



BLUEBIRD

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Contents

Kyla Marino

Fall Message to Our Affiliate Organizations - <i>Kevin Corwin</i>	1
From the President - <i>Bernie Daniel</i>	2
From the Managing Editor - <i>Scott W. Gillihan</i>	5
Letters to <i>Bluebird</i>	5
Nesting History Brought to Life: Nest Quest Go! - <i>Becca Rodomsky-Bish</i>	6
Eastern Bluebird Nest Artists - <i>Dean C. Rust</i>	8
Photo Gallery	10
Acorn Woodpecker Granary - <i>Lee Pauser</i>	11
A Specimen of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker (<i>Campephilus principalis</i>) Purportedly from Michigan	12
- Leon Schreffler, Jane Schreffler, and Benjamin E. Leese	
NABS 2020 Conference	15
Bluebird Season 2019 - <i>Sandra White</i>	19
Bluebirds Everywhere	26
BluesNews	27
Wanted: Nestbox Predators - <i>Scott W. Gillihan</i>	27
Index to <i>Bluebird</i> Volume 41	28
Affiliates of the North American Bluebird Society	30

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

www.nabluebirdsociety.org

Fall Message to Our Affiliate Organizations

Kevin Corwin

Hello Fellow Bluebirders!

First off, I want to give a shout out and big Thank You to the folks at Bluebirds Across Nebraska for agreeing to host the NABS 2020 conference in conjunction with their own meeting in Kearney the week of March 11 – 15. This will be the third time BAN has hosted us, and those of you who have attended previous Springtime conferences at Kearney know what a fantastic experience it is to see the waterfowl migration that passes through there. Those of you who haven't had that experience, here's your chance!

We have been talking with the folks who manage NestWatch at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, seeking ways to enable bluebird organizations to participate in NestWatch by providing them our nesting data with a minimum of effort. NestWatch currently accepts information four different ways, and there's a fair chance that one of those ways might work well for your organization. Don't be put off by the thought that you would have to abandon your current in-house reporting system, NestWatch can accept an annual download from your system if you are collecting the kind of information they need (several Affiliates are already doing this). If you're the slightest bit interested don't hesitate to contact your NABS Rep for more information. There is no obligation, and the potential for increasing and improving the quantity and quality of information in their continent-wide database is tremendous.

Administrative reminder: Please check your listing in this edition of the journal to ensure it's still correct. Send any changes to your NABS Rep. Thanks!

Thank you for all you do for our little blue friends.



JanetandPhil / www.flickr.com/photos/dharma_for_one/

From the President

Bernie Daniel

In the Northern Hemisphere autumn starts on September 23rd this year—probably about the time you read this fall issue of *Bluebird*! Of the four annual issues, this one always seems to me to be the bookend for the nesting season. The spring issue is characterized by hope and anticipation at the start of a new nesting season. But spring dissolves into summer when it is “pedal to the metal” time on the trail and we are immersed in all the work of managing a trail as the breeding season is in full swing. The winter issues are all about facing the cold, recharging our batteries, and thinking about all the things we might try next year if spring ever comes. But fall is the season when we count up the numbers of chicks fledged and close down the trail for the year. The last act of the bluebirder in the fall is to winterize the nestboxes. Please do so if you have not already done it. Some freezing bluebirds may be glad that you did.

I would like to expound a bit on a topic that I have been reporting on over the last two years: the issue of population trends of our three bluebird species. You will recall I presented our readers with several articles on this topic starting in the summer 2018 issue of *Bluebird*. I do want to walk a fine line on this topic and to strike a balance between keeping our members, and the public, informed about what is happening but at the same time I want to avoid discouraging our membership. We need to keep up the great work on our trails—we are doing an enormous amount of good and all native cavity-nesting birds would be much worse off if not for our efforts. Still, it is troubling to see some of the current trends for bluebird populations.

Since I have a lot more information assembled at present on the Eastern Bluebird (EABL), I'll use that species to make my points. In previous articles in *Bluebird*, I mentioned that most of the data from continental-scale monitoring programs show that EABL are not responding as well to our efforts to help them as they did in previous decades. When I became aware of this about two years ago I was at first stunned then baffled. How did this situation creep up on us?

Well, after looking back at BBS data from previous decades at least I think I can answer why we were taken by surprise. It is because the change from

“doing rather well” to “not so good” occurred rather abruptly. Until relatively recently the only real source of continental information on most bird populations came from the North American Breeding Bird Survey (BBS). The BBS started in 1966 and so this season, 2019, was the 53rd year of the survey—over a half-century of monitoring wild birds! Due to the way the BBS is designed massive amounts of data are collected each season. For example, the BBS collects over 100,000 point observations just on EABL every single year. Because of this massive amount of data the BBS publishes a full-scale analysis on the population trends every decade. There is too much information to do complete summaries every year as BBS has a rather small staff.

With this in mind, I decided to go the BBS archives to look at the EABL population trends for past decades. That information is in the table below. When I did so it was more apparent just what has been going on. The table shows the population trends for the EABL by each decade from 1966 (the start of the survey) to 2015 (the last year that BBS has published results for). The first decade of the BBS (1966–1975) showed the EABL population increasing by about 0.5% per year. But that growth rate tripled the next decade (1975–1985) to approximately 1.5% per year. Then it increased even more the following decade (1985–1995) when the EABL population growth rate more than doubled again to nearly 4% per year rate of gain! At this point, it was obvious that EABL reproduction was doing very well indeed and we felt very good about the progress we were making. In the next decade (i.e., 1995–2005) the population growth rate had dropped back to about 2% per year, which was about half that of the previous period. While this was clearly down from the previous decade, a 2% per year gain is still a very solid population growth rate and it did not particularly seem like a red flag at the time.

The shock came when the summary for the latest decade (2005–2015) was reported showing a dramatic decline in the EABL population growth rate—that is down to 0.15% per year (see the table). Such a weak growth rate is essentially equivalent to no growth at all in the population.

So we really were essentially “blindsided.” With the benefit of hindsight, we can see that each decade since 1985 we have observed a decline of about 2% per year

EABL Population Trends by Decade
North American Breeding Bird Survey

Survey Decade	Percent Change per Year	95% Confidence Interval
1966 – 1975	0.48	-0.45 to 1.35
1975 – 1985	1.53	0.87 to 2.18
1985 – 1995	3.71	3.11 to 4.33
1995 – 2005	1.97	1.45 to 2.41
2005 – 2015	0.11	-0.48 to 0.67

for the previous decade. Our challenge now is to find out why this has happened and then see what we might do to turn it around. As part of this effort I have sent a query to the head biologist at the BBS to see if they might have some thoughts at these trends for the EABL. I will inform you if I receive some of their thoughts on the matter.

Of course, there is likely more than one reason for the apparent slowdown in EABL population growth. One factor might simply be the number of bluebirders and the number nestboxes available. At present, we have no idea if the number of individuals offering nestboxes for bluebirds has changed (increased or decreased) over the years since the 1980s and 1990s when EABL numbers were increasing strongly. For more perspective I recommend looking again at “The Population Health of Bluebirders” article by Glen Hvenegaard et al. that appeared in the summer 2019 issue of *Bluebird*. It would be wonderful to know how the number of bluebirders and/or the number of nestboxes is changing across the EABL range over time. If any of our members have an idea of how we might compute that information I would love to hear from you. This is not a scientific statement but I do think I am seeing fewer nestboxes in my area than in past decades. I know I am seeing fewer EABL in the area and on my nestbox trail. What about you?

On another topic, NABS typically receives over 200 inquiries each breeding season from individuals having problems and needing help while trying to provide nestboxes to bluebirds. Perhaps these calls can give us an insight into the trail management practices of individuals who are not members of NABS. The number of requests for help from bluebirders has gone up dramatically since we opened the NABS Facebook page. To see two, three, or more Facebook questions and/or several phone calls to the Hotline on a single day is not unusual— not even a little bit. A large percentage of the Facebook queries are answered by NABS Secretary

Kathy Kremnitzer. It is quite a responsibility. I dealt with most of the phone calls this season.

Two things are so obvious about these calls for help from bluebirders. First, almost none of those seeking help are members of NABS nor are they members in one of the NABS Affiliate organizations. Second, a very large percentage of the problems reported are from well-meaning individuals who set out their nestboxes “wrong.” One of the most common problems is losing the eggs or the chicks due to a poor or even improper nestbox mounting or placement. Often we find out that the box was nailed to a tree or fence post, or mounted on a pole with no predator guards. Other common problems are a nestbox mounted in House Wren habitat or the failure to recognize the need to deal with House Sparrows.

Thus, many of these calls describe the loss of a clutch of bluebird eggs or chicks due to mostly avoidable factors. Every time one of these nests fails it is the loss of one important breeding attempt by a pair of bluebirds. Now imagine that for every call we get on the Hotline or Facebook that there are 100 individuals (or more?) doing things the same way and who are having the same problems but who do not call the hotline. When you think of it this way you realize the potential harm to EABL and other native cavity-nesting species that might be occurring by the misguided actions of well-meaning, but ill-informed, bluebirders. It would be wonderful if we knew of a way to educate more of these individuals. Any suggestions out there?

As you learned from the summer issue, NABS has met with the Cornell NestWatch staff in June and are hoping that many of you decided to try reporting your nestbox trail results to the Cornell NestWatch program this year. If we can get enough bluebird breeding data to NestWatch they can provide us a better picture of how successful we have been each season. Having all the nestbox data in one place is much better than having the data collected piecemeal with different bluebirding organizations collecting the data using their own format. If we all used NestWatch we might start getting some understanding why the growth of bluebird populations is slowing and also whether we are having specific problems in one part of the range versus another or one state compared to another. Having such information might provide us with clues as to factors that are influencing our success or lack thereof. Likewise, if we know what is going wrong we have a chance at least to address it.

This season we had several calls from bluebirders in the upper Midwest (specifically Minnesota and Wisconsin) who reported that the entire clutch of nestlings appeared unharmed and sleeping but were actually dead. Reaching out to some of our Affiliates in those regions it was concluded that the likely cause of death in these cases was black flies (aka buffalo gnats). These small biting flies have become a serious issue for cavity-nesting birds including bluebirds in many parts of the upper Midwest and probably Canada too. These flies spend their larval cycle attached to rocks in clean running water and then emerge in mid-spring in nasty biting swarms. The female black fly requires a blood meal to produce eggs and they usually get it from cutting the skin of mammals (mostly species like beavers, raccoons, deer, moose, etc.) and then lapping up the blood. The flies are attracted to a nestbox via the carbon dioxide from the bird's breath. If a swarm zeros in on a nest of chicks they will be doomed in short order. Bluebirders in these parts of the EABL range have worked out ways to combat the black flies but it is not a simple task. Common mosquito repellants which contain N-DEET are typically not very effective on black flies. Fortunately, however, the smell of vanilla and some essential oils do seem to be effective as a deterrent for these flies. Alternatively, some insect repellants, based on lemon eucalyptus oil, have been shown to be effective at repelling black flies. Also, the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin has developed a procedure based on spraying the poultry insecticide, Permethrin-10, on the nestbox, nest, and chicks that has been proven to be an effective method for defeating black flies. Since wild mammals, the usual blood source for black flies, are typically brown or black in coloration, the flies are attracted to dark colors. The Michigan Bluebird Society recommends painting the nestbox white in areas where black flies can be a problem. A bonus is that the white coloration also keeps the nestbox cooler. NABS is considering the development of a new Fact Sheet that would summarize the ways to deal with black flies and other invertebrates that can cause issues on the nestbox trail (e.g., ants, blow flies, mites, wasps, etc.). Would any of you members like to help on the development of such a fact sheet?

