



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.

Inside this issue:

Bluebird Tales	2-3
2008 Survey Comments	4-5 7, 9
NCBS Store	6
NABS Annual Meeting	9
Children & Bluebirds	10
Bluebirds, Blueberries & Pottery	11
Bluebird Quiz	12-13
NCBS Membership & Contribution Page	14
NCBS Annual Meeting	15

Time to Honor One of Our Own



Chuck Bliss and Helen Munro will match contributions dollar for dollar. Please make checks out to NCBS and send to:



Chuck Bliss
834 Shamrock Rd.
Asheboro, NC 27203.

According to former Moore County Extension Agent Al Cooke, the Finch Nursery in Bailey, NC, is responsible for 90% of the blueberry bushes in North Carolina. However, it is Jack Finch's *Homes for Bluebirds, Inc.* that is known not only throughout North Carolina, but also in the rest of North America.

Quoting from Bet Zimmerman's *History of Bluebirds and Bluebirding*, Jack and "*Homes for Bluebirds Inc.* has assembled and distributed more than 60,000 nest boxes since 1973. He (Jack) was a pragmatic naturalist. He would build four or five houses with different designs and watch to see which ones the birds preferred. To develop snake guards, Finch built a huge snake pit and filled it with black snakes and corn snakes to observe their behavior. At one time, Jack Finch was monitoring 2,200 boxes across North and South Carolina and Virginia." (<http://www.sialis.org/history.htm>)

Former NCBS President Chuck Bliss is heading up the effort to purchase and place a North Carolina Memorial Sign in memory of this man who was a friend to the bluebirds and bluebirders alike.

Contributors will be listed in the November newsletter. It is time for NCBS to "honor one of our own."

As part of the preparation of the placement of this sign, Chuck Bliss and Helen Munro traveled to Bailey, NC, in February to see the site for a sign similar to the one shown above.

Dan Finch, Jack's son, and now head of the bluebird organization founded by his father, owns the property that contains an inactive cemetery. The advantage of putting the sign there, which is adjacent to Rt. 581 and the Finch Nursery where *Homes for Bluebirds, Inc.* is housed, is that land with cemeteries are sacred and will not be disturbed in the future.

Below: Chuck Bliss standing where the memorial sign would be.



Bluebird Notes

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Bluebird Tales



Email from Bea Mansfield

Hi Helen,

In June of 2007 I received a book from Cornell University for being a 20-year participant in their Project Feeder-Watch. I'm quoted on their website below. It's possible that I'm the only one from NC to receive one of the books, but I don't know that for sure. I never thought to send NCBS a copy of their letter at the time. Recently, a reporter for the Rockingham County section of the Greensboro News & Record interviewed me and told about my service to Project FeederWatch and NCBS in her article (part 1 attached).

Her article included NCBS's web address, but the editor omitted that from the article. She also omitted the fact that I and one or two other officers went to Raleigh and petitioned the N.C. Wildlife Commission to change their ruling protecting "all" birds to protecting "native" birds. Before that, bluebirders in NC were not allowed to removed starling and house sparrow nests or young from bluebird nest boxes. I feel that that was a very important accomplishment.

I doubt that the article was published in the Greensboro or any other section of the News & Record, but hopefully, it will generate some interest in NCBS in Rockingham County.

Bea Mansfield

<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/Members/OriginalFeederWatchers.htm>

See next page for article.

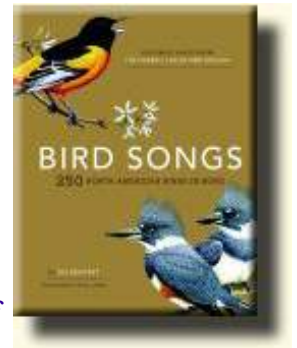


Bluebird Tales



Original FeederWatchers: 20 Years and Counting!

In 2007, Project FeederWatch celebrated its twentieth anniversary, a milestone we can only attribute to the dedication and support of our devoted participants, some of whom have been with us from the very beginning. For over twenty years, scientists have been tracking the distribution and abundance of winter bird populations based on data our citizen scientists gather in their own backyards and neighborhoods. Imagine if they hadn't been watching...



In recognition of the 119 "original" FeederWatchers who helped to launch the project's growth and success since 1987, Chronicle Books graciously donated the gift of *Bird Songs*, a book by Les Beletsky, featuring audio from the Macaulay Library at the Lab of Ornithology.

In return, we received the priceless gift of stories and photos from participants with twenty-plus years of FeederWatching under their belts, many of whom are still counting! It is our pleasure to share some of their memories with you.

Bea Mansfield, Reidsville, NC

Editor's Note: Comments by 36 of the 119 original Feeder Watchers are listed on this website, but only North Carolina's Bea Mansfield is copied below. Bea was the first President of NCBS!

