



NCBS Logo with Carolina Blue by Dempsey Essick

Bluebird Notes

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NCBS hosts NABS
May 19-22, 2005

September through November 2005

Volume 20 Number 4

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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David Huffine & Frank Newell Receive NABS Awards

The North American Bluebird Society (NABS) recognized both David Huffine and Frank Newell Jr. of the North Carolina Bluebird Society for their Outstanding Contributions to Bluebird Conservation. These awards were part of the Saturday banquet at NABS 2005 in Asheville on May 20, 2005.

Jim Jochum accepted the award on behalf of David Huffine who was honored for his work in helping to compile the video footage seen in the videotape presentation entitled "Inside the Nest Box." This educational tape is available from the North Carolina Bluebird Society (NCBS). Original footage was filmed with a nest camera mounted in a box on land belonging to Peter Van Duser, Clemmons, North Carolina. When Mr. Van Duser died, Mr. Huffine took the tapes and put hours of effort into the editing task. In addition, he also served at vice-president of the NCBS from 1996 to 2004.

Fred Benson did the honors for Frank Newell Jr. who was honored for leading a team of volunteers that over the years has built thousands of Eastern Bluebird nesting boxes.

Mr. Newell heads a group called Friends of Frank. These people get together to build bluebird nest boxes. They can make as many as 300 boxes a day. The boxes are sold for \$10 at offices of the North Carolina State Employees Credit Union.

Other recipients recognized for their Outstanding Contributions to Bluebird Conservation were Erv Davis of Charlo, Montana, and the Brice Prairie Conservation Association located in Wisconsin.

NCBS received a plaque recognizing its outstanding effort in organizing and hosting NABS 2005.

Reserve Saturday, April 1, 2006 for the annual meeting of NCBS. It will be at the NC Zoo in Asheboro.



Photo by Luci Weldon/ The Warren Record

Frank Newell of the Eastern Bluebird Rescue Group, standing at left, and Lorrie Stables of the State Employees Credit Union display an award presented to the bluebird rescue group by the North American Bluebird Society. They are pictured with other members of the Eastern Bluebird Rescue Group, including the Friends of Frank, who have devoted many hours to the building of bluebird houses. Frank's son-in-law Anthony Steed is the young man on the far right.

Bluebird Notes

Issue 19 Vol. 4

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Bluebird Tales



Thank You from Frank Newell

Dear Mrs. Munro,

I deeply appreciate the beautiful award and humbly accept it on the behalf of all of the volunteers who come weekly to build bluebird houses in my workshop; and also the State Employees' Credit Union's wonderful people who distribute them state wide. Through our combined efforts, we have built and distributed over 62,000 bluebird houses and are still going strong.

This wonderful award is a morale booster and a shot in the arm of our efforts to push ahead towards our goal of providing unlimited housing for bluebirds everywhere. We are truly grateful for this prestigious recognition.

Sincerely,

Frank B. Newell, Jr.
Warrenton, NC

Bird House Competition

Sunset Mountain Spring featuring The 2006 Decorated Birdhouse Competition April 14, 2006 - May 14, 2006

We invite you to visit our historic Inn in the spring to draw inspiration from the breathtaking beauty of our ancient mountains during this season of rebirth and renewal. Experience the magic of dogwood, sweet shrub, cherry and apple blossoms unfolding while spring flowers - daffodils, hyacinths and tulips - dance in the gentle breeze. We welcome you to join us for our sixth annual "Sunset Mountain Spring" celebration.

OUR SEVENTH ANNUAL BIRDHOUSE COMPETITION - The event offers prizes valued at over \$3000. Houses will be on display throughout the celebration of Sunset Mountain Spring beginning on April 14, 2006. Entries must be received on or by April 11, 2006. The competition also includes a youth category for those 12 years of age and younger as well as a teen category for those 13-17.

Call (828) 252-2711, ext. 8045 for further information.



Bluebird Tales



News & Observer Bird House Competition at the JC Raulston in Raleigh, NC

Submitted by Fred Benson, Cary, NC

This bird house competition is sponsored by the Raleigh News & Observer and the JC Raulston Arboretum of NC State.

Schedule of Events

March 24, 2006 (Friday)

Registration of entries. (JCRA working hours)

March 25, 2006 (Saturday) (JCRA working hours)

Judging begins promptly Saturday morning and should take one to two hours to complete. Winners will be announced upon completion of judging and in the News & Observer. Entries on display after judging is completed. (normally until 6 PM)

March 26, 2006 (Sunday)

Entries on display (normally noon - 5:00 PM).

March 26, 2006 (Sunday) & March 27, 2006 (Monday)

Entries may be picked up after 5 PM on Sunday until JCRA closes or on Monday during JCRA working hours. Entries not picked up will become the property of the JCRA.

