



NCBS Logo with Carolina Blue by Dempsey Essick

Bluebird Notes

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Volume 25 Issue 1

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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Giving Brown-headed Nuthatches a Helping Hand

Mark Stanback, a professor of Biology at Davidson College, has been studying Eastern Bluebirds for over a decade. In recent years he and his students have shifted their focus to another embattled cavity nester, the Brown-headed Nuthatch. The decline of this species in recent decades has typically been attributed to the destruction of the old-growth, fire-maintained, southeastern pine forests that this species favors. Moreover, they are not generally thought of as a species that utilizes nest boxes to a significant degree. However, Stanback and his students have conducted a series of experiments that have demonstrated that these nuthatches readily use nest boxes on suburban golf courses, but only if these boxes are provided with “bluebird-proof” entrance holes. When Stanback and his students provided a subset of boxes with 1” entrance holes, they observed dramatic increases in breeding by Brown-headed Nuthatches. When they returned 1.5” holes to boxes, bluebirds quickly usurped the boxes from the nuthatches. Stanback encourages Bluebird Society members who monitor golf course nest boxes (especially those with some scattered pines) to consider making some of their boxes available to Brown-headed

Nuthatches by providing them with a 1” hole. Bluebirds have been, for the most part, the sole beneficiaries of our nest boxes. As a society that values all native cavity nesters, perhaps it’s time to extend a helping hand to this charismatic but unappreciated state treasure. The Brown-headed Nuthatch is found only in the Southeast, it’s one of the few cooperative breeders in North America, and, most importantly, it needs our help.

Editor’s Note: The Bluebird population has made an amazing comeback due to the efforts of the bluebird societies and their thousands of monitors. Some monitors consider birds other than bluebirds in their boxes as a failure. Of course, this is not the case because any native birds given a home, especially where we have destroyed their normal habitat, is a good thing.

The Brown Headed Nuthatch only nests once early in the spring. The bluebirds can nest three times. Consider modifying a couple of boxes with an one inch opening. I am!

Helen S. Munro, Editor



Bluebird Notes

Issue 24 Vol. 4

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Bluebird Tales



This photograph of a carved bluebirds was submitted by the artist Randal Martin. I am sharing it with you as something that the beautiful bluebird has inspired.

His web page is www.woodfeathers.com.

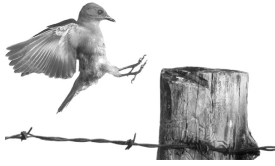
“Randal Martin began to discover his talents early. ‘My parents tell me I have been drawing since I was old enough to hold a pencil. With the reams of old papers, art pads and illustrations they still keep, I guess it must be true,’ he says.

“In the two dimensional realm, I enjoy all mediums: graphite, watercolor, oil, and acrylic. As an outdoor enthusiast and nature lover, I enjoy wildlife art, landscapes, and capturing both the pride and sorrow of the Native American Indian.”

“His first foray into the three-dimensional realm was carving Meerschaum pipes. He later began working with clay, creating a series of Native American bronze busts. But after carving his first bird from wood, he knew he had found his real passion. ‘I typically have four or five carvings going at once, and as they come to life, I can't wait to begin another,’ says Martin. ‘There has been more demand for wildfowl woodcarvings than any other form of my art. While I enjoy the reactions of those who purchase my work, I would keep on carving, whether I had buyers or not.’”

The website goes onto say, “Martin feels that his greatest honor to date was being selected to carve a bluebird ornament for the nation's White House Christmas tree for an 'All Creatures Great and Small' seasonal theme. He and his wife were invited to attend the unveiling at the White House.”





Bluebird Tales



Where do bluebirds go in the fall?

A question came into the NCBS website about where the bluebirds go in the fall. This is one of answers that came in via email:

After 20 years of observing bb's in the field (my home) they do seem to disappear in the fall when there is plenty of food in the fields, gardens, new fields (worms) and occasionally a pair will come by and check out their old house. They will be back as soon as the weather shows some change in the spring to claim their nest. Hope this will service some of my good friends who have helped me in the past. I am still here and listening !!!!

Catherine Traylor bblady - in Cumberland County

Another possible food for bluebirds



I have attached a picture taken yesterday (January 10, 2010) at our house of a little bluebird eating from a feeder. My husband was so excited that the new blend of feed that he purchased is drawing them to the feeders instead of just the suet.

The blend is called "Choice" and it is Wild Birds Unlimited brand name. It consists of sunflower seeds, sunflower chips, peanut splits, safflower and vegetable oil. It advertises a lot of nuts - high energy blend.

