

Winter Greetings / Welcome 2023

We have much in this edition to bring you cheer, inspiration, & knowledge. Bluebird photos from across NC, tips for feeding bluebirds, bluebird assistance & rescue, news of bluebird booths, 2022 nest box data & comments, schoolyard bluebirds (new project) and our upcoming annual conference (highlighted below).

Come and Join us at the NCBS Annual Conference Haw River State Park April 21st & 22nd 2023

Famous Bluebird Expert: Julie Zickefoose

We are pleased to let you know that well-known Nature Artist & Writer, Julie Zickefoose, will be our keynote speaker. She has a fabulous presentation lined up:



*Bluebird photos by
Glenda Ryan, Editor/Webmaster*

“Have You Ever Wondered...40 Years of Experimenting with Bluebirds”



Agenda/Registration ... Page 4

- Scenic location among nature
- Bluebird learning sessions
- Jam-packed day of fun !!!



Bluebird Education for Children in the Schoolyard

The Public Outreach Committee, directed by Iris Senzig, has implemented a program geared toward promoting awareness at a young age about bluebirds. See page 5 for more details about this splendid effort.

North Carolina Bluebird Society (NCBS) Mission Statement

Our goal is to support activities that foster the resurgence of bluebirds and other native cavity-nesting birds in our home areas. NCBS is an affiliate member of the North American Bluebird Society (NABS). www.ncbluebird.org

President's Report ... Page 3. Annual Meeting Highlights: Featured Speaker Julie Zickefoose, Bluebird Expert/Author. Learn more about bluebirds in several breakout sessions.

2023 Annual Conference ... A reminder that our 2023 Annual Conference will be at Haw River State Park in Browns Summit, NC. We have enjoyed several meetings there and are ready to visit again. *Agenda/Registration* on page 4.

2023 1st Board Meeting ... Scheduled for Tuesday, January 17, 2023 at 7 pm. All members are welcome. Contact President Bill Zitek @ 828-699-7717 for the Zoom link.

Education for Children ... Public Outreach is promoting awareness of bluebirds, nest boxes, and trails at schools. Chairman Iris Senzig is developing a program to carry our message to young people. More details on page 5.

Nest Boxes ... Results of 2022 Survey Data & Comments on pages 6-9. Thanks to all who submitted & a shout out to Kari for compiling. We are happy to report significant news about bluebirds & other songbirds flourishing in North Carolina. Also on page 9 — info of nest box woodworking course in February.

Bluebird Nesting in RV ... Bluebird pair take up residence in odd spot at Lake Tucker in Benson. See page 10.

County Coordinator Action ... Fairs and activities attended in Wake and Durham Counties — Page 12. Vange LaMore, Polk County, shares good news & tips on page 13.

Bluebird Notes

Vol. 37 Issue IV

North Carolina Bluebird Society, Inc. publishes *Bluebird Notes* quarterly:
Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter

Your bluebird stories and photos are welcome for newsletter/online content.
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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN AND SHARE

Yesterday I was out near one of my nest boxes which stood quietly near a swamp maple that was still reluctant to give up its leaves. “No activity” is what I would enter on my monitoring chart if this was nesting season. The nest box stood silently looking out on the grassy area waiting for spring.

Then, a male bluebird which must have been watching that site called out with that familiar warble. I looked up quickly as he navigated between branches and wondered if he were watching that nest box so that he could claim it when February came around or was he one of the many visitors from the northern reaches of the eastern bluebird’s territory, who has come down to join its southern relatives until things warm up again up north.

If I was still banding nestlings with colored bands identifying the year they were banded, I might have been able to tell. But, alas, no bands, so I must wonder about his status. That is the beauty of nature. It creates wonder in us and urges us to look further and learn as much as we can about the world around us.

Here comes a wonderful opportunity for you to learn about and share your knowledge of bluebirds. The **North Carolina Bluebird Society Annual Meeting** is coming up on **April 21st and 22nd, 2023**. Set in the natural surroundings of Haw River State Park, you will find not only a beautiful setting but also great overnight accommodations including all your meals and some wonderful programs. Three (3) meals a day are included.

This will be the conference you looked forward to. Beginning with a Friday night gathering and dinner, on Saturday morning we will have as our keynote speaker, Julie Zickefoose, world famous author and artist, bluebirder and naturalist. Following Julie’s talk we will have “Break-out” sessions in the afternoon where you can fill in your knowledge about bluebirds in a wide range of topics:

- Bluebirds 101
- Problems on the Nest Box Trail
- Nest Boxes and Predator Guards
- Bird Photography
- Plantings for Pollinators and Birds



Scenic beauty is abundant at Haw River State Park, as the two photos above show (snapped on a 2022 visit I took to this charming place). There will be much more information in this issue of *Bluebird Notes*. See Agenda/Registration on page 4. The most important ingredient will be you ... Sharing your questions and knowledge with your fellow bluebird members and bluebird conservationists.