Birdhouse Competition Specifics

Categories

Adult (Ages 13 and above)

Professional Serious Flight of Fancy

Children (Ages 4-12)

Ages 4-6 Ages 7-9 Ages 10-12

Children who enter will receive a gift bag from the News & Observer (while supplies last)

Prizes

1st - \$100.00 and 10# bag of premium bird seed for all first place winners (children and adult categories) and JCRA T-shirt (adult categories)

2nd - \$50.00, suet block, and feeder for all second place winners

3rd - suet block for all third place winners

Competition Guidelines

Professional (for those making and selling bird houses as a hobby or for a living)

Entries will be judged on: Craftsmanship; Functionality for humans and birds; Mountability, ability to be raised or lowered, type of material, ability to be cleaned out, hole, roof, chamber (hole diameter, depth); Aesthetics.

Adult Serious

Entries will be judged on: Craftsmanship; Functionality for humans and birds, Mountability, ability to be raised or lowered, type of material, ability to be cleaned out, hole, roof, chamber (hole diameter, depth); Aesthetics

Flight of Fancy

Entries will be judged on: Aesthetics; Imaginative theme or concept and exceptional use of form, texture, and/or color, composition, and execution; Craftsmanship, Functionality (for birds); Hole, roof, chamber.

Children (Ages 4-12) Entries will be judged on: Aesthetics; Imaginative theme or concept; use of form, texture and/or color; Craftsmanship; Functionality (for birds) hole, roof, chamber.

All entries should be able to stand alone when placed upon a display table. As much as possible, children's entries should be prepared by the entrant.

All entries should be portable (by one person).

Cost: Free.

Registration: Advanced registration is not required.

Location: JC Raulston Arboretum
4301 Beryl Rd.
Raleigh, NC 27606.
(919) 515-3132

Parking: Free parking is available at the JC Raulston Arboretum and along Beryl Road.

Directions: Take the Hillsborough exit from Rt. 440. Turn left toward Raleigh and take the first right onto Beryl Road. Or turn right from the exit, go to the next red light, turn left, go over railroad tracks and turn left onto Beryl Rd.

Nesting Platforms— Alternative to Nest Boxes

Fred Benson, Cary, NC

Note: In our area, nesting platforms are attractive to Great Horned Owls and Ospreys. Stay tuned for a future article on nesting platforms.

Nesting ledges are a valuable addition to your bird conservation portfolio. Some secondary cavity dwelling birds (Carolina Wrens, House Finches, etc.) as well as thicket dwelling birds (Robins, Eastern Phoebes, etc.) are attracted to them. In the case of secondary cavity dwellers nesting ledges offer an alternative place for them to nest, which can free up birdhouses that would otherwise be occupied by them. Nesting ledges provide a stable weatherproof nesting

environment for thicket dwellers that would normally build their nests in ornamental shrubs such as Photinias, Pyracanthas, Camellias.

What is a nesting ledge? Essentially it is a birdhouse without a front door. I built this nesting ledge and mounted it under a tree house in our backyard where it is completely protected from rain and wind. Carolina Wrens nested in it this year. The last of five nestlings is peering out.

Nesting ledges mounted within ornamental shrubs provide ideal locations for Robins, House Finches, and other songbirds that normally nest in thickets and shrubs. I have placed nesting ledges in all the large ornamental shrubs in my yard including Photinia, Holly, Pyracantha, and Camellia. Carolina Wrens nested in the Photinia ledge this year.

Nesting ledges also provide birds with a sheltered place to roost during heavy periods of rain and cold weather. This past winter during a very cold spell, I observed several house finches huddled in the holly-bush nesting ledge to keep warm. During the winter, I put a shallow layer of pine wood chips on the floor to facilitate roosting.

I recommend the following features be included in nesting ledges.

- ◆ 15 degree back-to-front sloping roof with 3" overhang beyond the sides
- ◆ Floor (corner cuts; 3/8" center drain hole; recessed minimum 1/2" to prevent drip siphoning; rear-pivot downward opening for easy cleaning)
- ◆ 3" side extensions beyond the floor for additional weather protection
- ◆ Raised lip on front of floor to prevent nests from slipping out

A nesting ledge suitable for large birds such as Robins has an 8" X 8" floor and an 8" ceiling. One suitable for smaller birds such as Carolina Wrens has a 4" X 4" floor, and an 8" ceiling.



Carolina Wren nestling peering out of tree house nesting ledge.



Nesting ledge in *Photinia* bush



Latest generation nesting ledge for smaller birds. The rear-pivot floor swings downward for easy cleaning. This is necessary due to the lip on the front of the floor. Notice the use of the molded wood-fiber nesting cup.

Tip for Stabilizing 2-pronged Crooks

By Fred Benson, Cary, NC

Many folks use 2-pronged crooks to hang bird-baths, feeders, and even birdhouses. Unfortunately, this type of crook becomes unstable in heavy rain and high wind causing it to tilt or even fall over. The prongs are not long enough to prevent it from becoming unstable. Uneven loads on the arms of the crook make things even worse. We have two 2-pronged crooks in our front yard. One is used to support very heavy hanging baskets and the other supports a birdbath and a feeder. In the summer, we hang a humming-



Pipe/concrete stability solution.

bird feeder from it and the rest of the year we use a thistle feeder. After putting up with the irritating instability problem for a couple of years, I decided to deal with it.

