day in the field with Mr. Briggs and Mr. Therrien along the Route 20 trail in Schoharie and Otsego counties. The film crew spent a second day obtaining additional footage. The thrust of the report was to present a human-interest story on Mr. Briggs and the contributions that he has made to the recovery of bluebirds in New York State. The report aired nationwide on the evening news in August.

The CBS Evening News broadcast apparently led to yet more attention for local bluebirders. On Aug. 31, New York Gov. George Pataki offered a proclamation declaring the day "Ray Briggs Bluebird Day" at the state's Five Rivers Environmental Education Center in Delmar. The ceremony honored Mr. Briggs more than 20 years of work with bluebirds.

The governor announced that in the near future new bluebird license plates in New York will start with RDB, Mr. Briggs's initials. Earlier

editions started with RTP, for Roger Tory Peterson, the artist who drew the bluebird featured on the license plates, and BRD for bird. Gov. Pataki also announced that the Eastern Bluebird was being taken off the "Species of Special Concern" list in the state.

Ray was presented a simulated license plate with his initials, mounted on a wooden plaque, as well as a solid walnut nest box with metal plaque attached to it noting this day of recognition. Mr. Berner of SUNY Cobleskill; John Cahill, commissioner of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; Sandi Treadwell, New York Secretary of State; John Faso, the local assemblyman; and David Miller, northeast regional director of the National Audubon Society, all spoke as six television cameras rolled.

(This article, in slightly different form, originally appeared in the newsletter of the Schoharie County Bluebird Society, and is used here with permission.)

Feeding mealworms in the winter

Some of us feed mealworms to our bluebirds during nesting season, to help parents feed hungry young. Other birders offer mealworms year-round to any hungry bird in the neighborhood, winter being a good time to do this.

The trick with mealworms, says bird expert Laura Erickson of Duluth, Minnesota, is teaching the birds that the worms are available.

"During cold weather, which we see in abundance in Duluth," said Ms. Erickson in a recent visit, "mealworms instantly freeze up, and without movement, birds simply don't notice them. I needed a lot of patience when I started offering them. Whenever one of my chickadee flocks appeared, I'd set out a

dozen or so mealworms, and bring them in if the chickadees moved on without taking any," she explained.

"It didn't take more than a couple of days to get them to notice the mealworms, and not more than an additional day or two for them to connect the window opening and me sticking my head out and whistling with the feeder being filled with mealworms."

Ms. Erickson said that in late October chickadees are readily learning where winter food might be found, so it is a good time to start feeding mealworms.

From Shore to Shore

What are they doing now?

Calvert County (Maryland)

Trail Monitors reported a record number of boxes, nests, eggs, and fledges this past year, the latter number topping 1,000.

The recently formed **Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania**, a NABS affiliate, received impressive publicity in a story published by the Harrisburg (Pa.) Patriot-News. Trails, nesting boxes, and the special needs of bluebirds were well explained by state conservation officials and Bob Early, society director, Kathy Clark, president, Anna Lenker, member, and Jim Lenker, director, some of whom were quoted and all of whom were pictured.

Three generations of the **Sawyer family of Ringgold, Georgia**, also were featured in a newspaper story recently. Mother Adelaide, daughter Elaine Sawyer Whittemore, and son Marvin Sawyer build nesting boxes and bird feeders. They continue work begun by Adelaide's late husband, Laurance, whose father, Edmund Joseph Sawyer, was a well-known bird artist. The houses and feeders are formed by working log cuts on a lathe, hollowing the cavities.

We receive a nice note from Charles Welch of Alturas, Calif., informing us of the very commendable work of **Fred P. Lesan of Biggs, Calif.**, who built and donated 258 bluebird houses to schools in his area.

Charlene Kelly, NABS member from **New Jersey**, provided plans for bluebird houses built and put up by Cub Scouts in her community. The finished houses were pictured in the local newspaper.

From Montana, comes a report of a special birding year by **Carl E. Wolf, a member of Montana Bluebird Trails**. In 1997, Carl saw and identified 302 species of birds in that state, traveling 18,851 miles by

foot, truck, canoe, and horse to do so. The all-time list for Montana is 389 species, about half of those difficult to find at best. Carl is a member of the American Birding Association, a licensed bander, and a devoted bluebird man who runs about 200 nest boxes. We took this story from the Mountain Bluebird Trails Bulletin, the newsletter published by that organization.

