

# BLUEBIRD NOTES

## WELCOME, NC CAVITY NESTING SONGBIRDS OF 2022

Greetings from Durham County: Brad Turnage of Durham provided the chickadee, bluebird, and titmouse photos below.



Carolina Chickadee

Eastern Bluebird

Tuffed Titmouse

How wonderful to be at Spring 2022. The new arrivals of baby bluebirds and other N.C. native cavity nesting songbirds is upon us. We are reporting the results of nest data from 2021 in this issue. We were delighted to learn that bluebirds as well as other species of cavity-nesters are benefiting from your effort.

Our survey data indicates that bluebirds, chickadees, wrens, titmice, and nuthatches, which are the songbirds we strive to help, flourished across the state last year. Providing, maintaining, and monitoring nest boxes for our little feathered friends is crucial to their survival. See pages 10-13 for reports from our nest box monitors, to include a chart for bluebird data and one for other species, as well as comments.

An exciting event on the horizon is a get-together at Sylvan Heights Bird Park in Scotland Neck. This is your chance to see a wide variety of birds of many colors, shapes, and sizes. We hope you can join us for this fun & educational Saturday on May 14. See more details and registration form on pages 4-5.

Hello from Buncombe County: The wrens and nuthatch photos below are courtesy of Russ Bauman of Biltmore Lake.



Carolina Wren Singing

Baby Carolina Wren

Brown Headed Nuthatch

# 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](http://www.ncbluebird.org)

**2021 Nest Box Reports ...** Your data is very appreciated. Bluebirds, chickadees, titmice, wrens, and nuthatches are birds that benefit from nest boxes. See pages 10-13 for reported results.

**Annual Meeting, May 14, 2022 ...** A fabulous event at Sylvan Heights Bird Park in Scotland Neck, NC. Your chance to see a wide variety of colorful feathered friends ... from South America, North America, Europe, Africa, Asia, & Australia. See [shwpark.com](http://shwpark.com) for more about the bird park. Questions: Kay Hindsley at [annualmeeting@ncbluebird.org](mailto:annualmeeting@ncbluebird.org) or 252-823-0737. Registration form/agenda on [ncbluebird.org](http://ncbluebird.org) and page 4.

**Tribute to Bluebird Lady of Durham ...** page 6

**Songbird of Focus: Tuffed Titmouse ...** pages 8-9

**Volunteer Opportunities ...** We have two Director slots open for members who are in the Coastal and Eastern Piedmont regions. Contact Co-Presidents if you are interested in serving on the Board. We have counties across the state that could use help. Contact Bill Zitek for County Coordinator opportunities.

**Upcoming Board Meeting ...** The next Board Meeting is scheduled for March 30, 2022 at 7 pm. All members are welcome. Please contact Marti for the Zoom link.

**Welcome to our new County Coordinators ...**  
Jean Sprague — representing both Gaston and Mecklenburg Counties and Dave Kilpatrick — representing Moore County. Jean and David join the many other County Coordinators throughout the state that are ready to help you with your bluebird questions and concerns.

## Bluebird Notes

### Vol. 37 Issue I

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Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter

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# CO-PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

When you receive this copy of *Bluebird Notes*, we will all be seeing life in our nest boxes. As long as I've been enjoying monitoring a nest box trail, it has always been the greatest thrill in the spring to approach a nest box and see a piece of grass sticking out of the bottom or side of the door. Activity? As time goes by ... a nest appears, then eggs, followed in a short time by nestlings, then an empty nest declaring a successful fledging. Just think ... 30 days from egg to the wide-wide world. A bluebird's success, the monitor's reward.

One of the most important parts of our mission is to provide knowledge about the Eastern Bluebird and other cavity nesting birds of North Carolina. Our County Coordinators stand by to assist members in their counties and many times, in surrounding counties. But, once a year, we have the opportunity to bring the membership, County Coordinators and Officers together to elect new officers for the coming years, share experiences, enjoy each other's company and gain new knowledge. We have planned a great Annual Meeting for May 14, 2022, at a premier venue, the Sylvan Heights Bird Park in Scotland Neck. This beautiful park houses over 2000 birds from around the world plus a bird breeding laboratory for endangered bird species. (See the registration form on page 4. More about the part at [shwpark.com](http://shwpark.com)). Our featured speaker, a colleague from the Pennsylvania Bluebird Society, Dean Rust, will share with us his extensive knowledge of bluebirds. Before touring the Bird Park we will also hear a talk about the valuable work done there on behalf of the many bird species on exhibit, each in their appropriate habitat. Make your plans to attend and meet your friends in the North Carolina Bluebird Society.

Our website, [ncbluebird.org](http://ncbluebird.org), and our Facebook (which has a link to access from the website) are great online channels to learn more about bluebirds and our organization. In addition to our quarterly newsletters, another print resource is a brochure called *Bluebird Tips*. It has been revised recently to offer more current information about the North Carolina Bluebird Society. Providing much information in a convenient form, *Bluebird Tips* is a great way to introduce others to our society and encourage new memberships. Along with the Newsletter, bookmarks, grants made available to potential nest box trails and studies of the Eastern Bluebird plus costs of production and mailing costs, have caused the Board to examine our dues structure. In order to not only keep up the quality of our services to our members but also, constantly up-grade our programs and information, we must raise our dues. As of July 1, 2022, the dues will be \$15 per year per person and \$40 for three years membership. A bargain at even this price. Our motto has to be: "Keep the Quality Up". I think you'll understand.