April 22nd will be Earth Day— what a wonderful coincidence-- so, join in with the gang and register for Haw River. I will see you there!!

President, Bill Zitek



A seed is a promise of the future! Plant native plants in your pollinator garden: Natural Bird Food

North Carolina Bluebird Society 2023 Annual Conference

April 21—22, 2023 at Haw River State Park

339 Conference Center Drive, Browns Summit, NC 27214

(336) 342-6163



We encourage you to spend Friday night at Haw River State Park. Friday night dinner and Saturday breakfast are included. All attendees (Overnight and Day-Only) receive Saturday lunch. **Pre-Registration is required by 3/31/2023. Registration is open to the Public. NCBS Membership is not required.**

CONFERENCE AGENDA

Friday Afternoon/Evening — April 21, 2023 (for Overnight Attendees)

- 3:00 p.m. Check-in
- 6:00 - 6:45 p.m. Dinner, Followed by Social Hour, Information Exchange and County Coordinator Meeting

Saturday Agenda — April 22, 2023

- 8:00 - 08:45 a.m. Breakfast for Overnight Attendees
- 8:00 - 09:00 a.m. Sign-In; Meet & Greet for Everyone; Coffee and Danish
- 9:00 - 10:30 a.m. Conference Opens: Introductions, Awards, Annual Business Meeting
- 10:30 - 12:00 p.m. Keynote Speaker — Julie Zickefoose — Renowned Nature Artist & Writer
“Have You Ever Wondered...40 Years of Experimenting with Bluebirds”
- 12:00 - 12:45 p.m. Lunch; Visit Silent Auction, Door Prizes, Sales and Information Tables
- 01:00 - 04:00 p.m. Breakout Sessions Including Bluebirding 101, Bird Photography, Nestbox and Baffle Set-up; Nestbox Problems, Nestbox Trails, Planting for Birds
- Open Question & Answer Time; Silent Auction and Door Prize Awards; Live Auction

REGISTRATION FORM — Return this form and check payable to NCBS by March 31, 2023 to:
George Wesoloski, 940 Arboretum Drive, Wilmington, NC 28405

Name(s) _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Friday night attendees: \$30.00/person X _____ = \$ _____
(Friday night lodging cost includes Fri dinner, Sat breakfast & lunch)

Saturday only attendees: \$40.00/person X _____ = \$ _____
(Registration cost for Saturday attendees includes Saturday lunch)

Haw River State Park Lodging (Friday Lodging Includes 3 Meals):

| | | |
|--|----------------|----------|
| Friday Night Single (1 Person in Room) | \$113 per room | \$ _____ |
| Friday Night Double (2 People in Room) | \$178 per room | \$ _____ |
| Friday Night Triple (3 People in Room) | \$267 per room | \$ _____ |

Optional Lodging Saturday Night:

| | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------|
| Saturday Night Single (No Meals) | \$80 per room | \$ _____ |
| Saturday Night Double (No Meals) | \$120 per room | \$ _____ |
| Saturday Night Triple (No Meals) | \$180 per room | \$ _____ |

(If 4 or more people stay Saturday night, Sunday breakfast will be available for \$10)

TOTAL: \$ _____

Questions? Contact Kay Cameron at (703) 336-2865 or kcamerondgray@gmail.com.

BLUEBIRDS IN THE SCHOOLYARD

The Public Outreach Committee of NCBS, steered by Iris Senzig (left photo, taken by Alexia Maneschi) is pleased to announce a new educational program that is offered to schools, libraries, scout troops and adult groups who are interested in helping further growth of the Eastern Bluebird. The program has been implemented in several schools — primarily in Wake County.



It is suitable for all levels: elementary, middle, high, adults and older. We are proud to have Mr. Randy Senzig, who brings over 40 years of public school science education, as our primary facilitator. Randy knows that everyone finds great benefits in being outside enjoying our natural areas.

He knows that children love to participate in nature-related activities. Teachers report how the classroom attitude changes when students are outside – not for recess – but for learning.

Bluebirds in the Schoolyard is designed to educate everyone about caring for the beautiful bluebirds whose song is so joyous. The project includes training the teachers first, so they can properly instruct the children.

A wealth of benefits for all involved:

- * Cross-Curricular: Science, Math, History, and English
- * Outdoor Classroom
- * Inquiry-based learning
- * Hands-on activities
- * Improves appreciation of natural world

Lesson Topics will include:

- * History of Eastern Bluebirds
- * Importance of a proper nest box
- * Install the nest box properly
- * Determine best location
- * All about monitoring
- * Collecting proper data
- * From Nestlings to Fledglings
- * Reporting to NCBS and NABS
- * Preparing nest box for winter
- * Waiting for Spring when the Eastern Bluebirds return, bringing a new life cycle.



