



NCBS Logo with Carolina Blue by Dempsey Essick

Bluebird Notes

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North Carolina Bluebird Society Mission Statement

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

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RISA JARMAN

As a neighbor and friend of Ray Welch, I was asked if I would help on the newsletter when Helen Munro, our present editor, decided to retire and move to Texas. I told him I would be glad to help a little.....of course, I am now the new editor, so I will do my best to be your new "tweeter." That's a new high tech word that will make us look like we are really up to date on all the new technology. I will start with how I got involved with bluebirds. I was a typical high school student that didn't know what I wanted to do with my life. I ended up teaching Industrial Arts, which to many is known as (shop class,) now known as Exploring Technology. My father, R.T. Troxler, was a professor in the College of Education at NC State and taught Industrial Arts. After two years of college at Appalachian State, I still wasn't sure what I wanted to do, so he suggested I try Industrial Arts and I did. I loved it, made the Dean's list, I have taught Exploring Technology in Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools for the past 30 years. At my first school, Walkertown Middle, a fellow named Ray Cook would come down every spring and ask me if I had any scrap wood. He would then proceed to build a few bluebird houses. He wasn't real exact in his sawing, and had quite a few "un-square" pieces and

A NEW "TWEETER"

quite a few gaps but he assured me that the bluebirds liked the houses just like that with lots of holes. I thought he was pulling my leg, because his carpentry work wasn't so hot, but now that I know a little about bluebirds, he was right! They do like a little air flow. Occasionally, I would have the students build bluebird houses, but I didn't know about the clean out procedure so mine were sealed pretty tight. Through the years I got a little better at the houses, making some where you could take the screws out of the top and some with hinges. One day I saw some bluebird houses outside Dempsey Essick's place in Welcome that were really cool! Dempsey Essick is a famous local artist, and former president of the NC Bluebird Society. The bird houses at Dempsey's fronts flipped out, by just putting two nails in at the top. I went up to the counter to buy one to use as a model for my students and met Dempsey's wife, Shelley, who told me all about bluebirds. She gave me one of the blue bird pamphlets to join the NC Bluebird Society and explained all about the demise and efforts to bring back the bluebirds. I had never put one of those bluebird houses up until I found out about bluebirds at Dempsey Essick's. I thought just any old bird would get in there, and never knew you could look in and check on them and even touch

Bluebird Notes

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A New Tweeter



them!! Dempsey's wife told me you could feed them meal worms and how they would fly right around Dempsey when he came out with them. She gave me the number of a place where I could get meal worms and I went home, sent in my \$10 to become a member, and put my first bluebird house up on a tree. (I have since learned that is a no! no!) I ordered some of those meal worms and pretty soon I had bluebirds and I was hooked!

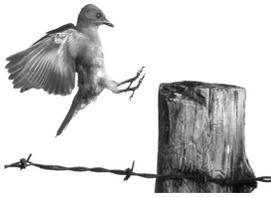
I was thrilled the first time I peeked in and pulled out that little nest to see a pretty light blue egg. The next day I had another until five pretty bluebird eggs were in the nest. I touched them and put them in my hand and that was a real thrill! I was so happy to know the mother WOULD come back and not abandon the eggs as I had always heard. When the babies hatched, I was able to look in at them every couple of days and watch them grow, watch the parents feed them and occasionally hold them in my hands. Wow! What a treat from nature, so I became a "bluebird girl." When I started getting literature about the bluebird society, I found out the Davidson County Coordinator lived within walking distance of my house in the next neighborhood over. Not only was he the Davidson County Coordinator, he was the president of the whole state!! So I went over and introduced myself to Ray and we have been bluebird partners over in our neck of the woods for a few years now.

We must be doing a good job; I see lots of bluebirds around and I have three clutches every year, except the year I put one in the field next door for my neighbor April. They went to her house instead of mine so I had to take April's bluebird house back!