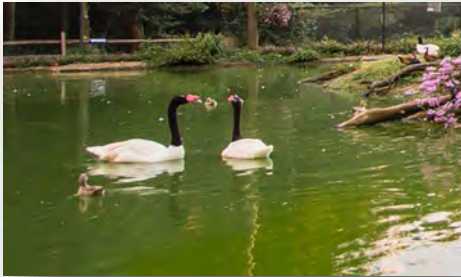
In my eighteen years of starting, monitoring and maintaining a 60 nest box trail, I have experienced-as have many of you-many wonderful moments. Besides being outside, moving from one meadow to the next, opening each nest box with excited anticipation of "what will I see?", I found the greatest satisfaction when sharing my stories with others. Even better than that, when I set up a short step ladder and a middle school student stepped up and looked into the nest box, their jaw dropped as they expressed delight and wonder at seeing those blue eggs or nestlings. Maybe they weren't "hooked" as budding biologists, but they were provided the opportunity to see something not many others could provide for them. Think about it—influencing a little mind—planting a seed. Can you do that? Not many people have this unique opportunity.

According to Bernie Daniels, NABS (North American Bluebird Society) President, the Eastern Bluebird population trend between 2000 and 2019 is down 0.65%. Not much, but, unfortunately, down. From 1980 to 2000 the Eastern Bluebird population grew at about 4.8% a year. This year Cornell's Nest Watch reports that 1,292 more nests were reported in the Southeastern US in 2020 than in 2019. It will be interesting to see if our NCBS nest reports are up also. Your efforts to observe and accurately report your observations both to our Bluebird Society and NestWatch produces data. I hope you were one of those who reported new nests. If so, thanks. If not, 2022 is a good year to start. See pages 10-13 for what was reported to us. Useful data is valuable and helps build knowledge. Be a builder.

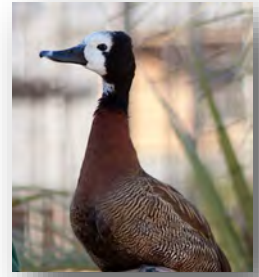
Bill Zitek, Co-President

***Bluebird Wisdom: A well-made nest box is a credit to its builder and a comfort to its occupant.***

# MAY 14, 2022: FIRST CONFERENCE IN THREE YEARS



**Sylvan Heights Bird Park**  
500 Sylvan Heights Park Way  
Scotland Neck, NC 27874  
**252-826-3186**  
**shwpark.com**



*Pictures are courtesy of Sylvan Heights Bird Park*

## **A FUN-FILLED DAY WITH EDUCATION, NATURE, & BIRDS GALORE**

8:45 – 9:45 Registration in Gold Leaf Room (Coffee & Danish, Meet & Greet, Welcome Film)  
9:30 – 10:00 Go to Toad Hall after registering to check out Silent Auction Viewing/Bidding, Door Prizes (each guest will receive 5 tickets for chances to win, additional tickets can be purchased)

### **Choices of where to spend your time. You can visit the Landing Zone from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, with your preference of options per timeline below:**

- 10:00 – 11:00 Welcome, Introductions, Annual Business Meeting
- 11:00 – 12:00 Speaker – Dr. Dean C. Rust, President of the Pennsylvania Bluebird Society
- 12:00 – 12:45 Lunch – Catered by Duck Landing Café. Website: [ducklandingcafe.com](http://ducklandingcafe.com)  
Menu includes BBQ Pork with delicious sides and desserts
- 12:45 – 1:00 Information Sharing, Silent Auction Bidding
- 1:00 – 1:30 Speaker – Kat Lewandowski, Lead Keeper at Sylvan Heights Bird Park
- 1:30 – 5:00 Tour of Sylvan Heights Bird Park (park is open until 5:00)
- 1:30 Announcement of Door Prizes and Silent Auction Winners
- 3:30 Prizes and Silent Auction Items must be picked up by 3:30
- 4:00 Toad Hall (meeting location) closes @ 4 o'clock
- 5:00 Sylvan Heights Bird Park closes @ 5 o'clock

**You will leave with wonderful memories & stories to keep. A day of treasure!!!**

**TO REGISTER:** Complete and return this form with check payable to NCBS by May 2, 2022 to Charles Brewer, NCBS Treasurer, 3900 Bamburgh Lane, Apex, NC 27539

Attendee #1 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone/Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Attendee #2 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone/Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Attendee #3 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone/Email \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of Registration(s) – \$40 per person (*Park Entrance Fee and Saturday lunch included*)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Total Payment Amount Enclosed

Door prize or silent auction item to donate? If so, notify Kay Hindsley at [kchind@embarqmail.com](mailto:kchind@embarqmail.com) or describe it here: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## NEST BOX TIPS FROM PENNSYLVANIA

Dr. Dean C. Rust, President of The Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania since 2014, will be a guest speaker at our May 14 meeting. Born and raised in Eaton, OH, Dr. Rust moved to Lancaster, PA in 1972. He currently resides in East Lampeter Township near the Lancaster Country Club. He and his wife, Shirley M. Royer-Rust, have 4 children: Tammy, DeeDee, Shaun and Laura, 11 grandchildren and 1 great grandchild