Here is my solution.

1. Pull the crook up and dig an oval shaped hole about a foot deep and wide enough to allow at least 6" of open area surrounding the prongs.
2. Cut (2) 18" lengths of 3/4" diameter EMT conduit or galvanized pipe.
3. Orient the crook and drive each length of pipe into the bottom of the hole spaced so a tight fit is produced when the prongs of the crook are inserted into the pipes. The pipes should each extend 2-3 inches above ground.
4. Mix 50 lbs of quick set concrete in a wheelbarrow or some other container and fill the hole evenly with it to a depth of about 2-3 inches below the top of the hole. Be careful **not** to fill the pipes with concrete.
5. When the concrete is set, cover the hole with dirt leaving the exposed pipes above ground. Insert the prongs of the crook into the pipes and enjoy the new stability. The crook can be easily removed by pulling it up until the prongs clear the pipes.

Looking for a few good men or women!!

At the annual meeting of NCBS on April 1, 2006, new officers will be elected. We need nominations or volunteers for the following positions:

President—Call and chair Board Meetings four times a year; assure that bylaws are up to date and followed; contact other state and national organizations for ideas; prepare annual statement with synopsis of last year's events and appoint committees, as needed.

Vice-President— Conduct Board Meetings during absence of the President; direct and advise Store Manager and obtain approval for funds for purchases.

Recording Secretary— Record and type minutes of Board Meetings; mail or email minutes to all Board

Members; maintain official files and papers.

Directors— Attend Board Meetings and Conventions; provide suggestions to increase the Bluebird population and enhance the public image of NCBS.

County Coordinator Chairperson—Coordinates activities of all NCBS County Coordinators and distributes educational material.

Please do not be shy. Throw your hat in the ring by writing or emailing by January 15, 2006 to:

Hank Moss

525 Fairway Drive
(910) 692-2328

Southern Pines, NC 28387
hmjr@pinehurst.net

Compiled by Reah Kittelberger

North Carolina Nesting Survey 2005

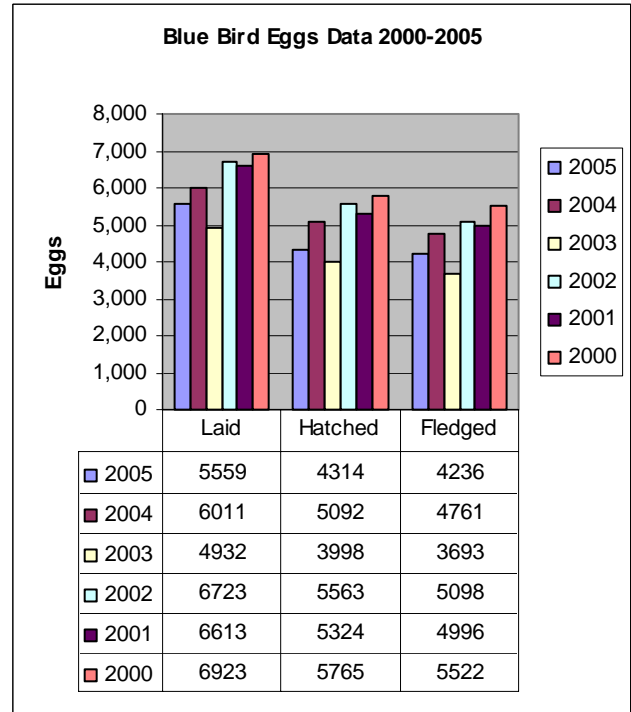
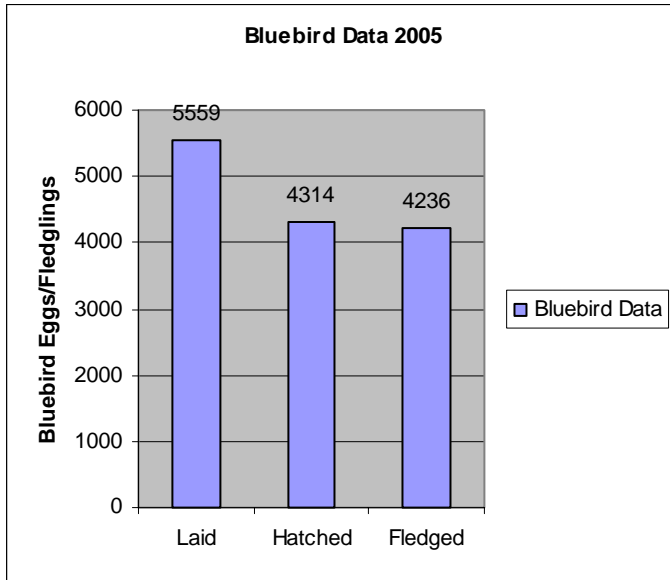
<u>Name</u>	<u>boxes</u>	<u>w/bb</u>	<u># eggs</u>	<u>hatched</u>	<u>fledged</u>	<u>2 sets</u>	<u>3 sets</u>	<u>1st date</u>
Florida								
Joseph H. & Anne J. Critchley	1	1	3	3	3	0	0	8-Jul-05
South Carolina								
Bear Creek Golf Club, M. Smith Super, T.								
Nordstrom Director	46	27	171	0	151	21	2	22-Apr-05
North Carolina								
By Towns:								
Asheboro								
Chuck Bliss	42	36	234	195	188	16	3	15-Mar-05
John Mothershead	1	1	5	4	4	1	0	26-May-05
Asheville								
Diane Hankins	4	2	8	6	5	1	0	5-May-05
Benson								
McGee's Crossroads Elementary School	15	10	57	26	20	3	0	
Burlington								
Kathryn Carroll	8	6	24	20	18	0	0	23-Apr-05
Chapel Hill								
Carol Woods Retirement Com. C/o S. Fletcher								
Lois Herring	30	19	114	90	88	6	1	6-Apr-05
	11	3	11	5	5	1	0	9-Apr-05
Charlotte								
Rick & Karen Mitchell	2	1	8	8	8	1	0	11-Apr-05
Nancy Betler	1	1	5	5	5	0	0	1-Jun-05
Clemmons								
Charles Abbey	65	53	294	201	186	21	1	10-Apr-05
Concord								
Jennifer Linn-Raby	2	2	7	6	6	0	0	1-Jun-05
East Bend								
Sue Homewood & Matt Perry	2	2	4	3	3	2	0	
Fayetteville								
Marijane Hailey	1	1	2	1	1	0	0	
Four Oaks								
Ethelene Allen	50	26	207	174	169	8	5	29-Mar-05
Garner								
Joye Stephenson & Phil Egan	1	1	8	4	4	1	0	11-Apr-05
Greensboro								
Dan Chambers	26	16	113	83	83	5	2	6-Apr-05
Bruce Stafford	4	3	25	18	16	2	0	25-Apr-05
Robert Rothrock	41	41	282	279	279	25	16	30-Mar-05
The Grande c/o Jim Jochum	7	6	35	34	34	2	0	23-Apr-05
Hickory								
Lake Hickory CC c/o D. Frye	69	47	342	244	204	44	4	10-Apr-05
Jackson Springs								
Taylorstown Head Start c/o Helen Munro	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Sandhills Community College c/o Helen Munro	4	2	7	7	7	0	0	22-Apr-05
Sandhills Christian Alliance c/o Helen Munro	1	1	5	5	5	0	0	15-Apr-05
Edu-Care Montessori & Day-Care c/o H. Munro	11	2	13	13	13	0	0	11-Apr-05
Bryant Trail c/o Helen Munro	6	5	35	31	31	3	0	17-Apr-05
Foxfire Garden Club c/o Helen Munro	78	64	418	353	352	28	4	12-Apr-05
Liberty								
Brian Greene	3	2	14	9	9	1	0	15-Apr-05

Compiled by Reah Kittelberger

North Carolina Nesting Survey 2005

Lillington									
Bill Dezso	6	5	19	11	11	1	0	12-Apr-05	
Lincolnton									
Doris Sanders	2	1	15	9	9	1	0	27-Apr-05	
Mebane									
Mill Creek Garden Club	20	6	26	17	12	0	0	27-Apr-05	
Mary Beth Moore	12	8	40	38	38	0	0	5-Apr-05	
Mary Beth Moore	26	22	131	93	83	8	0	1-Apr-05	
Moorestown									
Carol Radford	1	1	8	4	4	2	0	7-Apr-05	
Mt. Olive									
Wayne Borough Garden Club	9	2	10	10	10	0	0	8-Apr-05	
John & Virginia Pickles	6	2	15	10	10	1	1	1-Apr-05	
New London									
Wesley Eberspacher	6	4	22	21	19	2	0	20-Apr-05	
North Wilkesboro									
Lea Barnes	1	1	13	13	13	3	4	6-May-05	
Pinehurst									
Robert & Ruth Stolting	14	14	60	41	34	2	0	14-Apr-05	
Len & Joyce Tufts	22	15	75	63	63	5	0	14-Apr-05	
Purlear									
Zane T. Walsh	20	17	127	124	116	10	2	7-Apr-05	
Raleigh									
Linda Sukoski	6	4	16	16	16	5	5	15-Mar-05	
Bill Satterwhite	61	42	203	186	174	18	4	7-Apr-04	
Louise Dail	2	2	4	4	4	1	1	23-Mar-05	
Pat Dixon	1	1	5	5	4	0	0	14-Jun-05	
Ravenscroft School c/o Reah Kittelberger	4	4	28	23	22	4	0	19-Apr-05	
Reah Kittelberger	4	1	8	5	5	1	0	28-Apr-05	
Roaring River									
Randy Mays	4	2	9	9	9	0	0		
Ronda									
Samuel Bullard	2	2	15	13	13	1	0	10-Apr-05	
Rutherfordton									
Kenneth Rollins	6	3	19	18	17	1	0		
Southern Pines									
Jim & Jean Walker	70	56	265	211	200	17	1	3-Mar-05	
H. Moss, Jr	89	55	415	339	339	19	0		
Statesville									
Sue Ligon	5	4	26	26	21	3	0	1-Apr-05	
Union Mills									
Christine B. Ammons	52	43	347	269	242	26	6	23-Mar-05	
Elaine Miller	1	1	10	10	10	2	0	29-Mar-05	
Hugh Nanney	3	2	18	15	15	2	0	31-Mar-05	
Union Grove									
Joseph H. & Anne J. Critchley	5	3	29	24	24	2	1	25-Apr-05	
Wadesboro									
Doug & Luke Edwards	41	37	311	202	201	12	13	2-Apr-05	
West End									
Iris & Richard Johnson	12	8	36	29	29	2	0		
Wilkesboro									
Jim Felts	38	27	176	167	155	11	1	14-Mar-05	
Yadkinville									
Bob Southard	73	68	607	462	417	39	20	19-Mar-05	

