BLUEBIRD NOTES BLUEBIRD



GUILFORD COUNTY BLUEBIRDS SEND AUTUMN GREETINGS

Edward Haynes of Oak Ridge, North Carolina has given us many fabulous bluebird photos. He has snapped some awesome ones in his back yard. This amazing composite he provided will help start off your season of autumn with some education and cheer. Isn't it great to see how well Blues in Guilford County are doing? How nice to see so many stages of bluebirds lives represented visually. These photos illustrate the circle of life in the bluebird community: home selection / feathering the nest; arrival of blue eggs; baby blues hatching; adults feeding the young; fledglings taking flight, learning how to secure food, and eventually becoming parents themselves. See <u>ncbluebird.org</u> and <u>nabluebirdsociety.org</u> for more details about bluebirds, the joy they bring, and what you can do to help them overcome challenges to survive.





North Carolina Bluebird Society (NCBS) Mission Statement

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

NCBS is an affiliate member of the North American Bluebird Society.

www.ncbluebird.org

Autumn Report from Ken Kernodle

As the coronavirus pandemic continues to challenge, change, and reshape our lives, I am hopeful all of you are well and adjusting safely to this difficult environment. Let's all continue to use proven safety actions as we work to get this virus under control.

A positive note during this situation is an increased interest in bluebirds! NCBS has experienced 12% plus growth in memberships over the past 6 months! Bluebirds have provided us all with such joy, pleasure and entertainment during these uncertain days!

As the 2020 Bluebird nesting season concludes, complete and send in your 2020 Nest Box Survey Data form to Kari Gould, our new Nest Box Survey coordinator. Kari will enter our individual data and comments on a master sheet and then submit to Glenda for publication in our Winter newsletter for all to see! See pages 5-6 for the details! Please note the deadline for sending this information is November 15, 2020! The NCBS summary sheet will be sent to the Cornell Lab of Orinatorty for use in helping track their environmental health throughout their nesting domain.

Mark your calendars now! Provided the Coronavirus is under control - the next NCBS Annual Conference will be held at Sylvan Heights Bird Park in Scotland Neck on **Saturday May 15, 2021!** Board member Kay Hindsley has already engaged with the management there and plans are underway to make this the "best" Annual Conference ever! Make tentative plans and stay tuned for more details at *ncbluebird.org* and in the Winter edition of our newsletter.

Bluebird Notes

Vol. 35 Issue III

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

Your bluebird stories and photos are welcome for newsletter/online content.

Please submit to: Glenda Ryan, Editor/Webmaster/Marketing

E-mail: editor@ncbluebird.org

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nestdata@ncbluebird.org 919-349-3283

BLUEBIRD RESOURCES: NEST BOXES MATTER

UPDATE ON NEST BOXES AT SECU

Anthony Sneed (Frank Newell's Son- In-Law) reports they have over 6,000 bluebird boxes at their warehouse ready to be placed at SECU locations, but the SECU can not allow delivery due to the Coronavirus. They have given him no date for lifting the delivery restriction.

Anthony welcomes anyone to come by their facility in Warrenton and purchase what they need. No ... they are not set up to ship individual boxes. Please call in advance of visit to ensure he or someone is available.

Contact: Anthony Sneed / Phone #: 252-820-2275 (cell)

Facility location: 532 West Ridgeway Street, Warrenton, NC 27589

DONATION OF 11 NUTHATCH BOXES & CAMERA

The NCBS Board recognized and thanked Mike Graziano and Pam Pepsin for their donation of 11 nuthatch boxes and a camera This generous donation will be one of the Silent Auction items at the 2021 Conference.

