

# BLUEBIRD NOTES



## N. C. Bluebirds send Happy Greetings & Good Wishes for 2021



Photos on this page are courtesy of Russ Bauman, part of a slideshow from a past conference. Thanks to Russ, Buncombe County Coordinator, for these wonderful snapshots of some “Winter Beauties” from Biltmore Lake, NC. Russ does so much to help bluebirds. The bluebirds in Western North Carolina are fortunate to have him looking out for their best interest. These colorful Blues against the snowy and stark backgrounds are nice sights, but also a reminder that our feathered friends need extra help when the elements are bitter. See tips to assist bluebirds during cold weather and for other winter challenges at [ncbluebird.org](http://ncbluebird.org), [nabluebirdsociety.org](http://nabluebirdsociety.org), and [sialis.org](http://sialis.org).



Russ has been providing a plethora of magnificent pictures of bluebirds for many years. Many more of his photographs can be seen in past newsletters and the NCBS Facebook. Additionally, pictures by Russ make up a big portion of the visual content on [ncbluebird.org](http://ncbluebird.org). Furthermore, many products in our online store, <https://www.cafepress.com/northcarolinabluebirdsociety>, feature bluebird pictures taken by Russ. Many nice bluebird gift options can be found here. We appreciate all Russ has done and continues to do to help the mission of NCBS and bluebird conservation.

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

**Report from NCBS Immediate Past President**

Winter Tidings, Bluebirders! 2020 has certainly been challenging. I know everyone is thankful that a vaccine for COVID-19 is now being distributed! I am pleased to announce that the bluebirds have fared well this year, based on photos, sightings, and our nest data reports. See monitoring survey results and comments on pages 6-9. A special thanks to all of you that submitted your 2020 Nest Box Survey Data forms to Kari Gould.

A grand event to look forward to (tentatively) is our 2021 conference! Assuming the Coronavirus is under control, it will be held May 15, 2021 at Sylvan Heights Bird Park in Scotland Neck. Peggy and I visited the park in 2017 and it was a delightful experience. Special thanks to Kay and David Hindsley who have been the point persons pulling this together with Sylvan Heights!

For those of you that haven't heard, Frank Newell III, founder of the Eastern Bluebird Rescue Group passed away on November 6. If you have ever purchased a bluebird nesting box from the State Employees Credit Union (SECU), it was made by Frank Newell and his Eastern Bluebird Rescue Group. See page 3 for more about the life of this amazing man who was so dedicated to helping bluebirds. You can also see his website at [easternbluebirdrescue.org](http://easternbluebirdrescue.org) for many details about Frank and his work. His family and volunteers plan to continue the effort he began that has expanded extensively and helped bluebirds tremendously.

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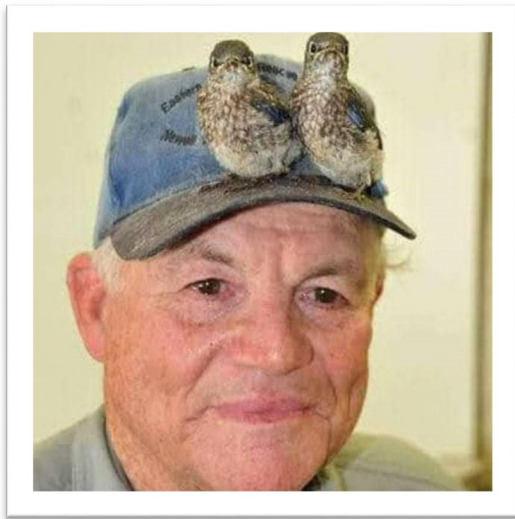
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# HONORING LONG-TIME BLUEBIRD ENTHUSIAST

## Memoriam for Frank Newell, Exceptional Bluebird Conservationist



The Board was very sorry to learn that Frank Newell passed away in early November. We send our heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, and team of volunteers. We would like to dedicate this edition of *Bluebird Notes* to honor this man who contributed so much for so many years to helping the precious bluebirds.

Frank will be greatly missed, but the nest boxes and other contributions he has given will continue to benefit bluebirds. The bluebirds have made a comeback with much thanks to Frank. His bird houses and education provided to others will ensure the precious bluebirds will keep soaring in North Carolina and many other places.