Canon City, Colorado, has built a bluebird trail on land that was used as the city landfill. A park is planned for the site. The bluebird work was done by the Canon City High School Environmental Club, under the leadership of sponsor Linda Bennett. Twenty-two nest boxes, built by the school's woodworking class, are now in place. Biology classes provide monitoring attention. Even third-graders in the school system have become involved. Western Bluebirds are the species attracted, and 50 of these beautiful birds have been counted there. This was first reported in the newsletter of the **Colorado Bluebird Project**.

One hundred bluebird nesting boxes have been put in place at the **Parris Island, S. C., United States Marine Corps Training Depot**. The post's natural resources and environmental office used cypress-cedar boxes, placing them throughout the facility. "Because there is a lack of natural cavities here," said Marine Ron Kinlow, an environmental protection specialist, "the birds will build a nest anywhere, including air-conditioner vents and open mail boxes, so we decided to put up the houses." The story came to us in the newsletter of the **Rutherford County (N.C.) Bluebird Club**.

As we approach the denouement of winter, the bluebirds we in the north await so eagerly are scattered from Ohio and mid-Missouri deep into Mexico. Lucky are you who enjoy them year round.

Eastern Bluebirds vacated the northern states in late October or November, in no hurry to leave the slanting sunshine of fall, the telephone wires they so brightly graced.

They are now feeding on insects if they can find them, favoring berries when they can't. You see them perching in berry trees and bushes or making short hovering flights to pluck on the wing.



Western Bluebirds which migrate have moved to the Pacific Coast, for the tempered weather there, or south, roughly below mid-Utah and beyond, into Mexico. They, too, find berries and small fruits important during the winter, sometimes gathering in flocks of hundreds where such food is plentiful.

Mountain Bluebirds can be found now in a crescent-shaped band from central Washington into New Mexico and farther south in northern Mexico and west Texas in an area where they can be found throughout the year. As you have guessed, berries and fruit are important to this species, too, mistletoe, juniper, and elderberry plants particular favorites.

If you wanted to see all three species in one place at one time, winter in deep west Texas would be a good bet.

(Information for this article came from Kenn Kaufman's book "Lives of North American Birds," published under the sponsorship of the Roger Tory Peterson Institute. It is a fine reference book.)

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Jacqueline Pieper
Robert and Beatrice Stout

In Memory of Maxine Montgomery
Harry Barker
Harriet Shapiro
Mrs. Garnett T. Tunstall, Sr.
Lilian Warfield

In memory of Fr. Joseph Sedlacek
Joe and Tamra Sedlacek

In Memory of Schuler Ullrich
Dr. William K. Roth, Jr.

In Memory of Wilfred Wickersham
Frances Zoeller

In Memory of Harold Wolf

Mr. Peterson
Doreen and Gail Wolf

(Categories are determined by total donations made during fiscal year 1997-1998, which was Nov. 1, 1997, to Oct. 31, 1998.)

1997 Speakers' Bureau report

By Ron Kingston

In January 1998, 329 questionnaires were sent to members of the NABS Speakers' Bureau. Every year, speakers are asked for a summary of programs, what worked and what didn't, how NABS can help them, and what goals NABS should seek. If you need a speaker in your area, contact NABS. Better yet, buy a set of slides and audio tape or a video and hit the road yourself. You will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have helped conservation of bluebirds by getting information to persons who can help bluebirds in your area.

Here are comments offered by some of the speakers in their reports, which summarized 531 programs presented in 1997 by the NABS Speakers' Bureau.

Jean Buchanan and Sue Ansley of Nashville, Tenn., encourage school groups and Scouts to become involved in bluebird conservation. They use nest boxes, old nests, and eggs cleaned from boxes, and samples of food to be offered during bad weather. They also emphasize that loss of green space and habitat, along with pesticides and other chemical toxins, are detrimental to the conservation of bluebirds.

