



NCBS Logo with Carolina Blue by Dempsey Essick

Bluebird Notes

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North Carolina Bluebird Society Mission Statement

Our goal is to support activities that foster the resurgence of bluebirds and other cavity nesting birds in our home areas.

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Waterfowl & Bluebird Education, Theme of NCBS 2005

“Mike Lubbock is among the most knowledgeable people in the world on the conservation and care of birds. He and his wife Ali built Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Center in Scotland Neck, North Carolina, so that they, along with their staff and volunteers, could help save the world's most rare and endangered wild waterfowl. There are many zoo and wildlife professionals who believe that without the efforts of Mike and those who support Sylvan Heights, many species would be without hope of a future existence or may have already vanished entirely. The Waterfowl Center preserves the largest collection of waterfowl in the world—plus many species of cranes, parrots and other exotic birds. Sylvan Heights’ newest venture will provide conservation-oriented programs and interactive bird exhibits to families



and students of all ages. In a partnership with the North Carolina Zoological Society, the Eco-Center and Nature Preserve are expected to open to the public in 2006.”
(from <http://www.sylvan-heights.org/>)
Mike will share the “feel” of being at the avian preserve at Sylvan Heights—the sights and sounds of the birds. Carolina Field Trips magazine named Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Center to the list of Top 15 Northeast North Carolina Field Trip Destinations.

Bluebirds in the Classroom

Since 1983 Randy Senzig, a NCBS Board Member, has been recognized by 21 awards for his teaching abilities. He pursues his passion of teaching and protecting the environment through his classes, his interactions with his students and then their commitments to the environment and contributions to the community. He writes, “Teachers are woven into the very fabric of the community. Not only do they help children acquire an education in the classroom, they

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Bluebird Tales

Photos by Ed Erkes



Former NCBS President Rescues Hummingbird

Out in her garden on a fine September day, fall chores to be completed, Donna Dunn reported hearing a frantic, but diminutive, "eee-eee-eee" sound close-by.

Looking about and following the distressed call, she approached a fading bed of *Monarda*, a favorite among her hummers. Peering about and changing focus she caught sight of a humming bird in the death-grip of a large praying mantis!

The bird, with frenzied effort, attempted to forcefully fly this-way-and-that with no effect. The insect's grip continued unyielding.

Ms. Dunn reached into the vegetation and shook the plant upon which the mantis was braced; release of the bird quickly followed!

The bird fell to the ground. Quickly recovering its composure, it looked around and flew to safety.

Ms. Dunn gently captured the mantis and removed it to a vegetative clump a few feet away - where hummingbirds were not frequent visitors! All participants were now in better spirits...if not frustrated.

Reporter's Note: One must wonder what a mantis, small as it is and an insect eater as well, would do with a small bird, if and when the bird's attempts to escape were unsuccessful.

Bill Abbey, Clemmons, NC

Interesting story that resulted in a new NCBS member.

I was in the local Ace Hardware Store this past Saturday and overheard a man questioning a young sales associate about bluebird nest box specifications -- entrance hole diameter, etc. I could see he was starting to get frustrated with the (lack of) answers he was receiving so I butted in. The man was trying to finish a bluebird house he was building so he could put it up on a place he has in the NC mountains. He and his wife were leaving Monday.

He lives close to me in Cary so I told him that I would drill the entrance hole for him and give him a metal hole protector and the screws if he would bring his birdhouse to my work shop.

He had patterned his bluebird house after the Bailey Bluebird Box he has in his backyard in Cary. Unfortunately there were some key features missing from his version including floor drainage and ventilation. I went ahead and drilled the entrance hole and gave him a metal hole cover and screws.

(Continued on page 3)



Bluebird Tales



Photos by Ed Erkes

Bluebird Valley

Written by *Frank Newell Jr.*

I awoke one night from a restless sleep
And standing there beside my bed
Was the vision of an angel with golden hair
Who looked at me and smiled and said

"Your life has not been perfect, my friend.
You've made mistakes and committed sins
But I know you've asked to be forgiven
And that's where the Good Lord's love comes in.

The good things you've done in life
Out weigh the bad, the sins, and all the rest
And I've been sent down here from Heaven
To tell you that you will be blessed.

One of the good things that you have done
Just happened to catch the Good Lord's eye
And that will be your one salvation
When the time comes for you to die.

Of all God's many wondrous creatures
He loves the little bluebirds best
And the work that you have done for them
Has helped you pass life's greatest test.

Tell your friends who come to help you
They will receive God's blessings, too.

When you all were looking out for His bluebirds
God was looking out for you.