Frank Newell grew up on a family farm in Warrenton, where his love of bluebirds began. During his youth bluebird sightings were plentiful. Frank was fortunate to see so many bluebirds, who then enjoyed abundant housing in wooden fence posts in the pastures. Frank joined the Army soon after high school and served 38 for years. During a time span close to 4 decades, changes are inevitable. Unfortunately, a decline in bluebird population was a change happening in Warrenton and elsewhere.

When Frank returned after his time in the military, he realized the sightings of bluebirds was significantly less than he remembered growing up. Noticing the fence posts were now metal and not friendly for bluebird homes, Frank decided the bluebirds needed his assistance. And so he began helping the bluebirds resume their presence on his farm by providing nest boxes for bluebird homes. Over time his bluebird work branched out and he inspired numerous others to help this important cause.

Frank founded the Eastern Bluebird Rescue Group in 1996. Mr. Newell and his volunteers have built and distributed over 365,000 bluebird houses. His bluebird houses have been shipped to every state in the US, as well as three foreign countries. The efforts by Frank significantly helped bluebirds make a comeback and removed them from endangered species status. In 2018 the County Commissioners deemed Warren County / Lake Gaston area the “Bluebird Capital of the World”.

Thanks to Frank’s daughter, Kristye Steed, for providing these photos and details about her father. We also retrieved information to compile this article from [easternbluebirdrescue.org](http://easternbluebirdrescue.org).

Check out this website to learn more about Frank’s passion and how you can help the bluebird cause. His family and volunteers plan to continue the work Frank started so long ago. What a great way to honor his memory: to help his beloved bluebirds continue to flourish!



# **BIRDS, BIRDS, BIRDS @ SCOTLAND NECK, NC**

## **2021 Spring Conference Location at Bird Park in Scotland Neck**

The mission for the NCBS puts primary focus on bluebirds and cavity nesting songbirds native to North Carolina. However, our organization cares about other birds as well. We are excited for an opportunity to be going to Sylvan Heights for the 2021 Conference and see a wide range of birds.

Our 2020 annual meeting at Sylvan Heights Bird Park was cancelled due to the Coronavirus, but we will try again for a get-together at this spectacular location in 2021. Of course, our tentative plans are dependent on the pandemic situation and government guidelines at that time. Safety is our top concern, so cancellation is a possibility. However, we are staying positive and hoping we will have a green light for May 15, 2021!

Members of the NCBS Board have been very pleased on past tours of this amazing place. Immediate Past President, Ken Kernoodle and his wife, Peggy, had a very enjoyable time during a 2017 visit to the park. The natural beauty of the setting and the range of winged creatures was impressive. Ken appreciated that he could see the birds so close up. It was cool when some even landed on his hands.

### **NCBS Corresponding Secretary, Kay Hindsley, Shares Sylvan Heights Story**

My favorite memory of Sylvan Heights Bird Park was going to the Landing Zone. This fun experience included entering a double door enclosure of birds with a seed stick (cost \$1). It was awesome. I felt like I was in Heaven, being so close to nature. Various colored parakeets landed on my shoulder, head, arms, and feet to check out what I brought them. There were at least 15 birds at one point checking out the snack of seeds. I loved this experience!

The last time we (myself and husband, David) visited, there were 3 birds that seemed very fond of David. Beautiful large bright colored creatures of chartreuse green and red. One of the miniature parrots ended up sitting on David's hat. Before we realized what was happening, this Prankster had snatched David's hearing aid. Fortunately, David was able to grab it back before his feathered friend flew out of reach.

Kay Hindsley,

### **Check out the Online Presence for Sylvan Heights Park**

Review of the park's website informs of so much about this charming place, such as:

- Visitors can stroll through aviaries with birds from Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, and South America right here in Eastern North Carolina.
- African Geese & Finches, Cranes, Emu, Ground Hornbills, Hawaiian Geese, Owls, Parrots, Peafowl, Pheasants, Toucans, so many other types of feathered friends from around the world.
- Learn more about this magnificent educational, colorful, and fun bird park online:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SylvanHeightsWaterfowl/photos>