Marvin Schwilling, a speaker for 18 years, uses nest boxes along with wood carvings to give programs to garden clubs in the **Emporia, Kan.**, area. He says, "I was the first full-time non-game biologist for Kansas, and bluebird restoration was one of our first projects."

Edwina Hahn, NABS historian, uses slides and videos when feasible, explaining the importance of berry plants for bluebirds in her talks to groups in **Columbus, Ga.** She speaks approximately once a month to adult clubs, garden clubs, and church groups.

In **Ellsworth, Iowa**, **Jaclyn Hill** shows the Peterson system along with a PVC box. She has field trips in her back yard for garden clubs and children. She shows how moving water and berry-producing plants attract bluebirds. **Pat Schlarbaum** in **Boone, Iowa**, explains the importance of properly placing the nest box and of using predator control.

Toni Lynn Merchen of **Crofton, Neb.**, offered many programs, including a bluebird brunch at her house in May.

She shows the good, bad, and the ugly of bluebird nest boxes, and sold the good boxes at a reasonable price if anyone bought a bluebird membership.

Ken Jankowski of Valparaiso, Ind., spoke to over 200 adults at the Jackson School Spring Fling. He distributed the new NABS brochure, and explained how the House Sparrow has become an obstacle to bluebird conservation.

There are two very busy speakers in Pennsylvania who build nest boxes at all their programs — **Diane Allison of Pipersville** and **Larry Rohrbaugh of Spring Grove**. Diane uses her own slides, and after the program helps kids assemble her precut kits. Larry uses an old NABS slide program, and says, "I go to the schools the first day to show the bluebird slide program. At one school, we put together eight precut boxes, and erected them around the school yard. Groups monitored the boxes the rest of the year, and they worked it in with box math and science projects."

David Alpert of Mechanicsville, Va., near Richmond, a very suburban area, hands out the new NABS brochure and presents the newer NABS slide program. His program suggests placing nest boxes on neighborhood mailbox posts. "The idea of boxes on mailposts should be encouraged in suburban neighborhoods. Bluebirds are quite common now in our neighborhood, having adapted to a community where homes are close together. I am convinced that if every neighborhood could do what we have done, bluebirds would become one of our most common birds," he said.

Jean Lister, Thunder Bay, Ont., uses a display of nest boxes, nest, eggs, and different books about bluebirds. She has a mixture of NABS slides and her own, tailoring her slides to her audience, which many NABS speakers do.

Myrna Pearman of the Ellis Bird Farm in **Lacombe, Alb.**, uses her own set of slides for programs in schools in the province and to thousands of visitors at the Ellis Bird Farm. She emphasizes how habitat loss, exotic species, and lack of knowledge have been detrimental to bluebirds.

At **Live Oak**, in northern Florida, **Lorna Beasley** uses nest boxes, her

own slides of cavity nesters, including Screech Owl, kestrels, titmice, and bluebirds. She likes the new NABS slide program very much. She gives programs at Cattlemen's Association meetings. Many ranchers later install boxes on their fences, she said.

In **New York**, **David Heidenrich of Colton** is involved with many others in establishing a bluebird trail that will run on New York's Route 11 from Rouses Point to the Pennsylvania border. He gave over 20 programs last year up and down Route 11 to find monitors who will help with this tremendous project and see that the trail will have boxes and monitors for years to come. An Adopt-A-Box program by the New York State Bluebird Society, along with kits for the schools, is proving successful here.

Elsie Eitzroth, Corvallis, Ore., gave many programs, including presentations at the Heartland Humane Society and a Wild Birds Unlimited store. She offered workshops at the store to help raise the low number of Western Bluebirds in her area.

For almost 12 years, **Eleanor Dunham** has been speaking for NABS in **New Salem, Ill.**, handing out NABS brochures and Nature Society News at her meetings.

Hobart Ellifritt went from his home in **Clarksburg, W.V.**, to New Haven (115 miles west on the Ohio River) where he showed the management of Mountain Power Company a program on bluebirds. The company has 100 acres of reclaimed land from coal mining and wants to create a bluebird trail on it. "It's a great opportunity to explain that bluebirds need artificial nesting places, and that the company has an excellent location to start a bluebird trail," he said. The company loved his ideas.