Dr. Rust monitors 20+ Bluebird Trails in Lancaster, York, Dauphin and Chester County (approximately 450 nest boxes ). He reached a lifetime goal of 1,000 FLEDGED Blues in 2021 with 1,158 Bluebirds FLEDGED. His hobbies include gardening, woodworking and watching all songbirds & waterfowl. He authored a book in 2016: *The Beloved and Charismatic Bluebird*. Learn more at his personal website: [bluebirdconservation.com](http://bluebirdconservation.com)

Dr. Rust shared with us *Considerations for Nest Box Site Selection* from his President's Message in the Pennsylvania Bluebird Society's 2022 Spring Newsletter. A portion of his words are shown below:

Bluebirds love open areas – parks, golf courses, schools, churches, large lawns, orchards, “right-of-ways” along interstates, country roads, water retention basins (both residential and commercial), cemeteries, small farms, horse farms and pastures all provide excellent habitat to attract our beloved Eastern Bluebirds. Even your own private backyard might just be the perfect home setting for a pair of Blues.

I would be the first to admit that I am not a guru or wizard in selecting amazingly productive locations for Bluebird nest boxes. I have picked locations that I thought were stellar and they turned out zero nests over a 5 year period. And alternatively, I have utilized what I thought were poor locations, and they turned out to be superb in producing Bluebird nests. What is the common thread running through all successful Bluebird locations?

“Location, Location, Location” is a pillar of real estate decision making as to where to live or build. I think it should enter the equation for Bluebird site selections as well and must be considered as a prime factor. It is NOT so much the model of nest box you choose but where you place it.

Some basic guidelines:

1. install your box on smooth metal 3/4” conduit about 5’ high
2. choose the most open & sunny area of your yard
3. do not install on a tree or wood split-rail fence – this invites predators!!
4. Bluebirds like to fly to and from their box in all directions (360 degrees)
5. utility lines overhead definitely increase the quality of a site
6. position the box entrance to the south-east
7. choose a location away from encroaching deciduous shrubs and vines
8. if your house is on a small lot (1/4 acre), one box is enough
9. add baffle for protection from climbing predators (raccoons & rat snakes)
10. if there are NO perching points nearby, add a green garden stake 12’ away
11. monitor your box weekly and keep it absolutely vertical
12. Bluebirds must have access to insects they can see from a perch or by hovering
13. space your nest boxes 100 yards apart (300’)
14. select open or semi-open grassland habitat with no understory

Eastern Bluebirds are typically found in open habitats with scattered trees and shrubs. Such habitats provide good foraging for bluebirds, who usually capture their insect prey on the ground. The trees and shrubs provide good hunting perches and cavities that can be used for nesting during the breeding season and for roosting during the nonbreeding season. Bluebirds can be less discriminating during the nonbreeding season, when the presence of a nearby cavity is not essential. They are sometimes found in more wooded habitats during winter. These areas may provide fruits, nuts, & berries and also provide greater protection from the elements (wind, rain and deep snow).



# DURHAM MASTER GARDNER/BLUEBIRD LADY LEGACY

## A Tribute to a Lover of Bluebirds: The Agnes Bordeaux Memorial Bluebird Trail

Agnes Bordeaux, a Master Gardner and longtime Durham resident, long ago fell in love with bluebirds for the color and activity they added to her yard. It all started when a neighbor presented Agnes with a bluebird box as a welcome gift at Hyco Lake, which began many seasons of enjoyment watching bluebird nestings at this location.

Soon Agnes had researched everything about bluebirds and was interested in broadening her support. Her husband, Tom Bordeaux, Sr., then built three boxes for placement in the area around their home on the 18th fairway of Croasdaile Country Club golf course. The beginnings of the bluebird trail were in place! Agnes loved playing golf and was a founding member of the Croasdaile Garden Club. It was only a matter of time, thanks to a collaboration between Agnes and Charles Sheffield, the course superintendent in those years, before ten additional bluebird boxes were placed in other locations on and around the golf course.



Agnes and members of the Garden Club gladly took on the important duties of cleaning and monitoring the boxes and recording results each season. As time passed and Agnes was no longer able to get out herself, garden club members would send her results and pictures from their rounds in checking the boxes. As noted by her daughter, Randi Edmiston of Charlotte, even in her final years of life, Agnes's spirits were always lifted when she sat on the back porch waiting for the bluebirds to come to her boxes and nest.

After her recent passing, son Tom Bordeaux of Durham found many books and newspaper articles she had saved regarding history, proper box placement, and nest box dimensions. One book titled *The Bluebird Book*, by Donald and Lillian Stokes, a complete guide to attracting bluebirds, was given to Agnes by her sister Florence as a birthday gift dated April 1993. Not surprisingly, both Tom & Randi today have bluebird boxes in each of their yards and have come to enjoy them as did their mother.



Not long after Agnes passed away, Susan Antle, a fellow Croasdaile golfer and Garden Club member, put forth the proposal that the current array of thirteen boxes be named in memory of Agnes. All of the principals of the country club and garden club approved the proposed tribute to Agnes. With the support of many, Susan, along with current course superintendent Andy McMahan, planned and implemented the commemorative marker for the Agnes Bordeaux Memorial Bluebird Trail. A fitting tribute to a lover of bluebirds.



Peter Chauncey, Durham County Coordinator

## CAVITY-NESTER SONGBIRDS FROM DURHAM

### Bluebirds and Carolina Chickadees Are Very Welcome Sight in Bahama

Elke Hoffmann, Bahama, has been a bluebirder for about 11 years. See story in Spring 2021 *Bluebird Notes* on how she became hooked after her first bluebird sightings. Bluebird nest boxes, bluebird monitoring, and bluebird photographing have been a part of her life since the first Blue stole her heart. You have likely seen some of her wonderful pictures, as they have appeared in countless newsletters. Many have graced our cover pages. A couple of Blue images snapped by Elke that will surely brighten your day are shown below.