They seem to really like it!

Thanks,
Pat Bumgarner

A special NCBS welcome to three new County Coordinators:

Anne Johnson - County Coordinator for Wilkes County

Amy Nester - County Coordinator for Orange County

Mike Plummer - County Coordinator for Pender County

Great Crested

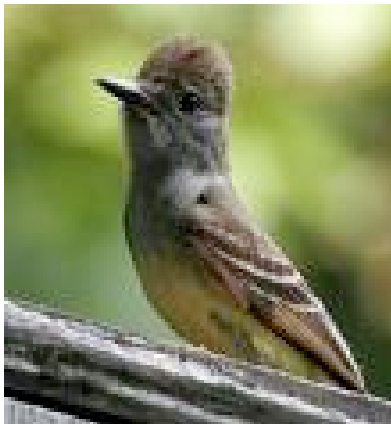
Editor's Note: Two consecutive summers, I had Great Crested Flycatchers in my backyard. They chose the modified nest box that the bluebirds thought of as their mealworm cafeteria to nest in. The bluebirds, of course, took exception and battled the Flycatchers for ownership. The Flycatchers laid their eggs in the cut off two liter soda container that originally contained the mealworms. The first year none of the four eggs hatched. The second year all of them hatched. Hence my interest in the following email from Keith Kridler.

On the Bluebird list they were asking **WHY Great Crested Flycatchers use a snake skin in most of their nests?** I thought you all would enjoy my reply.
Keith Kridler

The Great Crested Flycatchers normally build in nest boxes that have a minimum of a 1&3/4" diameter entrance hole. This is normally the size entrance hole the Red Bellied, Red Headed and I believe the Hairy Woodpecker end up leaving behind after they nest. There is a whole slew of species of woodpeckers that hammer out this size or larger entrance hole to a cavity.

All of my early encounters with nesting Great Crested Flycatchers were in man made nest boxes sized for the Yellow Shafted Flickers. All were in boxes mounted up in open branched trees at about 20 feet off the ground or the top of a 20 foot extension ladder.

Normally these birds will use a snake skin in the box as others have mentioned. If you tap on the sides of their box when the female is incubating, the defensive action of these birds consist of a loud hissing just as some species of snakes will do as they suck in air and expel it making you aware that you are now too close to the snake or in this case a female Great Crested Flycatcher.



IF you go ahead and open up the nest box or poke your fingers into the entrance hole their second line of defense kicks in! The female will begin to hiss AND lunge at you with lightning speed simulating a snake that is coiled up inside the nest box and is striking at say a flying squirrel or other bird that is attempting to enter the box. Remember that normally bird eyes are adjusted to bright outside sunshine and when they lean into a nest box that is dark on the inside they are ONLY going to get a quick glimpse of movement, hissing and what appears to be a snake lunging at them. They have a split second to escape a snake and few are going to go back for a second look.

Purple Martins often abandon a whole colony location for several years if a snake wipes out part of the colony.

Flying Squirrels are a HORRIBLE predator of most species of cavity nesters!!!! Again they are active at night coming out of hiding right at dusk and heading back to cavities before the sun clears the horizon. Again they can be frightened away from a cavity with the hissing and with what appears and smells like a snake in a dark cavity.

On ONE occasion the female Great Crested Flycatcher was striking at my face WHILE she held about a foot long piece of snake skin in her mouth. When the females strike they normally gap their mouth wide open to make it appear to a smaller predator that they are about to be swallowed whole. I am not sure if this one struck with the skin stuck to it's beak on purpose or if the skin just got in the way as she struck at me. The reaction in your brain to seeing all this shiny snake skin in motion is heart stopping at less than a foot distance!

I have fallen out of trees TWICE in my early blue-

(Continued on page 5)

Flycatcher

birding years while checking nest boxes!!!! Once when I reached into a nest box mounted so high I had to count eggs and young birds by feeling them ONLY and pulled out a baby bird filled sleeping snake out of the nest and it attempted to strike me right in my eyes when it cleared the top of the box! Both the snake and I made a gravity induced trip to the ground but I made a split second decision to fling that snake as far away as possible during the two second fall. (I NEVER found that snake to take revenge on it after I got some air into my lungs!) A human will fall 16 feet during the first full second! Bouncing off of tree limbs on the way down takes very little off of the initial speed of a fall.

