



NCBS Logo with Carolina Blue by Dempsey Essick

Bluebird Notes



NCBS is an affiliate of NABS.

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Volume 29 Issue 3

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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Our Orange Shoes, No Shoes, Red Shoes Bluebirds-What?



© Bill Pennell

How did this happen? Fifteen years ago, we purchased a fancy two story, ten hole, condo type bird house at a charity auction. Of course, we paid too much for it, except the cause of the event was priceless. It was allotted a place in the garage and remained there for several years. Somehow, we got the notion it would enhance the appearance of the wildflower garden in the backyard.

Soon, we observed, the birds did not like it, including the sparrows. This led to an investigation. We determined the builder of the box did not include any internal boxes for the holes. We remedied this by placing dividers for each hole.

Subsequently, a pair of bluebirds nested in the box the following year. They had orange shoes. We contacted Dr. Mark Stanback's office at Davidson College. He has published many journal articles about his ornithology research related to brown-headed nuthatches and bluebirds.

To our surprise, we were told the orange shoes bluebirds were from Davidson College. The college is about five miles away. How cool we thought. The birds flew all the way to our house from the college to nest in our backyard.

Later, we learned Dr. Stanback and his students monitor a forty box bluebird trail on our golf course and these birds were from this trail. We enjoyed our orange shoed bluebirds for several years. They fledged three broods each year.

Then, we observed one orange shoed bluebird and the next year no bluebirds nested in our garden condo box. One of our grandsons contacted Dr. Stanback about an Eagle Scout project related to bluebirds. He needed money for his project and he had no trouble selling us.

His project resulted in a thirty box trail. Because of this Eagle Scout Project, we became hooked on bluebirds. We joined the NC Bluebird Society and investigated how to



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Bluebird Tales



Continued from page 1

start and monitor a bluebird trail. We purchased boxes from the State Employees' Credit Union. Through trial and error, we learned how to make predator baffles from stove pipe. However, we like the squirrel baffles from Lowes better. We now use both types. This spring four red shoes bluebirds fledged April 28 from the new Credit Union box we located in our backyard garden.

Last fall, we moved the fancy condo box from the back garden to the front yard garden. The condo box was painted white and the roof turquoise. It looks great. We received numerous compliments about the condo box being in the front yard garden. Then we observed... WOW....the condo box in the front yard has bluebirds with no shoes.

You must be thinking these people really got messed up getting hooked on bluebirds and writing about birds with shoes. So how did they get the shoes? Dr. Stanback banded our birds the color orange and red to monitor the time and year they fledged. So, we refer to them as our orange shoes, no shoes, and red shoes babies.

We love our bluebird trail and our recently fledged red banded babies. They have returned after fledging to our backyard. Their Mom and Dad have started another nest and it has four eggs. The red banded juveniles are honing their skills of survival and learning how to feed at the meal worm feeder.

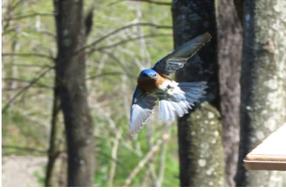
We look forward to our new brood of yellow shoes or banded bluebirds from the back yard; and, our front yard no shoe babies. WOW....what a difference a year makes. What color shoes will they have next year?

We will tell you at the annual meeting.

*By John and Ann Allen
Davidson, NC*



Courtesy: Tom Bodkin Bryk-Artist



Bluebird Tales



A NOTE FROM JIM KUNKLE

Hello my bluebird friends!

I have an update on the bluebird family living in my bluebird box. The mother has acted rather uninterested during the brooding season, but apparently has had some success. I rarely saw her go in or out of the box. The father has been AWOL for the entire brooding season, and has just returned about three days ago. He seems like he too does not really have his heart in assuming his fatherly role and feeding the babies. He is around the box occasionally, but I have yet to see



him catch an insect and take it to the box and feed the babies. I have seen him go in the box a few times. Apparently he is feeding them, however, because they appear to be much more lively and growing than they did 3 or 4 days ago. Then they didn't hardly have enough energy to raise their heads, and they looked more anemic than I have observed other newborns before.