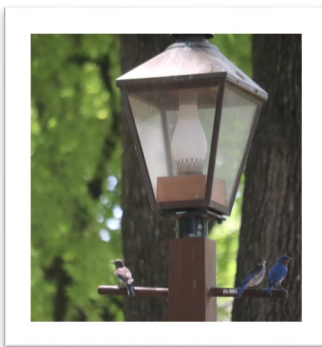
Website: <https://shwpark.com>

**More details will be available in the Spring newsletter regarding the conference.**

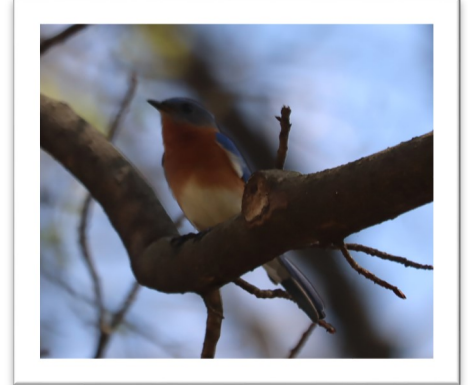
# LOVE IS ALL AROUND FOR OUR FEATHERED FRIENDS

## Good News for Bluebirds from the NCBS Board

Ken announced and thanked Kay Cameron for "stepping up" and becoming our Grant Request Coordinator. Kay will receive, review and present all future grant requests to the Board of Directors. If you have a project or idea in mind to help bluebirds, submit a request (form on [ncbluebird.org](http://ncbluebird.org)). If it is determined to benefit bluebirds, NCBS will gladly provide assistance. Bluebird help is available—why don't you take it?



Bluebird photos by Glenda Ryan



## Unique Idea to Help Durham Birds Secure Food

Randy and Pana Jones of Durham were having difficulty with squirrels eating the suet cakes meant for their feathered friends! So Randy decided to build a unit that would "fix" the issue.

Using pieces of leftover wood from around the house, Randy built this "bottom-up" suet feeder seen below. It has been helpful in solving his squirrel problem with additional entertainment coming from seeing the birds feeding "upside down".

He shared that it took a few days for the birds to find it but they were so enjoying watching the birds use it and appreciative of the cost savings on his suet purchases as well!

Let's build one!



Submitted by Ken Kernodle, Immediate Past President, Durham



# 2020 NEST BOX SURVEY REPORT (1 OF 4)

			BLUEBIRD			OTHER SPECIES			
County	Name	Boxes	Eggs	Hatched	Fledged	Eggs	Hatched	Fledged	
Alamance	Linda Fogleman	7	25	25	25	4	4	0	
Catawba (Lake Hickory Club)	Robert Warmuth	67	577	547	534	35	30	29	
Chatham	Jenny Baker	1	13	10	10	0	0	0	
Chatham (Governors Club)	Karen & Gus Kolias ***	54	381	353	331				
Cherokee	Mark Graham	14	40	33	33	37	30	30	
Cherokee	Historic Walker Inn	6	27	18	14	1	0	0	
Cherokee	Carmen Moore	14	59	55	54	42	39	33	
Cherokee	Maureen Ripper	2	10	10	10	0	0	0	
Davidson (Northern area)	Ray Welch	17	166	157	147	5	5	5	
Durham (Croasdaile Club)	Susan Antle	13	115	91	91	3	3	2	
Durham	Peter Chauncey	9	50	43	43	16	16	16	
Durham	Margaret & Rich Frothingham	3	11	8	7	0	0	0	
Durham	Elke Hoffmann	4	24	22	22				
Durham	Ken Kernodle	25	139	120	111	32	29	27	
Durham	Steve McDaniel	28	218	182	172	18	15	15	
Durham	Don Wells ***	10	57	47	42	0	0	0	
Durham/Wake	Michael Lutz	25	110	60	54	48	29	21	
Edgecombe	Kay & David Hindsley	6	5	5	5	2	2	2	
Forsyth	Kay Cameron	2	9	6	6	5	2	0	
Forsyth	Rhett Johnson	42	195	176	176	53	49	49	
Franklin	George Kay	98	110	88	65	153	115	85	
Guilford	Jim Burke	48	210	169	155	95	61	42	
Guilford	Janine & John Gauthier	1	14	14	13	0	0	0	
Guilford	Jim Jochum	6	30	25	20	8	7	4	
Iredell	Sue Ligon	5	29	21	21	4	4	4	
Johnston	Patricia Rogers	8	59	42	42	4	4	4	
Macon	Bruce & Viola Thne	9	13	11	11	22	15	15	
Moore	Ed Emery	20	185	89	84	14	13	13	
Moore (Foxfire East)	Bill Good	14	92	56	55	10	8	8	
Moore	Dave & Nancy Kinney	35	240	128	117	38	18	13	
Moore	Pam Reyes	16	111	76	76	9	6	6	
New Hanover	Judy Wesolosky	95	765	680	648	0	0	0	
Pitt	Shawn Jarvis	10	97	87	87	0	0	0	
Randolph	Chuck Bliss	2	26	26	26	0	0	0	
Rockingham	Carl Wayne Bray	8	30	22	22	11	10	10	
Union	Suzanne Stewart	1	14	13	13	0	0	0	
Wake (Hillandale)	Kari Gould/Carol Reid	12	79	74	67	4	4	4	
Wake	Cathrine Evans / Cindy Hamrick	12	109	79	78	17	14	14	
Wake	Dave & Carrie Helston	4	5	5	5	1	2	1	
Wake (Durant Nature Park)	Martha (Marti) Kane	20	14	14	14	57	45	34	
Wake (Horseshoe Preserve)	Martha (Marti) Kane	15	44	24	7	15	10	10	
Wake (Mordecai Historic Park)	Marti Kane for Suzy Spencer	7	16	10	9	3	3	3	
Wake (Wil-Mar Golf Course)	Martha (Marti) Kane	15	84	56	43	13	9	9	
Wake (Lake Benson Park Trail)	Diane Mitchell	10	109	95	91	5	5	4	
Wake	Ciji Richards	2	16	16	16	4	4	3	
Wake (White Deer Park)	Anne Runyan	8	30	25	25	21	19	19	
Wilkes	Zane T. Walsh	21	89	78	78	23			
*** Bluebird Eggs Hatched Estimated for 2 not reported		Totals --- >	851	4,851	3,991	3,775	832	629	534