The second time was when I shinned up the 18 feet or so to a nest box mounted to a long thin trunk limbless pine tree. Here I was in blue jean cut offs, tree bark cutting indentions into bare thigh skin while I hung on to the top of the nest box with one hand and pulled the latch pin out of the nest box side and opened it with my "free hand". Well, as the side of the box opened up, all I saw was a long shiny coil of snake skin wrapped around some sort of bird nest. Then there was this EXTREMELY loud hiss, possibly the buzz of a rattlesnake coming out of the darkness as my nose was only about 6" away from the nest. My eyes refused to focus this close and then out of the black recesses of the nestbox I saw two beady eyes, a huge open mouth coming at my face which caused an involuntary reaction in my leg muscles to begin the process of jumping back and away from the danger.

JUST this tiny change in leg pressure caused a searing, burning sensation as I immediately slipped down the sharp bark about 3 feet. With tanned skin and hide giving way to raw pink meat,



one side of my brain said to clamp down tighter and stop the fall but the other side of my brain forced me to bail out. So once again I am laying flat on my back and it would appear that I have been bucked off a wild horse and tossed into the straddle position of riding a pine tree now.

As I lay there getting air back into my lungs, watching the clouds drift by and listening to all the birds laughing, singing or whatever. My brain now had time to piece together the mental image of what I saw in that split second. Hind sight from 18 feet away I now KNOW it was just a Great Crested Flycatcher defending her nest. I do not recall shutting the side door on the nest box but it appears to be closed from where I am laying in the weeds. I am guessing it ONLY took about four seconds to open that box and then get 18 feet away.

ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS "LOOK" into a nest box from a safe distance BEFORE you put bare fingers into an entrance hole or stick your bare nose right into the danger zone of an open nest box!!!!

These birds' call, out in the wild, sound like TTTTREEEEEEEP, TREEEEEEEP, TREEEEEP, TREEEP, TREEEP, TREEEP or to me they sound like a HIDEOUS Woody the Woodpecker laughter as generation after generation of these birds have passed on the story about the boy, their maternal grandmother scared right out of a pine tree, so many years ago!!!! To this day every time one of these birds spot me they belt out this call to all of the birds nearby.....Although the road rash healed in a week or so and quit burning that was the LAST time I shinned up a tree to check on what was using one of my nest boxes!

Keith Kridler Mt. Pleasant, Texas



Bluebirds, Inside the Nest Box

Recorded by the Cornell Birdhouse Network

Summer 1999

Produced by the North Carolina Bluebird Society

VHS available for \$15.00 including shipping and handling.

DVD available for \$13.00 including shipping and handling.

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
Magnets with Bluebird & Dogwood	\$ 4.00	X _____	= _____
Magnets with State Outline/Bluebird	\$ 4.00	X _____	= _____
Bluebird Earrings (clipped)	\$ 7.00	X _____	= _____
Bluebird Earrings (pierced)	\$ 7.00	X _____	= _____
Caps with NCBS Logo	\$ 13.00	X _____	= _____
Bluebird Note Cards (12)	\$ 12.00	X _____	= _____
<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 _____	= _____
Cloisonné Bluebird Pins (1inch, 4 colors)	\$ 5.00	X _____	= _____
<i>Bluebirds Forever</i> (12 page booklet)	\$ 3.00	X _____	= _____
2 copies	\$ 5.00	X _____	= _____
<i>On the Wings of a Song—CD</i>	\$ 8.00	X _____	= _____
<i>Bluebirds, Inside the Nestbox</i> DVD	\$ 13.00	X _____	= _____
(DVD special 2 for \$20; 3 for \$30; 6 for \$60)			
<i>Roberta Lee</i> Bluebird Poster 18" x 24"	\$12.50	X _____	= _____
			Total = _____

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: **NCBS.**

SEND ORDER & CHECK TO:

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

Prices good through 12/10

Date of your order is _____

NCBS Nesting Survey 2009

Many thanks to Reah Kittelberger for once again compiling the NCBS Bluebird Survey for 2009. Last year there were 1,094 nest boxes reported. This year there are only 815. Does this mean that there are almost 300 fewer nest boxes in existence or that there are 300 nest boxes reported last year that did not get reported this year?

The results of the nesting survey for 2009 is on page 8 & 9. Take a few minutes to look over the results. If you compare the year 2000 with 2009 (below), the number hatched divided by the number of eggs laid showed a decline from 80% to 68%. This is the lowest in the last ten years. The question is "Is it a trend or just a very bad year?"