In addition to bluebirds, another songbird supported by the mission of NCBS has been visiting Elke's yard and nest boxes ... the Carolina Chickadee. She shared a splendid snapshot (left photo below) taken in October of 2021 with the words "They are so cute and so fast. Had to click quick to get this one." She did a good job, as this photo captures the beauty of this songbird so well.

Elke made the most of another great photo opportunity this January of a Carolina Chickadee munching on peanuts. Elke advises "Chickadee's are welcome in our yard anytime. Love watching them! Their speed coming to the feeder to get one or two seeds and they're gone. One of the BB nest boxes is occupied by Chickadees. I don't have a problem with that at all."





## HIGHLIGHTED CAVITY-NESTER: TUFFED TITOUSE

This edition we are highlighting the Tufted Titmouse (*Baeolophus bicolor*), which is related to the chickadee and will occasionally nest in our bluebird boxes. If you find a cup-shaped nest made of dead leaves, moss, and/or strips of bark and lined with fur, you might have a titmouse nesting in your box. Note: Carolina Wrens can make a similar-looking nest but the wren's nest is usually dome shaped. Titmouse eggs look like chickadee eggs but are a little larger. The incubation period for the titmouse is 12-13 days and the nestling period is 15-16 days. So, the titmouse nesting cycle is just a little shorter than that of our bluebird. Titmice usually nest only once a year in the spring (April in our area). They lay between 4 and 9 eggs, one day apart.

The Tufted Titmouse is a common, year-round resident of North Carolina, but usually not found above elevations of 2,000 feet. The titmouse prefers deciduous forests but can live in mixed pine and deciduous woods as well as in suburban backyards. Since it is a cavity nester, it needs a hole in a tree created by woodpeckers (titmice don't have the beaks to create their own nest cavities), or a nest box if it is to breed and raise young. According to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology (NestWatch), Tufted Titmice can use a box with an entrance hole that is 1 and ¼ inches in diameter. A chickadee box with an entrance hole of 1 and 1/8 inches would be too small.

I've only seen titmice in bluebird boxes with the standard 1 and 1/2 inch hole. Tufted Titmouse populations are stable. This species is actually expanding its range further north perhaps due to climate change and the proliferation of backyard feeders. These little songbirds are frequent visitors to bird feeders and they especially like sunflower seeds and peanuts.

Researchers who work with titmice have discovered that if given a choice of different sizes of seed, the titmouse usually picks the largest seed. It holds the seed with its feet, cracks it open with its beak, and then either eats the seed or caches it in a nearby tree. Then it's back to the feeder for another! In places where there are no bird feeders, the titmice depend on beech nuts, small acorns and a wide variety of insects and spiders. Of course, they feed their young caterpillars and other insects just like bluebirds do.

Alexia Maneschi (Board Member / Your Recording Chair) got lucky one year and had a pair of Tufted Titmice nesting in her bluebird box — your standard SECU box (Eastern Bluebird Rescue Box). She had the box equipped with an internal camera. She provided some awesome visual aides to supplement this article, from inside and outside the nest box. The left photo captures Mama titmouse peeking out of her nest box. The center images are a nest of titmice eggs & young waiting on food. The right picture of the baby titmouse is simply adorable. Thanks, Alexia, for sharing helpful pictures and cuteness overload.





I've only worked with two Tufted Titmice nests through the years; one nest was at the old Wil-Mar Golf Course. A titmouse had made her nest in one of Bill Satterwhite's old boxes. Since Bill had been unable to check his boxes there for some years, the box was falling apart and leaning over when I found it. I propped it up with stakes and held the sides together with bungee cords and duct tape. Mrs. Titmouse didn't seem to care about the "curb appeal." I suspect the bluebirds had already beaten her to the good boxes and this old box was all she had. She stuffed the box full of dead leaves, moss and fur, so much so that I could never see exactly how many young she had in there. She was very shy and usually disappeared as soon as I approached the box. Happily, several of the nestlings appeared to have fledged safely.

Tufted Titmice pairs stay together all year and sometimes through more than one breeding cycle. During the winter, you might notice a pair at your feeders. Sometimes a few of their young of the year spend the winter with them and occasionally help with feeding the next year's brood. One of the saddest things I have seen is a titmouse trying to coax its dead mate out of the road. I came upon the pair as I was driving down a road not far from my home. I stopped my car and moved the dead titmouse to the side of the road to insure that its mate would not also get hit. Later, I learned that titmice take advantage of acorns that have been squashed in the road by cars. Titmice like large nuts, but acorns can have shells that are too tough for them to crack with their beaks. So, they take advantage of cracked nuts in the road. This is what I think the titmice were doing when one of them was hit by a car. People don't realize that when a bird is focused on a bug or a seed in the road, it may not see the car barreling down on it. When I see birds flying in or near the road, I automatically slow down. I wish other drivers would do the same.

Titmice have an energetic, almost comical foraging style. They flit through the trees, hang upside down from branches and even climb on window screens to capture spiders. They make a variety of calls and like to sing "Peter, Peter, Peter" especially during the breeding season. If you hear their whiny "Seet" call, they are probably complaining about a predator in the area. Researchers have found that the titmice vary their calls to announce different kinds of predators. Titmice are often the first songbird to announce a predator and actually lead the others in mobbing the predator. They are feisty little birds!