God's made a special place for you.
It's as pretty as it can be.
A big green valley with sky so blue
And a bluebird sitting in every tree.

All your animals will be there waiting
The bobcats, deer, wolf, and bear
And when it's time for you to go
I'll come back and take you there.

Tell those you love that when you've gone
There'll be no need for them to grieve
For you'll be happy in Bluebird Valley
And that's one thing they can believe."

I drifted into peaceful sleep
And later on, when came the dawn
I awoke and looked around the room
But back to Heaven the angel had gone.

And now I know that beautiful valley
Is up there somewhere waiting for me.
It's God's promise from the angel
When I've gone, that's where I'll be.

(Continued from page 2)

Since he was on a tight timetable to get ready for his trip, I told him that if he would join NCBS I would give him a bluebird house and mounting system to use in the mountains. He gladly took my offer and completed the member form. I gave him a copy of *Bluebird Tips* and the November issue of *Bluebird Notes*. We chatted a couple of minutes about bluebird nest box features and he departed with the bluebird houses and mounting system.

Sunday afternoon he called and asked a number of questions about how I had built the nest box and mounting system as well as where I had purchased the material. Then he asked if I had patented my designs

and could he use them as templates for other houses he wanted to build. I gave him permission and told him to call me if he had questions or needed assistance.

I felt like the effort was worth the trouble. We now have a new member who will build safe and effective bluebird houses. I believe he will be an active member of NCBS.

Turns out that our new member is a retired pastor. Have we considered adding a NCBS Chaplain to the Board of Directors? He has expressed an interest in becoming a board member and assisting with the annual meeting.

Sincerely, *Fred Benson* Cary, NC

2005 North Carolina

Diane Hankins of Asheville ended her survey with the comment that “I very much enjoy seeing the results of the survey and how the birds are doing across North Carolina.

The actual numbers are reported in the November newsletter and here is a compilation of the comments. This is, in fact, just a sampling of what was written and these were picked because of their interest and/or educational value. Every comment had value, but it was not possible to print them all.

Hot, hot Summer

Christine Ammons lives in the mountains and writes, “We had 10 inches of rain in July. Four inches would be average. It has never seemed that the heat is a problem, but rain is . I use mostly Jack Finch boxes so this is a good box with a good overhang.”

However, Iris and Richard Johnson who live in the Piedmont zone reported that heat played a role in eggs not hatching. Bob Southard of Yadkinville had 18 out of 24 eggs that did not hatch during the July hot spell.

Hank Moss, Jr. of Southern Pines monitors the bluebird trail on Pine Needles Golf Course. In addition to 339 bluebirds fledged, he reported 72 chickadees and 10 nut-hatches. His comment was that this is the “lowest fledgling bluebirds in several years and believe extreme heat may be the cause.”

Doug and Luke Edwards of Wadesboro wrote that “In most of the late season (mid-July through August) nests the eggs did not hatch. Several boxes with new nests, but no eggs ever laid. This was an extremely hot period in our region (90 and 100 degree days). Don’t know if heat was a factor.

Snakes

Bob Southard “did not loose but one bird during hot spell, but lost eggs and little birds to black snakes.” A cat played a role in destroying two nests in the same box.”

Jim Jochum of Greensboro listed no predators and credits his baffles for the success of six out of seven boxes fledging thirty bluebird babies successfully.

Doug and Luke Edwards also reported predators of fire ants, flying squirrel and snakes with a question mark. They never saw a snake, but one week there would be eggs in the nest and the next week they would be gone. This is from the Carol Woods Retirement Community (Sue Fletcher) in Chapel Hill, NC. “The nest box that for

two years had a black snake destroy nest and nestlings was surrounded by sand and had sulfur powder sprinkled under it. There were no disturbances in that box this year. However, we believe that nestlings in two other boxes about 300 yards away were destroyed by snakes that seemed to have dropped from surrounding tree branches.

Living in Mt. Olive John Virginia Pickles simply wrote, “Snake—ate five eggs! Killed Snake !! Moved box to another location—pair started nest the next day.”

Bruce Stafford (Greensboro) reported a snake twice in the same box. He put a snake guard on. Then two more successful fledges in the same box. This was a total of four nestings in this one box.

Jim Felts of Wilkesboro also had snake issues. He had two nest boxes that were four and five feet off the ground. Snakes managed to get by 7 by 24 inch predator guards.

Robert Rothrock of Greensboro wrote that “After nine years I have never found signs of snakes or raccoons on Bryan Park Golf Course. The predator guards are large round cone shaped. Boxes are placed away from trees in most instances. Weeds and grass are kept short. There is lots of golf activity. Riding a golf cart simplifies checking boxes which is done by my wife Harriet and myself.