As we conclude another breeding season, keep in mind that if NABS is to continue to help bluebirds we need members who will share a little of their time to help NABS with the many tasks at hand. All NABS members are eligible to stand for election to the Board of Directors and also to serve on any of the NABS committees. If you have skills in database

management or the use of programs for word processing, spreadsheet, or graphics (e.g., Microsoft Office suite) there are many ways you could use those skills and a bit of your time to help NABS. If you are a regular Facebook user and also an experienced bluebird would you consider helping us answer some of the many questions about bluebirds and bluebirding that NABS gets each season? Please think about it.

On the topic of Fact Sheets. From time to time we hear from NABS members or also from members of Affiliate organizations that the advice and recommendations given in our NABS Fact Sheets are biased toward individuals working with Eastern Bluebirds in the eastern part of the USA. So it is possible that the NABS Fact Sheets might not be as useful to bluebirders working with Mountain or Western Bluebirds or even to individuals working with Eastern Bluebirds in places like Texas or Manitoba. If any of you find this to be the case please take the time to inform us of these problems/shortcomings as they will not be addressed if we are unaware of them. Again, we would appreciate any help we can get from the membership to improve our Fact Sheets.

Thanks for voting!

On behalf of the entire NABS Board and Officers, thank you to everyone who took the time to send in your ballot for the 2019 Director's election. A bit less than 10% of those eligible voted. I realize our elections have a perfunctory element to them which might discourage some from sending the ballot back. The preordained aspect of our elections is unfortunate but a reality these days due to the difficulty in finding individuals willing and able to donate some of their time to doing the things necessary to keep organizations like NABS in compliance and operating. In addition, I know all of our members would probably continue to put out nestboxes and monitor their trails just like they do now even if NABS were to someday go away. The true value of NABS and other bluebirding organizations, like all of our Affiliates, is that they provide a channel for public awareness to the plight of our native cavity-nesting birds and hopefully a means to reach out and recruit new individuals to our task. I know all of us in NABS are proud to do our part in making it possible for our native cavity-nesting bird species to survive and hopefully thrive into the future. So again thank you for voting—it means a lot to those of us on the NABS Board.

-- Bernie

From the Managing Editor

Scott W. Gillihan

“Anyone who thinks fallen leaves are dead has never watched them dancing on a windy day.” – Shira Tamir

I hope you'll enjoy the fall weather and this Fall issue of *Bluebird*. My thanks to Jim Semelroth (California Bluebird Recovery Program) and all of the writers and photographers who contributed material to this issue, and to the sponsors, advertisers, and Affiliates. As always, my thanks to you, the members of NABS, for your hard work and dedication to the conservation of bluebirds and other native cavity nesters.

Please send any letters, photos, articles, or ideas to me at NABSeditor@gmail.com or 5405 Villa View Dr., Farmington, NM 87402.

Letters to *Bluebird*

I just wanted to say that Bernie Daniel's message in this spring's NABS journal was right on about the toll on Eastern Bluebirds that overwintered. Here in Central Illinois (near Peoria) we had -21°F two days with 50 mph winds. I went around in late February and early March to check my 125 boxes to make sure they were ready for nesting and found 36 dead. I had a box of 6, 5, 4, 3, 3, 2 and the rest were singles. At that point I sent out some emails to people I know and had another 20 reported. One lady said it was just like a kick in the stomach when she opened her box and found 11 dead. I'm guessing that my final count will be down about half from last year.

Herb Unkrich
VP East Central Illinois Bluebird Society

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Nesting History Brought to Life: Nest Quest Go!

Becca Rodomsky-Bish

On this seemingly ordinary nest record card (below) exists a fascinating story. The obvious story is about a Prothonotary Warbler in Calhoun County, Michigan, who built a nest in a *maple stub* that fledged four young in late June, 1939. What you might not notice on first glance is the observer who submitted this card, L. H. Walkinshaw. It turns out that L. H. Walkinshaw was a passionate citizen scientist who contributed this card, and thousands of others, to the North American Nest Record Card Program at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

of online volunteers in transcribing the invaluable data captured on each card. This collection amasses to roughly the same amount of the data currently available in the NestWatch database, thus potentially doubling the size of our nest record data with the completion of Nest Quest Go! With the addition of the nest record card data to NestWatch, we hope to be able to provide researchers with a more robust dataset to understand the historical changes of nesting birds in North America.

Nesting birds have encountered numerous challenges over the last century. What may be influencing nest survival? Which species seem to be adapting and which ones seem to be struggling? What do different localities tell us about nesting bird success? The questions to be explored from this dataset are endless. Making the data available from this large crowdsourcing program is a step in a very important direction of helping to understand nesting birds and provide conservation recommendations to improve their nesting success rates.

The process to participate in this project is easy! *Anyone can participate who has access to a computer or smartphone.* In Zooniverse, volunteers are transcribing these cards using simple, often smartphone-friendly, questions to quickly transcribe the data on the cards. To become a volunteer, log in to Zooniverse and create an account. All active Nest Quest Go! projects will be displayed on our Nest Quest Go! organization page. There will be hundreds of projects available for people to participate in over the next several years. We launched our first project, Nest Quest Go: Warblers in July 2019. Look for new

NORTH AMERICAN NEST RECORD CARD PROGRAM		YEAR	Shaded boxes not to be completed by observer									
Species:	Prothonotary warbler	1	9	3	9	6	3	7	8	5	11	
Observer (no initials, last name)	L H W A L K I N S H A W											
Locality (in relation to nearest town)	mi SW Bellevue, Battle Creek River					Full name of known Locality						
County	Calhoun Co., Convis Twp.					(in feet above sea level)						
State or Province	Michigan					Longitude						
HABITAT (circle where appropriate)	1. Woods 2. Swamp 3. Marsh 4. Field 5. Grassland 6. Desert 7. Tundra 8. Suburban 9. Urban											
10. Other (specify)	11. Nest box 12. Other structure 13. Cliff or bank											
DOMINANT PLANTS IN HABITAT (list one or two)	Maple, ash, basswood, birch, elm, etc											
NEST SITE (circle where appropriate)	1. Bare ground 2. On ground in vegetation 3. Floating 4. Low vegetation 5. Shrub 6. Palm 7. Deciduous tree branch											
8. Deciduous tree cavity 9. Conifer branch 10. Conifer cavity 11. Nest box 12. Other structure 13. Cliff or bank	14 Other (specify)											
PRINCIPAL PLANT OR STRUCTURE SUPPORTING NEST	in maple stub											
Height of Eggs Above Ground or Water in Feet (feet and tenths if under five feet)	29 / 00 / 00											
If pursued by Corvids check here <input type="checkbox"/> If same pair had other nestings this year, indicate which this is (1, 2, 3) <input type="checkbox"/>	2 5 00											
PLEASE COMPLETE BOTH SIDES OF THIS CARD												

Prothonotary Warbler nest record card from Cornell Lab of Ornithology archives. Photo by Becca Rodomsky-Bish

The North American Nest Record Card Program ran from the 1960s to the early 2000s. Some earlier records, like this one, were submitted from people who had been doing citizen science for decades before it became a *thing*. In total, there are more than 300,000 nest record cards from this program at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology—more than 62,000 of these records contain bluebird data. This vital data has been awaiting an opportunity to see the light of day, to have the hidden nesting accounts revealed. That day has arrived with the help of a new online people-powered research tool called Zooniverse (<https://www.zooniverse.org/organizations/brbcornell/nest-quest-go>).

NestWatch (<https://nestwatch.org/>), a citizen-science project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, is using Zooniverse to host digital files of each of our nest record cards online. They are soliciting the help



Archivist working on the nest record cards before the days of smartphones and personal computers.



Mountain Bluebird feeding nestlings in machinery nest.
Photo by Kevin Corwin

projects in the coming months including bluebirds, chickadees, hummingbirds, and many more. Each species, or group of species, have varying numbers of nest cards available.

If you have a favorite bird or group of birds that you would be interested in transcribing, sign up to receive our monthly eNews or join our Facebook Nest Quest Go! Group (follow the links on the Zooniverse website). New projects will be announced, statistics regarding existing or completed projects will be shared, and important news about this massive endeavor will be communicated through these channels. Each nest record tells a story, often multiple stories, and we encourage our participants to explore and share those they discover. In the transcription process, you may discover your own mystery to investigate.

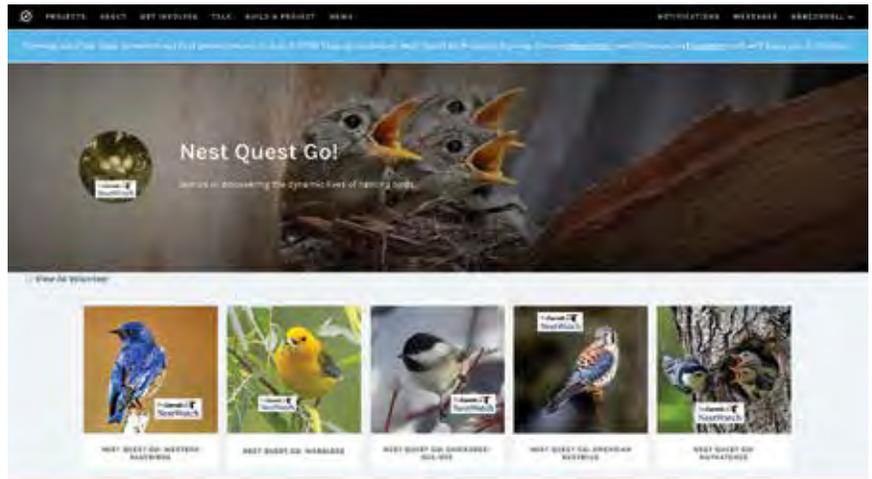
Returning to the Prothonotary Warbler card (pictured on the facing page), recorded by L. H. Walkinshaw in 1939, Zooniverse volunteer Tim B.—himself an avid bird lover and citizen scientist—became interested in L. H. Walkinshaw’s story. After some digging, he discovered this person was Larry Walkinshaw, a long-time citizen scientist who contributed thousands of nest record cards between 1916 and 1984. Larry Walkinshaw also contributed to several other bird collections, such as the Smithsonian, by submitting photos, maps of nesting locations, papers on bird observations, and banding information to notable ornithological programs.