Beatrice Mansfield of Reidsville, North Carolina says she has never been good at identifying birds by their songs, but she calls her new bird song book "a wonderful tool for me to learn more about the birds I hear and to teach my young granddaughter about birds."

The State of Birds

"The first ever comprehensive report on bird populations in the United States has been compiled, by a coalition of groups including American Bird Conservancy. The 2009 *State of the Birds Report* shows that nearly a third of the nation's 800 bird species are endangered, threatened or in significant decline due to habitat loss, invasive species, and other threats. At the same time, the report highlights examples, including many species of waterfowl, where habitat restoration and conservation have reversed previous declines, offering hope that it is not too late to take action to save declining populations." (Quoted from American Bird Conservancy's Birdwire.)

Cornell Lab of Ornithology released this same information. Check out <http://www.stateofthebirds.org>.

According to Dr. Patty Gowaty at NABS 2007, the work of the North American Bluebird Society and local bluebird associations like NCBS have been responsible for the recovery of the bluebirds. As we monitor the nest boxes every year, we are on the front lines of their defense against decline and extinction. I feel that it is a job that we are doing well and that we need to continue to do well !!

Helen S. Munro, Editor

North Carolina Bluebird

Name	# of Boxes	w/bb	# BB eggs	hatched	fledged
Some delayed survey reports					
Greensboro					
Bryan Park c/o Trina Smith	100	95	725	635	617
Bur Mil Park c/o Barbara Haralson	9	8	73	61	60
Data from NCBS 2008 Survey	880	661	4,766	3,954	3,689
New Total for NCBS 2008 Survey	989	734	5,564	4,650	4,366

Now comparing this to 4,174 bluebirds fledging in 2007, we have more in 2008. This is why every survey is important. We will have to figure out a reward system so that everyone takes the time to fill them out and mail them in!!

The next few pages have comments from submitted 2008 Bluebird Surveys. Comments included are chosen for their uniqueness and shared adventures. It is hoped that you will benefit from someone else's experience. Each year it is like visiting with old friends and finding out how their bluebirds have been this year.

Garner, NC—Joye Stephensen & Phil Egan: This is a great year at Lake Benson Park in Garner. The Town Parks and Recreational Department advertised a "Bluebird 101" class in their winter brochure and it generated some interest. We attracted seven new members. Some were new to birding, most have bluebird boxes at home and several are seasoned birders—all excited.

The nest boxes had been put up a number of years ago but it had not been monitored until 2007. We quickly realized that they were in wrong locations and in disrepair. The Parks and Recreation crew replaced a few last year, but out of the 12 boxes, we had only 14 bluebirds and 10 chickadees fledge. Early last spring, we got 11 new boxes and moved some to different locations. The Lake Benson Bluebirders (We now have 10 people in our group! See picture on the right) set up schedules to monitor the houses and kept the group updated by email; we also kept a notebook at the park accessible to everyone.

Out of the 11 nest boxes, bluebirds and/or chickadees used either so we have plans to relocate the three not used this year. We had 34 bluebirds and 10 chickadees fledge. The Garner Parks and Recreational Department has been very supportive of our efforts.

When the new houses were put up in Lake Benson Park, we put one at the Senior Center where I work part-time. I took photos of the eggs and bluebird (only one hatched from 4 eggs) and posted it. The Seniors were very interested.

Fayetteville, NC—Catherine Traylor: Last year I had what I thought was a sterile male (no eggs hatched from two nestings.) This year we had a new male (his behavior was different) show up. Five eggs were laid and only one hatched. An-



At the Senior Center (Garner, NC):
Anne Hicks, Annie Runyon, Joye Stephensen, Cherry Gay and Pam Cas
Not Present:
Kay Baker, Pat Bost, April Bosworth, Ellen Dunn, and Nancy Hulbert.

other box had five eggs and all hatched and fledged.

Greensboro, NC—Jim Jochum: A cowbird dropped an egg into a bluebird nest box, but homeowner removed it before incubation started.

Five eggs did not hatch in one nest box because the female bluebird was constantly driven away by an aggressive mockingbird.

Clemmons, NC (Tanglewood Park)-Bill Abbey:

Over all— another really good year! Predator activity "up" this year... I found that the "tube entry guard" worked especially well on selected nest boxes this season.

Charlotte, NC-Rick & Karen Mitchell: This was the first time in at least five years where 100% of the eggs laid, that we monitored, did "not" hatch and fledge!

Chapel Hill, NC –Lois Herring: Black snake got one set of eggs. When checking nests found snake had climbed a small shrub and was poised to enter box. Pruned shrub and gave snake

Survey 2008 Comments

a ride to the other side of our property. Bluebirds fledged 3 days later.