Ray talked me into going to the Annual Meeting in Hickory in 2011 and we had a really nice time, a great meal, met some wonderful people and won some really neat bluebird things. A few weeks ago, Ray came over and told me he really needed a new editor for the newspaper. I had accidentally mentioned that I used to do a little newspaper with my students. I tried to tell him that I had three teenagers, three schnauzers, a cat, a rabbit and ten chickens, couldn't type and was a substitute teacher and that I didn't think I would have time for this, but he assured me, he and Betsy would help out; so here I am, your new "Tweeter."



Risa Jarman



Bluebird Tweets



A Gift, Goodies and Thank You to Helen Munro, NCBS Editor for 16 Years!



On July 26, 2012, the bluebird Society had a board meeting at Helen Munro's house in Jackson Springs, NC. Since she is resigning as the editor after sixteen years of dedication and service in almost all capacities for the NC Bluebird Society, a gift of the painting, "King of the Field," by Dempsey Essick was presented to her by Ray Welch and the board. Helen was most appreciative of this and plans to put it above her fireplace in her

BLUEBIRD CUPCAKES



Kay and Helen

new home in Texas. She said she really enjoyed being a part of the NC Bluebird Society and will really miss this part of her life. We wish her well as she moves closer to her children and grandchildren in Texas. Kay Hindsley's granddaughter, Chelsie Rae Riggs, 17 of Tarboro, a freshman at Liberty University, made the group delicious "bluebirds in the nest" cup cakes. The nest was brown colored coconut with a cute little bluebird on top. Thank you Miss Chelsie!

BLUEBIRD PICTURES FROM AROUND THE STATE



I know there is one more meal worm in there! Let me get it!

May 25th, 2012

Risa Jarman Winston-Salem, NC

Salem



Busy Nest Builders

March 15, 2012

Submitted by Pat Yoakum

Raleigh, NC



Where's the beef??

Risa Jarman

Winston-Salem, NC

Submitted by **Susan Sechrist**

Drexel, NC

Helen Gonzalez of Winston-Salem named this little goldfinch

"Pole Dancer"

because he twists all around the pole to get a drink from the hummingbird



BEST YEAR YET FOR TANGLEWOOD BLUEBIRDS!!

According to Bill Abbey, Tanglewood's Bluebird Trail Monitor, the bluebirds nesting on the Park had an exceptional 2012 nesting season! The forty-three nesting boxes checked by Abbey during the spring and summer successfully delivered 227 young bluebirds. This was the best year of the past ten years yielding 5.3 birds per box over three nesting cycles.

Abbey, a thirty-two year volunteer suggested that, "We have learned to be smarter about our nest box placement and over the past decade have eliminated about twenty boxes with poor production history." Additionally, this year as a predator control measure, Abbey has begun experimenting with PVC pipe mounted guards as well as tube-type entry guards. Initial results seem favorable and it is hoped that a five-year data collection plan will show a useful outcome. The control measures selected are designed to discourage, not harm, common predators such as feral cat, squirrel, raccoon and certain bird species. Moreover, careful selection of habitat will tend to discourage hungry snakes and inquisitive human visitors. Readers wishing an interesting summary of the season's bluebird nesting activity may visit the Tanglewood Park Website at www.tanglewoodpark.org or call 336-788-6300. Tanglewood Park located in Clemmons, North Carolina is owned and operated by Forsyth County Parks and Recreation.

Bill Abbey



**Tube Type
PVC
Combo
Bottom
and
Entryway**

**PVC Guard
on Bottom
Post**



**PVC
Guard on
Entryway**

MEET THE “OTHER” CAVITY NESTING BIRDS

Bufflehead



As enterprising “bluebirders,” we don’t often think first of ducks as examples of the “other cavity nesting birds” to which our Society’s mission statement alludes. Yet, in North America, we have several species of ducks that use tree cavities for nesting sites. My personal favorite is the smartly marked Bufflehead, our smallest diving duck and close relative of two other underwater feeding ducks, the Common Goldeneye and Barrow’s Goldeneye, also cavity nesters and with whom Buffleheads compete for sites along with Northern Flickers and European Starlings.