Two of the eggs never hatched, and I took them out of the nest. One was never fertilized, and the other had a bird in it which was dead. It appeared to have only grown about 2/3 of its correct size,

and then something killed it. I know it got very cold at that time for at least two nights. It could have been the cold temperature that got it, or it could have been the mother simply didn't keep them warm enough. Oh well, on the bright side, I have three cute babies now! Hopefully the father gets his act together, and raises the babies the way he is supposed to, and trains them to eat out of my feeder the way they have always done before!

I talked with Ray Welch, and he said that it was not unusual for the male to disappear during the brooding season.

Well I hope this information will help you in some way in your future bluebirding!

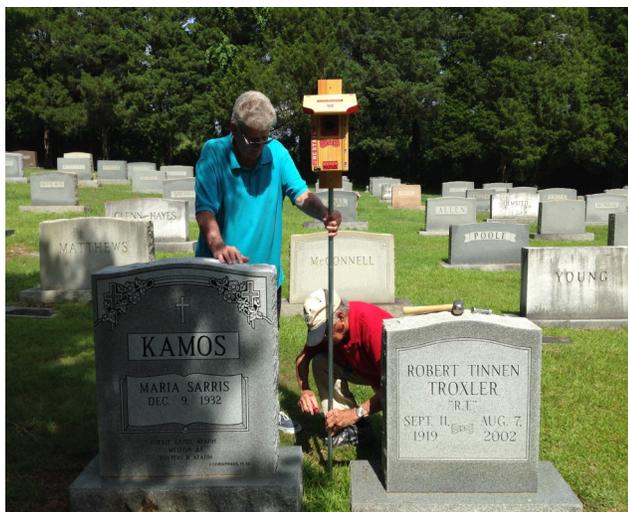
Jim



Ray Welch with new and improved State Employees Credit Union Bluebird Houses. Ray includes a metal reinforcement ring at the entrance hole, a thumb bolt instead of a nail, an official bluebird identity plate, and of course several coats of a marine base polyurethane.

Historic Oakwood Cemetery in Raleigh Gets a Custom Designed Bluebird House

After I discovered county coordinator and bluebird experts, Bill Satterwhite and Suzy Spencer had established a trail at Oakwood Cemetery in Raleigh, I wanted to put up one for my dad who is also buried there. Bill suggested that I decorate something special for my dad and he would put it up. I was thinking about trying to paint that NC State wolf and knew that would be a tough job, so I dragged my feet on the idea for a while. Then one day, while at Rite-Aid looking for some pain relief (after my exercise class,) I saw this area with college stickers for sale and there just happened to be some



Ted Harvey and Bill Satterwhite

really cool NC State stickers. What a wonderful aid to my design idea!

So I bought the stickers and got right to work on designing an NC State bluebird house for my dad since he taught there. Go Wolfpack! I picked a pretty day, opened the umbrella on my deck to keep me cool and made a special bluebird house for my dad with the stickers and paint. My dad always wore a bow tie, whether it was in style or not. It didn't get in his way when he was building things and it's harder to spill things on a bow-tie! So of course I painted a red and white bow tie on the front of his box.

The next dilemma was getting the house to



Bill, because the State Employees Credit Union boxes are super-good, well constructed and heavy, so a little costly to mail. It just happened that one of my tall daughters, (they took after their dad) Stephanie, had a basketball camp at NCSU so we were going to Raleigh anyway.

In between basketball games, my handy GPS took me right to Bill's house, which was quite a treat with all his unusual plant life, bluebird paraphernalia, and interesting stories. One about this tree that used to be used by monks to keep their libido down, and one plant that was about my age that belonged to his mother.

We made a plan to meet on that Sunday to put up the bluebird house. Most of my family live in and around Raleigh so I had the whole crew



Maria Kamos, Ted Harvey, Cindy Harvey, Risa Jarman Charlie Jarman in the back, and Judy and Joe Call.

meet Bill and I at the cemetery. Bill had all the tools and equipment for putting it up, so we picked a spot right by his grave and were quite proud of how it all looked when we finished. Job well done! I just hope no one steals it! I have heard of a few getting taken, but this one says in loving memory of RT Troxler, and his birth and death date, so surely no one would do such a thing! It was pretty late in the spring that we did this, so he may not have any birds until next spring, but I hope next spring and thereafter there will always be bluebirds for RT!