Hawks

Jim and Jean Walker of Southern Pines, NC reported two cowbird eggs as well as two local hawks that seem to have chased some bluebirds away.

Carol Radford (Mooresboro, NC) says that “I think hawk got female. The eggs did not hatch, but were good. I looked inside the eggs.”

Ant Invasion

Louise Dail of Raleigh shared the tale of a fourth nesting starting on July 22. There were three eggs, but only two hatched with one baby dying on the 2nd day. The temperature was between 90 and 103 degrees Fahrenheit. After a heavy rain ants invaded the nest. The mother flew out, but the baby was “jumping in the box”. Louise removed the baby and cup with nest. She gently held the baby in one hand while the ants crawled off on her, but were then off the baby. She was able to make a new nest in a cup from another

Nesting Survey Summary

Compiled by Helen Munro

bluebird box and placed the baby in it on the pine straw. The Mama and Daddy were very upset with all this activity. I cleaned out the original box, greased the pole with Vaseline (advice from Wild Bird Unlimited) and put the cup and nest and baby back. Mama immediately went in. The baby fledged on August 23.

Bob and Ruth Stotling of Pinehurst also had a nest invaded by ants. Unfortunately the greased pole did not deter the ants and two bluebird babies died.

Other Predators

Bizarre Happenings

Mary Beth Moore of Mebane wrote that "We had a nest that had four eggs in it. Three eggs did not hatch and we had one huge baby in one week. We guess both parents were feeding "Big Bird."

Mary Beth also reported that "One baby bluebird died in the exit hole before fledging with others left to fledge. The others fledged okay." Could he have choked on food?

Mealworms Help

Nancy Betler of Charlotte reported that "A cat killed the female after the eggs hatched. I aided the male with mealworms. Since I was so involved with the process, I actually was outside when the last baby left the nest." Lea Barnes of N. Wilkesboro is able to call "precious" and the male or female bluebird will come if they are near (or hear her voice). She has fed them mealworms since the beginning of May and exclaims, "What a blessing!"

Rick and Karen Mitchell of Charlotte feed their bluebirds meal worms. "Bluebirds were very friendly. They would land on our deck to eat meal worms placed within three feet of where the family was sitting. Great Photo opportunities!!"

First Season Report

Linda Nunemaker, President of the Mill Creek Garden Club, wrote, "Our first attempt at monitoring an existing trail was with Peterson style boxes already placed on mature trees on a golf course. I had placed slightly altered berry boxes before mating season, but it became quickly apparent the birds didn't like them or built on top of the boxes. One such nest with babies actually fell out when the box was opened. They were replaced successfully in the box and four ultimately fledged.

Unanimous opinion is that the Peterson style box is not easy to monitor so we are replacing them with squared side opening boxes with squirrel guards over the holes. We lost five babies to a black snake so we will try a granular snake repellent along with a black plastic netting 'tutu'. Next year if new design boxes do not attract attention at the start of the season, we will probably relocate several boxes. The box the snake got into will automatically be moved.

A disappointing first attempt, but we all learned and will expect to do better next year."

House Sparrows

The monitor at McGee's Crossroads Elementary School in Benson has fifteen boxes. Ten of them were occupied by bluebirds, but in order to have that happen, the monitor had to trap a total of fourteen house sparrows. Six males and two females were in one box! There was a suspicion that some eggs were taken to feed a pet snake. There were fifty-seven bluebird eggs hatched, but only twenty fledged.

Ethelene Allen of Four Oaks also battled house sparrows. She wrote, "I caught 10 sparrows (8 males, 2 females) in one neighbor's yard in a single box (a *Home for Bluebirds*) box by Jack Finch. I never release them unharmed, but quickly send them to "House Sparrow Heaven." She shared her sparrow traps with others and taught them how to use them.

Editor's Note: House Sparrows and Starlings are two non-native birds not protected by law. There have been many discussions of how best to deal with them, but unmonitored bluebird trails become House Sparrow trails.

Other Cavity Nesting Species

Ethelene Allen not only reported 169 bluebirds fledged, but she also hosted 31 chickadees, 6 nuthatches, 15 titmice, 16 wrens and 11 great crested flycatchers. She had three bluebird broods that were white eggs instead of the normal blue.

Reah Kittelberger of Ravenscroft School in Raleigh reported "many white eggs"! Christine Ammons (Union Mills, NC) reported pink eggs in two boxes. Len & Joyce Tufts of Pinehurst fledged 63 bluebirds, but also 16 Tufted Titmouse, 4 Carolina Wren and 16

(Continued on page 6)

2005 North Carolina Nesting Survey Summary (concluded)

(Continued from page 5)

Brown-headed Nuthatch.