Cary, NC-Sally Tiller: One of the many cheering experiences I had this past breeding season on my bluebird trail occurred with Box #11. One afternoon I peeked in and beheld a new nest with 2 bb eggs inside. A week later, however, I was saddened to open the door and find an empty nest with broken eggshells strewn about on the ground below. A raccoon, I surmised. I cleaned up the mess, but left the intact nest alone. The following week I opened up the box and, low and behold, there lay 4 new bb eggs! Now, one might suppose that this bluebird pair was foolish to lay any more eggs in a nest that had been violently invaded the week before. But in this case their undauntedness paid off; all 4 eggs hatched, grew and fledged!

Burlington, NC—Cynthia Benson/Frances Orthwaite: We had a Promontory Warbler nest, no eggs, but a nest!

Burlington, NC—Ray Ashley: This is my first survey, but I plan to have 5 boxes next year. A box of 5 baby bluebirds were found dead with no evidence of predators or blow flies. I did not see either parent. Hawks have been very active in the area.

I found a black snake curled up inside a box which previously had contained 4 fully feathered babies ready to fledge. Needless to say that was his last meal! I was heart broken.

Bunnlevel, NC—Terry Herndon: I have kept records for 20 plus years and have had segments filmed for Georgia Public TV of white bluebird eggs on my farm.

Asheboro, NC-Chuck Bliss: The first of May a pair of bluebirds built their nest in my backyard nestbox and the first egg was laid May 2 ending in a total of 6 eggs being laid. On Thursday, May 8, I found a female dead on the ground in front of the nestbox. I hoped it was not the female, but it was. I waited until Tuesday (May 13) to see what might happened and decided it was time to remove the original nest and eggs and start over.

To my surprise when I looked in the box on May 13 there was a new nest on top of the old nest with one egg. I monitored this closely and 6 eggs were finally laid by May 18. They all hatched May 31. As I watched them closely they grew and I expected them to fledge about June 18. On the evening of June 16 my wife observed a cat sitting on top of the box waiting, I suppose, for an adult to come near. I immediately chased him away and put up a tall fence around the back of the box. I guess he had jumped to the box from the rail fence several feet behind the box. The birds fledged June 19 and I did not see the cat again. I saw the parents up

in the very top of an oak tree frequently after fledging. I hope the male who never gave up returns next year.

Asheville, NC-Diane Hankins: Big news! I had 3 families in the same box—all used the same nest. Since I've never had a second family in the same box in any season, this was major excitement for me.

Again this year I counted days and actually observed several of "my" babies take flight out of their nestbox.

I monitor a "view thru box" and 3 others. The view thru is great for determining if chicks have fledged or not.

Thomasville, NC—Rev. Chet Byerly: We have a flock of Weaver Finches living in the trees and grapevines in our back yard. They love our bluebird boxes and build nests in them faster than we can take them out. As a result, only one of pair of bluebirds was able to get a foothold in one box and successfully fledge 4 off spring. My wife and I were fortunate enough to watch them take wing on a Sunday morning before we went to church.

Wingate, NC-Ruth Carelock: I have had 6 boxes in use in past years, but this year only 5 boxes. Spiders and wasps took over inside the bluebird house and they had to be killed before birds would use these houses. Fire ants had mounds near metal post supporting boxes and they had to be treated often.

I enjoy watching the young birds who come to the bird bath in our yard.

West End, NC-Bob & Ruth Stoltz: In 2 nests, one a tufted titmouse and one a bluebird, the female was bludgeoned. We cleaned the nests out, but nothing tried to start a new nest. We assumed it must have been a English House Sparrow and have been on the lookout for them. In another nest, a young baby (approximately 8 days old) was missing feathers. We checked with the rangers at Weymouth Woods and discovered that there might be a mite problem. After a second molt, the babies should be okay. Because of a mild winter, they could have been more vulnerable to insects. (The suggestion has been made to use rotenone to rid the nest boxes of pests after the nesting season. Then clean the boxes before the next nesting season.)

West End, NC-Marisa Back: Now that we are no longer in a "woodland" setting due to a house having been built next door and behind us, we see our feeding station birds becoming food for the incoming hawks. I know this is the circle of life in nature, but not when I see a bird carried off.

Wake Forest, NC-Sue Crawford: First bluebird egg wasn't

(Continued on page 7)



Bluebirds, Inside the Nest Box

Recorded by the Cornell Birdhouse Network

Summer 1999

Produced by the North Carolina Bluebird Society

VHS available for \$15.00 including shipping and handling.

DVD available for \$13.00 including shipping and handling.