Tim B. found a biography on the life of Larry Walkinshaw, *On the Wings of Cranes*, by Lowell M. Schake, Larry’s son-in-law. It is the story of a dentist who was a passionate ornithologist in his spare time while contributing vast amounts of data for citizen science. A part of his life story is folded into the Nest Record Card history now entrusted to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. As we work to share the stories of all the birds whose lives are captured in our collection, we also learn a bit about the people who loved and conserved them.

Join the Nest Quest Go! (<https://www.zooniverse.org/organizations/brbcornell/nest-quest-go>) adventure. Participate by transcribing historical nesting data in Zooniverse so scientists can better understand the lives of birds. Maybe you’ll make a surprising discovery of your own in the process.

Special thanks to NABS for their generous support of the Nest Quest Go! Project.

Becca Rodomsky-Bish is the Nest Quest Go! Project Leader at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.



Project page in Zooniverse. Photo credit: Nest Quest Go! in Zooniverse



Nest Quest Go! on Facebook.

Eastern Bluebird Nest Artists

Dean C. Rust

NEST ID - EABL

Neat, cup shaped, woven nest typically 100% fine grass or pine needles. Fairly deep, often cylindrical nest cup, usually 3–4 inches deep with the cup portion 2.5 inches in diameter and 2.25 inches deep. Nest may include some horsehair or feathers.

— www.sialis.org/nests.htm

Nest building is performed almost exclusively by the female Eastern Bluebird. The male is the chief encourager/coach for his mate on the nest construction project. He warbles softly to her while she gathers and weaves her nesting materials. Bluebird nests are neatly constructed and are usually rather homogeneous in composition; the discriminating female selects dry fine grasses, pine needles (*Pinus strobus*), or coarse grasses/straw (if only that is available). In her own style the female is quite particular and finicky in choosing all the same type of material for the nest. The female Eastern Bluebird is a first-class artisan and her nest will be a work of art. In the avian songbird world, she is considered a master craftsman at nest building. To form the hollow cup in the nest, the female will sit inside the nest and flutter her wings pressing her breast up against the sides. This action is called “moulding.”

Typically in early spring, nest building can take 5 or 6 days for completion depending on the weather. Later in the summer, a Bluebird nest can be completed in just a day or two. As the second half of the brood season approaches (June and July), Mrs. Blue senses some urgency and she ramps up her work schedule to complete her nest in record time. She may even take a shorter break or less downtime between nestings #1 and 2.

First-year mothers are just that—they are novices at nest building. They are “hard wired” on how to perform the task but they have never actually accomplished it. If you have ever tried to remove one of these first-year nests to inspect it or take a photo, even with the help of a supporting 4-inch-wide putty knife, you know what I mean!! Total disaster as the nest unravels and you panic. The nest is weaved loosely and it just crumbles! This is,

ugh was, a first-year nest!! She will refine her skills with each successive nest build and become a real professional by year 2 or 3. Now her nests seem like they are woven tighter and almost glued together holding their shape perfectly. Since I am using more nest cups, I have far fewer of these panic episodes at moving first-year nests!

Many female Eastern Bluebirds have an artistic flair in decorating their nests. Often you will see two or three blue pin-feathers woven into their nests. When I see a nest that has been tastefully accented, I just smile. This spring I found a nest on Weaver Road, Lancaster, that I called the “Patriotic Nest,” complete with red, white, and blue plastic fibers. A long white fiber coiled in the bottom of the nest and red and blue shorter segments in the walls of the nest. Really, you can’t make this stuff up!! (See photo below.)



At Susquehannock State Park a couple of years ago I took a photo of an Eastern Bluebird nest with six eggs. Upon closer inspection I saw a grayish fiber spun around the inside walls of the nest 75 or more times. This park has several Amish “tie-rails” for horses near the volleyball and softball fields. Horsehair was used in the nest construction by this ingenious female Blue. (See photo on facing page, upper left.)



Look for Eastern Bluebird nests with the cup oriented toward the back of the nestbox. A grass or pine needle platform landing is in the front of the nest. This allows the male or female to enter the box and stand on the platform to feed chicks or take away fecal sacs. Just another innovation some female Blues build into their nests! They even think about floor plan! Otherwise the bluebird parents have to tip-toe around the brim of the nest or stand on the chicks each time they enter and leave the box!! This cup orientation is an early clue that the nest is indeed a bluebird nest and not a Tree Swallow.



The "picnic basket nest." At Lancaster Country Club I have female bluebirds who choose straw for their nests. They use long straw pieces in the four corners of the nest rising up to almost the roof. The first time I saw this type nest I did not think it was a bluebird nest! Upon closer observation, yes, bluebirds were using the nest and blue eggs soon appeared. It truly looked like a "picnic basket." (See photo at left.)

The "fuzzy white cloud nest." This nest was identified recently at the Hershey Country Club Golf Course Bluebird Trail. (See photo above right.)

In 2012 I had a nest at the Lancaster Country Club that was built entirely of red maple tree blossoms/



stems (*Acer rubrum*). It was a sparse smallish nest but homogeneous in building material. This is the only nest I have ever seen of this type and I would put it in the category of weed stems or rootlets for bluebird nests. (See photo below.)

Finally, with nest building the female will choose very fine grasses to line the floor of the cup where the eggs will be laid. Even when a coarse grass or hay is used for the main part of the nest, a fine grass liner is used for the "finishing touch." You would want a soft seat, too, if you were going to sit 24 hours a day for 16 days straight in one spot incubating eggs!



With every successful bluebird nesting there is a "Happy-Sad" day awaiting on the horizon the day of FLEDGING !! This is the day when the beautiful cup-shaped nest has served its purpose and the nestlings magically turn into fledglings. The

young juveniles fly away and the flattened nest is quiet. It is both Happy and Sad.

There is one last thing to do. Clean out the nest and get one last thrill of another successful bluebird nesting. Hold the nest downwind and shake it gently. When you see a white powder like dandruff sifting through the air ... you know that this nesting produced bluebirds!! It is called "Bluebird Dust" and it is an accumulation thousands of dead epithelial

skin cells produced when the pin feathers form on the nestlings.

EXPERIENCE THE JOY THAT ONLY A BLUEBIRD CAN BRING.

Dr. Dean C. Rust is president of the Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania. This article originally appeared in their newsletter; it is reprinted here with permission.

Photo Gallery



This Eastern Bluebird fledgling is fresh out of the bird bath. Photo taken in Flower Mound, Texas, by Shiva Shenoy, and reprinted here under a Creative Commons license. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/shivashenoy/>



A woodpecker excavated this opening in a tree in the Superior National Forest of Minnesota. Must've been some good grubs in there! Photo by Courtney Celley of USFWS.



A male Mountain Bluebird is surely one of the most photogenic birds around. This photo was taken a few winters ago in northern California by K Schneider. Reprinted here under a Creative Commons license. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/zonotrichia/>

Acorn Woodpecker Granary

Lee Pauser

Over the years I've had Acorn Woodpeckers use my bluebird nestboxes as a granary by storing acorns in the box without having the ability to retrieve them given the size of the box's entry hole. However, there is a new record for the number of acorns stored in a nestbox—in this case it is a Barn Owl nestbox. As the photo below shows, the acorns are piled from a thin layer in the box's entry to an estimated depth of 10 inches at the back of the box. Given the dimensions of the box, I estimate there could be 1000 cubic inches of acorns. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to find a cubic inch to number of acorns calculator.



I wanted to answer the question of how many acorns could be in the box, and a friend told me where I could easily pick up coast live oak acorns (there are three varieties of oak trees at or near the Barn Owl box site—coast live oak, blue oak, and valley oak.

1. I filled a ½-gallon container with 445 acorns
2. I calculated that the space inside the ½-gallon container is 109 cubic inches
3. That meant that 4.08 (small) acorns per cubic inch and 1000 cubic inches can contain 4080 acorns.

I think Acorn Woodpeckers from all over the county have heard of this new granary and have contributed. Acorns are even jammed into the drain holes on the bottom of the box. Note the obvious holes bored through the end of the box, although there are more elsewhere. After seeing this, I decided to put a hole reducer on the box to keep Barn Owls out, and resign myself to allowing the Acorn Woodpeckers to use it as a granary. The fact that the box is hard to get to helped me arrive at this decision.

This article originally appeared in Bluebirds Fly! the newsletter of the California Bluebird Recovery Program. It is reprinted here with permission.

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A Specimen of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*) Purportedly from Michigan

Leon Schreffler, Jane Schreffler, and Benjamin E. Leese

The Ivory-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*) was among the largest woodpeckers in the world. Now widely believed to be extinct, it had lived throughout the American Southeast, ranging as far west as Texas and Oklahoma and as far north as the Ohio River Valley and perhaps southeastern Pennsylvania (Leese 2006a, 2011, 2016a, 2016b). These records include bones from Native American middens as well as historical notes in the writings of early settlers. No specimens of the species except for leg bones were previously known from this very northern part of its historical distribution (Hahn 1963, Jackson 2006).

While more than 350 skins of the species exist in museums, making it much more common in collections than some other extinct species, every specimen is potentially important in revealing what little might still be known about this species. Advances in genetic and other technology make each specimen a possible treasure trove of information to scientists. Specimens may also represent new ways to appreciate and study the morphology of the species (Capainolo et al 2007). Unreported specimens of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, and other extinct species, are still turning up in museums around the world.

The North Museum of Nature and Science in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, contains within its collection one such specimen of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. The specimen is a fine male mounted on an upright piece of wood. Although the North Museum responded to Hahn's questionnaire for his famous index of extinct and endangered species (1963), this specimen is not listed in that index for unknown reasons. The specimen was accessioned into the collection of the North Museum (then known as the Linnean Society of Lancaster) in 1916 from Jacob S. Peacock (Anonymous 1916). Peacock was a Lancaster steel magnate, and it is unclear from historical records how he came to possess the specimen from A.C. Kepler, who outlived him, although it seems likely that Peacock received it as a gift from Kepler. Kepler also donated materials to the museum directly (Eastern Synod 1904), including an Imperial Woodpecker (*Campephilus imperialis*). The specimen's collection site, as listed on the tag

data, shows it to be perhaps the most northern record of the species:

Ivory-billed Woodpecker
Shot by A.C. Kepler at Turtle Lake near
Indian River, Northern Peninsula, Michigan,
Nov. 13, 1885.
Mounted by A. H. Wood, Taxidermist,
Painted Post, NY

The site of the Michigan record is difficult to locate because there are multiple Turtle Lakes in the Upper Peninsula. The most likely candidate is Turtle Lake in Munising Township within Hiawatha National Forest, which is just west of the Indian River Canoe Trail. The Turtle Lake in Newton Township is possible also, although farther away from the related Indian River. Kepler's memoir specifies that the hunt was "on" Indian River, making the town of Indian River in the northern part of the Lower Peninsula an unlikely candidate for the geographical reference.

While the exact details of its accession are in question, this specimen and its provenance are remarkable. The previous northernmost record of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker is a historical observation of a female by Gerard Hopkins on 26 March 1804 near Piqua, Ohio (Leese 2011). The archaeological claim for Milan, Illinois, as the northernmost site is weak because it is based on a bill (Parmalee 1964), which most likely arrived at the site as a trade item (Leese 2006b). The Michigan record is approximately 400 miles farther north than the record from Piqua, Ohio.