The NABS (North American Bluebird Society / nabluebirdsociety.org) is a resource for bluebird specific material used in “Bluebirds in the Schoolyard”.

Iris Senzig, Public Outreach

2022 NEST BOX REPORT — BLUEBIRD DATA

| County | Name(s), Trail, Town — North Carolina | Boxes | Eggs | Hatched | Fledged |
|---------------|---|-------|-------|---------|---------|
| Alamance | Linda Fogleman, Graham | 8 | 43 | 38 | 37 |
| Brunswick | Bill Young, Bolivia | 17 | 103 | 87 | 84 |
| Brunswick | Bill Young, Bolivia | 56 | 309 | 270 | 260 |
| Burke | Gene Moore, Hickory | 2 | 9 | 4 | 4 |
| Catawba | Bob Warmuth, Hickory (Lake Hickory Country Club) | 66 | 558 | 497 | 474 |
| Cherokee | Janice Olson, Andrews | 3 | 18 | 11 | 11 |
| Cherokee | Elizabeth Hay, Andrews (Andrews Garden Club) | 6 | 56 | 51 | 42 |
| Cherokee | Patricia Cook, Andrews (Historic Walker Inn) | 5 | 13 | 11 | 11 |
| Cherokee | Mark Graham, Andrews/Marble | 14 | 52 | 42 | 40 |
| Craven | Shannon Lee, New Bern | 10 | 68 | 57 | 54 |
| Durham | Emily McCoy, Durham (Dairy Pond TH, Croasdaile Farm) | 11 | 67 | 67 | 64 |
| Durham | Ken Kernodle, Durham | 43 | 272 | 244 | 221 |
| Durham | Don Wells, Durham | 10 | 66 | 61 | 61 |
| Durham | Elke Hoffmann, Bahama | 6 | 47 | 27 | 27 |
| Durham | Susan Antle, Durham (Croasdaile Country Club) | 13 | 100 | 89 | 89 |
| Durham | Peter Chauncey, Durham | 13 | 83 | 72 | 57 |
| Edgecombe | Kay Hindsley, Tarboro | 5 | 20 | 19 | |
| Forsyth | Rhett Johnson | 42 | 182 | 180 | 180 |
| Forsyth | Kay Cameron, Winston-Salem (Reynolds Gardens) | 22 | 80 | 59 | 54 |
| Forsyth | Kay Cameron, Winston-Salem (Reynolds High School Yard) | 2 | 12 | 8 | 8 |
| Forsyth | Kay Cameron, Winston-Salem | 2 | | | |
| Forsyth | Ray Fitzgerald, Winston-Salem | 2 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| Gaston | Jeane Sprague, Belmont | 33 | 206 | 168 | 156 |
| Guilford | Ken Roberson, Greensboro | 21 | 84 | 80 | 79 |
| Henderson | Nick Ponzio, Hendersonville | 1 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Mecklenburg | Christina Powell, Charlotte | 2 | 10 | 8 | 8 |
| Moore | Ed Emery, West End (Beacon Ridge Golf Course) | 25 | 186 | 146 | 133 |
| Moore | Pam Reyes, Foxfire | 17 | 80 | 62 | 52 |
| Moore | Nancy & Kinney, Foxfire | 32 | 223 | 145 | 127 |
| Moore | Bill Good, Foxfire | 19 | 117 | 80 | 69 |
| New Hanover | George Wesoloski, Wilmington | 104 | 825 | 734 | 725 |
| Orange | Peter Chauncey, Chapel Hill | 8 | 44 | 31 | 31 |
| Polk | Evangeline LaMore, Tryon | 7 | 37 | 36 | 36 |
| Wake | Carrie & Dave Helston, Willow Springs | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Wake | Gary & Terri McLaughlin, Raleigh | 3 | 12 | 7 | 7 |
| Wake | Robin Baumgart & Cindy Hamrick, Raleigh (Historic Oakview Park) | 12 | 122 | 83 | 83 |
| Wake | Annie Runyon & Donna Whitaker, Garner (White Deer Park) | 8 | 39 | 22 | 18 |
| Wake | Diane Mitchell & Ellen Cook, Garner | 10 | 99 | 70 | 70 |
| Wake | Kari Gould & Carol Reid, Garner | 19 | 89 | 52 | 52 |
| Wake | Glenda Ryan, Knightdale | 1 | | | |
| Wake | Suzy Spencer, Raleigh (Historic Oakwood Cemetary) | 17 | 111 | 46 | 43 |
| Wake | Suzy Spencer, Raleigh (Mordecai Historic Park) | 8 | 21 | 17 | 17 |
| Wake | Sally Tiller, Cary (Lochmere Golf Club) | 21 | 156 | 128 | 124 |
| TOTALS ———>>> | | 697 | 4,631 | 3,821 | 3,620 |