By Risa Jarman



BEATING THE SUMMER HEAT

As temperatures soared this summer and baked much of the US, wildfires broke out, crops withered, fish and other wildlife died. They aren't the only ones to suffer from the blazing summer. Birds are also trying to keep cool. They don't sweat like humans, or pant like dogs. Instead they have a variety of ways to help beat the heat. Birds have rapid respiration rates that allow greater heat dissipation through regular breathing. Bare skin patches on the legs and feet allow for heat loss. Some birds will open their wings on a hot day. This allows air to circulate across their bodies and take away some of the heat, cooling them. Some will open their mouth and "flutter" their neck muscles promoting heat loss. This action must be avian version of panting. I ob-

served birds using this method especially goldfinches that visited our feeders and baths this summer.

Birds still need to replenish fluids on a hot day. Water is one of the three necessary elements in establishing a successful birding habitat. Installing a birdbath can provide birds with a place to cool their heels in summer and get a drink or a bath. The water level shouldn't be too high and only about a few inches or so deep with a few stones in the bowl. Replenish the water every day or two otherwise the water can host algae and mosquito larvae. On very hot days, the water will evaporate quickly. During the hottest weather, I filled twice each day. Birds love moving water, misters and drippers.

Shade is an important as water. Temperatures can be far cooler under trees or bushes. Shrubs at several levels provide plentiful, deep shade and shelter from the hot sun. It's a good idea to plant native trees and shrubs. We can make our landscaping bird friendly and do double duty by choosing plants that will provide natural food sources such as dogwood, hollies and serviceberry bushes. I observed our birds using the trees around midday or earlier. They would come out only to drink and then come out again in the evening to feed.

Betsy Welch/About Birding



Don't we all need a bluebird house like this!

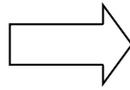
Pictures from Russ Bauman





Someone looks a little unhappy!

After hearing a wonderful presentation by Bill Satterwhite on bluebirds, **Martha Corregan** was inspired to send in these pictures of a beautiful bluebird pair that nested in her front yard.



Sent in by Stephanie Bertche



SOMETIMES OUR BABIES DON'T MAKE IT

Years ago someone bought us a gourd bird house, but we never hung it up --- just stashed it on a shelf in the car port. But, since the hole happened to be turned out, I'll be darned if someone didn't make a nest in it anyhow. A couple of times as I walked past, the mom flew by me, out of the nest.

The hatchlings behaved like no other baby birds I have ever seen. All three (I think) were jamming their heads out of the hole with beaks agape, screeching for food. On two occasions, one had fallen out. Sara found it both times and put it back.

They were clearly not ready to fly. We think something may have happened to the mom or that she abandoned the babies. We didn't know what to do to help them survive, if anything.

Hall Talley, Shelby NC

SADLY THESE BABIES DIDN'T MAKE IT. SOMETIMES WE HAVE TO JUST LET NATURE HANDLE THINGS AND WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT. WE'VE ALL BEEN THERE!



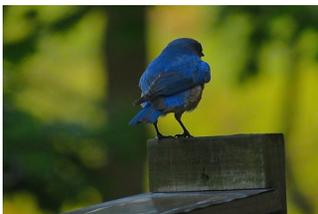
A Love Story by Susie and Russ



In June, a male and female bluebird completed building their third nest in our backyard nest box. (For clarity lets call them (Mom-1

and Dad-1.) Finally in the early morning, Mom-1 laid her first blue egg.

That same evening, Mom-1 and Dad-1 were accompanied by their three juveniles from their last brood—all were grabbing the scrumptious mealworms we set out. All of a sudden, the bluebirds were spooked by a hawk and rapidly flew away, each heading in different directions. We heard a “thud” outside. Mom-1 flew hard and head-on into the window glass. We watched her and made sure she was safe from predators, thinking she was dazed and would fly away in a minute or two. Sadly she never woke up. The next morning, I cleared out her nest where the beautiful egg was waiting.