First Egg: Shawn Jarvis (Pitt County) — March 3. Last Fedgling: Governor's Club (Chatham County) — October.

# 2020 NEST BOX SURVEY REPORT (2 OF 4)

**Robert Warmuth - Lake Hickory Country Club (Catawba):** Even though the number of boxes monitored has been reduced, the activity has increased. Obviously we have a great environment for our beautiful “blues”.

**Jenny Baker (Chatham):** After all done 1st of August removed 5ft black snake from the house, left open to air out, cleaned and ready for next year. No other species made a nest.

**Mark Graham (Cherokee):** This season 7 new nest boxes were added at the Welch Farm location. Those newboxes accounted for approximately two thirds of the bluebird fledglings. 6 of the 7 new boxes had at least one set of bluebird or other native cavity nesting bird fledglings. One of the boxes was taken over by a house wren pair that laid 5 eggs but never did hatch them. 6 of the 7 Riverwalk nest boxes also had at least one set of bluebird or other native cavity nesting bird fledglings. There was quite a bit of tree swallow activity at the Riverwalk nest boxes. One of the Riverwalk walk nest boxes had no activity at all. All things considered, I count it as a good season. I am looking forward to next year.

**Historic Walker Inn (Cherokee):** Four nest boxes were put up in town park. Two boxes produced 12 eggs and 8 bluebird fledglings (2 different nestings). The other two boxes were near a designated wetland. One box had 5 bluebird eggs, a week later the eggs were gone. Several weeks later there were 3 eggs and they disappeared. We think it was a snake so we took the bluebird box down. Hopefully this winter we can build a snake guard. The other box in the wetland had the beginnings of sparrow or wren nest but never any eggs. Next spring we'll find a better location for the 2 boxes that were in the wetland.

**Carmen Moore (Cherokee):** Good year for bluebirds. Less so for tree swallows and chickadees. Blue jay got eggs/babies three times. Six fully feathered dead tree swallows left in the box.

**Maureen Ripper (Cherokee):** I sure enjoyed keeping track of the nests. I didn't realize I needed to record the non bluebirds. They go right in after the bluebirds and keep the nest boxes occupied.

**Susan Antle (Durham):** A survey of our 40 members revealed 18 garden club members had nesting boxes in their yard and a few had more than one box. Between the 25 nesting boxes, 141 fledglings were hatched this year.