A titmouse played a joke on me one day. Actually, it didn't do this on purpose, but it sure fooled me. I had seen various cavity nesters, including titmice, investigating one of the bird boxes in my backyard. Several days later as I was making my morning coffee, I looked out and saw a snake draped over the top of this bird box. What!? I dashed out the door in my pajamas and slippers to rescue the birds from the snake. How could that snake have gotten on the box? I had a huge predator guard on the pole and there were no trees near this box. As I got close to the box, I realized that it was not a snake, but rather, a large snake skin lying across the top of the box. I started to laugh when I remembered that Tufted Titmice, like Great-crested Flycatchers, are famous for using snake skins as nesting material. Maybe this skin was too long and so the bird left it on top of the box? I can only imagine what the bird looked like flying with a five-foot-long snake skin trailing behind it like the tail of a kite.

If you want a really good laugh, go to YouTube and put "titmouse pulling fur" into the search bar. You will find dozens of videos of female titmice pulling fur out of various living mammals to use in their nests. The videos I watched showed the titmice pulling beakfuls of fur or hair from annoyed raccoons, cats, dogs, foxes, and even a human. I had always thought that the titmice retrieved shed hair or fur, or pulled it out of a dead mammal. But these "plucky" little birds actually pluck hair from living animals. So, another good reason to wear a hat when you go bird watching! Have fun watching the Tufted Titmice that live near you. Please share your stories of titmice and other cavity nesters with us!

Marti Kane President Team, Rolesville

# 2021 NEST BOX REPORT: BLUEBIRD DATA

County	Name(s), Trail, Town – NORTH CAROLINA	Boxes	Eggs	Hatched	Fledged
Asheville	Gene Moore, Hickory	2	9	5	5
Beaufort	Bob & Doris Emer	3	14	10	10
Beaufort	Eileen Posage	3	8	8	8
Brunswick	Lloyd Young, Winding River Plantation Trail, Bolivia	67	250	220	202
Brunswick	Nancy Schiffman	14	46	46	46
Catawba	Lynn B. Spees, Hickory	25	80	68	57
Catawba	Bob Warmuth, Hickory	66	693	508	487
Chatham	Karen & Gus Kalias, Chapel Hill	54	317		248
Cherokee	Mark Graham, Andrews	14	49	45	39
Cherokee	Historic Walker Inn, Andrews	5	16	12	8
Cherokee	Jan Olson, Andrews	3	12	12	12
Craven	Kathy & Clay Hodge, New Bern	58	258	134	134
Davidson	Jim Kelley, The Springs at High Rock	50	447	368	327
Durham	Elke Hoffman, Bahama	4	19	18	18
Durham	Cam Blass, Chapel Hill	1	14	10	10
Durham	Susan Antle, Croasdaile Country Club, Durham	13	130	125	123
Durham	Ken Kernodle, Durham	40	242	220	207
Durham	Don Wells, Durham	10	83	73	65
Forsyth	Rhett Johnson, Tanglewood Park, Clemmons, NC	42	208	198	198
Forsyth	Kay Cameron, Reynolds Gardens, Winston-Salem	15	54	43	38
Forsyth	Kay Cameron, Whitaker Park, Winston-Salem	3	12	12	12
Forsyth	Kay Cameron, Winston-Salem	2	4	0	0
Gaston	Jeane Sprague, Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden, Beldioux	33	133	94	90
Guilford	April Pilhom, Brown's Summit	1	14	13	13
Guilford	Tina Dolan, Greensboro	8	53	53	53
Guilford	Jim Burke, High Point	61	242	198	187
Harnett	Lisa Spainhour, Barbara Taylor, Keith Hills Country Club	40	322	244	242
Henderson	Nick Ponzio, Hendersonville	1			1
Johnston	Sandra White, Clayton	1	15	14	14
Johnston	Patricia Rogers, Four Oaks	7	72	52	46
Macon	George Kaye	111	150	109	89
Mecklenburg	Christina Powell, Charlotte	1	2	1	1
Montgomery	Stuart Shelton, Mt. Gilead	2	13	10	10
Moore	Bill Good, Foxfire Golf Course, Foxfire	70	441	270	256
Moore	Ed Emery, Beacon Ridge Golf Course, West End	25	201	160	160
New Hanover	George Wesoloski, Landfall Community Center, Wilmington	103	746	674	658
Orange	Peter Chauncey, Chapel Hill	8	33	21	19
Pitt	Shawn Jarvis, Grifton	10	81	74	74
Randolph	Chuck Bliss, Asheboro	2	42	42	42
Wake	Sally Tiller, Lochmere Golf Course, Cary	21	159	93	85
Wake	Carol Reid, Kari Gould, Hillandale Lane Trail, Garner	17	85	66	66
Wake	Diane W. Mitchell, Lake Benson Park, Garner	10	99	73	67
Wake	Rick Peifer, Anne Runyan, Donna Whitaker, White Deer Park, Garner	8	30	28	28
Wake	Glenda & Oscar Ryan, Knightdale	1	5	0	0
Wake	Martha Kane, Wil-Mar Golf Course, Knightdale	15	114	91	70
Wake	Martha Kane, Durant Nature Park, Raleigh	14	72	61	45
Wake	Robin Baumgart, Cindy Hamrick, Historic Oak View Park, Raleigh	12	94	74	74
Wake	Suzy Spencer, Historic Oakwood Cemetary, Raleigh	15	84	40	27
Wake	Martha Kane, Horeshoe Farm Nature Park, Raleigh	13	50	43	35
Wake	Suzy Spencer, Mordecai Historical Park, Raleigh	8	23	19	15
Wake	Sue & Jim Crawford, Wake Forest	4	17	17	17
Wake	Martha Kane, Turnipseed Nature Park, Wendell	10	38	31	27
TOTALS ----->>>		1,126	6,395	4,800	4,708
County	Name(s), Trail, Town – VIRGINIA	Boxes	Eggs	Hatched	Fledged
Brunswick	William Watson, Lake Gaston Golf Course, Gasburg	30	265	128	87