Dad-1 just couldn't understand where his mate was. He went to the nest box a number of times with food, sat on the nest box roof looking up, down, around and bewildered. He even bobbed in

and out of the entrance hole. Everything was gone, mate, egg and nest. I felt sorry for him. Every night at dusk as he perched on the box all by himself.

For the next eight days Dad-1 labored to find a new Mom-2. He sang, wing waved, offered up tasty meal worms. Two females did come visit him but no connection was made. I noticed a second pair of bluebirds were nesting in our neighbors mailbox slot, the slot intended for the newspapers. She was caring for five 7 day old chicks. She enjoyed the ease of fetching (or stealing) our mealworms. Each time she arrived our male (Dad-1) tried his best to impress this girl. She ignored him and went about collecting a mouthful of worms and took off for her nest.

Four days ago I walked over to check her mailbox nest and she was standing on top of it. A predator had entered, pulled most of the pine needles out and took three of her chicks. She couldn't even get inside.

I replaced the nest with my spare nest and placed the two remaining chicks on it.



She started feeding them – a good sign everything was well. Sadly the next day I found two chicks dead.

Within 24 hours this mailbox mom showed up on top of OUR backyard nest box – the same one Dad-1 was using to attract Mom-2. these two bluebirds who lost so much “made a love connection.” After courting for four days, Mom-2 and Dad-1 built a nest and she just laid her first egg. Lesson learned – We have three choices in life...give up, give in, or give it your all. These two bluebirds gave it their all!

By Susie Bauman



Our four babies hatched yesterday! Our survival story a complete success!



THE WING WAVE

The ultimate bluebird picture

I was out watering new grass in the backyard and looked on our bird feeder and saw our new dad. We have 2 eggs in the nest as of this morning. I was about 15 feet from him and he was just watching me. I went in, got my camera, went out and whistled at him. His back was to me. He turned and gave me a wing wave. There were no other birds around, so I have to think he was wing waving at me. He did it a couple of times and then just sat there. I'm going to try this again when he is close by. He is very comfortable with me and comes down to the worms seconds after I put them down. It was a thrill to watch his behavior this morning, even more so if he is truly responding to me. This shot goes in the book.

Russ Bauman

“The epitome of bluebirding the receipt of a wing wave!” Ray Welch





A FEW WORDS FROM RAY WELCH



NCBS,

Two weeks ago, we returned to our home after a 10 day trip and found that we had hatchlings in our box. From then on, we observed the parents bringing food (insects, suet, etc) to the box. We didn't open the box, fearing that some might try to get out. Yesterday afternoon, after not seeing the parents for the whole day, we opened the box a bit, took a picture, and found that the nest was empty, save for one unhatched egg. Since then, there has been no sign of the bluebirds, parents or young. Would they have left the area immediately upon fledging? Are there any other possibilities?

Thank you for your response,

Mark,



Thanks for contacting the North Carolina Bluebird Society (NCBS) with your question.

Sounds like good news to me! The babies will only stay in the nest for about 15 days depending upon the conditions. So I am suggesting that you missed the babies fledgling the nest. Bluebirds will not reuse (they are not into recycling yet) the old nest. They will build a new nest on top of the old, so that is one reason that the old nest should be removed as soon as the babies fledge the nest. The one egg that remained in the nest just failed to hatch for whatever reason.

The activity you enjoyed seeing at your nest box is now going on at an elevated level somewhere near by. The parents will take the babies into the top of the surrounding trees and continue the feeding that you have been seeing. Probably within ten days to two weeks the mother will begin the nesting process again and the dad will stay with those babies for, several weeks.

Hope this relieved your concerns about your babies and hope you will enjoy a second clutch of babies!

Ray Welch, Pres. of NCBS



We Missed You!

We did truly miss you at this past NCBS 2014 Annual Meeting at the DuPont Fayetteville Works plant in Fayetteville.