House Wrens

This is from John Mothershead of Asheboro, NC. "Last year I had two bluebird boxes and one gourd. We'd never seen house wrens in the neighborhood, but they moved in (noisily) and raised a family—all the while keeping the two bluebird houses littered with twigs to discourage neighbors even though eighty feet away. I removed their twigs almost daily. When I missed, I noticed they only put in enough twigs to discourage others. The year the wrens did not occupy the gourd, but stayed in the area evidenced by twig litter in the bluebird boxes, but less persistent and insufficiently discouraging to prevent a chickadee family from moving in and raising a family. (March 26, first egg and then one a day; April 15 five hatched and May 3, all fledged.)

Strange Nest

Lois Herring of Chapel Hill met with a confusing experience. "On July 14 I noticed a pair of bluebirds over-seeing a nesting box. Inside was a make-shift nest that was about 1/2 inch deep covering only the very bottom of the nesting cup and made up of tiny sticks, dried roots and only 2 to 3 pine needles. There were two eggs on the flat surface which did not look like a nest. The parents were both in attendance and scolded loudly when we came anywhere near. The female seemed to be incubating the two eggs. On July 18 there was only one egg and on July 19 no eggs and no bluebirds. Why the strange nest? Did their nest building gene mutate? Were they in a hurry? Or lazy???"

Nest Building Material

As Lois Herring observed, in her area pine needles are a common building material for bluebird nests. Bill Abbey of Clemmons writes, "Each day on the trail is an interesting experience. One observation: The use of horsehair (tail & mane) as one of the ingredients of the bluebird nests in the vicinity of Tanglewood horse barns."

Two Sided Post

David Frye of Hickory tells that "We erected a new post at our property line and put one house on the north side. The neighbor's living on the south side put up another

house on the same post. The north side raised one brood of four. The house on the other side then raise a brood of four. They raised another brood of four. The houses were back to back on the same post but all three broods were raised at different times, from the first egg on April 10th to the last fledge on August 7th.

Report from Florida

Joseph and Anne Critchley of Union Mills and Inverness, FL, gave a neighbor in Florida a bluebird box and on the eighth of July she had tenants, but was not home to see them fledge.

General Comments

The Wayne Borough Garden Club has a bluebird trail at the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Goldsboro, NC. "For some reason our boxes did not do well this year. Last year we had nineteen fledglings. We think that it could have been because the church sprayed the surrounding wooded area several times this spring and summer, but we are not sure. (Five bluebirds were fledged in 2005.)

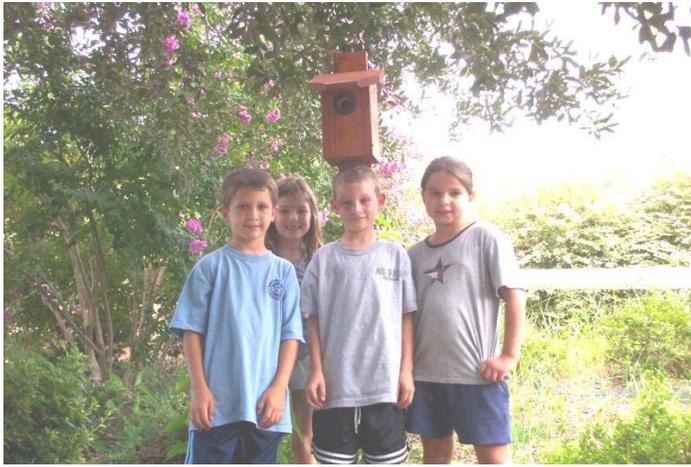
Wesley Eberspacher of New London wrote, "Bad year—First time in six years that I didn't have at least two nestings in each box.

Bill Satterwhite, NCBS Board member from Raleigh sums the year 2005 up. "Not the best year for bluebirds. Lots of unhatched eggs, not only in my boxes but other "bluebirders reporting their problems to me. Several cases of eggs missing from nests with predator guards ruling out snakes, makes it likely other birds are raiding the nests! One person reported two clutches of eggs (5 and 4) missing. The pair persisted and laid three more, two of which hatched."

Many thanks to everyone that sent in a survey and took the time to write comments. Not all were used, but all were appreciated. The mortality rate of the bluebirds adults, babies and fledglings is reflected in the data. These were not reported in these comments, but the resilience of the bluebirds and the other cavity nesters gives us reason to rejoice. It was not a great year, but still a good one. Significant numbers of bluebirds were fledged; a significant number of bluebirders kept track of that number and a significant number of caring monitors did their part in making nest boxes available to these birds.