Barbara Stinson talked to over 760 individuals in 1997, of which 552 were students. She spoke to 26 classes of fifth graders in and around **Warrenton, Va.**, where she lives. She says, "I give a 45-minute slide talk about bluebird life, history, and habitat, reasons for their population decline, how we can help restore them, importance of hedgerows, problems of pesticides and exotics, cats and other predators, and the decline in

Continued on page 21

— report

Continued from page 20

our migratory bird population." She takes the children on a spring field trip to her 49-box trail to observe nests, eggs and/or young of bluebirds, Tree Swallows, wrens, and chickadees.

Chris Grondahl and Scott Gomes presented 20 programs last year in **North Dakota**, using a cavity-nesting series of slides. They reached over 400 people, discussing development of bluebird trails and a new North Dakota brochure on developing, monitoring, and maintaining bluebird trails.

In **Center Sandwich, N.H.**, **David Eastman** gave nine programs in and around Squam Lake where the first thing participants must do is assemble nest

box kits. He then goes into a slide program on bluebirds, using his own slides. The importance of primary excavators and the fact that we never have enough cavities is the main point he presents.

Robert Hammond, Earlysville, Va., gave 10 programs last year to over 250 individuals, mainly at garden and horticultural clubs. He shows slides and distributes his own pamphlets along with NABS brochures. "Most people remember better and longer if you give them something to take home," he said. "I often give a bluebird nest box as a door prize."

In **Bethlehem, Conn.**, **Fred Comstock** talked at nature centers and a land trust organization, using personal slides, a banding kit, a bluebird nest box, and his own book to show the

importance of bluebird conservation. "Getting people to hear about bluebirds is the main obstacle to bluebird conservation," he says.

Bill and Joan Davis go the extra mile to help the bluebird cause in **Ohio**. They live in Dayton, but cover the state, talking about the Ohio Bluebird Society and NABS. Among their many stops were the Dayton Home and Garden Show, Lake Erie Wing Watch Festival, Midwest Birding Symposium, Planet Earth Expo, schools, and county fairs.

All the speakers in the bureau have one thing in common: The will and drive to tell others why they, themselves, are bluebirders, and what it means to be helping the bluebirds in their area. If you or anyone you know is interested in helping bluebirds, please contact NABS.

The following individuals and organizations returned their 1997 questionnaires to help us determine what works and what doesn't. I want to thank all the speakers for this special effort and also for all they do for bluebird conservation.

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ALBERTA

Ray Harris
Robert Lechner
Myrna Pearman

ONTARIO

Gord Kingsmill
Jean Lister
Lorne Smith
Mike Sullivan
Bernie Van Den Belt

SASKATCHEWAN

Lorne Scott

UNITED STATES

ARKANSAS

Stan Reed

CALIFORNIA

Lesa McDonald-Chan
Dick Purvis
Susan Yasuda

DONALD YODER

CONNECTICUT

Constance Benson
Fred Comstock

ROGER LAWSON

Dalton Sayles

FLORIDA

Lorna Beasley
Donna Legare

GEORGIA

LuAnn Craighton
Byron Feimster

Edward Gray

Edwina Hahn

Terry Johnson

Henderson Taylor

ILLINOIS

John Baxter
Eleanor Dunham
Max Forbes
Joan Harmet
Marcia Hoepfner
Kay MacNeil
Phil and Trish Quintenz