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: **NCBS.** SEND ORDER & CHECK TO:

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

North Carolina Bluebird Society Products

Description of Item	Cost Postage Included	No. Wanted	Total
Magnets with Bluebird & Dogwood	\$ 4.00	X _____	= _____
Magnets with State Outline/Bluebird	\$ 4.00	X _____	= _____
Bluebird Earrings (clipped)	\$ 7.00	X _____	= _____
Bluebird Earrings (pierced)	\$ 7.00	X _____	= _____
Caps with NCBS Logo	\$ 13.00	X _____	= _____
Bluebird Note Cards (12)	\$ 12.00	X _____	= _____
<i>Carolina Blue</i> Tote Bags	\$ 15.00	X _____	= _____
<i>Carolina Blue</i> T-Shirts			
by Dempsey Essick (S, M, L, XL)	\$ 20.00	X _____	= _____
Cloisonné Bluebird Pins (1inch, 4 colors)	\$ 5.00	X _____	= _____
<i>Bluebirds Forever</i> (12 page booklet)	\$ 3.00	X _____	= _____
2 copies	\$ 5.00	X _____	= _____
<i>On the Wings of a Song—CD</i>	\$ 8.00	X _____	= _____
<i>Bluebirds, Inside the Nestbox</i> DVD	\$ 13.00	X _____	= _____
(DVD special 2 for \$20; 3 for \$30; 6 for \$60)			
<i>Roberta Lee</i> Bluebird Poster 18" x 24"	\$12.50	X _____	= _____
			Total = _____

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: **NCBS.**

SEND ORDER & CHECK TO:

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

Prices good through 12/08

Date of your order is _____

2008 Survey Comments

(Continued from page 5)

laid until June 3 which resulted in only one nesting. However, a very persistent wren built in Box #1 very early in the season. It was very crowded with 7 babies!

Union Mills, NC-Brooklyn Breedlove: I love my bluebirds. Christine Ammons helps me. I did a Bluebird Presentation for 4-H.

I had 2 baby birds die in the box. There were 5: 3 fledged and 2 died. Do you know why?

Union Grove, NC—Joseph Critchley: First bluebird egg in Florida was March 11 and in NC not until April 21. For several nights 40 Purple Martins sat on the electric lines.

Union Mills, NC—Christine Ammons: The first nesting cycle avoids the snakes and the heat. During the second nesting cycle, the birds took a hit from the heat (102degrees F.). Of 171 eggs laid, only 112 hatched. The third nesting cycle found brave bluebird souls that just would not quit when the monitor was ready to surrender.

Seeing two females sitting on 8 eggs was a surprise. Nest box is just too small for 8 young. All hatched, but, in my opinion, one full grown nestling was trampled to death.

Tarboro, NC—Kay & David Hindsley: We caught on video the second nesting of one pair of bluebirds.

We had to put up another house when we heard the return of the flycatcher because the titmouse had already occupied his last summer's home.

We managed to rescue five Northern Flickers who were nesting in a dead tree that fell. Mom & Dad Flicker hung around and David cut a bigger hole in one of our unoccupied houses. He climbed up and down another tree trying to position the house so that the parents could enter to feed. After several tree climbs and relocations, the parents were able to enter the box and take care of them. Halleluiah, the five fledged several days later. We had used a nesting cup with wood shavings from the dead tree. We contacted Frank Newell who said we did well.

To complete the year, we had one pair of Canada Geese remain on the lake (in front of the house) and raise a family five. This is the first time in 17 years a pair has successfully raised their family without predators.

Southern Pines, NC- Jean & Jim Walker: We had an unusual number of boxes (7) in which sticks filled the box. From my nest book it looks like they were Northern Wrens. In only 3 of the boxes were eggs laid and only 2 had baby birds.

There was more predation this year. Three boxes in which the nests were partially pulled out indicating raccoons. Some with no signs of being disturbed and we assume these were

snakes. There was one persistent flying squirrel.

We have installed 6 inch x 2 feet vent pipe guards on 8 additional box posts this year. Have previously used "coolie hat" guards, but feel that vent pipe guards are more effective.

Raleigh, NC— Louise Dail: Temperature varied greatly from 32 degrees in March to 100 degrees in June. Babies all survived and fledged. Parents rarely brought babies back to meal worm feeder after they fledged. This is unusual so hope they all survived.

Raleigh, NC-Patrice Cooke: Interestingly, two nest boxes involved a bluebird alone toward the end raising the fledglings. One a female alone; one a male alone; 100% success.

Raleigh, NC-Sandy Thach: This was the worst year I have experienced since I began monitoring in 2003. I lost a female of the first nesting as well as her three chicks. I lost the male of the second nesting of bluebirds as well as all the chicks from that nesting.

I also lost 3 chickadee babies. Terrible, terrible year for me! Hope next spring is better.

Union Mills, NC—Pearl Barnette: A great deal of pleasure watching the birds taking care of young. This is a Jack Finch box which is easy to monitor.

Goldsboro, NC—Gerda Feilke: We, the Waynesboro Garden Club, have a bluebird trail at my church, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. We have 8 bluebird boxes with 2 nests and only 1 egg. It was so very disappointing.

We also have a bluebird box at Memorial Garden at the Pines. We had 2 broods each time with 5 eggs each and they all hatched.

Holly Springs, NC—Betty Ann Packler: We had to remove a cowbird egg from our first box. A book purchased at Wild Birds Unlimited show that it was definitely a cowbird egg. After day one, I saw the egg under the nest pole, but did not know if it was kicked out and replaced, so I did not put it back. One egg did not hatch so I removed it.