A job well done by both the birds and the people!!

BLUEBIRD NEST-BOX DONATION PROJECT



Young blue-birders at Green Elementary School in Raleigh. The bluebird trail on their school campus was made possible by a bluebird nest-box donation project staffed by NCBS members.

This is a call for volunteers interested in participating in the

BLUEBIRD NEST-BOX DONATION PROJECT. Volunteers across North Carolina are needed to locate suitable recyclable nest-box building material and volunteers are needed to build bluebird nest-boxes from the material. The nest-boxes will be donated to deserving causes such as hospices, elderly persons, retirement homes, educational institutions, fundraisers, nature trails, etc.

Every day large quantities of scrap lumber and other material suitable for building bluebird nest-boxes is deposited in landfills across North Carolina. Please help us locate and recycle this material into nest-boxes. Your efforts will help conserve our bluebird population as well as enrich the lives of those who will benefit from the nest-box donations.

If you would like to participate in the project or know of a deserving cause to receive a donation, please contact:

Fred Benson fbenson@ipass.net (919) 469-5897

Bluebirds Everywhere!!



First & third photos by Pat Ogren, Foxfire Village, NC. Middle photo by Jean Walker, Southern Pines, NC

Backyard Bluebirds

Helen, I was working at my outside bench when I looked up and spotted (6) adult bluebirds checking out all of the nest boxes in the yard. I hadn't seen them in several weeks. The downy woodpecker nest box seems to be the front runner again. This year a bluebird couple moved into the downy nest box on March 18. I hope they do it again next year.

Picture of two of them on my Grandson's swing set in the backyard taking a rest from nest box inspection. Bluebirds resting before continuing to check out the nest boxes in the yard.

Fred



North Carolina Bluebird Society Annual Meeting
Saturday, April 1, 2006 at the NC Zoo Stedman Education Bdg.
North American Zoo Entrance
4403 Zoo Parkway, Asheboro, NC 27205

Program Schedule

8:00 to 9:00 am	Check-in (Coffee, Displays & Door Prize Tickets)
9:00 am	Welcome (H. Munro, President) Bluebird Medley (K. Hindsley)
9:15 am	Statewide County Coordinator Program (C. Bliss)
9:30 am	Guest Speaker: Mike Lubbock, Director of Sylvan Heights, home of the largest collection of waterfowl in North America, Scotland Neck, NC “ <i>Sights & Sounds of a Waterfowl Preserve</i> ”
10:15 am	Break
10:45 am	Randy Senzig, Honored Outstanding Science Teacher, District #3, NCBS Board Director “ <i>Bluebirds in the Classroom</i> ”
11:30 am	Report on NCBS & NABS 2005 (H. Munro)
11:45 am	Election of NCBS Officers—2006-2008
Noon	President’s Deli Buffet

After Lunch
Visit the Zoo
(Tickets can be used another day.)

*If you have any items to be used as door prizes,
Please bring them to the meeting.
Thank you.*

Return by March 15, 2006

Friday: March 31, 2006

Traditionally the guest speakers and the NCBS Board Members meet the night before the annual meeting for dinner. This gives everyone an opportunity to socialize and to put the give-a-way bags together for the Saturday Meeting.

This year we will meet at the Asheboro Golden Corral on Route 64 at 7 pm. We will be in the room reserved for the Bluebird People. The cost is \$10.00 including tax and gratuity. No reservation is needed for this, but please indicate on the registration form whether or not you are coming so we can look for you.

Rooms have been set aside at the Holiday Inn Express of Asheboro for NCBS attendees on Friday night, March 31, 2006. The rooms will have either two double beds or one king size bed. The rate of \$65.70 (tax included) also provides a good Breakfast Buffet from 6:30 to 9:30 am Saturday morning. The Holiday Inn Express phone number is 336-636-5222. Their FAX number is 336-636-6322. Identify yourself as being with the North Carolina Bluebird Society.

Registration Form—Saturday, April 1, 2006

Name #1 _____ Name #2 _____

Phone # 1 _____ Phone #2 _____

Email Address _____

Please send checks to: NCBS, c/o Helen Munro, 22 Bobolink Rd., Jackson Springs, NC 27281
(910-673-6936 hsmunro@ac.net)

attending

_____ Adult registration & Lunch	\$15	\$ _____
_____ Child registration & Lunch	\$ 5	\$ _____
_____ Adult registration only	\$10	\$ _____
_____ Tickets to the Zoo: Adults	\$ 8	\$ _____
_____ Seniors	\$ 6	\$ _____
_____ Children	\$ 4	\$ _____

_____ Will be there for dinner on Friday night. **Total:** _____

Finch Pottery Open House

Fred Benson represented NCBS at the Finch Pottery Open House in Bailey, NC. This is an annual event and is held on the second Sunday of November. Sixty potters show and sell their functional pots and artistic creations along with wooden bowls, silver jewelry, music, hot spiced cider, food and, of course, bluebird houses by *Homes for Bluebirds* and Jack Finch.