First Egg laid on

March 1, 2009

Number of Bluebird Eggs laid:	Number of Eggs Hatched:	Number of Bluebirds Fledged:	BB Fledged/Eggs Laid
2009: 4182	2009: 3263	2009: 2875	68%
2008: 4,766	2008: 3,954	2008: 3,689	76%
2007: 5,659	2007: 4,479	2007: 4,174	74%
2006: 6,430	2006: 5,241	2006: 4,962	77%
2005: 5,559	2005: 4,314	2005: 4,236	76%
2004: 6,011	2004: 5,092	2004: 4,761	79%
2003: 4,932	2003: 3,998	2003: 3,693	75%
2002: 6,723	2002: 5,563	2002: 5,098	76%
2001: 6,613	2001: 5,324	2001: 4,996	76%
2000: 6,923	2000: 5,765	2000: 5,522	80%

Several years ago, I had a request for NCBS Nesting Surveys. I copied the surveys from 1995 to 2006. Then I looked for the name and address! It had become a victim of the Bermuda Triangle that is my desk!! If you are that person or would like to analyze the nesting surveys, please let me know (hsmunro@ac.net or 910-673-6936) and I will try to do better. I would include copies of 2007-2009 and look back to see what is available from the years prior to 1995.

Glenda Ryan, our web mistress, may be able to make it so we can enter the nest box information on-line. Would this guarantee that more people would participate? Do you feel that we should simplify the survey form so it is total bluebird eggs, hatchlings and fledglings for the year or do you like it broken down into the first, second and third broods?

Please let me know and I will pass your comments on to Glenda.

Helen S. Munro, Editor

Complied by Reah Kittelberger

NCBS 2009 Survey

<u>Name</u>	<u># of</u> Boxes	<u>w/bb</u>	<u># BB</u> eggs	<u>hatched</u>	<u>fledged</u>	<u>2 sets</u>	<u>3 sets</u>	<u>1st date</u>
North Carolina by Towns:								
Apex								
Theresa Korab	1	1	4	2	2	0	0	8-Jun-09
Asheville								
Diane Hankins	4	1	5	5	5	0	0	20-Apr-09
Bunlevel								
Terry M. Herndon	22	22	240	135	129	6	7	24-Mar-09
Cary								
Carl & Tres Bartels	1	1	5	5	5	0	0	
Ann & John Sykes c/o Penny Road Elem.	12	8	30	22	22	0	0	1-Mar-09
Ann Sykes	1	1	12	10	10	1	1	1-Mar-09
Chapel Hill								
Lois Herring	12	4	19	17	17	1	0	8-Apr-09
Charlotte								
Rick & Karen Mitchell	1	1	10	8	8	1	1	15-Mar-09
Clemmons								
Bill Abbey	47	39	322	214	203	26	16	3-Apr-09
Concord								
Carolyn V.E. Foil	4	1	15	15	15	1	1	24-Mar-09
Fayetteville								
Wilbur & Catherine M. Traylor	5	2	7	5	5	1	1	15-Apr-09
Four Oaks								
Ethelene Allen	68	68	373	247				23-Mar-09
Fuquay-Varina								
Fuquay-Varina High School/Randy Senzig	42	17	98	76	76	15	0	1-Apr-09
Garner								
Joye Stephenson c/o Lake Benson Park	12	8	57	43	33	6	8	1-Apr-09
Joye Stephenson Garner Sr Center	1	1	5	4	4	0	0	18-Apr-09
Joye Stephenson & Phil Egan	2	1	12	8	8	1	1	15-Mar-09
Diane Woerner	2	2	15	10	10	1	0	22-Mar-09
Gibsonville								
Pamela Kirby	4	3	15	9	9	3	0	3-Apr-09
C Benson, S Buchanan, F Outhwaite	30	22	124	121	99	11	1	21-Mar-09
Greensboro								
Bryan Park Players Course c/o Wild Birds Unl.	38	35	256	248	232	29	0	6-Apr-09
Bur-Mil Park by Sandra Matthews Wild Birds.	9	8	56	49	49	6	0	12-Apr-09
The Grande & Golf Course c/o Jim Jochum	16	16	80	61	61			
Hendersonville								
Joe Sanders	3	2	18	16	16	2	0	10-Apr-09
Hickory								
Lake Hickory CC c/o Robert Warmuth	74	74	354	260	230			3-Apr-09