The Bufflehead, whose scientific name is *Bucephala albeola*, derives its beauty not from brilliant, primary colors, but from contrasting black and white patterns. Its generic name, *Bucephala*, (Greek for “large head”) is probably derived from the male’s habit of erecting its head feathers thereby enhancing the display of its bright white cheek patch in courtship and visibly enlarging its head. The specific name, *albeola*, refers to the bright white patterns that contrast with the black areas of the plumage. The female’s colors are more subdued with brownish-gray plumage offering less contrast with smaller areas of white.

Buffleheads breed in the boreal forests of Canada and Alaska choosing nest sites in such cavities as former flicker holes in mature aspens, poplars and other deciduous and coniferous trees. Dead trees in or near permanent ponds are often utilized and there are instances where the birds have responded to nest boxes. They lay 10 to 14 eggs that are incubated for 28 to 33 days. The young remain in the nest for two to three days after hatching and then follow the parents to the safety of a nearby pool. In nearly two months, they are capable of flying. After the breeding season, Buffleheads can be found generally across the United States on inland lakes as well as on both coasts.

On inland fresh water ponds and lakes, “butterballs” feed underwater on insects and aquatic plants. At the coasts, they consume crustaceans and mollusks. Hunters, finding the birds on migration have dubbed them “butterballs” because of the large amounts of fat they store to be metabolized *en route*. Fortunately for the birds and for those of us who appreciate these small divers, Buffleheads are not prized for their meat. The primary limitation on their population size is habitat loss as the human population increases.

Visiting the North Carolina coast or any large body of water in winter will often offer a generous view of a flock of these charming “Little Black and White Ducks,” as the species was called when first described in the eighteenth century. Take along a spotting scope, and enjoy watching these handsome birds.

2nd in series of “Other” Cavity Nesters by Robert G. Wolk

Home Sweet Home?

As I drive around the state I find some interesting nest boxes and can't resist taking a photo. Some are humorous, some pathetic and some disgusting dwellings for House Sparrows. Makes me wonder just who is monitoring these? Some I know the answer to that question right away. It's not hard to spot a neglected box. I hope none of these are from any of your trails!

Patrick Ready, the Editor of the Wisconsin Bluebird Newsletter let us borrow his bluebird house pictures and captions!!