First Egg: Don Wells (Durham County) — March 3 . . . Last Fledge: Shannon Lee (Craven County) — October 25



Photos by Russ Bauman, Biltomore Lake, Buncombe County Coordinator

2022 NEST BOX REPORT — OTHER SPECIES DATA

| County | Name(s), Trail, Town — North Carolina | Eggs | Hatched | Fledged | Species |
|-----------------|---|------|---------|---------|-----------------|
| Alamance | Linda Fogleman, Graham | 3 | 3 | 2 | Cardinal |
| | | 5 | 5 | 5 | Tree Swallow |
| Brunswick | Bill Young, Bolivia | 42 | 19 | 17 | |
| Catawba | Bob Warmuth, Hickory (Lake Hickory Country Club) | 16 | 10 | 10 | unknown |
| Cherokee | Elizabeth Hay, Andrews (Andrews Garden Club) | 11 | 9 | 7 | Tree Swallow |
| Cherokee | Patricia Cook, Andrews (Historic Walker Inn) | 9 | 7 | 7 | Tree Swallow |
| Cherokee | Mark Graham, Andrews/Marble | 38 | 35 | 35 | |
| Craven | Shannon Lee, New Bern | 15 | 13 | 13 | |
| Durham | Emily McCoy, Durham (Dairy Pond TH, Croasdaile Farm) | 1 | 1 | 1 | Nuthatch |
| | | 10 | 10 | 10 | Carolina Wren |
| | | 1 | 1 | 1 | Cowbird |
| Durham | Ken Kernodle, Durham | 22 | 16 | 11 | Chickadee |
| | | 7 | 7 | 7 | Carolina Wren |
| Durham | Susan Antle, Durham (Croasdaile Country Club) | 9 | 5 | 5 | Tree Swallow |
| Durham | Peter Chauncey, Durham | 5 | 5 | 5 | House Wren |
| Edgecombe | Kay Hindsley, Tarboro | 5 | 5 | 5 | Chickadee |
| Forsyth | Rhett Johnson | 24 | 24 | 24 | |
| Forsyth | Kay Cameron, Winston-Salem (Reynolds Gardens) | 16 | 16 | 15 | Chickadee |
| Gaston | Jeane Sprague, Belmont | 11 | 10 | 10 | Chickadee |
| Guilford | Ken Roberson, Greensboro | 10 | 10 | 10 | Unknown |
| Mecklenburg | Christina Powell, Charlotte | 6 | 6 | 5 | Chickadee |
| Moore | Ed Emery, West End (Beacon Ridge Golf Course) | 12 | 12 | 12 | Brown-headed NH |
| Moore | Pam Reyes, Foxfire | 9 | 8 | 8 | |
| Moore | Nancy & Kinney, Foxfire | 5 | 5 | 5 | Titmouse |
| | | 6 | 6 | 6 | Brown-headed NH |
| Moore | Bill Good, Foxfire | 7 | 7 | 5 | Chickadee |
| | | 6 | 6 | 6 | Chickadee |
| Orange | Peter Chauncey, Chapel Hill | 10 | 10 | 10 | Chickadee |
| Polk | Evangeline LaMore, Tryon | 11 | 10 | 10 | Tree Swallow |
| | | 6 | 6 | 2 | Chickadee |
| Wake | Carrie & Dave Helston, Willow Springs | 5 | 5 | 5 | Chickadee |
| Wake | Gary & Terri McLaughlin, Raleigh | 5 | 0 | 0 | Chickadee |
| Wake | Robin Baumgart & Cindy Hamrick, Raleigh (Historic Oakview Park) | 7 | 7 | 7 | Chickadee |
| Wake | Annie Runyon & Donna Whitaker, Garner (White Deer Park) | 5 | 5 | 5 | Brown-headed NH |
| | | 5 | 3 | 0 | Tree Swallow |
| Wake | Kari Gould & Carol Reid, Garner | 29 | 21 | 21 | Chickadee |
| | | 5 | 4 | 4 | Brown-headed NH |
| Wake | Glenda Ryan, Knightdale | 5 | 5 | 4 | Chickadee |
| Wake | Suzy Spencer, Raleigh (Historic Oakwood Cemetary) | 14 | 7 | 7 | Chickadee |
| | | 11 | 9 | 9 | House Wren |
| Wake | Suzy Spencer, Raleigh (Mordecai Historic Park) | 16 | 13 | 13 | Chickadee |
| | | 5 | 0 | 0 | House Sparrow |
| Wake | Sally Tiller, Cary (Lochmere Golf Club) | 9 | 4 | 4 | Chickadee |
| | | 14 | 14 | 14 | Brown-headed NH |
| TOTALS ——— >>>> | | 473 | 394 | 355 | |



Photos by Glenda Ryan, Knightdale, Webmaster/Newletter Editor

2022 Nest Box Survey: Name, County, Comments

Linda Fogleman / Alamance: Tree swallow built a nest on the side of our stucco house - not sure how many eggs or babies. Last year tree swallows nested in bb house.