<u>Name</u>	<u># of</u>	<u>w/bb</u>	<u># BB</u>	<u>hatched</u>	<u>fledged</u>	<u>2 sets</u>	<u>3 sets</u>	<u>1st date</u>
North Carolina by Towns	Boxes		eggs					
Jackson Springs								
Foxfire Garden Club	81	46	399	311	306	44	5	30-Mar-09
Foxfire Village Green Park	7	1	19	17	17	3	3	13-Apr-09
Liberty								
Brian H. Greene, JR	3	3	25	16	16	3	0	
Morganton								
Linda Julien	19	15	133	119	119	14	2	29-Mar-09
New Bern								
Don Elsass	3	1	20	20	19	1	2	3-Apr-09
Pinehurst								
Pinehurst Greenway Wildlife Habitat	11	8	64	48	46	6	1	28-Mar-09
Edward Bator, Jr.	2	1	4	2	2	0	0	26-Apr-09
Purlear								
Zane T. Walsh	20	13	91	83	80	7	3	
Raleigh								
Sandy Thach	3	1	12	12	12	1	1	21-Mar-09
Marian Pollard	1	1	5	5	5	0	0	
Barbara Pearce	3	1	5	5	5	0	0	
NC Museum of Art/Park	9	7	21	18	15	2	0	
Louise Dail	2	2	10	10	9	0	0	19-Mar-09
Susan Wyatt	24	16	118	104	102	8	2	24-Mar-09
Ravenscroft School - Reah Kittelberger	4	4	39	38	38	4	3	20-Mar-09
The Kittelberger Family	5	1	5	5	5	0	0	12-Apr-09
Southern Pines								
Jean & Jim Walker	68	37	262	180	178			29-Mar-09
Statesville								
Sue Ligon	7	5	40	28	27			1-Apr-09
Union Mills								
Christine B Ammons	58	47	403	334	321	40	10	23-Mar-09
Louise Keck	1	1	4	4	4	0	0	2-Jul-09
Pearl Barnette	1	1	10	5	5	1	0	28-Apr-09
Walnut Cove								
Randolph Agee	2	2	11	11	10	2	0	
West End								
Marisa Back	1	1	9	7	7	1	0	18-Apr-09
Bob & Ruth Stolting	16	9	89	70	65	4	8	12-Apr-09
Iris & Richard Johnson	10	10	49	47	47	6	1	
Wilkesboro								
Jim Felts	36	31	168	141	134	0	0	10-Mar-09
Teresa Moore	1	1	4	4	4	0	0	
Wilmington								
Judith Marcy	2	1	13	11	11	1	1	19-Mar-09
Winston-Salem								
John Carroll	3	1	9	9	9	1	0	16-Apr-09
Wayne Moore	1	1	9	9	9	1	0	
Totals for 2009	815	607	4182	3263	2875	261	79	

Directions to the Garner Senior Center & Econo Lodge 205 East Garner Road, Garner, NC

From points north, east or west:

Point of reference I-40 exit 298 Intersection with South Saunders Street

Continue on South Saunders in a southeastern direction (away from Raleigh)

At US 70 & US 401 split, continue on US70/NC50

At sixth (6th) traffic light, turn left onto New Rand Road (ABC store on right at light)

Cross Railroad track, turn left onto East Garner Road

Senior Center on two-tenths (0.2) of a mile on right

The **Econo Lodge** is just after the US 70 & US 401 split.

Again, continue on US70/NC50, just after the US 70 & US 401 split, turn left at the first light onto Mechanical Blvd. Go to 1602 Mechanical Blvd.

The **Golden Corral** is across the street from the Econo Lodge.

From points south:

Point of reference US70 Business Intersection with I40 exit 306

Continue on US70 West in a northwestern direction toward Garner/Raleigh

At second (2d) traffic light, turn right onto New Rand Road (ABC store on left at light)

Cross Railroad track, turn left onto East Garner Road
Senior center on two-tenths (0.2) of a mile on right

To go to the **Econo Lodge**, continue up US 70 and turn right on Mechanical Blvd.