NC Bluebird Survey 2005



North Carolina Bluebird Society's Annual Survey Facts:

* Earliest Date of First Bluebird egg laid: March 3, 2005

*Number of bluebird boxes:

2005: 1,157
 2004: 1,255
 2003: 1,286
 2002: 1,318
 2001: 1,281
 2000: 1,377

*Number of bluebird boxes used by bluebirds:

2005: 844
 2004: 855
 2003: 850
 2002: 968
 2001: 953
 2000: 1,013

* Number of bluebird eggs laid:

2005: 5,559
 2004: 6,011
 2003: 4,932
 2002: 6,723
 2001: 6,613
 2000: 6,923

* Number of Eggs Hatched:

2005: 4,314
 2004: 5,092
 2003: 3,998
 2002: 5,563
 2001: 5,324
 2000: 5,765

*Number of Bluebirds Fledged:

2005: 4,236
 2004: 4,761
 2003: 3,693
 2002: 5,098
 2001: 4,996
 2000: 5,522

Snake hunting Bluebird Eggs. He got them all!!

To Fred Benson: So how do you stop THIS from happening. Look below. (Look carefully for the snake on roof of the bird house.)

From Weta Ray Clark, Garden Editor for the Raleigh N & O Newspaper.

From Fred Benson:

I'm assuming that the bluebird eggs that were lost were originally located in the bird house shown in the picture with the snake. This is a sad and somewhat common problem when a mounting system like the one in the picture is used. Snakes, cats, raccoons, foxes, squirrels, and possums will have no trouble scaling the mounting column and removing the contents of nests.

If I were going to remedy the problem, I would remove the bird house from the current mounting column and remount it on a section of smooth galvanized pipe (minimum of 1" diameter). I would also install a large cone shaped predator guard on the pipe. The pipe and predator guard can be spray painted to match the house. On the ground centered around the mounting pole, I would create a 4-foot diameter circular barrier zone filled with very fine white play sand to a depth of approximately 2 inches. The sand adheres to snakes making it difficult and uncomfortable for them to scale the mounting pole.

The predator guard acts as a barrier if something should get that far up the pole. The sand also makes it easy to spot snake tracks and foot prints of predatory animals.

Care should also be taken to insure that the re-

mounted house is not located directly under a tree or other object that would enable predators to jump to the house. Snakes can scale trees or other objects and then drop down on bird houses.

Galvanized pipe can be purchased at Lowes or Home Depot in 10' lengths. Both companies will cut the pipe to the desired length and thread it at no extra charge. A floor flange can be attached to the bottom of the bird house and the threaded pipe can be

screwed into the flange making a very secure but easily detachable mounting system. Large cone shaped predator guards can be purchased at Ace Hardware, Wild Bird Center in Apex, or one of the Wild Birds Unlimited stores in the area.

Rat snakes are very persistent and often difficult to deter. Sometimes it is necessary to employ a snake trap (see plans for Krueger snake trap on page 10) on the mounting pole. However snake traps have to be monitored frequently because trapped snakes will die fairly quickly and they also attract other predators such as hawks looking for a meal. Trapped snakes are collected and relocated far from the bird house.



Poisonous snakes have been known to scale mounting poles and reside in the nesting chambers of bird houses. Wasps frequently build nests in bird houses. One should always exercise caution when opening and inspecting the nesting chambers of bird houses. Hope this helps.