KENNETH SCHAR

Chester Schmidt
Richard Williams
Lloyd Wilson

INDIANA

Scott Anderson
Ann Auer
Alicia Craig-Lich
Jerry Hunefeld
Ken Jankowski

Art Jeffries

Chris Salberg

IOWA

Jaclyn Hill
Tom Lake
Pat Schlarbaum
Albert Weikert
Alvin Yuska

KANSAS

Oliver Russ
Marvin Schwilling

MAINE

Wendy Howes
Chuck Martin

MARYLAND

Debbie Delevan
Michael Gillis
Jerry Newman
Elizabeth Nichols
Elaine Sweitzer

Jean Tierney

MASSACHUSETTS

Lillian Files

Jill Miller

MICHIGAN

Alan Boulton

MINNESOTA

Richard and Marlys Hjort
Dorene Scriven

MONTANA

Art Aylesworth
Robert Niebuhr

NEBRASKA

Gordon Backer
Jim and Karen Baird

Steve Eno

Chuck and Connie Findley

John Holm

Toni Lynn Merchen

Vera Rauscher

Bill and Sandy Seibert

NEW HAMPSHIRE

David Eastman

Bill and Sandy Seibert

NEW JERSEY

Ken Karnas

NEW YORK

Kevin Berner
Raymond Briggs

Cris Case

Elaine Crossley

David Heidenreich

Joseph Giunta

David Junkin

Karl Parker

Sam Phelps

Evelyn Rifenburg

John Rogers

Vincent Schneible

Ruth Shone

Barbara Treiber

Ed Tuthill

Douglas Weeks

Richard Wells

NORTH CAROLINA

Christine Ammons

NORTH DAKOTA

Chris Grondahl

OHIO

William and Joan Davis

Svante Humbla

Doug LeVasseur

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OKLAHOMA

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Kevin McCurdy

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Elsie Eltzroth

Patricia Johnston

Brenda McGowan

PENNSYLVANIA

Diane Allison

Patricia Andrascik

Ted Morus

Wilbur Peachey

Larry Rohrbaugh

Judy Wink

SOUTH CAROLINA

Barry Graden

TENNESSEE

Sue Ansley

Jean Buchhanan

TEXAS

Francis Dorer

Mary Reed

VIRGINIA

David Alpert

Rosemarie Borges

Robert Hammond

Fred Sahl

Barbara Stinson

WASHINGTON

William Ryan

WEST VIRGINIA

Hobart Ellifritu

WISCONSIN

Carol McDaniel

Ernest and Delores Wendt

C. H. Schlauderaff

(Mr. Kingston lives at

3690 Country Lane,

Charlottesville, VA,

22903-7636.)

North American Bluebird Society Affiliate Organizations

The North American Bluebird Society serves as a clearinghouse for ideas, research, management, and education on behalf of bluebirds and other native cavity-nesting species. NABS invites all state, provincial, and regional bluebird organizations to become NABS affiliates in "a confederation of equals all working together toward a common goal ... a further partnership in international bluebird conservation." No cost is associated with affiliating with NABS.

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Calgary Alberta T2J 2M9

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LaCombe Alberta T4L 1W7

British Columbia

Southern Interior Bluebird Trail Society
P.O. Box 494, Oliver BC V0H 1T0 Canada

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California

California Bluebird Recovery Program
2021 Parmigan Drive, #1
Walnut Creek CA 94595

Colorado

The Bluebird Project: The Denver Audubon Society and The Colorado Division of Wildlife
6060 Broadway
Denver CO 80216

Georgia

Bluebirds Over Georgia
5858 Silver Ridge Dr.
Stone Mountain GA 30087

Indiana

Indiana Bluebird Society
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Leesburg IN 46538

Iowa

Johnson County Songbird Project
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Iowa City IA 52240

Maine

Bluebird Association of Maine
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RFD 4, Box 7600
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Minnesota

Bluebird Recovery Program of Minnesota (BBRP) Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis
P.O. Box 3801
Minneapolis MN 55403

Nebraska

Bluebirds Across Nebraska
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Lincoln NE 68506

New York

New York State Bluebird Society (NYSBS)
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Springville NY 14141

Schoharie County Bluebird Society
c/o Kevin Berner
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Cobleskill NY 12043

North Carolina

North Carolina Bluebird Society
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Ohio Bluebird Society
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Oklahoma Bluebird Society
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Sand Springs OK 74063

Oregon

Hubert Prescott Western Bluebird Recovery Project
c/o Patricia Johnston
7717 S.W. 50th
Portland OR 97219

Pennsylvania

Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania
PO Box 267
Enola PA 17025

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Cascade Bluebird and Purple Martin Society
3015 Squalicum Parkway, Suite 250
Bellingham WA 98225

Wisconsin

Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin (BRAW)
6612 Akron Avenue
Plainfield WI 54966

Lafayette County Bluebird Society
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Darlington WI 53530

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Along Perch Road, in Washburn County, in the far northwest of Wisconsin, the shaggy grass of a vacant pasture glows bright in the late September sun. Misha, a toy poodle who often birds with me, stands in my lap, her muzzle out the van window, eyes half shut in sheer dog pleasure, reading the passing scenery with her nose. If only she

could sense LeConte's Sparrows, the object of my eternal search, and tell me where and when to stop.