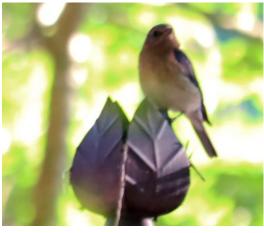
NCBS GRANT REQUESTS APPROVED AT JULY 2020 MEETING

The Board is pleased to offer support and funds for the following:

- New bluebird trail at Turnipseed Nature Preserve: \$120 to Martha Kane
- New bluebird trail in Chapel Hill: \$240 to William Nery
- Predator guards for a 25-box trail on Yadkin River Greenway: \$200 to Ray Abasher
- Additional 3 nest boxes at Lindley Park trail & predator guards on all 10 boxes: \$200 to Tina Dolan

NEST BOXES AND BLUEBIRD TRAILS DO MATTER

Time and money spent ensuring next boxes and trails are available for bluebirds and other cavity nesting songbirds does make a difference. Examples of 2020 Blues flourishing from the nestbox trail at Mordecai Historic Park in Raleigh are shown below and the following page. Many have contributed to helping bluebirds at this location, especially Bill Satterwhite, Joye Stephenson, Suzy Spencer, Marti Kane, as well as the park for hosting the nest boxes and Wake County Bluebirder meetings for many years.



Photos by Glenda Ryan, Editor/Webmaster



INSPIRATIONAL BLUES OF 2020

BLUEBIRDS SIGHTINGS OF 2020 HAVE BEEN EXTRA HELPFUL

I was excited to see bluebirds in January. Per discussion with Ken, sightings of the Blues this time of year is special. We did have some spring-like weather in winter. It seems the bluebirds were enjoying the outdoors and sunshine at a time when they usually are seeking shelter and warmth in their hiding places.

My opportunities to visit Mordecai Park in Raleigh were limited this spring and summer, but I was fortunate to see bluebirds there on several occasions. These feathered friends have been a source of cheer, hope, and color in a time of such challenge and turmoil. I find being out in nature offers healing, serenity, and peace, especially if bluebirds are spotted are among the scenery.





The bluebird on the Social Distancing sign is a reminder to take safety precautions, but still appreciate the beauty and good in the world. Bluebird sightings at the park made me smile and forget the dire circumstances of 2020 for a while. It was especially exciting to snap a photo with three Blues in a tree. They are all just too precious. Sending good wishes and hope that these photos brighten your day as much as seeing the bluebirds at the park did for me.





Glenda Ryan, Webmaster/Newsletter Editor

DON'T FORGET YOUR NEST DATA SURVEY

NEW DATA SURVEY COORDINATOR JOINS OUR TEAM

NCBS is very happy to announce that Kari Gould of Garner has agreed to manage our nesting data. This crucial function assembles the data provided from those who monitor nestboxes and report to us. We are lucky to have someone with enthusiasm for our mission, concern for our feathered friends, and the technology skills willing to help us in this important role. The nest data is due November 15, 2020.

Kari has provided some information about how she became involved in the bird world below. Please join us in welcoming her to the North Carolina Bluebird Society and sending thanks for sharing her knowledge and time to help our Blues and other songbirds. Please get your data to her by 11/15/2020.

GREETINGS FROM BIRD ENTHUSIAST, KARI FROM GARNER

Hi! My name is Kari Gould. I am honored to have been given a wonderful opportunity to participate with conservation efforts of birds and other wildlife. Being a part of the efforts of the North Carolina Bluebird Society is an exciting experience. I have a very high interest in wildlife, from the feathered, to the furry, to even the scaly.

The intrigue though, for me, is highest with our feathered friends. My mom is the one who inspired my interest in birds and taught me so much. I learned year after year watching my mother make hummingbird food. I am pleased to have recently joined her efforts.

Bird watching is an activity we enjoy on vacation visits to Myrtle Beach. Huntington State Park Beach, which is part of the South Carolina State Parks, is a place we have checked out frequently. We are drawn to their amazing causeway, and multitude of trails, at this scenic location with plenty of beautiful feathered friends to see and bird songs to hear.

I appreciate the awe inspiring diversity of avian species in North Carolina, our neighboring state of South Carolina, our country, and around the world. From the tiniest, and at times very feisty little nectar drinkers, the hummingbirds, to some of the largest, and regal carnivorous raptors. The avian world is just extraordinary!

I am very happy to be of assistance in compiling and inputting the data from NC Bluebird Society's eason of bluebird tracking and watching. I have experience with databases and very good skills with different types of computer systems, such as Linux, Windows, and Chrome OS (ChromeBook).

I look forward to combining my love of nature and technology to assist the goals of NCBS to help conserve our bluebirds and other songbirds.