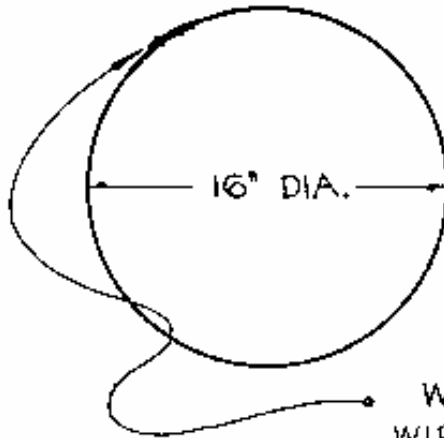
Fred

*Fred Benson . Cary, NC
(919) 469-0410
fbenson@ipass.net*

Kurger Snake Trap

SNAKE TRAP
 MADE OF
 ROSS' GARDEN NET
 3/4" SQUARE POLYPROPYLENE NET.

LIVE SNAKE EMESHED *in* NET,
 Can BE CUT LOOSE *and* FREED.



SUPPLIES:

12 GAUGE GALVANIZED WIRE
 24 GAUGE * COPPER WIRE
 3/4" x 3/4" * OR GALVANIZED
 GARDEN NET.

OVERLAP 12 GAUGE WIRE 2" *and*
 WIRE TOGETHER *with* 24 GAUGE
 WIRE.



GATHER
HERE



GATHER NET *and*
 * WIRE TIGHTLY to POLE * I USE ALUMINUM FENCE TIES.

Make 16" DIA. CIRCLE FROM 12 GA. WIRE. CUT 24"
 X 108" GARDEN NET. (GO AROUND 16" CIRCLE TWICE.)
 FASTEN 108" EDGE to 16" CIRCLE, EVERY 4 INCHES
 WITH 24 GA. WIRE.

GATHER NET *at* THE MIDDLE OF NET, SO TRAP
 WILL "STAND OUT" FROM SUPPORT POLE.

ROSS GARDEN NET.... 13' X 45' \$17.95 } *now*
 13' X 13' \$7.49 *and* 7 1/2' X 21' \$5.40 } *HIGHER!*

Mealworms: A Sweet Treat for Backyard Birds Special Report

It's prime time for bird-watching – but the season's cold snaps can mean trouble for our little winged friends, who often have a harder time getting sustenance in the winter.

The solution? Mealworms.

Small and round, mealworms are actually larval forms of the darkling beetle (*tenebrio molitor*) and are a favorite food of bluebirds and many other birds. Installing a mealworm feeder in your backyard can be quite helpful to birds during the cold winter months, when insects are scarce. In the spring, they can even promote the growth of healthy nestlings - if a plentiful food supply is readily available, the female won't have to leave her eggs for very long.

The easiest way to care for mealworms is to store them in the refrigerator, inside a shallow container that allows air circulation (holes in the cover) so the mealworms can breathe. They will remain alive, in a dormant state. Add a few pieces of apple or banana peel about once a week to provide moisture.

When you're ready to feed them to your backyard birds, place several dozen in a container with slick sides, so they won't crawl away before the birds can find them. A glass custard dish on a ledge works, or even an implanted empty soup can, with both ends cut out.

Place the feeder a good ways from your house. As the birds become aware of the food source, you can bring the mealworms closer for better bird-watching, even to your window with an acrylic stick-on feeder. Pauline Tom, a board member of the North American Bluebird Society, says, "I toss mealworms directly onto the back porch, and wrens hop along the porch picking them up."

Those who feed mealworms to their birds deem them well worth the cost, since they allow close-up views of bird species that don't eat seed. And now, a new program from the North American Bluebird Society has made it even more cost-effective to feed with mealworms. Members of the society will receive a 15 percent discount on mealworms from two leading distributors. (See

information below.) New members also receive an additional bonus when they sign up: a coupon for 1,000 free mealworms.

Individual memberships are just \$20, and family memberships are available for only \$30. In addition to the mealworm discount, members also receive a subscription to *Bluebird*, a quarterly journal with new scientific findings and a wealth of ideas and tips for bluebird lovers. To join, visit www.nabluebirdsociety.org, or send payment to NABS, 481 Athens Rd., Royston, GA 30662.

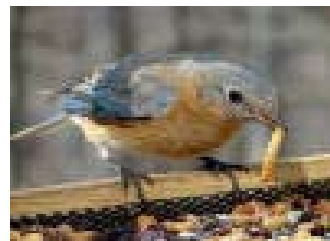
Founded in 1978, the North American Bluebird Society is a nonprofit organization dedicated to monitoring bluebird populations and leading the bluebird conservation movement.

Submitted by Jennifer Acosta Scott

Sunshine Mealworms
1-800-322-1100
7263 Gallon House Road
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Editor's Note: NCBS is an affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society. This article was submitted by Julie A. Kutruff, Vice President of the North American Bluebird Society.



Picture by Arlene Ripley

Here in North Carolina we can feed the bluebirds all year. The winters can be hard and the bluebirds stay around. They photograph particular well when the snow is the background.

Bill Abbey has researched the native plants that produce food attractive to bluebirds. This list will be posted on nbluebird.com.



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.