Fred was able to sign up seven new members. Each new member was given a free portable mealworm feeder made by Fred. Fred also had a bluebird nest box display including a Gilbertson and standard NABS-type boxes. One exhibit box had a cement fiber roof and a plexiglas observation window.

This year the Finch Pottery Open House was on Sunday, November 13, 2005. Check out the website, danfinch.com for more information.

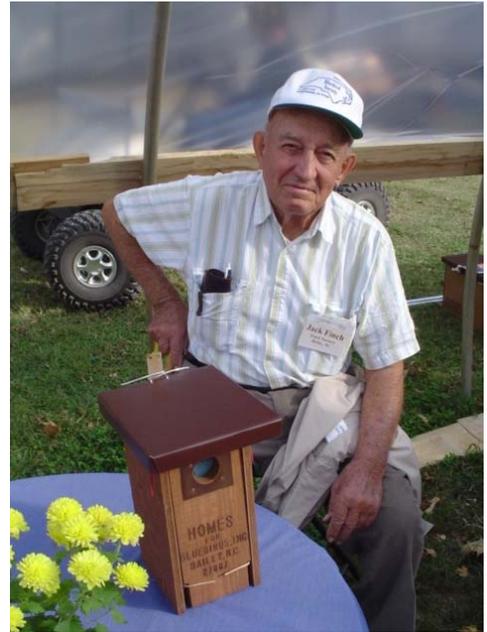


Photo of Jack Finch and his *Homes for Bluebirds* Box was taken by Fred Benson. This is also known as the Bailey Box.

Randy Senzig—Bluebirds in the Classroom

Continued from page 1

also model a life of service and dedication often stretching beyond the scope of a job — to a calling.” Randy goes on to say, “I believe we must bring our children and the Earth into a new relationship as we move into the future. We must show them through action—not just words.

As part of his philosophy of teaching, Randy writes, “Teaching affects more people for longer periods of time than perhaps any other profession. We each remember teachers who affected us—good or bad—all our lives. As teachers, we inspire some students to dream and become; some we put to sleep. But we must strive to find creative ways to reach even those who sleep in class and help them define personal goals for their lives.

I believe that it is extremely important for students to have a teacher who is more than an information giver, who is more than an attendance taker and who is more than a behavior modifier. It is of paramount importance that students learn to relate to adults.

The teacher must be an individual whom the student can trust. The teacher must be a stable model on which young people from unstable homes can focus.

I feel that an individual who enters the education profession must be willing to accept the responsibility of being a twenty-four hour teacher; that is, a teacher who will continue to be a role model long after the afternoon bell rings. There are many things that I have forgotten about courses and content, but the things about teachers I have remembered best are their actions, their personal passions and their own heartfelt thoughts and experiences.

A young person should never enter teaching searching for the monetary gain or for the summer vacations. Both of these reasons seemed to have escaped me. A person should enter teaching because he/she feels a calling or a mission to do so. This person needs to understand that each student has value and importance. It is our job to help the student find that value and believe in himself. The teacher must love hard work and learning, for a good teacher will have to do quite a bit of each.”

Randy has used the bluebirds as one of the vehicles to reach students and get them involved. Come to the NCBS Annual Meeting at the NC Zoo and find out how. His talk is entitled “Bluebirds in the Classroom.”



Bluebirds, Inside the Nest Box

Recorded by the Cornell Birdhouse Network

Summer 1999

Produced by the North Carolina Bluebird Society

Available for \$13.85 including shipping and handling.

Two tapes for \$25; Three for \$35; Six for \$70

E-mail towhee@blueridge.net to price larger quantities.