THE LEAN TO



THE BEND OVER



THE SLIDER



**LOCATION...LOCATION...
MAKE THAT POOR LOCATION**



SKID ROW



THE FLIP-FLOP

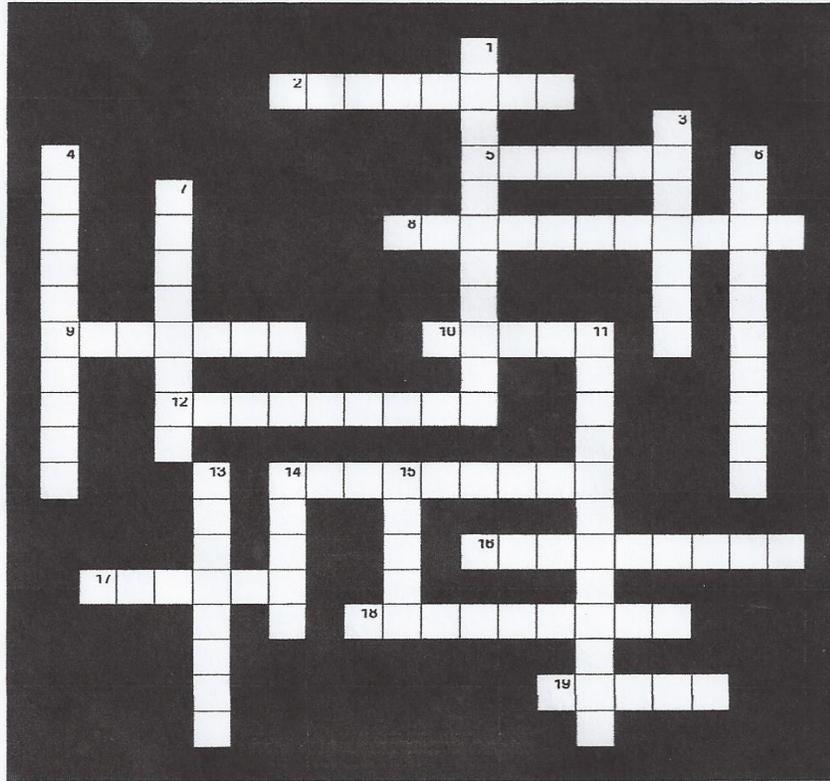


THE SPARROW PALACE



WRONG THRUSH

Bluebird Facts Crossword Puzzle



Answers
on page 14

Down

- 1 - Unpaired male Bluebirds may sing up to _____ Songs per hour.
- 3 - A type of North American bluebird.
- 4 - Bluebirds will sometimes select abandoned _____ nesting cavities.
- 6 - Bluebirds are generally _____ throughout the breeding season.
- 7 - A type of North American bluebird.
- 11 - The _____ has contributed to the decline in the bluebird population over the past century.
- 13 - "Mr. Bluebird's on my _____."
- 14 - A bluebird can spot caterpillars and insects in tall grass at the remarkable distance of over _____ yards.
- 15 - Bluebirds can raise up to _____ broods in a season.



Across

- 2 - Bluebirds do not have blue _____ in their feathers.
- 5 - Bluebirds will eat up to _____ percent of their body weight.
- 8 - Bluebirds hunt for insects by using the _____ technique.
- 9 - A type of North American bluebird.
- 10 - The beginning of breeding season for bluebirds.
- 12 - The bluebird population has _____ over the past 40 years.
- 14 - Bluebirds can fly up to _____ miles per hour.
- 16 - Bluebirds are typically seen as a symbol for _____.
- 17 - The ending of breeding season for bluebirds.
- 18 - You can attract bluebirds to your backyard by feeding them _____.
- 19 - Mountain Bluebirds are able _____ above the ground while searching for insects.

Crossword Submitted by Bill Abbey



These three adults
helped fledge a
third brood
after the mother
died!



Biltmore Lake,
NC 9/7/12



Submitted by
Russ Bauman

**Word Bank for
Crossword Puzzle**

AUGUST DROPHUNTING
EASTERN FIFTY
FORTYFIVE HAPPINESS
HOUSESPARROW HOVER
INCREASED MARCH
MEALWORMS,
MONOGAMOUS MOUNTAIN
ONETHOUSAND PIGMENTS,
SHOULDER THREE TWELVE
WESTERN WOODPECKER

“TURTLE LOVE”
Submitted by
Helen Gonzales
Arcadia
August 4, 2012



SPOTLIGHT ON A NEW COUNTY COORDINATOR

New Alamance County Coordinator Rob McGowan

Rob grew up in Southern New Jersey. His father was an Eagle Scout and taught him many nature lore skills among the farm and meadowlands of the Garden State. While his classmates may have been playing football, Rob was taking a nature hike through the woods, or canoeing the local drainage ditches.

A few years ago, Rob moved with his wife near the Glen Raven side of Alamance County. About two years ago his wife Debbie had discovered a pair of bluebirds had laid five eggs in her empty dry moss lined planter. The eggs hatched and bare naked fat tummy birds began growing. It was a great experience watching them grow and become fully feathered. The parents would dive bomb at anyone going near the nest, as it was not far from a hanging bird feeder. One night there was a severe thunderstorm and in the morning, the birds were gone. The parents were perching on the nearby wires and would just stare at the empty nest for a few days. It was as if they were asking, "What did you do with our children?"