**Ken Kerndle (Durham):** Overall a successful year for bluebirds on our trails. Special thanks to Randy Chase, John Boone and Earl Kerby of the Triangle Duke Energy Retirees Club for their monitoring of trails at Stagville, Duke Homestead and Bennett Place State Historic Sites. Black snakes were our top predator this year. We have several nestboxes without wildlife guards and black snakes seemed to have found them! We removed and relocated one black snake from one nestbox only to find another one at the same nestbox later in the season. Fortunately, it had not entered the box with 12 day old chicks when captured. We will add wildlife guards this winter to all the remaining nestboxes without them. I encourage everyone to do the same!

**Michael Lutz (Durham):** These data are for nestboxes that we monitor at our houses and two sites in Raleigh and Durham. We enter all of the data into Nestwatch and would be glad to send the Nestwatch records if helpful.

**Steve McDaniel (Durham):** Very solid nesting season!

**Don Wells (Durham):** This was our community's first year with a Bluebird trail. We didn't capture some of the information on the form but we will next season.

**Kay & David Hindlsey (Edgecombe):** Last Fall we were checking our houses and discovered 7 or 8 eggs that never hatched. Again this year in 2 boxes we found 7 or 8 eggs that never hatched. We are very sad about this. Maybe it was a sterile female or male? We are hopeful for better results in 2021. Kay's sister, Glenna Pack (Fort Mill, SC) had 3 nestings and 5 fledglings from 1 Box.

# 2020 NEST BOX SURVEY REPORT (3 OF 4)

**Kay Cameron (Forsyth):** There was a 2-day very cold and wet spell in early May and the tiny wrens did not survive.

**Rhett Johnson (Forsyth):** Had an average of 4.6 eggs per box (down from 4.8 in 2019). Had more other species this year.

**George Kaye (Franklin):** Unfortunately, with so many broken was unable to track egg laying, hatching, and fledging. I can only give estimated guesses. I see my role as providing a safe place for birds to reproduce, rather than being able to track exact numbers. P.S. This winter I will be repairing roofs of nestboxes that are 5 to 20 years old.

**Jim Burke (Guilford):** 1. I removed and destroyed 24 House Sparrow eggs from 7 nesting attempts. 2. High temps put a damper on egg laying. No eggs laid after July 23. There were no 3 broods in any nestbox. 3. This trail is on the campus of River Landing at Sandy Ridge, a retirement community near High Point.

**Jim Jochum (Guilford):** This was the first year at Whitestone for monitoring bluebird nest boxes. Although the heavy population of English Sparrows taking over bluebird populations, we were able to trap a total of 6 sparrows during the nesting season.

**Sue Ligon (Iredell):** Got off to a great start this season, then a huge raccoon discovered 2 of my boxes. He managed to climb the PVC poles, sit on top of the boxes, and break the roof of each into pieces. The other 3 boxes did ok, but not great.

**Patricia Rogers (Johnston):** Box at family cemetery most successful. 3 nestings with 16 eggs laid, 15 hatched, 15 fledged. 1st egg laid in this nest box occurred March 15th.

**J. Bruce and Viola Thorne (Macon):** Had less results '20 season than previous year. Looking forward to coming year because there seems a good number of young BBs remaining around our home. I plan feed MWs this winter. Also plan to expand my walk if I can find anyone to build additional boxes.

**Ed Emery (Moore):** This is my second year doing this and last years results were about the same. My BB trail is around Beacon Ridge Golf Course, which is located in west end - 7 Lakes West.

**George Good (Moore):** I did not begin to monitor until 4-19-20, at that point some boxes had eggs and some had fledglings.

**Judy Wesoloski (New Hanover):** The Country Club of Landfall is a large golf course community in New Hanover County. Five teams monitor nest boxes on the edges of each of the five courses. Since so much normal activity was shut down this year due to the pandemic, it was extra pleasurable to be able to take a golf cart and check out the boxes.

**Shawn Jarvis (Pitt):** Even the bluebirds in Pitt County quarantined. Had a decline in numbers by 10 the past year. Any one else experience that? We have planted some trees on part of the farm and they are big enough now to support bird nests. I guess they are choosing nature. At least that is what I hope is going on.

**Chuck Bliss (Randolph):** A front and back yard pair of boxes.

**Carl Wayne Bray (Rockingham):** Lost 1 clutch of eggs (5) to stray cats sitting around the box not letting mama bird to enter to keep them warm. Unable to monitor as much as I used to because of health problems. I wish we could find a coordinator for Rockingham County. I enjoyed the conference at the Haw River Park. Wish I could attend another one. I still make a few bird boxes now, trying to get some new members interested to keep the bluebirds around.