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: NCBS. SEND ORDER & CHECK TO:
Ms. Christine Ammons, 670 Nanneytown Rd., Union Mills, NC 28167-8762

North Carolina Bluebird Society Products

Description of Item	Cost Postage Included	No. Wanted	Total
New: Caps with NCBS Logo	\$ 13.00	X_____	=_____
New: Bluebird Note Cards (12)	\$ 12.00	X_____	=_____
New: <i>Carolina Blue</i> Tote Bags	\$ 15.00	X_____	=_____
<i>Carolina Blue</i> T-Shirts			
by Dempsey Essick (S, M, L, XL)	\$20.00	X_____	=_____
Lands End knit shirt with collar (M, L, XL)	\$35.00	X_____	=_____
Cloisonné Bluebird Pins (1inch, 4 colors)	\$ 5.00	X_____	=_____
“On the Wings of a Song” - CD	\$ 8.00	X_____	=_____
<i>A Bluebird Medley</i> by Kay Hindsley			
Eastern Bluebird with Flowers Card	\$ 2.50	X_____	=_____
or 5 for \$10.00		X_____	=_____
<i>Bluebirds, Inside the Nestbox</i> Video Tape	\$13.85	X_____	=_____
Also available in DVD format, same price	\$13.85	X_____	=_____
(2 for \$25; 3 for \$35; 6 for \$70)			=_____
Total			=_____

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: NCBS.

SEND ORDER & CHECK TO:

Ms. Christine Ammons, 670 Nanneytown Rd., Union Mills, NC 28167-8762

Date of your order is _____

Video tapes and DVDs are available on the ncbluebird.com website.

First Year Bluebirder Report

This is my first year to monitor bluebird boxes and have enjoyed every day (well maybe except for one, when I discovered the first eggs destroyed). I bought five boxes from the N.C. Employee's Credit Union, installed two on 4 x 4 wooden post, one on 7-8" cedar post and gave two to my sister. After the devastation of finding the eggs destroyed, I joined the North American Bluebird Society, bought the book "The Bluebird Monitor's Guide", joined the North Carolina Bluebird Society, did a lot of web searching, reading and talking with anyone I could find to talk to about bluebirds. It didn't take long for me to get addicted.

The first five eggs were laid in the box installed on the cedar post (with no guard). This was before I knew anything about monitoring or guards. I saw five eggs approximately 4/27 but was not keeping written records at that time and then on 5/16 found the nest intact but one egg broken, two out of the nest between the nest and front door and can't remember about the other two. I'm not sure they would have hatched since I think they should have hatched at least 4 or 5 days prior.

On 5/20 a male and female bird checked out another box, built a nest and completed it on 5/27. Laid first egg on 5/28, fifth on 6/1. After eggs hatched, with the help of my brother, we very carefully changed the 4 x 4 wooden post to a 1 1/2" water pipe post with a predator guard.

Four babies hatched on 6/12 and 6/13 (removed unhatched egg about 6 days later), and fledged on 7/1 cleaned the box, and soaped inside roof.

Started seeing 3 of the 4 fledglings at worm feeder on 7/19, 2 1/2 weeks after leaving the nest Mom and Dad started a new nest on 7/6, completed it on 7/9, laid first egg 7/10 and fifth on 7/14.

Saw a very large hawk perched on nest box. on 7/27.

On 8/9 at 7:30 pm, there was a lot of activity around the box. Babies had fledged too early (14th day). At

dark at least two babies were still in high grass. Mom and Dad had been swooping down and over with worms in their mouth. I couldn't really determine for sure, but I think there may have been other adult birds trying to get these babies to safety, or maybe it was the juveniles from the last brood. Thunderstorm during the night with 1/2" of rain. The next morning at 5:30 am, just before daylight, one adult was on the worm feeder. I had kept worms in the feeder all evening and the last batch was still there at 7:30 am. I checked the grass and the babies were gone. During the afternoon the big hawk was back perched on the birdbath. On 8/10 and 8/29 only one baby plus Mom, Dad and 3 Juveniles showed up at worm feeder. Apparently 4 of the last fledglings did not make it.

I have been feeding meal worms since 7/8 and will continue, hoping to see the fledglings come to the feeder by the first of September. On 8/13 Mom, Dad and three of the juveniles were at the feeder, but I don't see them nearly as often as I did before the fledging. Saw the hawk again up in the trees and scared him off. Can only wait and hope that he didn't get my babies.

My brother-in-law took over the Bluebird boxes I gave my sister and like most everyone I talked with did not believe in monitoring. One of his boxes had two broods with 5 eggs in each; another box had one brood of

Chickadees and one of 5 Bluebird eggs. I don't know how many hatched or fledged except for the last. Of the five eggs (one larger than the others) only two hatched. I removed three unhatched eggs 6 or 7 days after the two hatched and fledged I finally got him to feed them mealworms but not on a regular basis and to check the box every now and then, but he has refused to change his 4 x 4 wooden post or use a predator guard. I'll keep working on him and others.