Tag data can sometimes be switched between specimens or otherwise incorrect, and additional evidence can lend credibility to tag data which may seem unusual. In this case, A.C. Kepler's journal provides more substantiation of its provenance. Kepler was a rather famous hardware store mogul and hunter from Lancaster, and his memoirs are in the collection of LancasterHistory.org (formerly the Lancaster County Historical Society). Unfortunately, Kepler's journal does not mention the ivory-bill directly, but his memoir (Kepler ca. 1921) does put him in the Upper Peninsula during the right time frame:

In 1885 I had a big hunt with Mr. Lyman on Indian River, N. Michigan, where we killed a great many deer, trapped a goodly number of beaver and other fur-bearing animals.

The North Museum holds a Common Raven (*Corvus corax*) from northern Michigan collected in November 1885, which is apparently from the same trip in which the ivory-bill was collected.

While one wishes that Kepler had emphasized the significance of the ivory-billed specimen in his journal at the time, Kepler seems more concerned in his memoirs with game species. In the rest of his memoirs he does not offer much comment on ornithological or other specimens that he collected; he was a hunter first and foremost.

While data switching can never be excluded, it seems unlikely that Kepler would have confused an ivory-bill with the similar Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*), given his pedigree as an outdoorsman. There are two pileateds in the North Museum that were donated by, and presumably collected by, Kepler — one from the Lancaster area and one that lacks data. It is possible that the unlabeled pileated once had the ivory-bill data and the ivory-bill lacked data, but because the accession of the specimen from Peacock was clearly an ivory-bill, there is less chance that tag-switching occurred (Anonymous 1916). Furthermore, the two pileateds were donated directly by Kepler, and the ivory-bill came through Peacock, again making data switching less likely. There is no reason

that the catalog record regarding the collection of an ivory-bill could refer to any other specimen in the North's collection.

In addition to data on the tag and in the memoir, the validity of the record is also supported by the expertise of the taxidermist who mounted it. A.H. Wood wrote a brief note to the scientific journal *Ornithologist and Oölogist* regarding the presence of the Black-backed Woodpecker (*Picoides arcticus*) in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan (Wood 1884), showing his direct knowledge of the area in which Kepler collected his ivory-bill. One would hope that Wood would have written to *Ornithologist and Oölogist* about the remarkable ivory-bill record, but he does not seem to have written extensive correspondence to the journal (which ended publication in 1893).

Records for species far from their usual range are not unusual, whether because of expanding distribution, movements because of food supply, or weather. While it is impossible to know for sure how an ivory-bill ended up in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, the weather during the fall of 1885 should be a leading candidate. Three tropical storms, including two with hurricane status, made landfall in the United States between 21 September and 11 October 1885 (NOAA 2018). The last of those storms, Number 8 for the year, was a tropical storm that moved straight up the eastern seaboard in the middle of October. Kepler's ivory-bill was purportedly killed in Michigan only a month later, and it is not hard to imagine three weeks of storms moving an ivory-bill that far north.



The Michigan Ivory-billed Woodpecker.
Photo by Benjamin Leese.

While only snippets of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker's natural history remain to be learned, its presence north of its conventionally expected range shows a species that was more adaptable than often believed (Snyder 2007). If the species was dependent on old-growth southern forests, it at least made use of other habitats from time to time.

Some doubts about this specimen certainly remain, and one may only wish that more notes from Kepler or Wood had made their way to us. However, a documented specimen in a well-curated museum is very strong evidence, and there seems to be relatively little chance that tag switching occurred in this case. Kepler's journal placing him in Michigan at the correct time, the knowledge of the taxidermist, and the weather pattern that fall all support the legitimacy of the tag data for this specimen. Albeit tentatively, Michigan can now claim the most northerly record of the species, and the state bird record committee

should consider adding the species to the state list, at least on the hypothetical/historical list.

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Leon and Jane Schreffler are volunteer curators of ornithology at the North Museum of Nature and Science in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

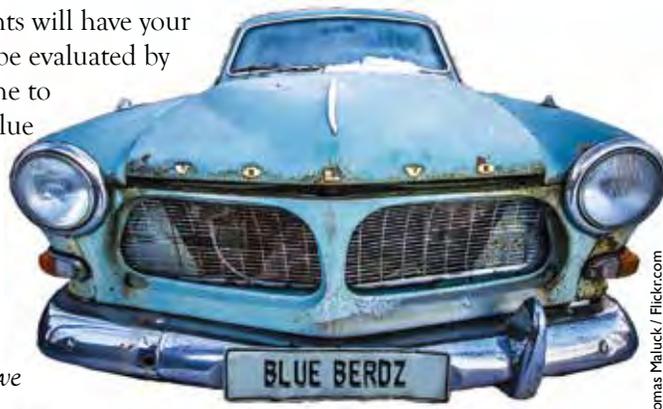
Ben Leese is a microbiologist at Ahlstrom-Munksjö Filtration in Mt. Holly Springs, Pennsylvania.

VEHICLE/PROPERTY DONATION PROGRAM

If you have a car, truck, motorcycle, RV, boat, or even an airplane that you no longer need, NABS would like to receive it as a tax-deductible charitable donation.

To donate, simply call this toll-free number: **866-244-8464**. Our agents will have your vehicle, boat, RV, etc. picked up and taken to a facility where it will be evaluated by experts. A determination will be made regarding what should be done to maximize its selling price, thereby resulting in significantly higher value than it might otherwise generate so you will receive the maximum tax benefit allowable by U.S. law. For tax purposes you, the donor, will receive a formal Certificate of Donation complying with all State and Federal requirements for authenticating your donation to NABS, an IRS 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charity.

Thank you for supporting the conservation of bluebirds and other native cavity nesters!



Thomas Maluck / Flickr.com

Follow The Flock



2020 NABS CONFERENCE

HOSTED BY BLUEBIRDS ACROSS NEBRASKA

MARCH 11-15

HOLIDAY INN, KEARNEY, NEBRASKA

SANDHILL CRANE BLIND TRIPS

PRAIRIE CULTURE FIELD TRIP

BIRDING FIELD TRIP

WORKSHOPS

NATIONALLY KNOWN SPEAKERS
& ENTERTAINERS

RAFFLE, LIVE
& SILENT AUCTIONS



ITINERARY

Wednesday, March 11

- 2 to 5 p.m. Registration, pre-function area
- 4:45 to 9 p.m. Sandhill Crane viewing blind trip

Thursday, March 12

- 4:45 to 9 a.m. Sandhill Crane viewing blind trip
- 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Registration, pre-function area
- 2 to 9 p.m. Vendors, exhibitors, raffle/silent auction setup
- 2 to 3 p.m. Putting WOW in Your Cellphone Pictures
- 3 to 4 p.m. What You Say in Kearney, Stays in Kearney!
- 4:45 to 9 p.m. Sandhill Crane viewing blind trip

Friday, March 13

- 4:45 to 9 a.m. Sandhill Crane viewing blind trip
- 7 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Birding field trip, bus starts loading at 6:45 a.m.
- 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Prairie culture field trip, bus starts loading at 7:15 a.m.
- 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Registration, pre-function area, vendor, exhibitor and auction areas open
- 3 to 4 p.m. Finding Beauty Everywhere
- 4 to 5 p.m. Personal Habitat: The Bird-friendly Backyard
- 4 to 6 p.m. NABS affiliates meeting
- 6 to 7 p.m. Social hour with cash bar
- 7 to 10 p.m. Dinner
Live auction
Entertainment by Al Batt

Saturday, March 14

- 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. Registration, pre-function area
- 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Vendors' tables, education displays and raffle/silent auction areas open
- 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. BAN awards presented
Conference speakers, including Al Batt, Bernie Daniel, Myrna Pearman, Bill Taddicken, Stan Tekielka and Julie Zickefoose
- 6 to 7 p.m. Social hour with cash bar
- 7 to 10 p.m. Conference banquet
NABS awards presented
Entertainment by Ron Cisar, Musical Reflections of Our Mother, the Earth

Sunday, March 15

- 4:45 to 9 a.m. Sandhill Crane viewing blind trip

Note: Subject to minor changes prior to the start of the conference.

EVENTS

SANDHILL CRANE VIEWING BLIND TRIP

The trips to the Audubon Society's Rowe Sanctuary begin at either 4:45 a.m. or 4:45 p.m. Be a witness to one of the birding wonders of the world! Half a million Sandhill Cranes descend to the Platte River Valley between late February and early April, consisting of more than 80% of the world's population. It is the largest gathering of cranes anywhere in the world. All trips are guided by experienced staff and volunteers and last two to three hours. Dress warmly, as the blinds are not heated; and bring your camera and binoculars. The morning and evening experiences at the blinds are very different, so you may want to attend both times. No car? No problem. BAN volunteers will help facilitate carpooling. **Space is limited, first come/first served.**

BIRDING TOUR

Hundreds of thousands of Sandhill Cranes and millions of ducks and geese pass through the Platte River Valley this time of year. Our tour will begin with a trip to Harlan County Reservoir. Along the way, we will view waterfowl, black-tailed prairie dogs, hawks and other species. The viewing of a prairie chicken lek may be a possibility, as the males arrive before dawn and quickly begin their unique courtship display, characterized by stomping feet, towering leaps and resonant booming calls created by inflated yellow-orange air sacs along both sides of their necks. On the way back, we will view other waterfowl areas in the rainwater basin. Some viewing is outside of the vehicle, so dress for possible cold weather and bring your binoculars and field guide. Breakfast and lunch are included in the cost. (Changes are possible due to weather.)

PRAIRIE CULTURE FIELD TRIP

Learn about Nebraska's history and culture through a tour of nearby landmarks and other sightseeing. The tour includes the G.W. Frank Museum of History and Culture, which offers a window into Kearney's past, its early rise and fall, and rebirth as a center for health and education. The Archway — a museum that spans I-80 — salutes the pioneers. The Museum of Nebraska Art celebrates visual artwork that reflects the state's culture. Both the birding and prairie culture tours include lunch at Burchell's White Hill Farmhouse Inn.

WORKSHOPS

Don Brockmeier's greatest photography interest is in photographing wildlife. He has had photos published in magazines, websites, newspapers, calendars, and shown in galleries. Don recently became intrigued by the great pictures that can be taken with a cellphone with just a little know-how. Don will share his techniques with you at his workshop, **Putting Some WOW in Your Cellphone Pictures.**

Al Batt presents a show-and-tell workshop. We love birds and share our lives with them. Bring your stories on how you got interested in birds, what got you into bluebirding or how birds enhance your existence. With Al as the head of this workshop, everyone will leave, no doubt, with their sides aching from laughter. Remember, **What You Say in Kearney, Stays in Kearney!**

Finding Beauty Everywhere: Myrna Pearman will share photographs and stories from her new book, "Beauty Everywhere: Nature Photo Essays." She will share interesting information about lesser-known wildlife species and she will inspire participants to find beauty everywhere.