Gene Moore / Burke: Bad year, removed one box and set up a new one in front yard. This is supposed to be safe from house wrens.

Bob Warmath / Catawba: Our activity for 2022 was down 20% in terms of eggs laid. However, in terms of BB hatched and fledged, the numbers were basically equal to 2021. We continue to see fewer swallows and other birds. However the number of geese has increased.

Mark Graham / Cherokee: Though the season seemed to start out slow possibly due to lingering cold, it picked up and stayed pretty active throughout. We had a little more activity than last year. We have some nest box repair, replacement and relocation to do during the off season. I count this season as a successful one and look forward to next year.

Ken Kernodle / Durham: First nesting seemed to come later than usual, with second nesting being very productive this year. Third nesting seemed limited in 2022 as only 3 of 43 boxes saw 3rd nesting this year.

Emily McCoy / Durham: This is the first time these boxes have been monitored and reported. Unfortunately, we do not have dates or number of eggs laid, or fledged. I did not know what was needed for reporting.

Don Wells / Durham: The number of boxes with nests and number of broods per box are down this year. I owe the decrease to the proliferation of boxes in our community's residents' yards. We have over 30 boxes in yards in addition to the trail.

Kay Hindsley / Edgecombe: We had 6 bluebirds last winter at the feeder. We have had a red shouldered hawk close to our yard. Chickadees and titmice used some houses. Had frequent visits. Also had red cockaded woodpeckers and flickers.

Ray Fitzgerald / Forsyth: First time putting up 2 boxes. One box had 2 clutches, 4 eggs then 3 eggs-all fledged Also, at my son's place, a BB couple had a nest in an oak tree, but do not know if eggs or fledglings.

Rhett Johnson / Forsyth: Several unproductive to relocate in future. Damaged boxes were repaired Tree swallow built a nest on the side of our stucco house - not sure how many eggs or babies. Last year tree swallows nested in bb house.

Jeane Sprague / Gaston: Many repairs were done to old worn boxes in 2021. This resulted in a large uptick of fledglings in 2022. From 90 in 2021 to 156 in 2022. We have since replaced all 33 old boxes and added 17 more brand new boxes to trail.

Ed Emery / Moore: Had some trouble with vandalism this year. One box was just taken or stolen -pole and all! Another was just smashed to bits. Both boxes had young chicks at the time!

George Wesoloski / New Hanover: No other species were noted or occupied boxes this year.

Robin Baumgart & Cindy Hamrick / Wake: Good news- all boxes had at least 2 broods; 4 boxes had 3 broods. (In one box, all eggs in 2 of 3 broods were defective) Not so good news- Although we had 28 more eggs laid, fledge rate went down from 79% to 68%. This may be due to late freeze dates (as late as April 19th). We found extra pine needles stuffed behind and in front of cups - maybe for extra insulation? Never seen this before. Another new discovery- Found a male dead on top of live chicks in nest. Saw house sparrow (we think?) sitting on top of box. Also 2 eggs were missing- Did predator or mom discard?? She may have found new mate or cared for chicks on her own since it appeared that 3 chicks fledged.

Dave & Carrie Helston / Wake: We had Bluebirds start nests twice but then abandoned. Downy woodpeckers showed interest, but only chickadees actually nested. We are not seeing so many bluebirds anymore. Maybe we need to upgrade their houses? Don't know why there are fewer now.

Gary & Terri McLaughlin / Wake: Lost first 2 clutches to black snake. Put up stove pipe guard, and had no more losses. Thx!

Glenda Ryan / Wake: Nest box removed after first nesting cycle. See page 13 of Summer 2022 *Bluebird Notes* for details.

Rick Piefer, Annie Runyon & Donna Whitaker / Wake: Calvin Williams helped relocate a box for us again this year.

Ellen Cook, Diane Mitchell, Annie Runyon / Wake: Diane was the lead monitor and kept the records. After she died, Ellen gathered the information from our group's emails. We all will miss Diane. She was truly dedicated to caring for the bluebirds. Annie Runyon

Suzu Spencer / Wake: Saw more house wrens than normal. I did not bother chickadees or house wrens after I determined number of chicks. So, I cannot be certain that they matured to fledge. I used wood egg replacements to control house sparrows in one nest. I did not have any other house sparrows in nests this year after pressure last year. A bumble bee established a nest in one box and raised several young before dying out (nest dissected at end of year).

Cam Blass (County Unknown): No other cavity nester eggs laid or hatched. In the last 2 years I have had two houses but birds in only one house.