First Egg: Jim Burke (Guilford County) – March 1. Last Fedgling: Jim Kelley (Davidson County) – August 31.

# 2021 NEST BOX REPORT: OTHER SPECIES DATA

County	Name(s), Trail, Town – NORTH CAROLINA	Eggs	Hatched	Fledged	Other Species
Beaufort	Bob & Doris Emer	6	0	0	Pink (unknown)
		2	0	0	Warbler
Brunswick	Nancy Schiffman	5	5	5	Nuthatch
Catawba	Bob Warmuth, Lake Hickory Country Club	16	14	14	Chickadee
Catawba	Gene Moore, Hickory	5	5	5	
Catawba	Lynn B. Spees, Hickory	13	10	5	Brown Headed Nuthatch
		19	11	11	Carolina Chickadee
		3	3	0	House Sparrow
		8	0	0	House Wren
Cherokee	Historic Walker Inn, Andrews	18	12	8	Carolina Wren
		10	8	7	Tree Swallow
Cherokee	Mark Graham, Andrews	31	31	31	
Craven	Kathy & Clay Hodge, New Bern	11	11	11	
Davidson	Jim Kelley, The Springs at High Rock	26	25	25	
Durham	Ken Kernodle, Durham	22	19	17	Carolina Chickadee
		15	15	15	House Wren
Forsyth	Rhett Johnson, Tanglewood Park, Clemmons	11	11	11	
Forsyth	Kay Cameron, Reynolds Gardens, Winston-Salem	9	9	9	Carolina Chickadee
		4	4	4	Tree Swallow
Forsyth	Kay Cameron, Whitaker Park, Winston-Salem	4	0	0	Carolina Wren
Gaston	Jeane Sprague, Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden, Beldioux	22	22	21	Carolina Chickadee
		5	5	5	Tree Swallow
Guilford	Jim Burke, High Point	42	34	34	Chickadee
		4	0	0	House Sparrow
		40	26	25	Tree Swallow
Guilford	Tina Dolan, Greensboro	5	5	5	Chickadee
Harnett	Lisa Spainhour, Barbara Taylor, Keith Hills Country Club	5	5	5	Chickadee
Johnston	Patricia Rogers, Four Oaks	4	4	4	Brown Headed Nuthatch
		5	4	4	Tufted Titmouse
Macon	George Kaye	88	65	52	Carolina Chickadee
		21		11	House Wren
		4			House Sparrow
		33	24	19	Tree Swallow
Mecklenburg	Christina Powell, Charlotte	6	6	5	Carolina Wren
Moore	Bill Good, Foxfire Golf Course, Foxfire	75	46	41	
Moore	Ed Emery, Beacon Ridge Garden Club, West End	9	9	9	Brown Headed Nuthatch
New Hanover	George Wesoloski, Landfall Community Center, Wilmington			5	Carolina Wren
				10	Chickadee
Orange	Peter Chauncey, Chapel Hill	12	12	12	
Wake	Sally Tiller, Lochmere Garden Club, Cary	5	4	4	Carolina Chickadee
		12	3	0	Brown Headed Nuthatch
Wake	Carol Reid, Kari Gould, Hillandale Lane Trail, Garner	21	21	21	Carolina Chickadee
		6	6	6	Tufted Titmouse
Wake	Rick Peifer, Anne Runyan, Donna Whitaker, White Deer Park, Garner	6	6	5	Brown Headed Nuthatch
		5	5	5	Tree Swallow
Wake	Martha Kane, Wil-Mar Golf Course, Knightdale	9	8	3	Carolina Chickadee
		4	4	4	Carolina Wren
Wake	Glenda & Oscar Ryan, Knightdale	5	5	5	Chickadee
		7	7	7	House Wren
		7	3	3	Brown Headed Nuthatch
Wake	Martha Kane, Durant Nature Park, Raleigh	12	0	0	Carolina Chickadee
		32	24	6	House Wren
		5	5	5	Tree Swallow
Wake	Robin Baumgart, Cindy Hamrick, Historic Oak View Park, Raleigh	20	13	13	House Wren
Wake	Suzy Spencer, Historic Oakwood Cemetery, Raleigh	4	0	0	Tree Swallow
		11	10	8	Carolina Chickadee
Wake	Suzy Spencer, Mordecai Historical Park, Raleigh	21	1	1	House Sparrow
		6	6	6	Carolina Chickadee
		5	5	5	Brown Headed Nuthatch
Wake	Martha Kane, Horseshoe Farm Nature Park, Raleigh	10	6	3	Carolina Wren
		5	5	5	Carolina Chickadee
		5	0	0	Tufted Titmouse
Wake	Martha Kane, Turnipseed Nature Park, Wendell	5	5	5	Carolina Chickadee
County	Name(s), Trail, Town – VIRGINIA	Eggs	Hatched	Fledged	Other Species
Brunswick	William Watson, Lake Gaston Golf Course, Gaston	31	12	12	



## 2021 NEST DATA REPORT: MONITOR COMMENTS

**Bob & Doris Emer (Beaufort):** The six warbler eggs didn't hatch. In our 2nd BB nest, only 1 hatched and fledged.

**Bob Warmuth (Catawba):** 2021 was an unusual year in that we had 146 more eggs laid but fewer birds hatched. All of our boxes predator protection. There have been some golf course issues that were the result of severe weather problems. We did not see the usual number of swallows.