You may send your 2020 monitoring data by postal mail or via email. The 2020 Data Survey form is provided on the next page (6) with contact information and more details. Thanks for all your interest and help with monitoring nest box data. Please remember data submission is needed by November 15, 2020.

2020 NEST BOX SURVEY DATA FORM

Name:
Phone:
Email:
Nest Box/Trail Location (county, city, state):
Field Record Observation Notes Summary
Date of first egg laid (start of season)
Total number of nest boxes monitored this season
Total number of Bluebird eggs laid
Total number of Bluebird eggs hatched
Total number of Bluebird fledglings
Total number of other species cavity nesting eggs laid
Total number of other species cavity nesting eggs hatched
Total number of other species cavity nesting fledglings
Date of end of seasons last fledglings
Comments:
Use an additional sheet or sheets of paper if necessary. Your concern for Bluebirds is so important!

Please return by November 15, 2020 via email or postal address per information below:

Kari Gould, NCBS Board of Directors, 702 Hillandale Lane, Garner, NC 27529

Email: nestdata@ncbluebird.org / Telephone number for questions: 919-349-3283

Thank you so much for monitoring and reporting the data to help track Blues and other songbirds.

TOP RESOURCE FOR BLUEBIRD QUESTIONS

CHECK OUT NORTH AMERICAN BLUEBIRD SOCIETY (NABS)

I was thrilled to receive a subscription to NABS compliments of Ken Kernodle. I have spent a lot of time looking over <u>nabluebirdsociety.org</u> to find helpful information to share in <u>Bluebird Notes</u>, but it is nice to also have printed material to review. I now have valuable new educational resources to turn to for content.

How fun and educational to receive a welcome packet with NABS Factsheets (*Getting Started with Bluebirds, Nestbox Recommendations, Monitoring Bluebird Nestboxes, and Eastern Bluebird Nestling Growth Chart*), brochure, and NABS magnet. NCBS is an affiliate of this national organization.

I am sharing some tips from the resources received in my package from this fantastic bluebird organization.

NESTING SITES ARE CRITICAL FOR THE BLUEBIRDS' FUTURE

- Human activities such as tree removal for developments, highways, and agriculture have taken away natural nesting sites used by bluebirds. Similarly, replacement of wooden fence posts with metal is another way bluebirds lost nesting cavities. Aggressive cavity nesting birds such as European Starlings and House Sparrows take resources away from bluebirds and contribute to their challenges for survival.
- Bluebird nest boxes and trails are listed as the most important way people can help bluebirds. Bluebird
 populations do increase in locations where nest boxes are provided, if habitats are favorable for
 bluebirds.
- Open rural county is a great place for nest boxes. It is best if items for bluebirds to perch and scout for food, such as fences, wires, and tree brances, are easily accessible.
- Bluebirds typically prefer rural areas, but can be found nesting in the outer edges of cities or towns.
- Recommended places for trails of nest boxes include: open pastureland, parks with limited human visits, golf courses and cemeteries that are kept mowed.
- Avoid places where pesticides are used for setting up nest boxes or trails.
- The nest box should be placed away from prevailing winds.
- A nest box near a tree or shrub (ideally within 100 feet) will offer a landing place for baby bluebirds and give some protection from predators.
- Avoid places of competition with other birds if possible. Keeping boxes 50-200 feet from heavily wooded areas and reduce chance of being in House Wren's habitat. House Sparrows are a top competitor for bluebirds, so stay away from putting next boxes in their known turf.
- House Wrens and House Sparrows like perches, so choose nest boxes for bluebirds without a perch.

NABS Factsheets *Getting Started with Bluebirds*, where information above was retrieved, can be found on their website <u>nabluebirdsociety.org.</u>

See more details regarding nest boxes, bluebird trails, and a wide range of helpful bluebird resources at this online channel for the North American Bluebird Society (NABS).





NCBS TEAM MEMBER SPOTLIGHT (1 OF 5)

CLEVELAND COUNTY ADVICE & REPORTS FROM JIM KUNKLE

Jim Kunkle is very active in communicating with NCBS members in his area of Cleveland County. He keeps in touch with email to answer questions and provide updates, which proves very helpful. Thanks to Jim for his long term dedicated effort and concern for our precious Blues as the Cleveland County Coordinator. Bluebirds in his area certainly have someone in their corner. We are sharing snippets of some of his recent bluebird email notes and tips below, as well as some very nice pictures.