After putting up some boxes and having some successful nesting experiences, Rob decided to buy some mealworms from Nature's Emporium then sales rep, Julie, invited him to the annual NC Bluebird Society meeting that weekend. When he returned home, he noticed that since the last rainstorm that the nest box was quiet when the female went in and out. Apparently, something had GOTTEN them. At the last minute Rob decided to go to the NCBS meeting, because he wanted to learn more about supplemental feeding and preventing predators. The meeting was very informative and since the local County Coordinator was retiring, Rob volunteered. Rob says, "Meeting Frances Outhwaite and spending time with her learning about all she has done has been a great educational experience." Rob recorded Fran's instructions on video and filmed and photographed his first trip on the Cedar Rock Park 25 nest box bird trail with Donna Redmon and

Cindy Benson. It was a great spring day, with many of the nest boxes occupied. Unfortunately one of the boxes had a low tree branch too close and was occupied by a rat snake.

Rob is a media producer and would like to meet and videotape more Coordinators who want to share their knowledge. "I look forward to spreading the word on Bluebirds and other secondary cavity nesters and plan to produce an educational DVD."

Rob can be contacted at 336-266-4473 or by email nestboxmonitor@gmail.com

Written by Rob McGowan; Submitted by Joye Stephenson, County Coordinator Administrator

Side note: There are a number of counties without coordinators. Please consider this volunteer position. Also, if you have photos that may be of interest, please send them to the Editor.

Thanks.

Joye Stephenson, Wake County
Coordinator Administrator

2013 ANNUAL "BLUEBIRD FLY-IN"



The 2013 NC Annual "Bluebird Fly-In" will be held at The Summit Conference Center in the Haw River State Park on May 4, 2013. The Haw River State Park is located at 339 Conference Center Drive, Brown Summit, NC 27214. If you are interested, Google "Haw River State Park NC" to find information about the park. This is a great location for a meeting, a haven for nature lovers and we will have a great program and lunch. So please mark your calendar to reserve Saturday, May 4, 2013 for a great day! Additional details and reservations information will be in the next newsletter.



**Rob McGowan—New Alamance
County Coordinator**



What??? Where's the nest!!!



Getting Hungry!!



Sleeping Peacefully!



Hello World!!



Boo!!

Pictures on this page submitted by Rob McGowan

A NEW NCBS MEMBER AND A GOOD SNAKE STORY

It all started when I moved into my new home in Hillsborough, NC last summer. My next door neighbor gave me a house warming gift of a bluebird house that they purchased from the North Carolina State Employee's Credit Union. I immediately put it up on a big oak tree, paying special attention to put it at just the right height and facing my office window where I sit all day, every day.

Then spring came and my neighbors said they had a nest of Bluebirds at their house. I decided to buy a few more houses from NCSECU and put them up nearby - to better my odds. Then one day, bluebird parents started moving into my first bluebird house.

After doing a little research online about bluebirds, I became concerned about snakes climbing up the tree trunks where my nests were located. So I Googled for help with my snake problem and found the NC Bluebird Society. I immediately called President Ray Welch, the first name on the list of contacts. I explained my concern about the numerous snakes in my wooded area and Ray referred me to Steve McDaniel, "the snake specialist."

I immediately called Steve and told him my concerns and he advised me to purchase galvanized steel rods to mount the houses and said that he would even come to my home that evening to help with moving the houses.

True to his word, Steve arrived in the early evening with Ken Kernodle, the Orange County Coordinators. They moved the inhabited Bluebird house just a few feet from its location on the Oak Tree, assuring me that the birds would not be bothered by this and I could expect them to move back in within a day or two.

Early the next morning the activity in the new location began – just as they promised. They said that I could check on the birds once a day – but I didn't because I didn't want to bother them. It soon became apparent that we had babies.