Our second box progressed without incident. We saw 2 of the 4 leaving the box. Really neat!

Indian Trail, NC—Bill & Bonnie Ingersoll: In one of our houses, my husband put one side of plexiglass with a wood side piece that opened so we could see into the nest without disturbing the birds as they hatched. This was great as it helped us determine when they would fledge.

When we first started putting out meal worms in early Spring, I would sing as I filled the feeder. Within a few days, the male started coming and then the female. This continued until the

(Continued on page 8)

2008 Survey Comments

(Continued from page 7)

babies fledged and then continued as the babies grew. They all came and hardly waited until the feeder was full. What a joy!! P.S. has anyone tried whistling? Three years ago we put up 10 bluebird boxes on our neighborhood trail. Due to health issues they were not monitored. Hopefully next year this will happen. Thank you for all your educational help.

Liberty, NC—Brian H. Greene, Jr.: One box with 5 eggs and one with 4 did not hatch. The eggs were not broken. I don't know what the problem was.

N. Wilkesboro, NC—Lea Barnes: I missed seeing the twigs in a nest box until after the bluebirds had gone to find another place to build. Thanks for all you are doing for our bluebirds.

Advance, NC—Raymond Bridges: This is my first time participating in the survey. I did not count "noses" (or beaks), but I will in future years. I had two nestings in the same box during the second and third periods. There were probably 3 or 4 eggs per nesting and all hatchlings left the nest. I'm trying to interest friends in putting up a nest box.

West End, NC—Iris & Richard Johnson: (In reference to the new survey format) I have no idea if this is correct. I do know that we fledged 42 bluebirds, 6 titmouse and 22 chickadee. I think I put the totals in the wrong places!

Raleigh, NC—John & Laurie Nuhn: We think that our second nest attempt failed (only 1 egg laid) because something happened to the mother. Perhaps she was killed?? Only 1 egg was laid and then the nest was abandoned.

Raleigh, NC—Susan Wyatt: There were 5 nests which were total failures—either no eggs hatched or all babies died. Many of the nests had 1 egg which did not hatch, but others the eggs were fine. The biggest problem is probably the drought resulting in heat, lack of water and lack of insects.

Ronda, NC—Samuel Bullard: Nine didn't hatch due to

sparrows and raccoons. I found a female bluebird dead on one nest.

Editor's Note: *Someone from outside North Carolina called one day asking if we did bluebird surveys. I copied off the surveys since 1996, put them into a envelope and found that I had lost the address. If you are that someone or wish to look over the survey data for the last 12 years, please contact me.*

We are all familiar with the disclaimers that make up much of the advertising for prescription medicine. It is understood that many of us in our love for bluebirds do things that are "against the law." We don't do this because we are bad people, but because the bluebirds are such great birds.

However, I would be remiss if I did not say that all native birds are protected by federal law. English House Sparrows and Starlings are not native and removing them is legally correct. After they have killed "your" bluebirds, you feel justified in killing them. I fortunately have never been faced with this dilemma. To avoid this just remove their nests.

Cowbirds produce young by placing them in other birds' nests. Cowbirds are native and, hence, protected. However, watching baby bluebirds starve because this larger intruder is the one being fed would be hard to watch. I have had experience with this and followed someone else's advice about removing an egg that looked like a elephant compared with the bluebird babies. It is one of those grey areas.

These comments are put in the newsletter because they are interesting and educational. Reah Kittelberger has been accepting the surveys, inputting the data and then analyzing it. She mails the surveys to me. I sort out all the ones with comments and key them in. They are in no particular order. Perhaps you would like to accept the surveys from Reah and be responsible for keying in the comments. I am sure that someone could come up with a way to perhaps group them by predators or types of problems or cities. My contact information is on page 2, page 14 and the www.ncbluebird.org website. Don't be shy!

Helen S. Munro, Editor

NCBS "State of the Union" Report

David Hindsley is the Records Chairman. He is responsible for accepting membership dues and producing the labels for the newsletters. At each Board Meeting, he reports the following:

Members: 387 (July, 2008)

Newsletters sent via mail: 442

(There are complimentary newsletters to other Societies.)

Newsletters sent on-line: 70

Diane Scales, NCBS Treasurer, reports the financial state of NCBS.

Balance the end of December, 2008 was \$3,112.89.

CD at First Bank is valued at \$3,418.16.

CD at BB&T is valued at \$1,663.28.

The bottom line is that NCBS founded in 1986 is doing well. Our membership averages 400 and our bank account pays for the newsletter, *Bluebird Tips* and the annual meeting costs.