The facilities were great, the recreational grounds were beautiful, hospitality was super, the meeting was good and, the folks from DuPont were very generous. Zizzy's Piggy produced some of the best barbecue that I have ever eaten! If you weren't there...you missed a great opportunity!

Your Board works hard and spends a lot of time each year trying to put together an interesting and informative meeting.

As we adjourned the 2014 meeting we announced the meeting site for the 2015 Annual meeting, so that everyone could mark your calendar. The SummitConference Center at Haw River State Park has invited us to return to their location again. This is the same location that we were at for the 2013 meeting. The dates for this meeting will be April 24, 2015 for the Board meeting and, April 25, 2015 for the general membership meeting.

Additional information will be published later. The old adage, "The more the merrier" is really true! If you are not there, we really will miss you and hope that you won't be missed in 2015!

Ray

Collect your 2014 Nesting Data

If you haven't already, please starting saving your 2014 nesting data. Our fall and winter editions of the *Bluebird Notes* newsletter will contain the format and directions for reporting your data. Stella Rideout will be compiling the data as you report your data to her. The reporting of your data is very important! It indicates how our bluebird and other cavity-dweller birds are doing.

BLUEBIRD TALES

A LITTLE NOTE ABOUT "POOP"

I wanted to talk a little about nests. My 3 babies fledged about two weeks ago. That's about the time the father and mother starts bringing them to the bluebird feeder to teach them how to use it. I removed the old nest as soon as the babies left, and just brushed the poop out. I once washed the box out good with water, and didn't have another bird build in it again for over two months. I would recommend that you not wash it out

good till the last of August. They apparently like the smell of poop I guess! Or they smell bluebirds, and feel more comfortable building in that box.

At any rate I already have a new bluebird nest built in the same box where the babies left just two weeks ago!

Jim Kunkle



Unidentified eggs-any guesses?



Photo by
Russ Bauman



Above and below photos sent in by Meredith Mock, Burlington, NC

PICTURE SENT IN
BY REBECCA
WILSON
WINSTON-SALEM,
NC



SPOTLIGHT ON COUNTY COORDINATOR

TIM TAPIO, HOKE COUNTY

Small town boy makes good... I was born and raised in western Washington state (yes, it does rain a lot there). In 2000 I was offered a position out this way and after two extremely wet winters, and I couldn't accept fast enough.

In my first two weeks in North Carolina, I saw more sun than I had in nearly 40 years in Washington...wow. And with a fair complexion I learned quickly that more is not better. Then, after retiring much sooner than I expected, I developed an interest in bats. I met a young lady on Ft. Bragg who is the biologist for bats...and of course, the red-cockaded woodpecker (I heard they taste like chicken) and, lo and behold, bluebirds.

In fact, she had a bluebird trail...and had absorbed another on Pope Army Airfield when it transitioned over from being an Air Force Base. Her primary function is looking after the woodpeckers...and, she has some bat houses that were put up by an Eagle Scout a few years back.

Bottom line, she didn't have much time for bluebirds. Her trails had not been looked at for at least two years. So, I pretty much took over her bluebird trails. She handed me a couple binders and a book...and now I know what a bluebird looks like. The trails are in rough shape, as many of the boxes are missing due to construction or taken down due to flying squirrels taking them over. There is plenty of work to be done.

Getting on the Internet, I ran across NCBS and boy that was a lot of information. I looked up my local county coordinator...there wasn't one. I looked at the adjoining county and there wasn't one. Knowing quite well, I didn't have all the answers, I went ahead and joined NCBS and volunteered to be the local coordinator for Hoke County. Due to my work on the trail on Ft. Bragg and on Pope Army Airfield, those are under my umbrella as well.

I'm really thinking of going back to work, this retirement thing just isn't working out; I don't have any time any more. If I can be of assistance, my contact information is

Tim Tapio
910-429-4620
tim@timtapio.com



NOTE from Joye: Tim was recently awarded a \$200 grant to re-establish a trail on the property of Ft. Bragg. Tim estimates the completion of this project to be October 31, 2014. Thanks! Tim. We look forward to your report.