Also apparent was that a big black snake was watching the nest. I became very nervous. The parents would dive bomb at squirrels, other birds and now this 4 – 5 foot snake.

I emailed Steve again. He wanted to know the snake's size – when I said "4 feet-ish," he said he'd be out in the evening. Again, Steve and Ken came over, checked out the area and we decided to put up a black plastic bag to act as a skirt around the rod. If the snake tried to climb the rod, it would be stopped where the bag was attached at the top.

Ken went back to the car to get something and we heard him calling for Steve. He spotted the snake. It was definitely the snake I had seen. Steve caught it. They took a photo and then put it in a pillow case and in the car to relocate it. We thought our problem was solved.

It stormed that night and early the next morning, I looked out my office window and saw the male hovering and fluttering in front of the Birdhouse opening. I thought he might be coaxing the babies to fly. When his behavior continued, I decided to check on the babies. I opened the house and saw a black snake

curled up in the house.

I ran for a garden tool and started to poke at it. It finally fell out and seemed like it wasn't going to move on. I poked harder with a shovel this time and eventually it did move on through the woods.

Another email to Steve telling him the sad news. It looked like there were two babies left but I didn't know if they were alive.

And again Steve and Ken came to check on the babies. Two were alive! We discarded the black plastic garbage bag skirt and Ken brought some netting to put on the ground around the base of the rod. I was to keep watch to make sure that if a snake got caught in the netting I could call on them to release it.

Several days passed and all was quiet. I checked on the babies the night before I left for a road trip up north and all seemed well. They seemed big enough to leave the nest. Steve came to check on them the next day and they were gone.

I missed seeing them fly off on June 30th but I am thrilled and relieved they are alive and well and off on their own.

I miss watching them from my office window. I hope they'll return. The house is all cleaned and ready for them.

I wonder if the NC Bluebird Society gives an award to the year's Best Volunteers. If yes, I know two well deserving Volunteers! Thank you Steve McDaniel and Ken Kernodle for helping to save two more beautiful Bluebirds in North Carolina and for going above and beyond the call of duty to help a new member of NCBS.

Joyce Marcus
Hillsborough, NC



Steve McDaniel
"Snake Charmer"



Joyce Marcus and
Steve McDaniel
"Trashbag Solution"

North Carolina Bluebird Society



What a little
sweetie from
Biltmore Lake!!

**WELCOME TO THE
NORTH CAROLINA
BLUEBIRD
SOCIETY ON-LINE
STORE!!**

**[http://www.fortune3.com/
NCBS/](http://www.fortune3.com/NCBS/)**

**The new on-line store
opened for business on
August 15, 2012. Browse
the website and enjoy our
wonderful selection of
products! Check back often
as we will be adding new
items as we find them!**

**Books.....Clothing.....Hats
Tote Bags.....Flags.....
Street Signs.....Puzzles
AND MORE!!!**

A REQUEST FROM YOUR NEW EDITOR

Please be patient with me as I learn MS Publisher and how to arrange and organize newsletter articles. I am always open to suggestions. Let me know your likes and dislikes and any suggestions you may have. If I ever leave out an article you have submitted, please feel free to call or email me to be sure I received it and that it hasn't gotten lost in the bowels of my computer!! Frequent email reminders or a phone call would be great if you have something you really want published. If I have not published something you felt worthy please bring it to my attention and I will try to get it in the next possible newsletter. Things can get lost although I am working hard on my digital organization skills! And my file cabinet! If anyone would like to help on the newsletter staff, please let me know! Thank you so much for the many articles and pictures that helped complete this one. Email suggestions to :

Risatj2@triad.rr.com
or call 336-775-4083

*Thank you!
Risa Jarman*

BLUEBIRD SURVEYS DUE

SEND TO:

HELEN MUNRO

22 BOBOLINK ROAD
JACKSON SPRINGS, NC 27281

SHE IS GOING TO COMPILE THOSE
AGAIN FOR US THIS YEAR!!

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