May 31: Snakes are the leading pest as far as the bluebird boxes are concerned. Raccoons, flying squirrels, and other birds such as House Wrens are generally secondary threats. From my experience, I can pass on what I have found to be the best way to keep them out of nests. I will list here how I mount a box to limit snake access as much as possible.

Location: Nest box needs to be placed not too close to woods if possible. Not near overhanging branches where snakes or other critters can drop onto the box from overhanging limbs.

Nest box: It can be any of the bluebird box designs, but must have a way to get into the box and check on the nest. I personally use a "Jack Finch" box. Also I have found it helps if there is another piece of wood added onto the front to make it harder for critters to reach in.

Pole: You want a pole that is slippery so as to make it more difficult to climb. Wood is not a good choice. I have used PVC, and galvanized pipe. I like the pipe best, where you can put a piece on top that screws on and you can screw to bottom of box.

Snake guard: I make them myself from sheet metal from Lowes. This makes it much more difficult for snakes to crawl up the pole.

Snake netting: This is just a second layer of making life difficult for the snakes. I put it between the snake guard and the nest to trap the snake if they get this far.

June 18: I discovered a tip last week I thought I would share. As you know the dried mealworms can be fairly expensive and I found a way save on this cost. I was at Tractor Supply and found a room off to the side where they keep big bags of food for chickens and some other animal foods. I did not know that the chicken farmers give their chickens dried mealworms as part of their diets. Tractor Supply carries a five pound bag of mealworms for \$39.00 — that's about 50 cents an ounce.

My last nest of three bluebirds fledged about a week ago. I have another nest in the other house which has a nest in it now, but no eggs yet.

July 4: I have a new nest in my box in my back yard with 4 little eggs in it. I anticipate everything going well for them. It was unfortunate that we weren't able to have the NCBS annual meeting this year. I'm sure there will be one next May, and I will be looking forward to it.

NCBS TEAM MEMBER SPOTLIGHT (2 OF 5)







July 25: I have a new clutch of three babies in the nestbox in my back yard! Nothing else in the box in my front yard. I suppose this may be the last babies I have this summer. As you know Mid-March to Mid-August is about it for the bluebird nesting season.

Well, the nice thing is with your bluebird feeders you will get to see them all winter, since many don't migrate, but stay around here! In fact I saw just the other day one of the 'speckled' babies from my last fledglings at my feeder. They learn from their parents very quick how to use the feeders.

I hope this summer has been a fruitful one for you overall, and also for your bluebirds! I enjoy the emails I receive from you throughout the year, and I try to answer your questions to the best of my ability. I always enjoy hearing from you, and especially your bluebird experiences.

ROSE BREASTED GROSSBEAK SPOTTED IN CLEVELAND COUNTY



Jim Kunkle, Shelby

I had a real delight recently. My wife said "come look here ... what kind of bird is this?" And I was pleased to see a Rose Breasted Grossbeak!

They are a beautiful bird which mainly lives up North, or at least North of North Carolina for sure. They only pass thru here migrating back and forth to Central America.

They are kin to the Northern Cardinal, and have the same large seed cracking beak, but have no top knot.

This is the first time I have ever seen one! They apparently love seed feeders, and especially love sunflower seeds.

Much thanks to Jim for providing such useful information and great photos. We love seeing pictures of Blue Eggs and Baby Blues, and the Rose Breasted Grossbeak is an extra special snapshot!

NCBS TEAM MEMBER SPOTLIGHT (3 OF 5)

GEORGE KAYE, NEW MACON COUNTY COORDINATOR

I'm looking forward to serving as the Macon County Coordinator. This fits in nicely with the work I am doing maintaining 100+ nestboxes in beautiful Macon County.

I started birding in Tampa Florida after I retired in 2005. During one of our field trips, we visited a bluebird trail outside Tampa, and I was hooked! My wife and I spent summers in Franklin and fell in love with the mountains and moved here full time in 2016. There were a few events that got me started as a" nestboxer."