# 2020 NEST BOX SURVEY REPORT (4 OF 4)

**Catherine Evans & Cindy Hamrick - Historic Oak View County Park (Wake):** One nest we think was vandalized because 6 chicks and the nest cup disappeared. 23 defective eggs were discarded. One nest may have had predators as we observed 3 young birds + 2 eggs one week and next week, nest was empty and clean so it didn't look like the birds had fledged.

**Dave & Carrie Helston (Wake):** This was the first time in more than 10 years that we only had 1 nesting of bluebirds. Don't know why.

**Martha (Marti) Kane - Durant Nature Preserve (Wake):** Nest Monitoring stopped at the end of March due to park closure for Covid 19. Monitoring resumed May 19th. There were 5 bluebird boxes not monitored in this period. Because I observed fecal sacs in these boxes, it is likely they produced young and potentially fledglings. Therefore we may have fledged as many as 30 bluebirds vs the 14 observed later.

House wrens are a serious problem here. I documented at least 10 nesting attempts that were taken over by house wrens with several disappearing bluebird eggs and chickadee eggs with peck holes. Because monitoring stopped in late March, I do not know when the house wrens arrived. I have given the park manager recommendations for nest box locations to hopefully improve bluebird success in 2021.

**Martha (Marti) Kane - Horseshoe Farm Nature Preserve (Wake):** Nest monitoring stopped at the end of March due to park closure for Covid 19. Monitoring resumed May 9th. There were 5 bluebird nests not monitored in this period. From observing nests, I concluded some of them produced young, which may have fledged. Although excessive heat and snake predation killed at least 30% of the nestlings in later broods. These two factors would not have been active in April. Therefore, it is possible that we may have fledged 27 bluebirds verses just the 7 observed. I have provided park managers with recommendations to improve bluebird nesting success via better protections from rat snakes and relocation to keep boxes out of direct sun (excessive heat in boxes killed at least 9 hatchlings).

**Martha (Marti) Kane - Mordecai Historic Park (Wake):** Lots of trouble with house sparrows dominating 3 boxes along Wake Forest Road. Removed their nests and eggs. Bluebirds were finally able to "take back" one of the house sparrow dominated boxes. One house wren in the area but it did not disturb nests or eggs. Lots of road construction near one box. After nesting season was over, I replaced all of the old boxes with new SECU boxes and Wild Birds Unlimited pole systems. Suzy and I met with site managers and gardeners to make sure boxes were in locations best for birds and for people.

**Martha (Marti) Kane - Wil-Mar Golf Course (Wake):** This was Bill Satterwhite's bluebird trail established in the 1990's. Most boxes in disrepair; some falling over; all unprotected with no predator guards and only 4 ft from grounded to box. I replaced all of Bills boxes after first brood with new SECU boxes, WBU pole systems and predator guards. Success rate went up significantly for 2nd and 3rd broods. I moved most of the boxes to keep them out of the way of mowers and sprinklers. Tested 2 types of predator guards - found PVC pipe (4 inches in diameter and 5 foot tall) most successful in keeping snakes out of boxes. Observed 4 broods lost to snakes: 1 brood lost to mower hitting box; found 2 dead females in 2 of Bill's old boxes. Pesticides??

**Diane Mitchell - Lake Benson Park Trail (Wake):** Another great season. Box # 1 holds the record for the second season in a row for most eggs laid (16), hatched (14), and fledged (11). Boxes #1, 8, and 10 had 3 successful nestings. The remaining 7 boxes all had 2 nestings each, with lower numbers of fledglings.

**Ciji Richardson (Wake):** We have a camera in our nest box and greatly enjoyed watching all the babies this season.

**Anne Runyan - White Deer Park (Wake):** Plan to move three of the six bluebird boxes away from trees which have grown, to more open areas. These boxes were not well used this season.

# BLUEBIRD INFORMATION & HELPFUL TIPS

## Turn to NABS (North American Bluebird Society) with your Bluebird Questions

NCBS is an affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society (NABS). This well respected organization is an excellent resource for bluebird education. Their website, [nabluebirdsociety.org](http://nabluebirdsociety.org), offers a wealth of valuable information on the history, challenges, and needs of bluebirds and how you can help bluebirds.