**Patty Cook, Historic Walker Inn (Cherokee):** We have 3 bluebird houses in open areas. Two houses have a few trees and shrubs. That is where we get Carolina wrens and tree swallows. In January we will move those two houses and try not to get too close to trees or other B.B. houses.

**Jim Kelley (Davidson):** This is the second full season for our trail. Our # of fledglings is down from 2020 total of 374. There were more eggs abandoned or damaged by predators. Also, fewer birds had 3 broods.

**Rhett Johnson, Tanglewood Park (Forsyth):** Good bird to box ratio-4.9(each box produced an average of 4.9 fledglings). Several unproductive boxes to relocate as usual.

**Jeane Sprague, Daniel Stowe Botanical Gardens (Gaston):** DSGB established this bluebird trail in 2008 with 33 boxes that start at the Garden's entrance on 6500 S. New Hope Road, Belmont, NC. Boxes follow the the road to the visitors center, then continue along fields next to the gardens. This is the first year we have submitted a report to the NCBS.

**Jim Burke (Guilford):** No Brown-headed nuthatches nested even though 1.25" entry portals were added to 7 boxes near pine trees. 12 nuthatches fledged in 2020, and 21 in 2019. Tree swallows increased from 8 in 2019, 11 in 2020, to 25 in 2021. Bluebirds increased from 137 in 2019, 163 in 2020, to 187 in 2021. Hot July temps seem to have shortened the nesting season.

**Lisa T. Spainhour and Barbara Taylor, Keith Hills Country Club (Harnett):** The 2021 Buies Creek Garden Club Birdwatch on the Nancy Blair Eliason Bluebird Trail along the Keith Hills Golf Course experienced another successful year. The club members monitoring the 40 boxes were Barbara Taylor and Lisa Spainhour.

**George Kaye (Macon):** I thank several fellow birders in Macon County who helped me with monitoring, box repair, funding and posting my annual internet reports. I unfortunately encountered 2 nest boxes in March of 2021 with dead nestlings. I believe the cold weather prevented the mothers from feeding the nestlings and themselves.

**Christina Powell (Mecklenburg):** So I had three nest boxes set up per guidelines. Chickadees took over one box, so I put on a reducer. 5 out of the 6 fledglings were healthy. No BBs took up residence in the other two boxes. However bbs laid two eggs in my decorative Lazy Hill Box. I didn't even think to close off the openings since this box was in my front yard. One fledgling did well.

**Ed Emery (Moore):** Out of 25 boxes 23 had Bluebirds. 1 remained empty all summer, and one had a brown-headed nuthatch.

**Shawn Jarvis (Pitt):** This is the lowest number of eggs and fledglings in 10 years. We don't know where the bluebirds have gone. We did plant pine trees on our farm and they of course are almost grown. Don't know if that is what caused a drop in the numbers? Would they choose the "woods" over a "house"? I would sure appreciate some guidance on this. In 2019=93. In 2020=97

**Chuck Bliss (Randolph):** I have a box in my front and back yards approximately 250 yards apart. The sites are broken by my house. Each box had 3 nestings. 5, 5, 4 eggs laid. All fledged.

**Anne Runyan, Donna Whitaker and Rick Peifer (Wake):** Good season in spite of hot, dry weather. One box which we had relocated was not productive. Chickadee began a nest, but the nest was taken over by bumble bees. We put in a new cup, but no birds used this box.

**Robin Baumgart and Cindy Hamrick, Historic Oak View County Park (Wake):** Most boxes (9) had 2 broods. One box had 3 broods. Two boxes had only one brood - one of the boxes had swallows. The other box had chickadees checking it out early in the season but they didn't stay. Bluebirds finally nested there in June.

**Suzy Spencer, Historic Oakwood Cemetery (Wake):** No house sparrow issues at this site. Many bluebird eggs were infertile, however they were predated (probably avian predator). Tree swallow eggs had tiny specks (not pure white) but were identified by bird expert John Gerwin at the NC Museum of Natural Sciences, Raleigh. The eggs did not hatch (parents were not observed). Number of hatches and fledges of house wrens unknown. If a house wren lays eggs I don't check the progress because it disturbs the nest too much. In one case however, I saw that all 7 eggs had disappeared, so I subtracted 7 from the total possible hatch and fledge.

**Suzy Spencer, Mordecai Park (Wake):** When house sparrows' eggs were laid, they were replaced with wooden eggs, which delayed the house sparrows restarting the nest. In two cases, more eggs were laid in the same nest with the wooden eggs after a couple of weeks. Unfortunately, I missed taking out all of the eggs and left one in, which hatched. The wooden egg swap works well for me to manage house sparrows because I still have empty boxes for the bluebirds to use.