Wood Passed Forward — Keeping Bluebird Spirit Going

Ed and Carol Reid donated ten boxes of pre-cut wood for nest boxes to Gabe Stroud, Woodworking Instructor at John C. Campbell Folk School in the Far West Cherokee County. Gabe will be teaching a weekend course at the school in February. He shared that the wood would be a big help. Students will be able to practice their skills.

The wood had been donated to Ed Reid by the family of NCBS Johnson County member, Ethalene Allen, after she passed. Ed is no longer able to do woodworking due to a health condition. What a good feeling to know the Bluebirding Spirit can be Passed Forward. To enroll in Building Eastern Bluebird Nest Boxes in February contact folkschool.org or call Gabe at (828) 837 2775 ext. 140.



Ed Reid and Gabe Stroud

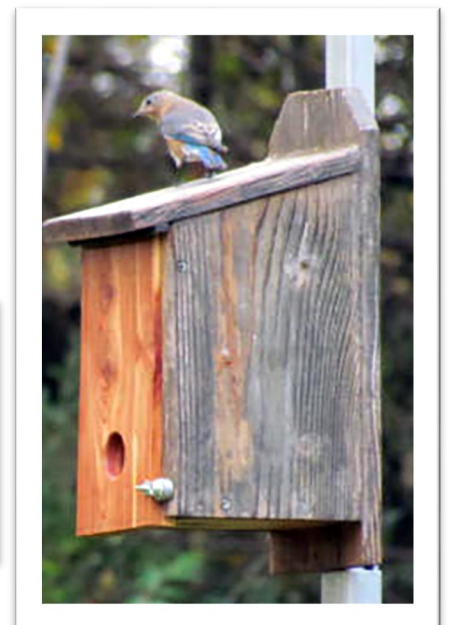
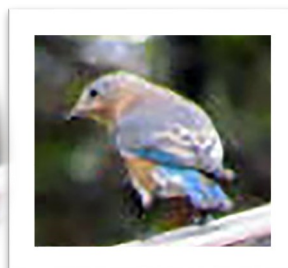
Carol Reid, NCBS Co-Vice President / Wake County Coordinator Team Member

Looking for a Warm Place to Sleep

November 30: These are photos taken yesterday of a renovated roost box that I had installed less than an hour before this was taken. Both the male and female bluebirds were checking out the box. I put the box up in the same place every winter. It gets only occasional use, judging by the presence of droppings.



Lynn B. Spees, Hickory, NC



EASTERN BLUEBIRDS MEET THE CHALLENGE

“We are vacationing at Tucker Lake in Benson, NC. A pair of bluebirds have built a nest and hatched two eggs in the 4”X4” bumper of our RV (fifth wheeler). The eggs hatched within the last 3 days. We are scheduled to leave at the end of the month and do not believe that the birds will have fledged by then.”



Do you know of anyone who would take on the challenge of hand raising the two young birds? Please contact us at your convenience.” That was the email that came in on July 22, of this year, 2022, signed by John and Julie Brashier. It was accompanied by two photos taken on July 16 of a pine needle nest with two eggs ensconced 18” back in the bumper. What would you have done in this situation?

According to my calculations, those nestlings would fledge about August 6th. That would place the nestlings, timewise, in a particularly critical time in their development—it would be in the “No-Check” period when we avoid opening the nest box under usual monitoring procedure to prevent premature fledging. Hand raising nestlings is not an easy task and is often unfruitful. The best chance for this clutch to survive is to at least be at or near its original nest site. We must do some “outside the box” thinking here!

I advised John to get a nest box and place it as close to the bumper nest site as possible. Then, to take the nest and its 3–4-day old nestlings in the nest and move them into the nest box where the parents could easily hear their calling and hopefully respond by moving over and continuing the nestlings’ feeding and care. I suggested where to get a nest box and sent him an attachment, in the email, of the conduit/rebar pole mounting system.

But another event presented a change in the birds’ situation when on July 29th the Brashiers noticed one of the nestlings had moved out of the nest and further into the bumper, where it expired. The other still appeared vital and in the nest. At this time, a third unhatched egg was found.

Not having a nest box yet, the Brashiers used a corrugated cardboard box 4’X 6”X 8” to make a temporary nest box with a 1 ½” opening. The nest was removed from the bumper with the nestling and placed in the cardboard box which had been sealed with clear packaging tape. The box was placed on a table 30” off the ground, 48” from the bumper nest site with the opening faced in the same direction as the bumper opening. Within several hours, the parents arrived and began feeding the nestling—in the cardboard box.



Two days later, on August 1, they transferred the nest and nestling to a cedar bluebird nest box placed next to the cardboard nest box. Again, within hours, the parents made the transition and began feeding the nestling. The Brashiers had to leave on August 2nd but, on August 16 they returned to find the nest box empty. We hope the bluebird made it and would assume this, since knowing the hatch date allowed prediction of the fledging date of August 6th.