NABS 2009



31st Annual North American Bluebird Society Conference

Hosted by the Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania

September 9-13, 2009

Holiday Inn– Harrisburg/Hershey located in Grantville, PA

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Details & Registration Forms on www.thebsp.org and
www.nabluebirdsociety.org

Early bird registration—May 15, 2009—save \$10

Deadline—July 18, 2009

A Quick Overview

Thursday (September 10)

Birds & History of Harrisburg Tour
Hawk's Eye View Tour
NABS Affiliate Meeting

Friday (September 11)

Pennsylvania Wildlife & Bluebird Trail Tour
Chocolate & Butterflies Tour
Gettysburg Battlefield & its Wildlife Tour
NABS Board Meeting
Buffet Dinner at Hotel
Bluebird-L Get-Together
Clay and Pat Sutton present "**How to Spot Hawks and Eagles, Raptors in time and Space.**"

Saturday (September 12)

NABS Member Meeting

Ambassador for Bluebirds Harry Schmeider

presents "**The Fledging Experience**"

Gary Shimmel presents "**The Saw Whet Owl Migration Project.**"

Lunch at the Hotel

Live Auction—"For the Birds!"

Dick Tuttle presents "**The Beaver Hypothesis: Bluebirding before the 17th Century.**"

Dr. Keith L. Bildstein presents "**American Kestrels: The view from Hawk Mountain.**"

NABS/BSP Banquet at the Hotel with NABS Awards

Jane Kirland presents "**I Saw a Bald Eagle Soaring Over My Grocery Store.**"

Sunday (September 13)

Wilderness Birding

NABS 2009 has two advantages for North Carolina members. One is that we can drive. (It is under 500 miles from Jackson Springs, about a 9 hour drive.) The second is that it is the land of War and Chocolate. The War is the Civil War and the opportunity to visit Gettysburg and remember the battle that was a turning point in that war. The Chocolate is Hershey's with a chance to learn how it is made and tastes.

As noted above the registration forms are on two websites and in the NABS newsletter *Bluebird*. Registration can be done by regular mail or online. The cost has been done so that you sign up for the things that you wish to do. All meals and tours are separate with a \$40 registration fee for one day and a \$60 registration fee for the whole conference.

Helen Munro, Editor

Children & Bluebirds

April 2, 2008



Dear Mrs. Kittelberger,

Thank you for teaching us about bluebirds. You taught us so much, and we learned lots. We had a great time listening to you. The video was interesting!

We are very excited about being able to watch the bluebirds grow. We hope we get to see lots of eggs and baby birds.

We also hope to see you again. Please come and visit us if you have time or write us a note back. We have a few more questions for you. How did you become interested in bluebirds? How did you learn so much about the bluebirds? How do you know when the bluebirds are not in their nests? Do you like the mommy or the daddy bluebird best? How many bluebird boxes do you have at your house?

Thank you again! We are really looking forward to learning more about these pretty birds.

Val
 Mia
 John
 Emily
 Erin
 Maddie
 Alex
 Adelaide
 Jackson
 Georgia
 Emmanuel

Your friends in first grade,

Mrs. Lane
 Mrs. Lane's class
 Alexis
 Isaac
 Clare
 Kyle
 Bridget
 Christian
 Kenan

Bluebirds, Blueberries & Pottery

The newspapers and television news are full of the “recession” that is gripping our country. It was a pleasure for Chuck Bliss and myself to visit the Finch Nursery (Bailey, NC—Rt. 264 & 581) in late February. I had found out from Dan Finch during a telephone conversation that *Homes for Bluebirds, Inc.* had sold more bluebird houses in the last year than the year before and that his pottery business is doing well. He has a major exhibit starting April 29 at the North Carolina Pottery Center in Seagrove, NC. Dan also hosts a Pottery Festival on the second Sunday of November. A great time to go visit, purchase some pottery and restock your supply of bluebird houses, and cups.

Rudy Perry who manages another part of the Finch Nursery reports that the demand for blueberries has been tremendous. The publicity that their antioxidant content is high has made him concerned that they haven't grown enough to meet the demand.

The day had one more treat in store. I had read about Cedar Waxwings coming in flocks and stripping the berries off of Holly Trees. Jack Finch had planted a long row of Nellie Stevens Hollies along the long entrance to Finch Nursery. Chuck Bliss and I watched as thousands of Cedar Waxwings swooped down on the holly trees and plucked the red berries. It was like watching a ballet as the birds came in in waves and retreated as they responded to the sound of the car and the blowing of the wind.

The picture below does not do justice to this amazing sight.

Helen Munro, Editor



Dan Finch & The Finch Studio Potters **EXHIBITION** (over 50 potters exhibiting)



APRIL 29 – AUGUST 1, 2009
at the North Carolina Pottery Center

OPENING RECEPTION
Thursday, May 7, 5-8pm

Reception is free to the public.

For more information visit
www.danfinch.com or
www.ncpotterycenter.com

The North Carolina Pottery Center
233 East Avenue • Seagrove, North Carolina 27341
Open Tuesday - Saturday 10am - 4pm
336-873-8430

Eastern Bluebird History Quiz & Answers

This quiz with the answers is taken with permission from the web site"

<http://www.sialis.org/quiz.htm>.