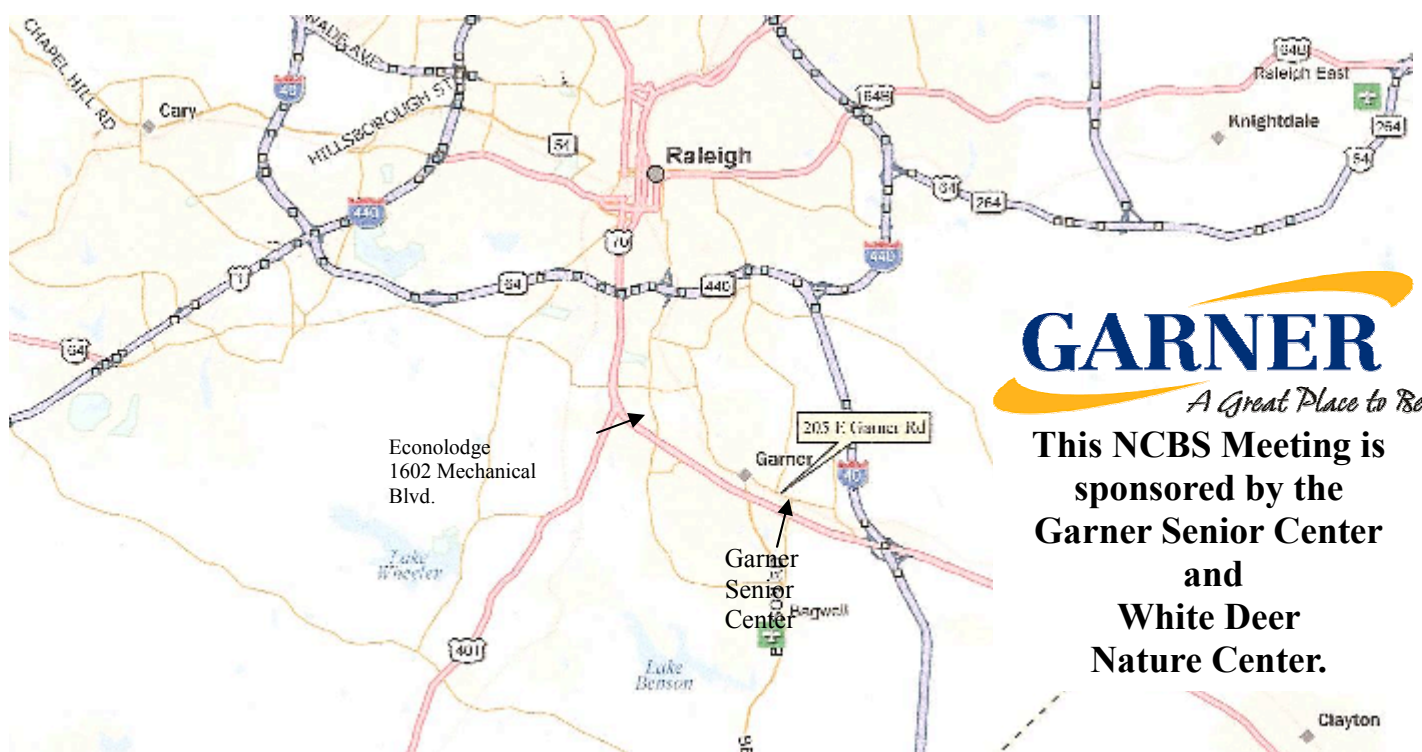
From Econo Lodge South to the Garner Senior Center:

Turn right from parking lot

At traffic light, turn left onto US70 in southeastern direction

At fifth (5th) traffic light, turn left onto New Rand Road (ABC store on right at light)

Cross Railroad track, turn left onto East Garner Road
Senior center two-tenths (0.2) of a mile on right



GARNER

A Great Place to Be

This NCBS Meeting is
sponsored by the
**Garner Senior Center
and
White Deer
Nature Center.**

North Carolina Bluebird Society Annual Meeting
Garner Senior Center <http://www.ci.garner.nc.us>
205 E. Garner Rd. Garner, NC 27529
Saturday, April 17, 2010 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

- 8:00 – 8:30 a.m. Registration, Coffee, NCBS Membership, NCBS Store, Silent Auction, Door Prizes
Please leave door prizes/silent auction items at the registration table.
- 8:30 - 9:00 a.m. Bluebirders Forum – Question and Answer Period
Moderators: Bill Satterwhite, Wake County Coordinator and Jimmy Miller, Treasurer
- 9:00 – 9:15 a.m. Welcome – President, Ray Welch
Wing of a Song by Kay Hindsley
- 9:15 – 9:45 a.m. Business Session (by-laws, elections, etc.)
- 9:45 – 10:45 a.m. Dr. Douglas Pratt, Research Curator of Birds, NC Museum of Natural Sciences, Raleigh <http://www.hdouglaspratt.com/>
"Illustrating Nature: Life at the Interface of Art and Science"
- 10:45 – 11:15 a.m. Break for everyone (Check out Silent Auction & purchase door prize tickets)
County Coordinators meet in Arts and Crafts Room
- 11:15: 12:15 p.m. Dr. Lynn Siefferman, Behavioral Ecologist, Department of Biology, Appalachian State University <http://www.today.appstate.edu/bluebirds/>
"Plumage Coloration and Personality in Eastern Bluebirds"
- 12:30 – 2:00 p.m. Lunch (Draw for prizes, etc.)
- 2:30 – 3:30 p.m. To be held at White Deer Nature Center in coordination with the Town of Garner's Earth Day Celebration
Presentation by Steve Stone, Head America Wildlife Refuge (Wildlife Rehabilitation and Nature Education)
<http://americanwildliferefuge.org>