While we will have to assume, and hope, that this one bluebird nestling fledged successfully, we do not know that. But we do know that we should congratulate this bluebird pair on their resilience and adaptability. Bluebirds are resourceful. Imagine two nest moves in a few days and both were accepted by the adults, and both worked.

If it were not for the alertness and resourcefulness of the folks who recognized the unusual circumstances involving this pair’s plight there would be one less bluebird in the world. Thank you, John and Julie Brashier. Where there is a will there is a way. Where there is life there is hope.

Forsyth County Bluebird Catering Lunch for Family



Pictures were taken at Reynolda Gardens area, Winston-Salem, NC. May 2021, on a glorious day. I have several more from this day. Male bluebird arriving with an insect, and feeding its youngsters.

Ray Fitzgerald



Great Attendance at Alamance County Bluebird Buffet



Thanks to Jon Forsyth of Gibsonville, who sent in these great snapshots. We are happy to hear the bluebirds in this area are well fed and looking so fine.

Let us know how your Blues are doing. We love hearing from all over the state and welcome your photos, articles, comments, and questions sent to editor@ncbluebird.org



ONLINE BLUEBIRD EDUCATION RESOURCES

NCBS is grateful to be a long-time affiliate of NABS (North American Bluebird Society). Their website, nbluebirdsociety.org, is chock full of helpful information about bluebirds. They have recently added a fantastic publication that is geared toward the education of a younger audience. Check out this wonderful online channel that has a wealth of history, tips, and beautiful bluebird pictures.

Per the website for NABS, nbluebirdsociety.org, the booklet titled *Get to Know Bluebirds: A Guide for Young Nature Lovers* was written by Myrna Pearman (retired biologist/nature writer/photographer) with help from bluebird expert Bet Zimmerman Smith and other members of the NABS Education Committee. Additionally, Ms. Smith is the webmaster of sialis.org, which is another excellent place to turn to for bluebird knowledge.

TRIANGLE AREA: EDUCATION & NETWORKING & FUN

Bluebird Society Booth @ Durham Summer Event: 2 New Members Aboard

Alexia Maneschi and Joye Stephenson enjoyed a great day at Duke Homestead Family Farm Animal Day on August 27, 2022. Some of the exhibits brought back memories of growing up on a tobacco farm in Johnston County. We welcomed two new members from Durham: Cindy Dorner and Jonathan Crisp. Jon (right photo below) was the winner of our bluebird nesting box.



Three More NCBS Members from Autumn Festival in Cary



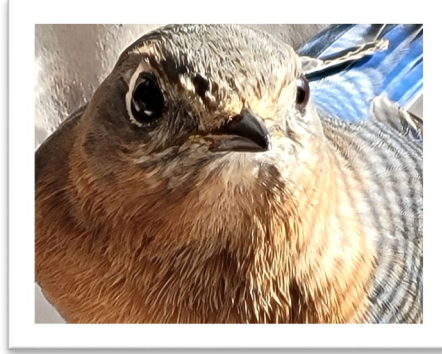
NC Bluebird Society was represented by Maggie Goldston and Joye Stephenson at the Good Hope Farm Harvest Festival in Cary on October 15, 2022. Maggie lives in Raleigh, is a dedicated bluebird landlord at home, has been a NCBS member for many years, and has attended our annual meetings. We are so happy she volunteered as an “event trainee” and is willing to help at future events!

There was something for everyone: farm machinery, educational vendors, artisans, music, and relaxing. We welcomed three new members from Cary: Roger Montague, Alan Grovesteen, and George Cenker (winner of the bluebird nesting box...photo bottom right).



Submitted by Joye Stephenson
Wake County Co-Coordinator

BLUEBIRD HEALTH & SAFETY



Vange LeMore, our Polk County Coordinator, is a federally permitted songbird rehabilitator. First two photos above are of a bluebird she had in rehabilitation — rescued by a 10 year old girl and brought to Vange. This bird was found in a deep puddle during a recent rain storm, soaked to the bone, and couldn't fly. The feathered friend was a bit thin upon arrival. With Vange's care & time, she gained weight & her strength & has been released. The top right photo is sign at at Harmon Field Tryon, NC trail, which was set up by Vange and her husband. See her data reported of the first year of this seven box trail— pages 6-7.

Winter Feeding Tips

Eastern Bluebirds are in the Thrush family, which are mainly insect eaters. During winter, when insects are scarce, bluebirds will eat berries & some seeds. Favorites are Dogwood, Holly, Juniper, Serviceberries, Sumac, Mountain Ash, Mistletoe, Firethorn, Poison Ivy, Multifloral rose, Bradford Pear. You can collect some of these in early fall so that in late winter you can put them out in tray feeders for the bluebirds.

You can freeze Dogwood berries in a freezer at just below 32 degrees; mixed in sawdust. They will last 6 months. Also, they will keep in a refrigerator for a few months in the coldest part of the fridge. Spread them out and put a paper towel between the layers. This is a favorite! You can mix the berries with soaked raisins and currants. Soaking will plump up the raisins.