There the questions are placed separately from the answers, but I decided that it was more important to read the answers than to test how much you already knew. This way we can't feel "bluebird challenged."

Helen Munro, Editor

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1. Name the 1946 Disney Movie featuring the tune "Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah."

In Song of the South, Uncle Remus sang Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah, which won the 1947 Academy Award for Best Song (words by Ray Gilbert, music by Allie Wrubel, voice of Remus by James Baskett, recorded and popularized by Johnny Mercer and the Pied Pipers). The lyrics are:

*Zip a dee doo-dah, zip a dee ay
My, oh my, what a wonderful day.
Plenty of sunshine headed my way.
Zip a dee doo-dah, zip a dee ay
Mister bluebird on my shoulder
It's the truth, it's actual.
Everything is satisfactual.
Zip a dee doo-dah, zip a dee ay
Wonderful feelin'.
Wonderful day.*

2. The Eastern Bluebird is the state bird of _____ and _____.

The Eastern Bluebird was designated the State Bird of Missouri in 1927; and of New York in 1970, despite one delegate's comment "I think this is a bit premature. After all, who has ever seen a bluebird, except perhaps on the cover of a greeting card?"

The Mountain Bluebird is the state bird of both Idaho and Nevada.

3. " Without question the most deplorable event in the history of American ornithology was the introduction of the _____ ." -W.L. Dawson, The Birds of Ohio , 1903.

The English (or House) Sparrow. The population of House Sparrows exploded after their introduction to the U.S. in 1850/1851, resulting in agricultural damage. House Sparrows also aggressively compete with other cavity-nesters such as the bluebird, destroying eggs, nestlings and adults.

4. Who said: " Who has decided - who has the right to decide - for the countless legions of people who were not consulted that the supreme value is a world without insects, even though it be also a world ungraced by the curving wing of a bird in flight ?"

In her 1962 book "Silent Spring," Rachel Carson expressed concern about the impact of DDT and other pesticides on bird populations. She noted " *Over increasingly large areas of the United States, spring now comes unheralded by the return of the birds, and the early mornings are strangely silent where once they were filled with the beauty of bird song.*" DDT was used widely in the U.S. from the late 1940's through 1972, with usage peaking in 1959, to kill disease vectors such as mosquitoes and agricultural pests. However, DDT bioaccumulates, and as the concentration in birds fatty tissues increases, egg shell thickness decreases.

5. Name birds or animals that will attack eggs/nestlings/adult bluebirds in a nestbox.

The raccoon, feral cat, opossum, black rat snake, House Sparrow, House Wren, bluejay, starling, red-headed woodpecker (eggs and nestlings), red squirrel, and gray squirrel may prey on eggs/nestlings or adult bluebirds inside a nestbox. Properly designed boxes and predator guards can minimize the likelihood of successful attacks by raccoons, cats, snakes, starlings and squirrels. Other predators of fledgling and adult bluebirds include the red tail hawk, sharp-shinned hawk, and barred owl.

6. Name birds that will nest in Eastern Bluebird nest-box.

Eastern Bluebird History Quiz & Answers

Cavity-nesters that will utilize bluebird nest-boxes include: House Sparrow, House Wren, Carolina Wren, Bewick's Wren, Tree Swallow, Great Crested Flycatcher, Black-capped Chickadee and Tufted Titmouse. See Photos. Occasionally flying squirrels will inhabit nestboxes, and bumblebees may use an abandoned chickadee nest.

7. Who recorded "I Wish You Love" ("I wish you bluebirds in the Spring, To give your heart a song to sing, And then a kiss, But more than this, I wish you love!") in 1946.

Frank Sinatra recorded this tune written by C. Trenet, and translated to English by A.A. Beach.

8. Between 1926-1938, which of the following established bluebird trails?

- a. Thomas E. Musselman, Illinois
- b. Amelia Laskey, Nashville
- c. Junior Audubon Club of Missouri
- d. The Better Garden Club of Missouri
- e. All of the above

All of the above established trails. It is interesting that recognition of decreased bluebird populations occurred so early. The grassroots nature of bluebird conservation is also noteworthy.

9. What was the year of publication for Larry Zeleny's (founder of NABS) article in National Geographic entitled "Song of Hope for the Bluebirds"?

June 1977. This was the first article in a large, general-interest publication to highlight the bluebird's plight, and it resulted in a groundswell of support. The following year, Zeleny officially founded the North American Bluebird Society.

10. In 1970, Lorne Scott of Saskatchewan was single-handedly monitoring a bluebird trail with # _____ boxes.

2,000 boxes. This may be the largest trail handled by one individual.