Julie Zickefoose presents **Personal Habitat: The Bird-friendly Backyard.** Simple habitat enhancements can take a backyard from bland to bustling with wildlife. Julie will show how she transformed an 80-acre farm into a wildlife sanctuary — a perfect personal habitat.

“I plan to attend NABS 2020 in March. It has been on my bucket list to get out to that WONDER one more time. Next to the Galapagos, witnessing the crane migration and all the other amazing birds in Nebraska was the high point of my 'birding' life.”

— Anne Sturm, Maryland, founding member and past president of NABS

REGISTRATION FORM

BAN is looking for items to be donated for the silent auction and raffle.

All events have limited seating, first-come, first-served. Register early.	No. of people/tables	Price before Jan. 1	Price after Jan. 1	Total
Saturday — speakers and lunch		\$35	\$45	
Field Trips				
Sandhill Crane blinds				
Wednesday evening, 4:45 to 9 p.m.		\$45	\$55	
Thursday morning, 4:45 to 9 a.m.		\$45	\$55	
Thursday evening, 4:45 to 9 p.m.		\$45	\$55	
Friday morning, 4:45 to 9 a.m.		\$45	\$55	
Sunday morning, 4:45 to 9 a.m.		\$45	\$55	
Birding tour (limited to 100 people)		\$60	\$70	
Prairie Culture Tour (limited to 50 people)		\$60	\$70	
Workshops				
Putting Some Wow in Your Cellphone Pictures Don Brockmeier, Thursday, 2 p.m.		\$15	\$20	
What You Say in Kearney, Stays in Kearney! Al Batt, Thursday, 3 p.m.		\$15	\$20	
Finding Beauty Everywhere Myrna Pearman, Friday, 3 p.m.		\$15	\$20	
Personal Habitat: The Bird-friendly Backyard Julie Zickefoose, Friday, 4 p.m.		\$15	\$20	
* * All four workshops		\$50	\$70	
Friday evening dinner and entertainment		\$25	\$35	
Saturday evening dinner and entertainment		\$40	\$45	
Vendors Sales tables (includes electricity)		\$35 + item for raffle	\$35 + item for raffle	
Nonprofit organizations Information display tables (includes electricity)		\$35	\$35	
Grand total enclosed				\$

You can view and print the registration form by going to bbne.org or nabluebirdsociety.org.

Name(s) _____ Phone _____

Address _____ Email _____

City _____ State/Prov _____ Postal code _____

Complete this form and return with full payment to:

Sandy Seibert, 2115 S. 114th St., Omaha, NE 68144.
Checks should be made payable to Bluebirds Across Nebraska.
Cancellation policy on next page.

Profits from this conference go to Bluebirds Across Nebraska's recovery efforts for bluebirds and other cavity nesting birds and to help offset some of the expenses of the conference.

HOTEL INFORMATION

Our host hotel is the Holiday Inn Conference Center, 110 2nd Ave, Kearney, Nebraska, exit 272 off Interstate 80. The room rate is \$109.95 per night. Due to severe flooding in Kearney, the hotel is unable to accept reservations until November 15, 2019. We have a block of rooms reserved for this conference so there should be no problem getting a room if you register as soon as possible after Nov. 15. You should make your reservation by calling the hotel directly at 308-237-5971. Please specify that you are with the NABS/BAN conference to get the group rate. The hotel is providing a 24-hour reservation cancellation policy. Please check with the hotel for complete cancellation information.

CAMPING INFORMATION

Complete hookups are available for RVs at Fort Kearny State Recreation Area at South Hwy 10 and 44. Make reservations at reserveamerica.com.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Due to the advanced commitments and expenses incurred by BAN, the following cancellation policy will be used:

- Before Jan. 1, 2020, a full refund will be issued.
- From Jan. 1 through Jan. 31, a full refund will be issued, excluding the cost for Sandhill Crane blinds.
- From Feb. 1 through Feb. 28, one-half refund will be issued for workshops, Friday night dinner, Saturday program and Saturday night dinner. No refund will be issued for Sandhill Crane blinds, or the birding or prairie culture field trips.
- After March 1, refunds will be issued on a case-by-case review only for illness or family issues.
- No refunds will be issued for inclement weather.

CONVENTION SPEAKERS AND ENTERTAINERS

AL BATT



Performing double duty as Friday night's entertainment, Al (albatt.com) also will lend his nature-related storytelling skills as a Saturday speaker. A writer, speaker, storyteller and humorist, Al is also known

for his cartoon strips, radio show and Bird Watcher's Digest column.

BERNIE DANIEL



A retired environmental research scientist who has been bluebirding since 1953, Bernie serves as NABS' president. He will discuss distribution and trends for the population of the three bluebird species

based on data from the Breeding Bird Survey.

RON CISAR



An Iowa Western Community College professor, Ron teaches environmental science. He has helped educate groups of all ages for more than 30 years. The singer/songwriter shares his message through his

Earth Music program.

MYRNA PEARMAN



Myrna will give a short history of Ells Bird Farm, a conservation, research and education center founded by Alberta farmers, Charlie and Winnie Ellis. She will talk about how the farm has been developed

to improve biodiversity and how the natural assets of the old homestead have been creatively used to address engaging children in nature

BILL TADDICKEN



The director of Rowe Sanctuary's Ian Nicolson Audubon Center (rowe.audubon.com), Bill will discuss the Sandhill Cranes' annual migration to the Kearney area. He oversees all programs on the

2,400-acre sanctuary and has worked extensively on conservation of the Platte River for Sandhill Cranes, Whooping Cranes and other wildlife.

STAN TEKIELA



A naturalist, wildlife photographer, radio show host and writer of more than 130 field guides, nature appreciation books and wildlife audio CDs for nearly every state in the nation, Stan (naturesmart.com)

will present "Captivating Bluebirds."

JULIE ZICKEFOOSE



A widely published natural history writer and artist, Julie adopted an orphaned blue jay. She will discuss her book, "Saving Jemima: Life and Love With a Hard-luck Jay." More than a wildlife rehab story, it's a story of life,

love and dealing with great loss; and finding grace and redemption in bonding with a wild bird.



Bluebird Season 2019

Sandra White

This narrative describes the nesting season for one of my nestboxes, housing what I believe is the same Eastern Bluebird pair from last season.

March 17: 1 egg; March 18: 2 eggs; March 19: 3 eggs; March 20: 4 eggs; March 21: 5 eggs.

April 3 – four nestlings and one egg hatching (13 days incubated)

April 13 – nestlings 10 days old

All was going well until today. I went out to give some mealworms and noticed that the mama bluebird was not around when I tapped the mealworm bowl with a fork to signal dinner time. By late afternoon I knew something had happened to her. In a span of 12 hours we had had a violent thunderstorm, I saw a hawk on the nearby oak tree, and I had run off a stray cat. Did one of those things get her? I will never know but I do know I was heartbroken and, embarrassed to say, I cried several times that day. I went to Sialis.org to see what to do. I knew the Bluebird Lady (that's what I call her) would have the answers.

April 14 – 11 days old

Luckily, I had just received a fresh shipment of mealworms; I started giving them every 30 minutes. I bought calcium carbonate and crickets today. I could hear Daddy singing over and over when he was not feeding the nestlings. I did a nest check at 11:30 am and all looked ok and appeared to be sleeping.

At noon a new female approached the nestbox. She was much smaller than the missing mama. She looked in and immediately left. A short time later she showed up near the mealworm bowl and watched as Daddy continued to feed mealworms to the nestlings. Daddy will not feed the crickets for some reason. Early afternoon the female came back and looked in the nestbox twice. The second time as she peered in, she fanned out her tail feathers like a lobster while Daddy was on top of the nestbox. I don't know what this means but I'm hoping and praying it means she loves her new stepchildren.

Daddy has been very diligent with feeding the nestlings. I see him now take as many worms as he can get in his mouth to the nestbox. I started to wonder how many mealworms are being dropped in the nest and not eaten so I greased the bottom of the pole with Vaseline so ants cannot climb up. I have not seen any but better safe than sorry.

I've continued to feed dusted mealworms every

30 minutes. Now I'm starting to worry that too many mealworms are not good for the nestlings, but I don't know what else to do since I don't think Daddy will be able to keep up with the feedings. He's been working hard all day with feeding, removing fecal sacs, and courting the female.

6:27 pm – I see the female again. She is a lot smaller than the mama bird was. I start calling her Little Female. She got on top of the nestbox and Daddy seemed to be shooing her away as he continued to feed. I don't know why she won't jump in and help out...Daddy and I are tired. It's been a long day of giving mealworms.

7:30 pm – Daddy gives his last feeding. I hope he gets a good night's rest. It all starts again tomorrow.

April 15 – 12 days old

I'm awake at 4:30 and can't go back to sleep thinking about the nestlings, the poor mama, and the hard-working daddy. I hope nothing happens to him or it's all over for the nestlings. I get up and wait for daylight.

6:37 am – First sign of Daddy at the nestbox. I get busy dusting crickets and mealworms. I see Little Female near the nestbox. She seems to have no interest whatsoever in helping feed the nestlings.

6:53 am – I see Daddy removing a fecal sac. Little Female is still following him around. Daddy has been hunting for food and I have been giving dusted mealworms. The owner of Wild Birds Unlimited tells me that too many mealworms are not good, which I already know, but nestlings not getting fed is bad too, in my opinion. I'm going to cut back on the mealworms and see if Daddy can keep up. What to do...what to do!

3:00 pm – I suddenly have the thought that I had put out the crickets with the mealworms so maybe that is why Daddy wouldn't feed the crickets. Now since holding back the mealworms and offering only the crickets, Daddy is feeding them to the nestlings. I feel as happy as if I'd won the lottery. I guess I will be making a trip this afternoon for more crickets.

Daddy seems to like the live crickets better. Maybe this is my solution for too many mealworms.

I don't check the nestbox today since they are 12 days old. Plus, truthfully, I'm scared to look in.

5:30 pm – Little Female is following Daddy around this afternoon. She gets on the nestbox with him and flaps her wings and watches him feed the nestlings. Bought 100 live crickets today. I'm only giving Daddy crickets to feed, and I see him taking

several at a time to the nestbox. I'm feeling a little more confident now that maybe I can help fledge all or at least some of the nestlings.

7:15 pm – Last feeding for me and Daddy. I'm pooped and I know he is too.

I've figured out a few helpful things with the cricket feedings. I have two cricket containers—one medium and one small. I use a piece of egg crate to lift a few crickets out of the medium container into the small one, then put the small container in the freezer for about 10 minutes. That's just about time enough for them to stop moving but not be dead. I take them out and dump them onto a plastic cutting board. I cut off both barbed legs and add them into glass bowls. I dump the legless crickets into a small kitchen sifter and dust with the calcium carbonate over a bowl so I can reuse the powder. The crickets will be alive when they warm up, but they won't be able to jump out of the mealworm bowl with no back legs.

April 16 – 13 days old

Temperature unusually cold this morning at 40°. I was up early cutting off cricket legs for Daddy to feed the nestlings.

6:50 am – No sign of Daddy. I go out to the mealworm feeder and clang the bowl with my fork.