**Martha Kane, Durant Nature Preserve (Wake):** This year, the House Wrens arrived in early April and destroyed all of the Carolina Chickadee eggs and nesting attempts. The Eastern Bluebirds were more successful in thwarting the House Wrens but still lost some eggs to the wrens. The House Wren boxes were heavily predated by rat snakes. I have recommended that the stove pipe baffles be replaced with the PVC guards (5 feet tall and 4 inches in diameter).

**Martha Kane, Horseshoe Farm Nature Preserve (Wake):** This year old boxes and predator guards were replaced. Last year we had a lot of rat snake predation on wooden posts with cone baffles. This year, we had no predation in the boxes on poles with the 5ft tall, 4in diameter PVC predator guards. We observed that some of the bluebird eggs laid in late March did not hatch; we think this was because of the below freezing temperatures at that time.

**Martha Kane, Turnipseed Nature Park (Wake):** This was the 1st nesting season at Turnipseed Nature Preserve. There have been several fields at the preserve that are managed via mowing and prescribed burns. Boxes were installed at the edges of these field areas. We think we had 4 to 5 pairs of bluebirds that used our boxes this year. We hope to see more use next year. We moved several boxes towards the end of the season to areas we thought the bluebirds might prefer.

**Martha Kane, Wil-Mar Golf Course (Wake):** We had a wonderful year the Eastern Bluebirds with 70 or more chicks fledging from the boxes. Rat snake predation did occur but at a much lower level than with the old boxes and predator guards. The golf course was sold this fall, so we have removed all of the boxes. The golf course will be logged and converted into a high density housing development. The surrounding habitat will no longer support bluebirds or other cavity nesters. This is very sad as this bluebird trail has been in operation for over 25 years (Bill Satterwhite set up the original trail).

**Sally Tiller, Lochmere Golf Course (Wake):** As you can see, there is a great disparity between the number of eggs laid this season and those that fledged. The reason is that, for the first time in my 17 years of monitoring this trail, most of my boxes were repeatedly vandalized in April and May. Boxes were opened, and active nests were flung to the ground or stuffed with stones or sticks. Entrance holes were jammed. Many eggs and nestlings thus were destroyed. Finally, in early June, the disturbed person(s) responsible for this behavior-a federal crime (Migratory Bird Treaty Act)-stopped. While our undeterred Bluebirds kept returning and rebuilding, the Brown-headed Nuthatch pairs gave up.

**Diane W. Mitchell, Lake Benson Park (Wake):** First 2 eggs laid both on the same day (4/1/21)-1 in box #6 and 1 in box #10. Box #10 was our most productive box-12 eggs laid, 12 fledged. We tried two of the "Birds Choice" nesting boxes when Credit Union were not available in 2020, with very limited success. We plan to replace with Credit Union boxes next season.

**Glenda & Oscar Ryan, Knightdale (Wake):** First nest box experience documented in NC Bluebird Society newsletters from viewpoint of Oscar, a kitty, observing out the windows. Published in the Summer and Fall 2021 editions. Bluebirds did not make it due to invasion that destroyed eggs by House Wren.

Much thanks to everyone who participated in nest box monitoring / reporting. Your effort is helping our cavity-nesters!!!

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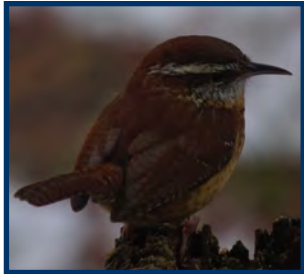
# OSCAR'S WINDOW VIEW



I have seen a lot of different types of songbirds already in 2022. Glenda was home right much due to inclement weather and Covid isolation, so she was able to photo some of the winged creature activity in our back yard. I have enjoyed watching from the windows, especially the parade of many titmice and chickadees.



There have been quite a few of these birds. I have also seen nuthatches, wrens, and several bluebirds. NCBS website, [ncbluebird.org](http://ncbluebird.org), and [nbluebirdsociety.org](http://nbluebirdsociety.org), NABS (North American Bluebird Society) website, can help you help bluebirds and other songbirds



I am keeping notes to report to you in the Summer edition of any birds moving into my nestbox. Have you been monitoring your nest box? If not, 2022 is a good year to start. If I can monitor, so can you.

Oscar, Your Bird-Friendly Feline, Knightdale

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- \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteering to be a NCBS County Coordinator
- \_\_\_\_\_ Monitoring a nestbox trail
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please explain)

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## **ENJOY YOUR SPRING & SONGBIRD VISITORS IN 22**

May you be blessed with many bluebird sights and sounds in 2022. The upcoming months are prime time to see eggs, babies, and little ones take flight. Their visits bring so much beauty, hope, and cheer. We hope this Spring edition brought you joy and inspiration. Happy Bird Watching in 2022!

Check out our website, [ncbluebird.org](http://ncbluebird.org), for tips to help the bluebird and other cavity nesting songbirds native to North Carolina. Another great resource for bluebird/songbird knowledge is [nbluebirdsociety.org](http://nbluebirdsociety.org), website for NABS (North American Bluebird Society). Direct questions to a representative in your county, a nearby county, or Co-President, Bill Zitek.

**Bluebird Greetings from Henderson County:** Photos below are courtesy of Nick Ponzio of Hendersonville. Nick submitted several wonderful bluebird pictures to NCBS. Some were included in the Winter 2021 edition with a cool story. A few more are provided below. Thanks, Nick. Great snapshots.