NABS was formed 1978 to help save bluebirds, whose population was in great decline. Dr. Zeleny, NABS founder, was a strong supporter of bluebird education. He authored *Bluebird: How You Can Help Its Fight for Survival*. Providing nestboxes and managing bluebird trails was a big part of his life.

Some educational data to look for include problems bluebirds have faced and overcome, challenges they still deal with, and how to attract and care for bluebirds. There are various ways that humans can help bluebirds. Of critical need for bluebirds is safe housing. Check out their website for so much helpful bluebird information.

Resource: [nabluebirdsociety.org](http://nabluebirdsociety.org)

## Getting Ready for the 2021 Nesting Season

Looking for something productive to do during these unusual times? How about spending some time preparing for the 2021 nesting season? A good place to start is at the North American Bluebird Society website, [nabluebirdsociety.org](http://nabluebirdsociety.org). Then click on *Fact Sheets & Plans*.

Here you will find downloadable plans for 11 styles of bluebird nestboxes and 2 predator guards. You will also find links to download 8 different full-color bluebird fact sheets and a full-color brochure. The fact sheets are 4 page documents except for Mealworms, which is two pages.

There is also a link where you can purchase the NABS DVD for \$10. The DVD has two bluebird presentations. The long version contains 89 slides. The short version has 46 slides. Both versions are in PowerPoint and PDF formats. There are scripts for both presentations. You can also modify the PowerPoint presentations to customize for your particular situation. The presentations are organized into five sections:

1. Why Bluebirds?
2. Bluebird Biology
3. Helping Bluebirds
4. Predators and Competitors
5. Conclusion



Submitted by Jim Burke, NCBS Board Member / Vice President of NABS

Check out more in the *NABS Factsheet FAQ* and their website per the links below:

<http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org/PDF/NABSFactsheetFAQs.pdf>

[nabluebirdsociety.org](http://nabluebirdsociety.org)

# HELPING BLUEBIRDS & FINDING HOPE

## Welcome Back Eastern Bluebirds of Yesteryear



The Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Citizen-Science Project NestWatch ([nestwatch.org](http://nestwatch.org)) is undertaking an epic task that will assist in understanding the historical nesting patterns of North American birds. From the 1960s to the early 2000s citizen scientists documented nesting behavior by participating in the North American Nest Record Card Program. This program resulted in the submission of more than 300,000 nest records. Of this collection more than 60,000 are Eastern Bluebird nest records. The NestWatch Nest Quest Go! project's goal is to transcribe the paper cards to digital format. The research potential of this information is invaluable.

North Carolina Bluebird Society members can help digitize the data using the Nest Quest Go! Zooniverse website. Volunteers have already helped transcribe the Mountain and Western Bluebirds, along with numerous other species; but all hands are needed on deck for this massive undertaking. If you have empty nest syndrome this winter and are missing your birds, take a crack at virtual nest monitoring. All data will eventually be imported into NestWatch for researchers to freely use.



The North American Bluebird Society is supporting this project with a \$6,000 donation. Becca Rodomsky-Bish is the Nest Quest Go! Project Leader at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. She can be reached via email at [rbr75@cornell.edu](mailto:rbr75@cornell.edu).



To get started, enter the following link into your browser:

<https://www.zooniverse.org/projects/brbcornell/nest-quest-go-eastern-bluebirds>

Submitted by Jim Burke, NCBS Board Member / NABS Vice President

## Inspiration & Hope from the Bluebirds

It is wonderful that so many folks do so much to help bluebirds. Clearly it offers much reward. We have stories and beautiful photos of bluebirds flourishing across North Carolina in this issue. Even in a year such as 2020 where struggles and despair are all around, there is hope. We must stay positive and know that we will triumph. The beauty of the bluebirds lifts our spirits and favorable energy even higher.

Please remember that the bluebirds have survived overwhelming challenges, setbacks, and disadvantages, but have made a strong comeback. So shall we!. The bluebirds were helped by humans and they help us. Isn't it great to be part of the solution to preserve the precious bluebirds. And they show their gratitude by providing us with beauty, hope, and inspiration for our own struggles.

Stay Safe, Stay Positive, and Happy Bluebirding in 2021.

## HAPPY WISHES FROM OUR FEATHERED FRIENDS (1 OF 2)



### Winston-Salem Bluebird Sends Tunes of Cheer

Thanks to John Holland for this fabulous snapshot from a happy Forsyth County bluebird.