Registration Form—Saturday, April 17, 2010

Deadline—April 10, 2010

Name #1 _____ Name #2 _____
Phone # 1 _____ Phone #2 _____
Email Address _____
County _____

Please send checks to: NCBS, c/o Gail Miller, P.O. Box 589, Garner, NC 27529-0589

(919) 772-9457

annualmeeting@ncbluebird.org

_____ Adult registration & Lunch	\$15	\$	_____
_____ Child registration & Lunch	\$ 5	\$	_____
_____ Adult registration only	\$10	\$	_____
	Total: \$		_____

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

Friday Night—Dinner & Lodging

Friday: April 16, 2010

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 6:30 pm. at the Golden Corral that is right across the parking lot from the Econo Lodge. We will be in the room reserved for the North Carolina Bluebird Society. 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.

Econo Lodge South (NC140)

1602 Mechanical Blvd. , Garner, NC,, 27529
Phone: (919) 779-7888 Fax: (919) 779-4603

Rooms will be held until April 9th, at rate of \$63.75
http://www.econolodge.com/hotel-garner-north_carolina-NC140

Please call local number 919-779-7888 and identify yourself as reserving a room as part of the NC Bluebird Society.



Helping the Bluebirds in the Winter

If you monitor nest boxes between March and August, you have a great chance of seeing bluebirds. However, in the winter when the bluebirds are fighting to survive, you increase your chances of seeing bluebirds by offering them food in your backyard.

Consider planting Multiflora Rose, American Holly, Western red Cedar, Red Chokeberry, Virginia Creeper, High-bush Cranberry, Flowering Dogwood, Mountain Ash, Washington Hawthorn, Sumac, Pyracantha, Spicebush, Inch Berry, Hack Berry, Coralberry, Bittersweet, Bayberry Moon Seed or Black Alder. All these produce berries that bluebirds can use to supplement their primarily insect diet.

The No Melt Suet Recipe is a favorite with all the birds. The addition of the cayenne pepper helps to keep the squirrels from eating it. I watched a squirrel bite in to my freshly made batch and then drop to the water garden and drink water as fast as he could. My latest batch does not have pepper in and the squirrel can be seen hanging onto the wire feeder and gorging himself on this delightful treat.

I do not feed the bluebirds mealworms except in January through March. Normally, I put them in a mealworm feeder to keep the rest of the birds from eating the mealworms, but this year, I am using a simple plastic tray from a Wild Bird Unlimited bird feeder. Each day the mealworms are gone, but I haven't seen who took them.

A mealworm feeder for bluebirds forces the bluebirds to go through a hole into a cavity to find the mealworms. Other birds are either too large for the hole or will not go into a cavity to get food. The first meal-

worm feeder that I used was a modified nest box that I purchased from Jack Finch. It had a tray on top to put mealworms in as advertising for the mealworms that were reserved for the bluebirds inside. The other mealworm feeder I used was purchased at Lowes Hardware. It is like a seed hopper feeder except that there are holes at both ends and Plexiglas for the sides. The mealworms are put inside and the



bluebirds fit through the one and half inch holes. (Picture is from Duncraft website.)

This morning a female bluebird who comes to tap on the transit above the front door was back. I have placed some mealworms for her on the front steps and

will watch to see if she spots them in her trips to let me know that she is here.

Here are the phone numbers for several mail order sources of mealworms. They can be obtained locally, but it is generally more expensive.