GRANT FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE NCBS AND WE

ENCOURAGE YOU TO APPLY FOR THEM FOR PROJECTS.

North Carolina Bluebird Society

NORTH CAROLINA BLUEBIRD SOCIETY (NCBS) MEMBERSHIP FORM

NC Bluebird Dues:

() 1 Year (\$10.00) () 3 Years (\$25.00)

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ATTN: David Hindsley
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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) _____

**NCBS is an affiliate of the
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GIVE A FRIEND THE GIFT OF THE NC BLUEBIRD SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP!

Just fill out the form on the left and indicate it is a gift membership and we will put a note in their membership packet that they are the recipient of your wonderful gift of bluebird events, stories and pictures.



*Please submit your wonderful stories and pictures to:
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or Risa Jarman
Risatj2@triad.rr.com
336-775-4083
or write to
Risa Jarman
141 Williams Meadow Lane
Winston-Salem, NC 27127*

I often feel that I have left something out. If I did please let me know and I will try to put it in the next issue !



Water Color Paintings by Artist Jo Anne Rose



*Joe Anne Rose, NCBS Member
Biltmore Lake, NC
Neighbor of
Russ and Susie Bauman*

These are paintings of Russ's actual photos of bluebirds in the area. You may recognize some of these photos from previous issues.

WHAT A GREAT COMBINATION!



Russ's great photos and a talented Artist!



MEET THE CAVITY NESTERS

8. Carolina Wren

Birds have lots of energy, both literally and figuratively, and some of the most energetic and active “little brown jobs” are the bold and perky Carolina Wrens. Never seeming to sit still and contemplate their world, Carolina Wrens ceaselessly hop about poking their long, decurved bills into crevices and corners and leaf litter capturing the tasty delights provided by insects and spiders and other invertebrates.

A familiar bird of southern back (and front) yards, the Carolina Wren, unlike many other cavity nesters, is in little danger of extinction although natural cavities are becoming a rarity in the wild. It is, of course, a protected species. It is also less likely than other wrens to intrude upon boxes placed for bluebirds. As a cavity nester, it will build a nest in almost any cavity available; this wren is clearly not fussy about its living quarters. Carolina Wrens have been known to accept a variety of cavities: in addition to natural sites in brushy woodlands, they are known to select nesting cavities in abandoned flower pots, in a vase stored on its side, and even in the pocket of an old coat hanging in a garage. Small in size for a songbird, the Carolina Wren is the largest wren found east of the Mississippi River. Only the southwestern Cactus Wren—a bird nearly 50% larger than the Carolina Wren, exceeds the species in size.

Carolina Wrens inhabit thickets and brush and are often heard long before they become visible to an observer. In fact, they produce one of the most obvious bird sounds heard in suburban yards. One doesn't need a mnemonic to help recognize a Carolina Wren song: it is simply the *loudest* and most variable song one hears. Nevertheless, it is often described in bird guides as sounding like “tea-kettle-tea-kettle,” or “Ger-man-y,” along with other phrases none of which seems to work for me. Surprisingly, it is only the male who sings; yet he easily makes up for the relatively silent female who has her own repertoire of chirps and chatter.

Both male and female share the responsibility of building the nest that is a messy mixture of grasses, bark, moss, leaves and is usually domed. The female produces a clutch of four or more white eggs with brown spots that are incubated by her alone. The eggs require about two weeks of incubation to hatch and the nestlings take about two weeks more to fledge. The two parents feed the young.

Despite the current success of the Carolina Wren, it is important for us to be aware that nesting sites are limited for them and all secondary cavity-nesting birds. Secondary cavity nesters are those species that do not excavate their own cavities for reproduction. Instead, they depend on finding old woodpecker nests or on naturally formed holes, such as crevices in aging trees. With the continual loss of wild habitat caused by our own increasing population, we readily take on the responsibility to make artificial nest sites available to all secondary cavity nesters, along with the delightful bluebirds.



By Robert G. Wolk

North Carolina Bluebird Society County Coordinators

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