First, my very active Highlands Plateau Audubon Chapter decided to put up 150 nestboxes in Highlands, Cashiers and Franklin. I was part of the team. I inherited the 22 boxes in Franklin, and have been blessed that Highlands Audubon later gave me double that number of boxes to add to my trails. I also received a grant from them to add 20 predator guards. The Franklin Greenway Board, of which I am a member, also gave me a grant for 20 more guards to add to the nestboxes on the Greenway.

The second thing that got me motivated to work with nextboxes was that I discovered dozens and dozens of neglected boxes on conservation properties as I hiked around Franklin. Many of the retirees and Eagle Scouts and others who put them up had moved on and forgotten the boxes. I started cleaning, repairing, replacing the neglected boxes, and adding to the boxes for the past several years.

It's been very gratifying that graduate students from Western Carolina University and Young Harris College have been using some of the boxes for their Masters' Thesis projects. I have to thank enthusiastic NC Bluebird member Bruce Thorne of Franklin for informing me about the NC Bluebird Society.

My first community project as County Coordinator was to advise some 4-H kids on installing and monitoring several bluebird boxes they had built this spring. Birds occupied these boxes right away. I had more projects planned, but then the virus epidemic hit, and everything came to a halt.

Except the birds haven't stopped raising young, and I continue working for them on my nestbox trails. It's been a rewarding and fascinating experience.

Hope to meet you all in person soon.

George Kaye

The County Coordinators are the backbone of our organization. We are so grateful for the generosity given by so many across the state to help with our mission to help bluebirds.

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you, to the entire NCBS County Coordinator Team!!!



NCBS TEAM MEMBER SPOTLIGHT (4 OF 5)

PETER CHAUNCEY, NEW DURHAM COUNTY COORDINATOR

Hello. My name is Peter Chauncey. I have recently accepted the position of Durham County Coordinator and will do my level best to fill the shoes of the legendary Steve McDaniel. I actually learned a great deal of what I know about bluebirds by working with Steve and Ken Kernodle to install bluebird houses in parts of the Durham area beginning in 2010 and by monitoring them each season.

Thanks to the support of the developer of Croasdaile Farm David Beischer, the members of the Croasdaile Farm Garden Club and the Croasdaile County Club, there are 22 houses in



our immediate vicinity which accounted for 139 fledged bluebirds during this 2020 season. The opportunity to observe nesting habits and patterns, the hatching, growth and fledging of baby birds, and all stages of the care of young birds by the parents has been both educational and enjoyable.

My wife Amy and I are North Carolina natives. After living in several other areas of the country, we returned to our home state and located in Durham in 1996. I spent over 35 years in health care administration and now do part time consulting and Board work. Amy is currently engaged as the Director of Lower School in a K-12 private school in our area. We both enjoy spending time outdoors.

I know there are a significant number of people in the Durham area who also have bluebird boxes and enjoy supporting and enhancing the bluebird population. If I can be of assistance in any way, please feel free to contact me (919-475-5450 or chauncey.pw@gmail.com).

WE WELCOME THREE NEW BOARD MEMBERS

THE NCBS BOARD IS PLEASED TO REPORT THAT OUR RANDOLPH COUNTY COORDINATOR HAS ALSO JOINED AS A DIRECTOR. Read

more below. Looks like he has gotten his money's worth out of a nest box — 3 decades!

KEN ROBERSON

- This bluebird box is 30 years old and the bluebirds keep coming back.
- The third brood this year fledged yesterday.
- My wife and I recently added 4 more houses in the area.
- Looking forward to seeing everyone at the spring meeting in Scotland Neck.



NCBS TEAM MEMBER SPOTLIGHT (5 OF 5)

PLEASE JOIN US TO WELCOME 2 MORE NEW BOARD DIRECTORS AND LEARN HOW THEY BECAME INTERESTED IN BLUEBIRDS.



BOB WARMUTH

In 2007 I was invited to join the committee to monitor nest boxes located on the Lake Hickory Country Club golf courses. That year, 68 boxes fledged a total of 192 bluebirds.

Over the next several years, there was an aggressive effort to relocate boxes to better sites, and to improve protection from predators. The result of this effort was to increase the number of birds fledged to 425 by 2011.