6:55 am – I go out and clang the bowl again. I'm starting to get worried but about a minute later he shows up with Little Female in tow. Now my worry turns to anger as she is distracting him from his job and what's turned into my job too. I fill up the bowl with dusted back-legless crickets and he starts feeding the nestlings. Immediately after feeding he leaves with Little Female.

I picked up 200 crickets today. I supplemented mostly crickets today and occasionally mealworms.

This morning I was feeling very discouraged with Daddy. I see what looks like another male bluebird chasing Little Female and Daddy chasing after both. There was a lot of squawking. Daddy is obviously preoccupied, and I'm concerned for the nestlings. A little while later I see Little Female is back and on top of the nestbox with Daddy; they are flapping their wings at each other.

This afternoon Daddy seems to be in sight more, maybe because Little Female is around and seems to be following him. She is still not helping feed the nestlings, just watching and stuffing herself with mealworms. I am mad at her and then feel stupid for being mad at a bird.

I watch Daddy through the binoculars and see that his white feathers on one side are roughed up. I wonder if he has been in a fight with the male I saw this morning while defending his territory and Little Female.

A couple of times today when Daddy was away I went near the nestbox to see if I could hear the nestlings begging for food. No sound at all from the nestbox. I wonder if they are okay, getting enough to eat, if they are developing normally, if they are getting too much calcium, if any have died, and about a hundred other thoughts. Dear Lord, please don't let all this work and worry be in vain.

7:20 pm – Last feeding and I see Daddy fly off for the night.

April 17 – 14 days old

6:24 am – I am up and have four batches of at least 15 crickets ready to go. I have been noticing that Daddy picks up three crickets per round to the nestbox. I assume all three crickets go in one mouth since he's so quick there doesn't seem enough time that he could be feeding one cricket to each nestling.

6:42 am – First sight of Daddy. He's early this morning. He's sitting on the mealworm feeder pole like always. I go out with my batch of crickets and he watches me. When I get almost within reaching distance, I say good morning and he moves one branch up.

I watch him fly to the nestbox four times with three crickets each trip. He downs some crickets himself, so I go inside and get another batch of 15. He makes a total of eight trips to the nestbox with crickets and during exit he removes fecal sacs. He only left two crickets in the bowl of about 30. Does that mean all five nestlings are alive? I want to look but I'm scared of something going wrong like premature fledging.

I see Little Female with Daddy whenever he first arrives. I hurriedly put out some mealworms since I know she likes them, and I want her to stick around today. I see Daddy at the worms with one in his mouth and whistling. I figure he's trying to lure her so he can feed her the mealworm. She looked in the nestbox again today and flew away with Daddy during one of the fecal sac removals. She needs to get her lazy butt back here and help out.

7:30 am – Little Female and Daddy eating mealworms. I wonder if it's the mealworms or Daddy's charm that's keeping her around.

8:58 am – I have not seen Daddy in over an hour. I go out to the mealworm feeder and clang the bowl. He's probably off with Little Female. I don't like to clang too much as the cardinals and robins have learned the sound too. At 9:11 Daddy shows. He seems distracted sitting on the limb above the crickets waving one wing. I'm sure Little Female is involved. Yep, I see her and to my amazement they fly off together as if Daddy doesn't have mouths to feed. I start clanging the bowl for him to come back.

9:22 am – Still no sign of Daddy but I now see another female on top of the nestbox, much more plump than Little Female. She stays about a minute then flies off. There is an open field that butts up to our backyard, and I see three or four bluebirds flying around chasing each other. I am sure one of them is Daddy. I am mad at Daddy for not being more attentive to the nestlings.

9:40 am – Daddy finally shows up as I am standing behind the nestbox. He doesn't dive at me. I had been listening to see if I heard the nestlings making any noise or begging for food. I stood there for a few minutes and didn't hear a peep. Daddy is at the mealworm feeder and I back away from the nestbox. He flies over to the nestbox, stands on top, then flies back over to the mealworm feeder, eats two mealworms himself and then flies off with one in his mouth. I guess I should assume that he knows if the nestlings need food or not. It's either that or the females have him distracted.

9:45 am – Daddy is back with the new female. I'm calling her Plump Female. She is rounder than Little Female and looks similar in size to missing Mama. It looks as if he calls her over to the mealworm feeder and then starts feeding the nestlings while she stuffs herself with mealworms.

10:25 am – Daddy feeding nestlings crickets. No sign of Plump or Little Female. After feeding he's gone again.

11:00 am – Daddy feeding nestlings, then leaves again. I don't see him taking fecal sacs but maybe he does and I missed it. It happens so fast and it's hard to watch every second. I chant in my head, you can't fix everything, as my Bluebird Lady has said at the end of her long list of how to help widows and

widowers.

12:00 pm – Daddy feeding. I see a female but can't tell without the binoculars if it's Plump or Little Female.

1:00 pm – Daddy comes about once an hour to feed nestlings, then leaves. No guarding of the nest for him. I am though, and I wonder if he's smart enough to know that. I have not seen Little or Plump Female this afternoon.

4:41 pm – Daddy goes to the nestbox four times with food. I only see him remove one fecal sac. I don't see Little or Plump Female.

4:48 pm – Daddy removes another fecal sac. Maybe at least two are alive of the five. I'm hopeful for more. It could be that he is feeding more and removing fecal sacs when I'm not looking.

Feeding occurring every hour. Last feeding was around 7:15 pm.

April 18 – 15 days old

6:46 am – Daddy lands on top of the nestbox then flies over to the mealworm feeder waiting for me. I take him 20 dusted crickets. He has brought Plump Female with him and she is sitting on the box. She looks in the hole just like Little Female. Daddy does three trips to the nestbox and one fecal sac removal. Daddy leaves and Plump Female leaves with him. I look to see how many crickets remain and it looks like about half are left.

6:56 am – Daddy is back, gets a cricket and some other insect off the ground and flies away...must be for Plump Female. Geez! Here we go again.

7:00 am – He's back with the same food in his mouth. I guess he couldn't find her. He takes the food to the nestbox and then flies off. I go out to the mealworm bowl and clang it to remind him he has babies that need feeding. No luck. I stand quietly behind the nestbox to listen for any noise from the nestlings. I hear nothing. I sniff around the back to see if there is any smell coming from the box. Nothing. This is good, I think. I look through the binoculars from a distance and I don't see any movement in the nestbox. I make more legless crickets for next feeding.

7:18 am – Daddy is back, feeding and removing fecal sacs.

9:30 am – I take another look in the nestbox hole with the binoculars and I see some wings flapping inside. Daddy seems to be around more this morning. I wonder if it is because Plump Female is staying nearby.

3:00 pm - Busy afternoon and no time to monitor. I ran out of crickets. The mealworms I had ordered and received yesterday were all dead when I took the box out of the refrigerator. At noon, I run to Petco for 200 crickets at 34 bucks. Run back home and add



Plump Female

to freezer, clip back legs, dust and hurry to put out. Then a trip to Wild Birds Unlimited for mealworms: 2,000 mealworms at 35 bucks. I usually mail order but no time for that now. When it's all said and done these nestlings are going to bust me.

I put out only crickets this afternoon. Plump Female has been around all day and Daddy has too. She continues to enjoy crickets that I put out for the nestlings.

6:21 pm – I look through the binoculars and can see one nestling has what appears to be something white stuck to the side of its face.... could it be a fecal sac? I don't have an extra nest and, even if I did how do you do a nest change at 15 days old? I feel so discouraged now.

6:52 pm – I finally see Daddy take out one fecal sac. It appears that he is not feeding as much per visit now. Is he just feeding the stronger ones? Maybe he knows the others won't make it or already didn't. I have my second crying session since Mama died. I say to myself that tomorrow I will only put out food every hour and not monitor. Mentally I can't take it.

7:20 pm – Daddy makes three visits to the nestbox with food. I see no fecal sac removed. He seems to be depending on me and waits near the mealworm bowl for me. I can walk right up on him and he doesn't move far from me. We look each other in the eye, and I talk to him like he's a person. I tell him to lay off the females and worry about the nestlings, that there will be plenty of time later for them.

April 19 – 16 days old

6:36 am – Daddy here. I say good morning jerk. I can't help but feel angry at him for not being around more. I've tried hard to help out and maybe he has too, and I just expect too much. I take out 10 crickets. He downs a few and takes one to the nestbox. It's still not completely light but no fecal removals that I can see.

7:00 am – Daddy feeds at least three more times and I see at least three fecal sac removals. Plump Female is here and on top of the nestbox. She looks in the hole and looks like she is giving food or making a pecking gesture toward the nestlings.

9:11 am – I've seen Plump Female at the box several times sticking her head in the box. By the time I can grab the binoculars she leaves. It looks like she's trying to peck at them. Not viciously though. I can still see at least two heads moving in the nestbox.

Daddy & Plump Female must be a couple now. She's hanging around all the time and not leaving. She looks older than Little Female and maybe more experienced. Maybe she knows the nestbox will soon be empty. I see her standing on the nestbox as Daddy takes food to the nestlings. She tries to take the food

from him, but he doesn't let her. I am proud of him. I think I have had every emotion possible toward him this week.

10:00 am – Raining. Severe Category 4 storm today. First time in three years for the Raleigh area. 70 mph+ winds & tornados. The main line is supposed to push through late afternoon. Thank goodness any nestlings still alive are in the nestbox.

11:21 am – A short break from the rain. Daddy could feed the nestlings, but he does not. I can hear him calling in a whistle-like tone. I see Plump Female. Could he be trying to call the nestlings out or is he communicating with Plump Female? With this storm coming, now is not the time for fledging. I tell Daddy to get over there and feed the babies. A short time later he does feed, but only once. There is a male Summer Tanager at the mealworm feeder. I hate shooing him off and normally love seeing them because they are such pretty birds.

11:30 am – Raining again. At least the nestlings got a few bites to tide them over.

12:00 pm – Break in the rain. Daddy feeds. No fecal sac removal.

12:45 pm – Daddy feeds one time. No fecal sac removal.

1:15 pm – Break in the rain. I provide crickets and Plump Female eats all of them. I make more and Daddy makes three rounds to the nestbox. I see one fecal sac removal.

2:30 pm – Daddy has kept me hopping with the crickets. He feeds like crazy the last hour. I check my mobile weather app and see the rain is going to start again soon. He must know the bad weather is upon us. Huge main rain band will hit later. Luckily we are having breaks in between for feedings.

3:39 pm – Daddy still in a feeding frenzy. I've been supplying endless crickets for him to feed. Plump Female has had her share.

5:30 pm – Have not had time to make notes since I've been supplying crickets and Daddy is still going to feed more than normal. I don't see him remove any fecal sacs but I could have missed it. He stops feeding about 15 minutes before the storm band moves in.

6:30 pm – Storm is over and Daddy picks back up with feedings until 7:10 pm.

April 20 – 17 days old

6:00 am – Will today be the day? In past years it has usually been day 18 when nestlings fledge. The conditions in that nestbox must be bad. I know there must be poop everywhere and I suspect dead or half-dead nestlings too. This is my first experience with this situation, so I have no idea what to expect. Last year for the first time I had on the third set eggs that did not hatch and a few years ago I saw a hawk

pluck the mama bird right off the nestbox. She was incubating five eggs. Those for sure were upsetting, but no comparison to this.