Photo by Pat Ogren of Foxfire Village, NC

Doris Sanders, Lincolnton, NC

North Carolina Bluebird Society

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- _____ Assisting with the annual meeting
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 _____ Conducting a bluebird workshop
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NCBS—At Least Twenty Years Old and Going Strong

Bea Mansfield, first President of NCBS, wrote in November 1996 (*Bluebird Notes*, Vol 11, No. 4) that the organizational meeting of NCBS was on February 1, 1986. Here is Bill Abbey's membership card with an expiration date of March 1984. He remembers attending a meeting in Greensboro sometime in the June-July of 1983. This meeting had been publicized in the local newspaper.

In March, 1986, one thousand invitations to join the established North Carolina Bluebird Society were sent out to individuals. Two hundred responded and became members. The first newsletter is dated July 1986.

The first North Carolina Charter is dated May 5, 1986 and signed by Thad Eure, the Secretary of State of the State of North Carolina. The tax identification number, which makes NCBS exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, is dated May 13, 1988. This, in turn, makes all donations tax deductible.

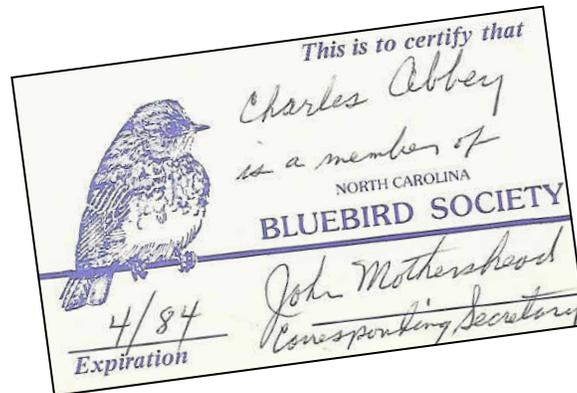
A second charter was issued August 5, 1987 after the directors clarified their non-profit activities.

As you can see from this, it is difficult to pick an exact founding date for NCBS, but by the summer of 1986, a newsletter was being generated. Memberships had been established and by November 1986 a bluebird survey had been taken.

This means that in the spring of 2006 NCBS will be celebrating at least twenty years of bluebird conservation.

What has happened in twenty years? The membership has doubled to between four and five hundred. The number of bluebirds reported as fledging has increased from 1,831 as reported in November, 1986, to 4,236 in 2005. The newsletter has gone from six pages to sixteen pages.

In 2005 NCBS hosted the North American Bluebird Society annual meeting. Almost 200 people joined us in Asheville for the traditional three to four day conference where the conservation of bluebirds was the main topic and bluebirds were honored by the speakers, workshops and participants.



The original by-laws have been updated several times. The membership dues have been simplified to \$10 per

year or three years for \$25. The offerings of the NCBS store give our members the opportunity to purchase bluebird related items. The web-site continues to disseminate bluebird information through the internet. Members can now subscribe to an on-line newsletter saving the cost of postage and printing.

In addition to the cost of the newsletter, our membership

fees support grants to groups for bluebird activities. Our members give many talks every year to youth groups and garden clubs stressing the importance of monitoring bluebird boxes and keeping these trails from becoming English House Sparrow trails.

The first annual meeting was January 24, 1987 and was held despite a record snow fall. Every year the speakers are different. Their cost is again supported by dues, store sales and a few donations. Look over the registration form and plan to come join the NCBS Board in its celebration of twenty years of a job well done.

Helen S. Munro, NCBS President

Newsletter Editor, Foxfire Village, NC

Editor Note: It is difficult to determine what 20 years of monitoring bluebirds has done for their population in North Carolina. "Inside the Birdhouse" published by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology (Issue 9, Fall 2004) presented a summary of 2002-2003 Nesting Data. This was produced by "Partners in Flight" (PIF), a coalition of environmental groups, agencies, universities and individuals that addresses bird and habitat issues at an international scale." They summarized the conservation status of 448 land birds and gave them a PIF score. Scores between 17 and 20 means that these birds "have multiple causes for concerns." They include the Red Cockaded Woodpecker, Ivory-billed Woodpecker, Kirtland's Warbler, California Condor and Golden-winged Warbler.

The Eastern Bluebird has a PIF score of 8 with an estimated population of 10,000,000. This means we are doing our job well, but need to continue with bluebird conservation education, putting up nest boxes and monitoring them. The bluebirds still need us.

North Carolina Bluebird Society County Coordinators

ALAMANCE	Fran Outhwaite	(336-226-4770)	MCDOWELL	Carol Gilliam	(828-738-0655)
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If your county does not have a coordinator, please
Call Chuck Bliss (336-625-5423) and volunteer.

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