In 2010 my wife, Beth, and I attended the NCBS annual meeting, and suggested the idea of holding the 2011 meeting in Hickory. The invitation was accepted, enthusiastically, and the meeting was hosted by Lake Hickory Country Club. We continue to have a successful bluebird program here, as in 2019, a record of 529 birds fledged. The interest and support received from the membership of our Club, continues to make our efforts worthwhile.



DONNA ALLRED

When I was young and newly married, my husband and I moved to rural Chatham County, NC. It was there that my Aunt Mary introduced me to bluebirds. She was an amateur carpenter and had been making bluebird houses for her yard and for the yards of others. I was thrilled to see the bluebirds that were nesting in her front yard and couldn't wait to have some too.

My love for the beautiful bird continued when I moved to Greensboro and learned that the local Audubon Society sponsored bluebird houses along the trail in the neighborhood where I was living. Several years ago, I volunteered to help monitor the boxes during nesting season. It was a thrill to knock on the lids to announce my presence, then open the boxes to see what was inside.

When our neighborhood volunteer coordinator moved out of the neighborhood, she asked if I would take over for her as coordinator, which I was happy to do. It was wonderful to meet neighbors who were as excited as I was to see so many bluebirds in our nearby Lake Daniel park. The houses are located along Buffalo Creek that runs through the park, and large trees and shrubs are abundant throughout the area.

Several years after I began coordinating, I was asked to be on the board of the NC Bluebird Society. I am delighted to do anything I can to help our beloved bluebirds! I'm honored to have been asked to be on the board of NCBS!

BLUEBIRDS FLOURISHING ACROSS OUR STATE

Kimberly Miskiewicz of Raleigh (Wake County) submitted these splendid snapshots of Blues in the Triangle area of North Carolina. The baby blue having a snack is precious. Thanks, Kimberly.





BLUEBIRD NESTLINGS @ PINEHURST GOLF COURSE

Golf Courses can be great location for nest box trails.

- The picture to the right is a perfect example of the beauty that nest boxes add to golfing areas. A home for bluebirds and extra doses of nature for people.
- Photo taken 7/13/20 by David Kilpatrick
- Aren't these little fellars simply adorable?



MOUNTAIN BLUES FINDING PLENTY OF FOOD SOURCES

Russ Bauman of Biltmore Lake (Buncome County) gave us some cool pictures of Western NC Bluebirds.





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Wayne	Virginia Pickles	pic658@nc.rr.com	919-658-3062

FALL IS IN THE AIR

Autumn Greeting, Bluebirders!

I hope you have been able to find joy, hope, and inspiration from the Bluebirds of 2020. I have been fortunate to see and photograph bluebirds several times this year. Photo below, and pictures on pages 3, 4, & 16, are snapshots from Mordecai Historic Park in Raleigh.



I have found <u>nabluebirdsociety.org</u>, the website of the North American Bluebird Society (NABS), beneficial in learning about bluebirds.

I am a new member of NABS and look forward to seeing their newsletters arrive in the mail. See page 7 for some tips I shared from the welcome package that acknowledged the start of my NABS membership.



Glenda Ryan, Webmaster/Newsletter Editor *glendaryan.com*

NCBS MEMBERSHIP

NCBS memberships options are one or three years. Dues: \$10.00 per year or \$25 for three years
Gift membership fromto:
Name
Address
City, State & Zip
County
Phone
E-mail
A member's email address will be used only for NCBS official business and considered private and confidential.
[] Check box if you prefer to access the <i>Bluebird Notes</i> via the Internet instead of a printed copy by postal mail.
Please complete this form and send it with your check payable to "NCBS" to:
North Carolina Bluebird Society 135 Lakeview Drive Tarboro, NC 27886
Additional tax deductible donation \$
New Membership []
Renewal []
Check Amount: \$
Please indicate if you also have an interest in: Assisting with the annual meeting Serving as a NCBS Board Member Helping with the newsletter Conducting a bluebird workshop Contacting my local paper with news Volunteering to be a NCBS County Coordinator Other (please explain)

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TAKE TIME TO STOP & ENJOY THE BLUES



Photo taken by Glenda Ryan at Mordecai Historic Park in Raleigh