7:18 pm – Busy all day today with feedings and monitoring. No time to make notes today so below is all from memory.

6:45 am – Daddy shows up with Plump Female. I have batches of crickets ready and I take some out to the mealworm bowl. Plump Female is looking in the hole and watching Daddy feed. All of a sudden, for the first time I see her enter the nestbox and not come out. I am frantic with worry. I picture her pecking at the nestlings and trying to kill them. I can't stand it any more so I go outside and clap my hands near the box. She exits. A few minutes later this happens again and I repeat my hand clapping to get her to come out. I don't know what to do. I ask Randy, my husband, and he says, "Email your bluebird lady." I say, "I don't have time for a response plus it's Easter weekend." After the third time of Plump Female entering and staying inside a long time, I decide to take my chances with looking in the nestbox. We go out together. I take a CD case to cover the hole. I tell him to peep in while I cover the hole. I'm too scared to look in and see them dead. He takes a quick look in and says he just sees eyes looking at him. We're both so nervous with cracking the door that we close the door and back off. He says he couldn't tell if they were alive or not or how many he saw. We go back inside.

Now that it's lighter, I can see through the binoculars that Plump Female is taking pine straw into the nestbox. I'm frantic again thinking that the nestlings are half dead and she's covering them up building her nest. Randy and I go back out. I take my phone in case there's an opportunity to take a picture to view later if they are alive. This time, he is the hole coverer and I gently crack open the door. I can see two of the nestlings looking at me and other same-sized birds with heads hunkered down. I can see they look alive and that Plump Female has not killed them. I didn't expect to see that many alive. I'm proud of Daddy again. I quickly snap a picture and close the door.

When I get back inside, I examine the picture. I think I see all five nestlings and they look in good health to me, but I've never seen a nestling that old in the box. I go to Sialis.org and pull up the growth chart. I compare my 17-day-old nestlings to the day 17 picture on the website. They look very similar to me. I am so very relieved! It looks like one of the nestlings has white calcium powder on its beak. Maybe that's what I saw and not poop the other day. I see too in the picture that Plump Female is adding new pine straw around the edges of the old nest.



Five (?) nestlings on April 20

She obviously is ready for the nestlings to get out. I think on what if anything I should do. I wonder what my bluebird lady would do. I watch closely and see Daddy continue to feed and remove fecal sacs. He must have removed more than I realized this last week because the nest didn't look too bad, although I couldn't see under the nestlings. What must those poor babies think of this strange female building around them?

After watching Daddy continue to feed, I think the best thing to do is nothing but watch. All morning and afternoon I continue to have crickets available. It's a constant battle guarding the crickets and occasional mealworm. Daddy waits for me at the mealworm feeder. I take them out and guard the crickets about 20 feet back while he makes rounds to and from the nestbox. While he's at the nestbox if another bird tries to grab the crickets, I run up and shoo it away. Then I back up as Daddy comes back from the nestbox for another round. I do this every hour all day long not to mention all the leg cutting of the crickets. My feet and back are killing me.

I saw this morning the nestlings open their mouth when Plump Female goes in the nestbox. They must think she is going to feed them. Daddy and Plump Female seem to develop a system in the afternoon: Daddy feeds the nestlings first then Plump Female enters the nest with pine straw.

I hope I am doing the right thing by doing nothing. I can't imagine how much pine straw must be in there now. Surely they will fledge tomorrow. I heard Daddy trying to call them out all day. First, he would whistle; then, when they wouldn't come out, he would take food to them. I was so busy today with feedings that I have no clue if any fledged. I may look in the nestbox again tomorrow if they have not

fledged by mid-afternoon.

Overcast this evening and Daddy makes his last feeding early at 6:50 pm.

April 21 – 18 days old

6:15 am – Happy Easter! I pray that today is fledging day. I have the whole family coming for dinner at 4 pm and the kitchen is currently set up like a cricket farm. I'll have to plan ahead and have multiple feedings available so I'm not cutting cricket legs while Randy is cutting the ham.

6:41 am – I provide two batches of crickets. Daddy lets Plump Female eat before taking any to the nestlings. Figures!

6:47 am – I see Daddy sitting on a limb near the nestbox. No sign of Plump Female now.

7:22 am – Another round of feeding the nestlings. Plump Female continues to bring in pine straw. I saw a nestling sticking its head out of the hole.

8:42 am – I don't see Daddy or Plump Female. Some crickets are still in the bowl. I wonder if any nestlings fledged while I've been in the kitchen cooking.

9:16 am – I don't see Daddy or Plump Female around as much. I'm pretty sure some have fledged. Days past I have been able to watch more closely but today there are things to do.

10:00 am – I go outside to see what's going on and it's eerily calm with Daddy nowhere in sight. Before I go in, I see Plump Female bringing in more materials for the nest. I wonder what's going on in the box. I might have to look later.

10:40 am – I take a break from the kitchen again and I see a nestling hanging half out. Daddy feeds and leaves.

2:53 pm – I take out crickets and as I'm nearing the mealworm bowl, Daddy divebombs me. I back off and look up in the tree to see a nestling has fledged. What a beautiful sight. There is another nestling with its head sticking out of the hole. Plump Female tries to enter with pine straw and the poor thing has its mouth wide open.

3:30 pm – Daddy has not been to the nestbox in over an hour. I only have 30 minutes before everyone is here, so I decide to check the nestbox. There are still three nestlings in the box. I snap a quick picture and back off.

4:30 pm – This is the ending to a perfect story. We are eating Easter dinner and four of us are at the breakfast room nook. I am watching the nestbox while talking and eating and see another nestling half hanging out. We're all watching the nestling and right as if on cue it fledges. We all start clapping. The fledgling flies over the woody area near the nestbox and clings to a tree. It was truly amazing. We are still

at the table not long after and see another one at the hole. We all watch and witness another one fledging and clap again. This one made it to the woody area but then took a dive down. Hopefully he/she made it ok from there.

6:30 pm – Everyone has just left, and I have not noticed Daddy at the nestbox any time that I have looked out the window in the last two hours. I check the box and it's empty! Plump Female has built a new nest on top of the old one. I can't describe what a joyous moment for me. It has been an Easter I will remember forever.

April 22

I continue to offer crickets occasionally today and Daddy comes and gets them. I've seen Plump Female at the mealworm bowl only twice. With her nest complete, she must be hanging with Daddy. My plan is to do this for at least the next few days then back to my normal morning and afternoon mealworm treat. Daddy has moved the fledglings from the woody area behind the house closer to the woody area by the mealworm feeder. Smart Daddy! I hope to see some or all the fledglings at the mealworm feeder with Daddy in a couple of weeks.

After the wonderful outcome of this, I think I was too hard on Daddy and Plump Female. Daddy rose to the occasion and I was happy to assist him along the way. I love bluebirds with all my heart, but I truly don't think I could do this again. There was so much time involved, not to mention I was stressed out the whole week. I am mentally and physically worn out and have experienced every emotion possible this last week. I might consider it again if it were only for a few days or if it were the last set during breeding season. I hope not to have to make the decision again anytime soon.

Post-script – Plump Female went on to lay five eggs in her new nest. I took part of the bottom out of the old nest. Out of the five nestlings that fledged from the original nest, four survived.



Daddy and his four fledglings

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Bluebirds Everywhere

“Bluebirds Everywhere” is a feature that celebrates the widespread and creative uses of bluebird images and the word “bluebird” itself. We invite you to submit your own images and ideas—simply email them to NABSeditor@gmail.com or mail them to NABS Editor, 5405 Villa View Dr., Farmington, NM 87402. Let’s see what bluebirds you can find!

Bet Zimmerman Smith (NABS Board member and creator of the Sialis.org website) noticed a drink called the Blue Bird on the menu at a fancy restaurant in Thompson, Connecticut. Curiously, none of the ingredients is blue, but the finished drink is this lovely aquamarine. Bet reports that it was very strong.



If you’re ever in need of a cab in the New Rochelle, New York area, Leslie Brill of the NABS Affiliate Bronx River-Sound Shore Audubon has found a solution: Blue Bird Taxi. Why roll to the airport in a boring canary yellow taxi when you could go in a cool blue one?



If you fancy one of these REC RJM Bluebird watches, you’d better hurry: it’s a limited-edition of only 334. On the other hand, at \$1,295, the waiting line might not be too long. Part of the reason for the high price: each watch includes metal cut from a crashed WWII Spitfire fighter plane. The blue face honors the Royal Air Force and its blue uniforms. Learn more at www.recwatches.com



NABS member Ken Smith found this can from England in a Cracker Barrel Restaurant. As he points out, bluebirds aren’t found in England. Rather, the bird looks to be a Tree Swallow. Our thanks to Ken for submitting this photo, and for monitoring a bluebird trail on a Glen Rock, Pennsylvania, golf course for 30 years!

Laura Claggett, president of the Bella Vista Bluebird Society (a NABS Affiliate), writes, “The Bluebird Shed (<https://www.thebluebirdshed.com/>) is a locally owned and operated haven for wild bird lovers in Bella Vista, Arkansas. The owner is a licensed bird bander who often gives talks about birds. The store has a large selection of high-quality merchandise, including seed, suet, feeders of all sizes & shapes, books, bird baths, and beautiful home goods and gift items; it is our society’s outlet for nestboxes, hats, and t-shirts. Overall, an impressive addition to Bella Vista, and an asset to the Bella Vista Bluebird Society.”



The state of Canada's birds is...

According to this study of Canadian bird populations and how they have changed since 1970, the state of Canada's birds is a mixed bag. The populations of some groups of birds are doing quite well—for example, waterfowl and forest birds (including all three bluebird species). Unfortunately, a group of birds of interest to NABS members is declining precipitously—the aerial insect-eaters, including the cavity-nesting Tree Swallow. This decline is probably due to widespread use of insecticides, climate change, and habitat loss. You can download this brief report at <http://www.stateofcanadasbirds.org/>, where you can also dig deeper into the data, if you're interested.



New Duck Stamp Now Available

The US Fish & Wildlife Service's Duck Stamp program is an exceptional conservation success story. In its 85-year history, the program has raised over **\$1 billion** to purchase wetlands and other lands critical for birds. Each year, a panel of judges selects the original artwork that will grace the stamp. The 2019/2020 stamp features a Wood Duck (a cavity-nesting species), painted by Scot Storm of Freeport, Minnesota. Even if you're not a duck hunter, you can purchase a stamp to help support bird conservation. As a bonus, the stamp allows you free admission to the national wildlife refuges that charge admission. Stamps can be purchased online (<https://www.fws.gov/birds/get-involved/duck-stamp/buy-duck-stamp.php>) or at many sporting goods stores, post offices, and national wildlife refuges. *Image courtesy US Fish & Wildlife Service*



Wanted: Nestbox Predators

Scott W. Gillihan

I need your help. I'm putting together an article for a future issue of *Bluebird* on the topic of cavity-nest predators. If you have ever witnessed a predator taking eggs, nestlings, or an adult **out of a nest cavity**, or if you didn't witness it but you have **positive proof** of the predator's identification, I'd like to hear about it. Specifically, I'd like to know about:

- the predator (raccoon, snake, etc.)
- the victim (Eastern Bluebird, Tree Swallow, etc.)
- the cavity location: nestbox, fencepost, tree, etc.
- the habitat (open rural, coniferous forest, etc.)
- the state or province where this occurred

I'm specifically interested in predation, in other words, one animal killing another in order to eat it. As tragic as it is when House Sparrows or House Wrens kill or displace bluebirds from a nestbox, I'm not interested in collecting information about those events for this project.