Bonus questions:

11. The bluebird appears on a ___ cent stamp issued by the U.S. Postal Service.

The Eastern Bluebird appears on a three cent stamp issued in 1991, and again in 1996. The 1991 stamp does not have a "¢" symbol after the number 3. On 1982 the U.S. Postal Service issued a State Birds and Flowers 20 cent stamp series for all 50 states, with the bluebirds painted by Arthur Singer depicted on stamps for Idaho, Missouri, Nevada and New York. The Mountain Bluebird appears on a 25 cent stamp issued for the Idaho Statehood Centenary in 1990.

12. In early records, the bluebird was referred to as (check all that apply)

- a. Blew Bird
- b. Blue Robin
- c. Blue Warbler
- d. Blue Bonnet
- e. Blue Redbreast

All but "d". In 1722, Mark Catesby, an English artist, published *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida and the Bahama Islands*, which included one plate entitled "The Blew Bird." He noted "*They make their nests in holes of trees, are harmless birds, and resemble our robin-redbreast.*" Like Robins, bluebirds are members of the thrush family.

13. What color are bluebird eggs?

Typically blue (darker blue than a robin's egg.) About 4-5% of bluebird eggs are white. Birds hatching from white eggs have normal pigmentation. Pale pink eggs have also been reported.

North Carolina Bluebird Society

NORTH CAROLINA BLUEBIRD SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

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() 1 Year (\$10.00)

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

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ATTN: David Hindsley
135 Lakeview Drive
Tarboro, NC 27886

I am interested in:

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

Contributions to the Newsletter

Sharing Bluebird information and stories make this an unique publication

Please submit to: Helen Munro, Co-editor
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Phone - (910) 673-6936 Fax - (910) 673-7345
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Slide Programs, Videos and books can be borrowed,
Please Contact: Hank Moss, Jr.

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



Meet Duncan Munro who is a six year veteran of monitoring nest boxes. This year he earned money by jumping out of the golf cart and checking some of the 80 boxes on the Bluebird Trail at Foxfire Village.

This trail has been active since 1997 and is monitored by Foxfire residents and members of the Foxfire Garden Club. The Foxfire Property Owners Association finance the replacement of boxes and poles.

Eighty-five percent of the boxes have bluebirds and since 1997, 4,175 bluebirds have been fledged from these boxes.

North Carolina Bluebird Society Annual Meeting Saturday, May 9, 2009 at the Hawthorne Convention Center 420 High St. (Exit 5C from I-40) Winston– Salem, NC

Coffee, NCBS Membership, NCBS Store, Silent Auction, Door Prizes, Vendors— 8:30 a.m. to Noon

Bluebirders Forum—8:45 to 9:30 a.m.— Question and Answer period—Ray Welch, Moderator

Welcome – 9:30 to 9:45 a.m.—Acting President Helen Munro, *Wing of a Song* by Kay Hindsley

Possible Afternoon Activities—9:45 to 10:00 a.m. Bill Abbey, Annual Meeting Co-Chair

10:00—11:00 a.m. *Winter Survival: Flight, Food, Feathers, Fat & Flocks*—
Dr. David Pitts from the University of Tennessee at Martin

There is still time to sign up for the 2009 NCBS Annual Meeting. Deadline is April 30th.

Break for everyone—11:00 to 11:45 a.m. (Check out Silent Auction & purchase door prize tickets.)
County Coordinators will meet with Ray Welch & Virginia Pickles. Location to be announced.

11:45 a.m. to Noon—Bluebird Societies in Crisis—Helen Munro **(Door Prizes and Silent Auction closes at Noon.)**

Lunch—Noon to 1:00 p.m.

1:00 p.m. Old Salem is a nearby local attraction for your enjoyment after the meeting. This is a carefully restored Moravian town (C. 1766) and living history community. Old Salem is a scant three block walk along a delightful stroll-way (or drive and enjoy plenty of free parking). You may stroll the old streets free of charge or purchase tickets for entry into the ten major restored buildings. A Two-Stop ticket which is admission to two of the museums is \$14 for adults and \$7 for children ages 6-16. An “All in One” ticket is \$21 (\$10 for children) with a \$3 discount for AAA and \$2 for AARP. For information call 1-888-653-7253 or see <http://www.oldsalem.org>.



Cut along the line below and submit this registration form.

Registration Form—Saturday, May 9, 2009

Call Helen for information.
1-910-673-6936

Name #1 _____ Name #2 _____

Phone # 1 _____ Phone #2 _____

Email Address _____

County _____ First Time Attending Annual Meeting? Yes ___ If no, how many? ____

Please send checks to: NCBS, c/o Helen Munro, 22 Bobolink Rd., Jackson Springs, NC 27281
910-673-6936 hsmunro@ac.net

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

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

Friday night is the NCBS Board Meeting & Dinner at 7 p.m. All are welcome to attend.

BLUEBIRD NOTES PUBLISHED BY
THE NORTH CAROLINA BLUEBIRD SOCIETY

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Tarboro, NC 27886

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