There are birds everywhere on this sunny day. Sparrows fly up from along the road now and now and now again. They dive into the center of the few trees we pass, shy and unknown. Finally, motivation gets the best of me; I stop the van. Misha hops out to zero in on some irresistible scent. I walk slowly down the road, hoping sparrows will linger.

From the corn field across the road comes the unmistakable music of Eastern Bluebirds.

They have been flocking up here for weeks now, beginning in mid-August, when I returned from an Alaskan birding trip, all the way through September. Bluebirds have been gathering on the telephone wires, family groups of four or five, neighborhoods of two dozen. I first saw them along our driveway, a half-mile of gravel that peeks out of the woods for its final stretch, running along a bit of old prairie where we installed our five bluebird houses. A pair of bluebirds were seen there daily for a couple of weeks, parents perhaps, resting in the sun of fall, fledglings gone, the job of reproduction done for another year.

I cross Perch Road to look for bluebirds. They spring from the corn, a knit of threads above me, flying into the field we were studying, landing on a barbed-wire fence.

There they sit, like holiday lights strung and lit, red and blue against the yellow grass. There are 13 of them and two sparrows.

I check the sparrows. No LeConte's. I whistle for my companion. We load up and drive off, bluebirds resting in the morning sun behind us.

• • •

We live about 15 miles east of that bluebird cornfield, in the woods of Burnett County, Wisconsin, halfway between Grantsburg and Spooner, should you check this on a map.

With this first issue of Bluebird I begin my service to you as editor. Working with me on design and production of this publication is Jude Hughes-Williams, my partner in many things.

We have a lot of work to do to even begin to replace Jo Solem, who retired this fall after many years of devotion to Sialia, the journal of the North American Bluebird Society. This publication succeeds Sialia. It is our hope and intent to continue to give you helpful and entertaining information about bluebirds and other cavity-nesting birds of North America.

Your contributions to this effort are welcome and encouraged. This publication belongs to you. It will be the better if we have your stories, your photos, your bluebird tips, and whatever else you might share with those who share your interest in birds, and bluebirds in particular.

Let us know *what* you are doing. Let us know *how* we are doing.

For my part, I will meet you here occasionally, sharing the birding adventures that Misha and I sniff out.

Good birding to you all.

Backroad Birding

By Jim Williams

Send us your stories



Bluebird, as did its predecessor Sialia, relies on stories, articles, and photographs from you, the members of the North American Bluebird Society. The most interesting items used in this magazine are the ones you provide.

Please send stories about your birding adventures, your ideas and suggestions for better bluebirding and the conservation and nurturing of all North American cavity-nesting bird species.

If you have thoughts and comments to share about this publication, or something you read here, or the activities of NABS, we welcome your letters.

Please remember that it is important to give us your name and address on all communications.

Stories and articles are best submitted on computer disk, Macintosh compatible. We can, however, translate documents created on IBM-type equipment. You also can e-mail us directly with your submissions; see address below.

Typewritten articles also are welcomed, of course. Please double-space.

If you wish manuscripts and photos to be returned, we ask that you include a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Send submissions to:

Jim Williams
c/o Bluebird
5239 Cranberry Lane
Webster, Wisconsin 54893
E-mail <twojays@win.bright.net>.

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\$6 of each member's dues is designated for subscription to Bluebird, publication of NABS.

North American Bluebird Society

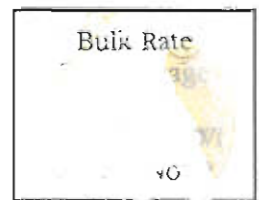
Founded in 1978, the North American Bluebird Society is an incorporated non-profit organization determined to increase the populations of the three species of bluebirds on this continent. Inasmuch as the populations of these birds have diminished due to the maladroitness of human beings, as well as natural 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 mankind.



North American Bluebird Society
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