1. **Nature's Way—1-800-318-2611**
2. **Grubo—1-800-222-3563**
3. **Sunshine—1-503-873-8989**
4. **Rainbow—1-800-777-9676**

Helen S. Munro, Editor

North Carolina Bluebird Society




Photo by Frank Ripp
Whispering Pines
January, 2008

No Melt Suet Recipe
by Susan Campbell
Whispering Pines, NC

1 cup creamy peanut butter
1 cup lard
Melt together and add 2 cups oatmeal, 2 to 3 cups cornmeal, 1 cup flour and a couple tablespoons. Cayenne pepper if you need to keep the squirrels away.

Variation: Add 1/2 cup white millet or Sunflower hearts.

Jean Ripp

North Carolina Bluebird Society

NORTH CAROLINA BLUEBIRD SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

North Carolina Bluebird Society Dues:

() 1 Year (\$10.00)

() 3 Years (\$25.00)

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E-mail address _____

I prefer to access the NCBS Bluebird Notes newsletter via the Internet rather than have it mailed to me.

Yes	No
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Access information will be sent to the E-mail address you furnished including advance notification of membership expiration.

If you elect to receive the Bluebird Notes newsletter by mail, your Membership Expiration appears on your Mailing Label.

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

North Carolina Bluebird Society
ATTN: David Hindsley
135 Lakeview Drive
Tarboro, NC 27886

I am interested in:

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

Contributions to the Newsletter

Sharing Bluebird information and stories make this an unique publication

Please submit to: Helen Munro, Co-editor
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e-mail - hsmunro@ac.net

Slide Programs, Videos and books can be borrowed,
Please Contact: Hank Moss, Jr.

525 Fairway Drive Southern Pines, NC 28387
(910) 692-2328 hmjr@nc.rr.com

NCBS Original Members

NCBS was founded in 1986. The following people have been members for the past 24 years.

Bill	Abbey	Clemmons
Ethelene	Allen	Four Oaks
Christine	Ammons	Union Mills
Sara	Capps	Asheville
Frances McGee	Cook	Trinity
Joseph & Ann	Critchley	Union Grove
Brian	Greene, Jr.	Liberty
Richard	Griffin	Norwood
Frances	Hunley	Monroe
Eloise	Job	Bethania
Iris & Richard	Johnson	West End
Bea	Mansfield	Reidsville
Fran	Outhwaite	Burlington
Len & Joyce	Tufts	Pinehurst
Muriel	Wilson	Greensboro

The current NCBS Board wishes to acknowledge this milestone in loyalty and all of their past, present and future support for the bluebirds of North Carolina.

Thank You!!!

Speakers for NCBS 2010

Dr. Lynn Siefferman



“The evolution of plumage color fascinates Dr. Lynn Siefferman.

A behavioral ecologist at Appalachian State University, Siefferman researches variations in feather color of the Eastern bluebird – how brightness correlates with personality traits and choice of mate. Using more than 200 bird boxes in rural Watauga County, she has attracted a substantial bird population for studying mating behavior and for collecting feathers to examine in her campus lab.”

She finds that “more colorful males tend to be less aggressive than the duller birds, even during mating season.”

<http://today.appstate.edu/bluebirds/>

Dr. H. Douglas Pratt



“Ornithologist and illustrator Dr. H. Douglas Pratt is Research Curator of Birds at the North Carolina State Museum of Natural Sciences in Raleigh. He is a native of Charlotte, but spent 35 years as a student and research associate at Louisiana State University before returning to NC in 2005. A Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union, Dr. Pratt has conducted numerous research expeditions to Hawaii, Micronesia, and Polynesia, and is a pioneer in the recording of vocalizations of Pacific island birds. His scientific papers have been published in many journals, and his popular guides to birds, plants and wildlife are local best sellers in Hawaii.”

<http://artist-registry.stanford.edu/html/Pratt.html>

More about Nuthatches

Christine Ammons reports that in 2008, she had nuthatches building on February 23 and four eggs on March 26. In 2007, the nuthatches built on February 12 with eggs on March 24 and young reported on April 8th.

On March 24, 2008, it was 22 degrees. This bird put material in all of the cracks, in the vent holes and along the door opening. She hated to open box and cause this to fall out. The birds must have worked a long time to get nesting material in these boxes that are just so big.



The bluebirds do not nest this early.

Homes for Bluebirds Box on the left had its one and nine-sixteenth inch hole reduced to one inch using a Hillman hardened flat washer (\$1.15). The washer was fastened with weather stripping that had adhesive on both sides.

The *Credit Union Box* on the right had its hole reduced from one and half inches to one inch using a washer (\$.45) with those dimensions. It was held in place by caulking.



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THE NORTH CAROLINA BLUEBIRD SOCIETY

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