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North Carolina Bluebird Society Products

Description of Item	Cost Postage Included	No. Wanted	Total
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New: Bluebird Note Cards (12)	\$ 12.00	X_____	=_____
New: <i>Carolina Blue</i> Tote Bags	\$ 15.00	X_____	=_____
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by Dempsey Essick (S, M, L, XL)	\$20.00	X_____	=_____
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Video tapes and DVDs are available on the ncbird.com website.

Look out for your birds by “bird proofing” your windows

Many birds fly into windows because they cannot see the glass. During migration, this can be particularly deadly because birds can hit windows with incredible force. Some birds fly at the window because they see their reflection and think it's another bird invading their territory.

Make your windows safer for the birds and yourself by following these suggestions:

- ◆ Locate feeders and birdbaths 30+ feet from your windows. If you want your feeders close to your windows, move them to within 1-3 feet of the window, or put up a window feeder. That way, if birds hit the window when "fleeing a predator," they will not be going fast enough to harm themselves.
- ◆ Where practical, use window screens.
- ◆ Place decals, including cutouts of raptors, and leaded glass decorations in windows. .
- ◆ Put vertical exterior tape strips 10 centimeters apart on windows.
- ◆ Use interior vertical blinds and open the slats half-way.
- ◆ Cover windows with soap if appropriate.
- ◆ Plant shade trees outside windows to reduce the reflection.

Wild Birds Unlimited brochure "Prevent birds from hitting your windows" 2003

The Blue We See by Pat Johnston

Ever wonder what gives those beautiful feathers their dazzling blue tones? According to an article in the July / August issue of *Bird Watcher's Digest*, the blue in bird feathers ... is not actually chemical pigment."

The color is the result of light reflected by the structure of the feather itself. In the May, 2004 *Horizon Air Magazine*, Kathy Witkowsky explains that blue and green feather's only actual color is brown melanin. A complex lattice arrangement of the shaft, its branches, fringes, and "tiny barbs covered with cylinders of melanin" affect which light waves pass through. This results in color that truly never fades.

Isn't Mother Nature amazing?

from *Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project Newsletter, Fall 2004*

Callaway Gardens (Georgia) Not just for Golf

The delightful Eastern Bluebird is a recognized symbol of love, hope and happiness. A true friend of gardeners, bluebirds eat insects most of the year and feed on holly, sumac and other small fleshy fruits in winter. These colorful and melodious members of the thrush family forage in open, grassy areas such as pastures and orchards, and typically feed by dropping down from low perches to capture insects on the ground. Excellent eyesight allows them to spot small prey more than 100 feet away! Populations of the once common Eastern Bluebird began to drop dramatically in the late 1960s. Just two decades later their numbers had decreased by 83 percent, with extinction becoming a possibility. Several factors contributed to their decline including severe winters, habitat loss, harmful effects of pesticides, and perhaps most significantly, competition with other birds for increasingly scarce nest sites.

Bluebirds need an enclosed space for nesting, such as a hollow tree, a hole in a wooden fence post, or a specifically designed nest box. Their toughest competitors are the introduced House Sparrow and European Starling. The House Sparrow is actually a weaver finch first introduced from England in 1851. European Starlings were introduced from Europe in 1890 by some well-meaning people who thought American should have all the birds mentioned in Shakespeare's plays. Within a few years these aggressive birds multiplied and spread and now live through North America.

Today the Eastern Bluebird is gradually making a comeback largely due to citizen-led campaigns to erect bluebird nesting boxes. Bluebirds will readily accept artificial cavities in suitable habitat if the design and placement provide protection from competitors and predators. These efforts to provide bluebird nesting boxes have been remarkably successful. At Callaway dedicated citizen scientist volunteers monitor 114 bluebird nest boxes from March to August, collectively donating more than 500 hours a year to this activity.

"Bluebirds Making a Comeback" by Rosalind "Season" Platt, Interpretive Naturalist printed in Inside Callaway, Vol. 3 Issue 2 Summer 2005.

North Carolina Bluebird Society

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Mission Statement

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

Please help the bluebirds by volunteering to help with:

- _____ Newsletters
 _____ Meetings
 _____ Box Building
 _____ Publicity
 _____ Membership
 _____ Nominations
 _____ County Coordinator program
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Contributions to the Newsletter

Sharing Bluebird information and stories make this an unique publication

Please submit to: Helen Munro, Co-editor
 22 Bobolink Rd. Jackson Springs, NC 27281
 Phone - (910) 673-6936 Fax - (910) 673-7345
 e-mail - hsmunro@ac.net

For Slide Programs, Videos and Education Material,
 Please Contact: Hank Moss, Jr.
 525 Fairway Drive Southern Pines, NC 28387
 (910) 692-2328 hmjr@pinehurst.net

Attention NCBS Members

Check out the August *Bluebird Notes*

<http://www.ncbluebird.com/news>

Password: **summer**

If you like this delivery method and would like to receive your NCBS newsletter, *Bluebird Notes*, on line, please do this:

Send your email address to
newsonline@ncbluebird.com.