I'd like to limit this to predation events that occurred since about the year 2000.

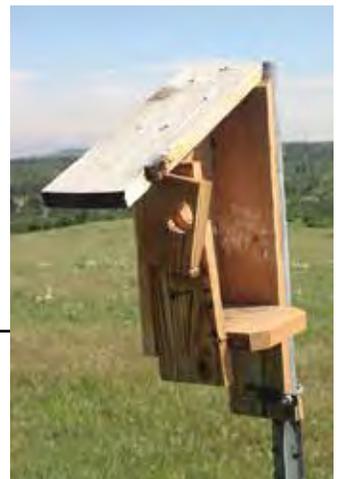
I have some interesting findings already but I need more data!

Please send any observations to:
NABSeditor@gmail.com

or drop me a line at:
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Thank you very much!

Black bear predation on Western Bluebird nest, Colorado.



Index to *Bluebird* Volume 41

Author

Allen, Barbie. *Bluebirds with Fertility Issues* 1:26–27.
Bauman, Russ. *An Unusual Friendship* 2:9.
Betts, Tom. *Natural Perching* 3:26.
Boran, Christine. *Malformed Eggs* 1:16.
Bulger, Susan, and Gillian Martin. *Is Your Backyard Bluebird Nestbox a Tragedy in the Making?* 1:10–12.
Corwin, Kevin. Message to Affiliate organizations 1:1, 2:1, 3:1, 4:1.
Daniel, Bernie. *The Bluebird Population Index: An Idea for Monitoring Bluebird Populations* 3:21–25; *Current Status and Trends of the Mountain Bluebird* 1:22–26; *From the President* 1:2–4, 2:2–3, 3:2–3, 4:2–4; *Know the Laws Regarding Nestbox Trail Management* 3:16–17.
Gillihan, Scott W. *From the Managing Editor* 2:4, 3:4, 4:5; *Research Review* 2:26–27; *Wanted: Nestbox Predators* 4:27; *What is the Airspeed Velocity of an Unladen Bluebird?* 2:15.
Hall, Sam. *Birdhouse* [poem] 2:27.
Harrod, Sara. *Preliminary Results from a Large-Scale, Long-Term Bluebird Study* 2:22–23.
Heffernan, Kathy. *Tree Swallows Raise Mountain Bluebird* 1:8.
Henderson, Carrol. *Remembering Dorene Sciven: Conservationist and Friend of Bluebirds* 1:18–20.
Hollein, Leo. *An Unusual Nestbox Occupant* 1:14–15.
Hvenegaard, Glen, Robyn Perkins, and Garrett Rawleigh. *The Population Health of Bluebirders: Implications for the Future of Bluebirds* 3:18–19.
Martin, Gillian. *Filling Tree Cavities May Mean Additional Habitat Loss for Bluebirds* 1:17.
McGrath, Terry. *Bird Wives of Virginia and South Carolina* 3:11.
Pauser, Lee. *Acorn Woodpecker Granary* 4:11; *Plastic Skin to Protect Nestboxes* 2:25.
Rodomsky-Bish, Becca. *Nesting History Brought to Life: Nest Quest Go!* 4:6–7.
Rust, Dean C. *Eastern Bluebird Nest Artists* 4:8–10.
Schreffler, Leon, Jane Schreffler, and Benjamin E. Leese. *A Specimen of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker (Campephilus principalis) Purportedly from Michigan* 4:12–14.
Scott, Lorne. *My Life with Bluebirds* 2:16–19.
Stemp, Ralph. *Bluebird Predator Guard Revisited* 2:8.
Stiles, Don, and Bill Taylor. *Two Broods of Tree Swallows in One Nest* 1:9.
Tuttle, Richard M. *A Prolific Nestbox Grid for Tree Swallows* 2:20–21.
University of Sydney. *Insect Populations Face Catastrophic Collapse* 3:27.
White, Sandra. *Bluebird Season 2019* 4:19–24.

Wilcox, Samantha. *Studying the Parasite Load of Cavity-Nesting Birds* 2:14–15.
Ziebarth, Paula. *Why NestWatch?* 2:10–11.

Notices

Affiliates Assigned to Each NABS Regional Representative 1:29, 2:29, 3:29.
Affiliates of NABS 1:30–32, 2:30–32, 3:30–32, 4:30–32.
Bluebirds Everywhere 1:28, 2:28, 3:17, 4:26.
BluesNews 1:28, 3:9, 4:27.
Important Information about Your NABS Membership 2:7.
Letters to Bluebird 1:6–7 (response), 4:5.
NABS 2020 conference 1:7, 2:7, 3:14–15, 4:15–18.
NABS annual meeting 3:5.
NABS Directors election 3:8.
NABS education grants program 1:5, 3:9.
NABS finances 3:7.
NABS proposed bylaws change 3:6.
NABS research grants: 3:9–10; 2019 recipients 2:5.
Photo Gallery 1:20, 2:12, 3:12, 4:10.
Survey: birders and conservation 3:20.

Subjects

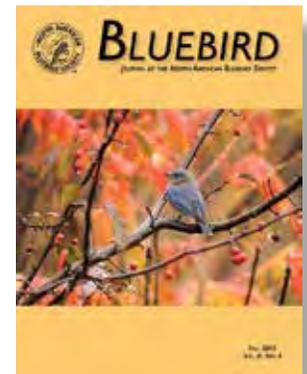
Bluebird, Eastern: demographics 2:22–23; fed by American Robin 2:9; females sharing nestbox 3:11; fertility issues 1:26–27; flight speed 2:15; malformed eggs 1:16; nesting narrative 4:19–24; population index 3:21–25; unusual nests 4:8–10.
Bluebird, Mountain: management 2:16–19; population trends 1:22–26; raised by Tree Swallows 1:8.
Bluebirders: population health 3:18–19.
Eggs: color of bird eggs vs. dinosaur eggs 2:23.
Eltzroth, Elsie: memorial 2:24–25.
Insects: population declines 3:27.
Nestboxes: legal issues 3:16–17; management 1:10–12, 2:10–11, 2:25; predator guard 2:8; predators 4:27; use by flying squirrel 1:14–15.
Nests: historical records 4:6–7.
Parasites: of Eastern Bluebirds, Purple Martins, Tree Swallows 2:14–15.
Perches: creating 3:26.
Poetry: 2:27.
Robin, American: feeding Eastern Bluebirds 2:9.
Sciven, Doreen: memorial 1:18–20.
Squirrel, flying: 1:14–15.
Swallow, Tree: management 2:20–21; raise Mountain Bluebird 1:8; two broods in one nest 1:9.
Thompson, Bill, III: memorial 3:27.
Ticks: 3:3.
Tree cavities: management 1:17.
Woodpecker, Acorn: acorn storage 4:11.

Woodpecker, Ivory-billed: Michigan specimen 4:12–14.

Titles

Acorn Woodpecker Granary, Lee Pauser 4:11.
Birdhouse, Sam Hall [poem] 2:27.
Bird Wives of Virginia and South Carolina, Terry McGrath 3:11.
The Bluebird Population Index: An Idea for Monitoring Bluebird Populations, Bernie Daniel 3:21–25.
Bluebird Predator Guard Revisited, Ralph Stemp 2:8.
Bluebird Season 2019, Sandra White 4:19–24.
Bluebirds with Fertility Issues, Barbie Allen 1:26–27.
Current Status and Trends of the Mountain Bluebird, Bernie Daniel 1:22–26.
Dinosaur Egg Color Not Unlike That of Modern Birds 2:23.
Eastern Bluebird Nest Artists, Dean C. Rust 4:8–10.
Filling Tree Cavities May Mean Additional Habitat Loss for Bluebirds, Gillian Martin 1:17.
From the Managing Editor, Scott W. Gillihan 2:4, 3:4, 4:5.
From the President, Bernie Daniel 1:2–4, 2:2–3, 3:2–3, 4:2–4.
Insect Populations Face Catastrophic Collapse, University of Sydney 3:27.
Is Your Backyard Bluebird Nestbox a Tragedy in the Making? Susan Bulger and Gillian Martin 1:10–12.
Know the Laws Regarding Nestbox Trail Management, Bernie Daniel 3:16–17.
Malformed Eggs, Christine Boran 1:16.
My Life with Bluebirds, Lorne Scott 2:16–19.
Natural Perching, Tom Betts 3:26.
Nesting History Brought to Life: Nest Quest Go! Becca Rodomsky-Bish 4:6–7.
Plastic Skin to Protect Nestboxes, Lee Pauser 2:25.
The Population Health of Bluebirders: Implications for the Future of Bluebirds, Glen Hvenegaard, Robyn Perkins, and Garrett Rawleigh 3:18–19.
Preliminary Results from a Large-Scale, Long-Term Bluebird Study, Sara Harrod 2:22–23.
A Prolific Nestbox Grid for Tree Swallows, Richard M. Tuttle 2:20–21.
Remembering Bill Thompson III 3:27.
Remembering Dorene Sciven: Conservationist and Friend of Bluebirds, Carrol Henderson 1:18–20.
Remembering Elsie Eltzroth 2:24–25.
Research Review, Scott W. Gillihan 2:26–27.
*A Specimen of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*) Purportedly from Michigan*, Leon Schreffler, Jane Schreffler, and Benjamin E. Leese 4:12–14.

Studying the Parasite Load of Cavity-Nesting Birds, Samantha Wilcox 2:14–15.
Tick Time 3:3.
Two Broods of Tree Swallows in One Nest, Don Stiles and Bill Taylor 1:9.
Tree Swallows Raise Mountain Bluebird, Kathy Heffernan 1:8.
An Unusual Friendship, Russ Bauman 2:9.
An Unusual Nestbox Occupant, Leo Hollein 1:14–15.
Wanted: Nestbox Predators, Scott W. Gillihan 4:27.
What is the Airspeed Velocity of an Unladen Bluebird? Scott W. Gillihan 2:15.
Why NestWatch? Paula Ziebarth 2:10–11.



Affiliates of the North American Bluebird Society

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 working together in a partnership in international bluebird conservation. No cost is associated with affiliating with NABS. Your affiliated organization will be listed on the NABS website and in *Bluebird*. To find out more about becoming a NABS Affiliate please contact Kevin Corwin at KCorwin@nabluebirdsociety.org. If your organization is listed below, please review your listing to ensure it is current and send any changes to Kevin. Thanks!



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