Homemade suet. It can help keep weight on the Bluebirds in winter. There is a good article at sialis.org Please check it out! Lots of info there and recipes.

Mealworms. You can put out mealworms in winter. They will eat them frozen. They are expensive to buy if your birds gobble them down. An occasional treat will be appreciated. You can propagate your own mealworms if you want. It is a bit of a process though. The dehydrated mealworms are not as palatable to the Blues but you could mix them with the live and they may start to eat them. Even though Blues are Thrushes, do not feed them earthworms, or any spiny or stinging insects as they can make them sick. Grasshoppers and crickets are something they like.

Seeds. Blues will eat some seeds. Sunflower chips, Safflower, hulled chopped peanuts, chopped pecans.

Do not feed nuts that are salted. Keep in mind that bluebirds do not have seed cracking beaks. So chop chop! This can be added to a cornmeal peanut butter suet, along with berries.

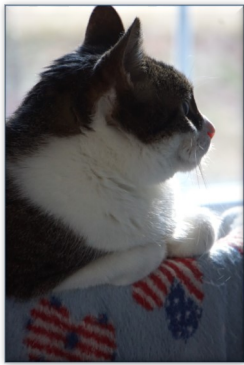
Water. Putting out water is important in winter. It is a bit of a chore but so worth it.

Clean!!! Please keep feeders clean. Especially after rain and snow fall. Mold and bacteria can spread disease.

Enjoy seeing Blues in winter!!!

Evangeline LaMore, Songbird Rehabilitator / County Coordinator NC Bluebird Society Polk County

OSCAR'S NEWS/PHOTOS



Hello from Oscar, your indoor Feline who watches birds from the windows. Bird sightings from my view recently include bluebirds and other NC native cavity-nesting songbirds supported by the NCBS (Carolina chickadees, nuthatches, titmice, and Carolina wrens).

Happy New Year!!!

Oscar, Knightdale
felinegreetings.com

We have been supplying Black Oil Sunflower Seeds per the advice of Ray Welch, Past NCBS President. The nuthatches have been arriving for snacks in droves, which is awesome! Per discussion with Vange LaMore, Polk County Coordinator,



providing hulled/chopped seeds will help attract the Blues, as their beaks can not crack open the shelled seeds. *Winter Feeding Tips* from Vange can be found on page 13. Ken Kernodle, Immediate Past NCBS President, informed that a wise tip he learned from

Ray is that bluebirds like crunchy peanut butter. We are learning & will keep implementing new strategies to help feed bluebirds & keep you posted. Some great online resources of bluebird info include nabluebirdsociety.org and sialis.org.



Photos/writing help from Oscar's caretaker, Glenda Ryan (your Newsletter Editor/Webmaster)

websitebloom.com

NCBS MEMBERSHIP

NCBS membership options: 1 year (\$15) or 3 years (\$40)

Memberships are effective when started until June 30 after a full year. Thereafter, memberships will run July 1— June 30. Questions: Alexia Maneschi at 919-387-9500

Gift membership from _____ to:

Name _____

Address _____

City, State & Zip _____

County _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

A member's email address will be used only for NCBS official business and considered private and confidential.

Yes, I'd like to help NCBS save costs by receiving the quarterly newsletter *Bluebird Notes* electronically (Email needed for this option)

Please complete this form and send it with your check payable to "NCBS" to:

**North Carolina Bluebird Society
 4600 Chandler Grove Court
 Raleigh, NC 27612**

Additional tax deductible donation \$ _____

New Membership

Renewal

Check Amount: \$ _____

Please indicate if you also have an interest in:

- Assisting with the annual meeting
- Serving as a NCBS Board Member
- Helping with the newsletter
- Conducting a bluebird workshop
- Contacting my local paper with news
- Volunteering to be a NCBS County Coordinator
- Monitoring a nestbox trail
- Other (please explain)

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SONGBIRD GREETINGS FROM DURHAM COUNTY



Elke Hoffmann of Bahama consistently submits wonderful snapshots of feathered friends from her area. The Tufted Titmouse (left) is taking a mealworm snack.

The twin Blues (bottom left) are 2022 offspring she reported seeing flitting from tree to tree as she took walks. Nice reminder of what we have to look forward to in the near future ... with the 2023 Spring & Summer arrivals of more mottled nestlings.

Isn't that adult bluebird at the bottom right striking a stunning pose? These images are motivation to spend the winter assisting with food and water for our feathered friends, and nest box maintenance to prepare shelter for the nests of the next generation of cavity-nesters.



Happy New Year 2023

For tips to help bluebirds, check out the following websites:

- nabluebirdsociety.org
- sialis.org
- ncbluebird.org

Happy Bluebirding !!!



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