Four times a year you will be emailed the internet address and password to access the newsletter a full ten days early. Wishing to change back, send a note to **newsonline@ncbluebird.com**.



This cartoon by Dempsey Essick from the November 2002 *Bluebird Notes* says it all. When you are thinking about Holiday Gifts for your loved ones, remember that a membership to the North Carolina Bluebird Society is not fattening and a newsletter will arrive four times during the following year. Check out page 13 for other items from the Bluebird Store.

Alternatives to Meal Worms—Bluebird Miracle Meal or Winter Pudding

Feeding meal worms to birds is not for everyone. However, there are many recipes that are fun to make and can be offered either on a platform feeder or in one of the specialized meal worm feeders.

I was surprised the first time I saw a bluebird feasting on the crunchy peanut butter, lard and a bird-seed mixture smeared on a pinecone. I can only assume that they were picking around the seeds.

Bluebird Miracle Meal

(The Nestbox, Issue 20, Spring, 2005)

4 cups yellow corn meal
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup lard or melted suet
1 teaspoon corn oil
Plus sunflower hearts, peanut hearts, chopped soaked raisins.

Directions: Melt lard and stir in other ingredients. Spike with sunflower hearts, peanut hearts or chopped soaked raisins, as desired. Let set, cut into chunks, feed as suet.

How to Render Suet.

Feed the Birds by Helen Witty & Dick Witty
“To ‘render’ suet is to melt the pure fat free of the membranes that weave around, over and through it. Rendered suet is first choice for most bird recipes calling for fat. Shortening, drippings and lard are good substitutes.”

This book has many recipes some of which feature high protein dog food. This dog food has also been recommended as feed for meal worms. Each year I make some sort of Winter Pudding and the ingredients are determined by what is in the cupboard.

Winter Pudding

Chuck Bliss, NCBS Vice-President

1 quart water
1 stick margarine
Boil water & melt margarine
Stir in 2 cups of grits. Cook until mixture is thickened and take from the stove.
Mix in 1/2 cup peanut butter and add chopped raisins or sunflower hearts.
Put in a baking pan. Let it cool and cut into squares. Store in the refrigerator.

Helen S. Munro, Editor

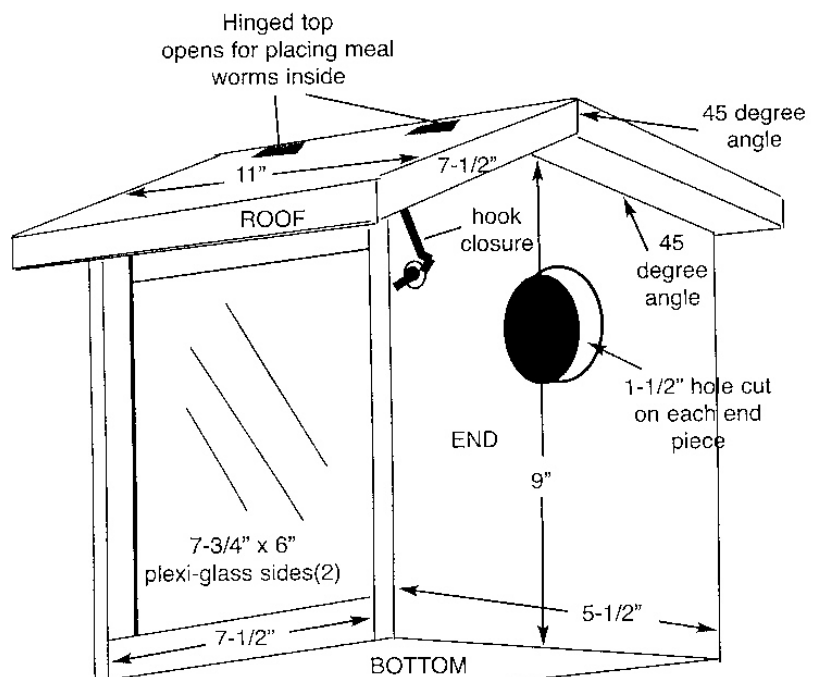
Meal worm feeder

Cut roof pieces to 11" and ends to 9" lengths. Cut 45 degree angles at top of each end piece. Score a 1/8" saw cut 1/2" in from the edge of the ends inside for the plexi glass to slide into. The bottom is 7-1/2" long. Rip 1 edge of each roof piece at 45 degree angles.

These butt together at the top. Nail one piece to the ends and hinge the other to it. Add hook and eyelet.

Bluebirds will have to learn to use this type of feeder. Start by removing the plexiglass and placing the meal worms in a dish. When the bluebirds start using the open box, the plexi is installed, and the starlings, etc. are kept out, though the bluebirds go in thru the end holes. Make sure you watch to see that the bluebirds don't get trapped inside.

If you don't want to build your own another way is to buy a hopper style bird feeder and drill 1-1/2" holes in each end.



North Carolina Bluebird Society County Coordinators

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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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