How refreshing to see this charming bluebird singing with such joy. He hopes your 2021 New Year is peaceful, relaxing, and fun.

### Greetings from Garner

Tracy Levy from the southern part of Wake County submitted this bluebird glamour portrait. Isn't this closeup of a beautiful blue simply breathtaking?

We greatly appreciate this fantastic picture, Tracy, a sign that bluebirds in the central part of our state are doing well. We know this photo will add cheer and inspiration to our readers' winter days.



### Hello from Bahama

Elke Hoffmann of northern Durham County submitted this splendid photo of a bright blue feathered friend. We love it!

Elke has sent us many great pictures of bluebirds that have appeared in past newsletters. Check out our archives at [ncbluebird.org](http://ncbluebird.org). Thanks to Elke for her consistent concern for the Blues and for sharing her wonderful photos.



## HAPPY WISHES FROM OUR FEATHERED FRIENDS (2 OF 2)

### Good Tidings & News from Apex Bluebird Nest Box

Ciji Johnson of Apex participated in the 2020 nest box data monitoring, as well as sending a visual report. She shared the fantastic images shown below captured from her nest box camcorder. What wonderful snapshots to see: Blue Eggs, Baby Blues, a watchful Parent. Thanks so much, Ciji, for your help with collecting important nest data and sharing these photo supplements. It is nice to see faces of bluebirds that the data survey numbers represent. Good job!



### Peace from Lake Biltmore

This Carolina Wren in the NC Mountain area has found a nice cozy place to call home and relax. Russ, Buncombe County Coordinator, sent in this cool picture. The art in his yard adds beauty to the scenic view and serves to help a songbird escape the harsh winter elements.

Our feathered friends are resourceful, but they can use our help for water, food, and housing during this cold season. Check out ways to help bluebirds in winter on [ncbluebird.org](http://ncbluebird.org), [nabluebirdsociety.org](http://nabluebirdsociety.org), and [sialis.org](http://sialis.org).



### Titmouse & Chickadee Winter Songbird Picture Gallery

Donald Ryan, brother of Glenda Ryan, loves taking nature pictures. He is able to capture snapshots of many birds near his home in Houston, Indiana, which is near the Hoosier National Forest. He has shared great photos of bluebirds, chickadees, titmice, and other feathered friends for our Facebook, website, and past newsletters. Check out our archives at [ncbluebird.org](http://ncbluebird.org). Since chickadees and titmice are two of the common birds listed as “other species” in our nest data survey, we thought some photos of these songbirds would be of interest in this issue. Hope these sassy birds from the Midwest posing so nicely brighten your winter day.



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## HAPPY WINTER 2020

## NCBS MEMBERSHIP

The season of cold weather is my least favorite, but I will stay positive and focus on the good things in life during this time.



There are photo opportunities all year long. Wake County Parks in the winter are nice places to enjoy nature and take pictures of birds, scenery, and cute critters. I have been fortunate to see bluebirds several times in 2020 at Mordecai Historic Park in Raleigh. These snapshots were taken at that Happy Place, made even better with the sights & sounds of the charming downtown Blues.

Speaking of a place to take great pictures, I am looking forward to visiting Sylvan Bird Park—hopefully in 2021. Reviewing their website made me aware of how much beauty they have to offer. A wonderful way to see so many feathered friends, and not too far of a drive for me from Knightdale, NC.



Glenda Ryan, Webmaster/Newsletter Editor

[websitebloom.com](http://websitebloom.com)

NCBS memberships options are one or three years.

**Dues: \$10.00 per year or \$25 for three years**

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Check Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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- \_\_\_\_\_ Conducting a bluebird workshop
- \_\_\_\_\_ Contacting my local paper with news
- \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteering to be a NCBS County Coordinator
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please explain)

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## **WINTER BLUEBIRDS ADD COLOR & CHEER**

Seeing bluebirds anytime is a blessing. Sightings of them in the colder months are even more special. Thanks to Baxter Sapp, Jr. of Durham for these great photos he snapped in a previous winter. We have shared some of his bluebird pictures in a past issue and are pleased to have a few more poses to include in this edition. Didn't he capture some fantastic snapshots? Well done, Baxter!!



- Lets all be on the lookout for these precious blue winged creatures in the upcoming months.
- If we don't see them during the winter, knowing of their arrival in Spring is enough to keep us going.
- Stay Safe, Stay Positive, Happy Bluebirding in 2021!

