



NCBS Logo with Carolina Blue by Dempsey Essick

# Bluebird Notes

PUBLISHED BY  
The North Carolina Bluebird Society  
www.ncbluebird.org



NCBS is an affiliate of NABS.

September through November 2010

Volume 25 Issue 4

## 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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## The Computer Age & Bluebirds

Jack Finch remarked at a NABS meeting in 1998 that people should not let a “bird brain” design the nest box. This was the result of a very heated argument on Peterson boxes versus NABS boxes where the participants were throwing around statistics as to which birds preferred which box. Jack stood by his design that is now more than 30 years old. However, the way we get information has really changed. We no longer run off to the library to use the reference books. We turn on the computer, access the internet and use the different browsers to look up obscure subjects. In this issue, there are many references to websites. If you view this issue on line, these websites are in blue.

The socially interactive sites such as Facebook has millions of users. More

and more businesses are getting their own Facebook pages. The question is how can a bluebird society use this technology to help share its bluebird knowledge and, in turn, help the bluebirds and other cavity nesters increase their chances of survival.

It is the younger generation that needs to become active in conservation and, in this case, bluebird conservation. This is the generation that checks its Facebook page every day. They gradually add friends to their wall. Friends with whom they share personal information and ideas. Friends who might all band together to swell the ranks of NCBS. Friends who, in turn, would become friends with the bluebirds. Is this something that NCBS should be doing? Do we have a volunteer?

*Helen S. Munro, Editor*  
hsmunro@ac.net or 910-673-6936

### NORTH CAROLINA BLUEBIRD SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING APRIL 2011

1. “The Story of the Sparkling Catawba Springs”
2. Audubon International Golf Course Sanctuary Certification
3. Bluebird speaker from Lenoir-Rhyne University.
4. A visit to the “Salt Block” (Science, Arts and Literature Together), local art and science museum

**Lake Hickory Country Club  
Hickory, NC  
Saturday, April 30  
8 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

February 2011 *Bluebird Notes*, newsletter of NCBS, will have details of this meeting.



## Bluebird Notes

### Issue 25 Vol. 4

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## Bluebird Tales

Photos by Ed Erkes



# Cats in the Yard

Dear Mr. Hindsley,

Do you have any ideas of how I can keep cats off my property. I have tried sprays, etc. without success.

I had a nest of four bluebirds, feathers and all who died of starvation because the cats scared the parents away.

Then, I had to discard a nest with 4 eggs that never hatched for the same reason.

Hope you can advise.

*Anne M Prunty, Pinehurst, NC*

*Editor's Note: I have held this letter since 2007 hoping to find a good answer. A search of the internet came up with:*

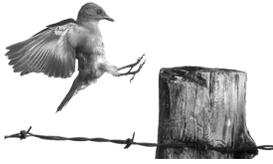
1. *Keeping your cat indoors. This, of course, assumes it is your cat.*
2. *Spraying the cat with a hose. Do not know how many times you would have to do it.*
3. *Blow a dog training whistle. Contributor said that a couple times will do it.*
4. *Get a dog!! This will keep the cats away and the dog doesn't kill birds.*
5. *Plant cactus around the pole holding the nest box. This only keeps the cats out of the nest box, not out of the yard.*
6. *Put a Noel Predator Guard on the box.*
7. *Use a Have-a-Heart Trap and capture them. Return ones with an identification tag to their owners with a request to keep their cats indoors. Take ones without a tag to the local animal shelter.*
8. *"Bell the Cat!"*

*I am hoping that some of our members has a better idea or something that has worked for them. Please, use the contact information on page 10 to share it with me and this newsletter.*

*Helen S. Munro, Editor*

*See pages 4 & 5 for plans for Noel Guards and Stovepipe Baffles.*

*See page 15 for a commercially available predator guard similar to the Noel Guard.*



# Bluebird Tales



## Cats Indoors

Free-roaming cats take a terrible toll on wildlife, as they never lose their predatory instinct. Since many of us are cat lovers and owners and have an outdoor cat (or two or three!), consider moving them indoors this spring and making them indoor cats. It will save them from injury and disease and will reduce wildlife deaths. There is reliable data to indicate that the free-roaming and feral cats in this country kill over a million birds each day! Not to mention all the small rodents they kill that could be some hawk's meal.

The American Bird Conservancy . (ABC) has developed a program called Cats Indoors! It's designed to make us cat lovers aware of the very real problems free-roaming cats cause. ABC, along with the Humane Society of the U.S. and the American Humane Association, has produced a brochure on being a responsible pet owner. It's available at [www.abcbirds.org](http://www.abcbirds.org). Go to "Bird Conservation Issues in the Americas" and click on "cats." Be sure to watch the YouTube Channel in the upper left (of that webpage) for more.

Many states are getting on the bandwagon; it's not too late for Virginia. VBS advocates two predator guards on each pole-mounted box. The Noel guard, at the entrance hole, is there to discourage cats as well as raccoons! If you just can't get that outdoor cat of yours to stay indoors all day, every day, at least resolve that your next cat will be an indoor cat. And in the meantime, carry your share of the guilt!

– Barbara Chambers

*Reprinted with permission from The Bird Box, Newsletter from the Virginia Bluebird Society.*



## He is beautiful in an ugly sort of way.!

Dear Editor,

I enjoy your website very much. We moved to Fuquay-Varina, NC, about a year and a half ago from Pennsylvania. This was our first time installing a bluebird house and your site was very helpful. Last year we had two nest cycles and we are on our second one this year.

The attached photo was taken on June 13, 2010 at our home. It was of two hatchlings and two eggs although one is mostly seen. The hatchling was less than 24 hours old.

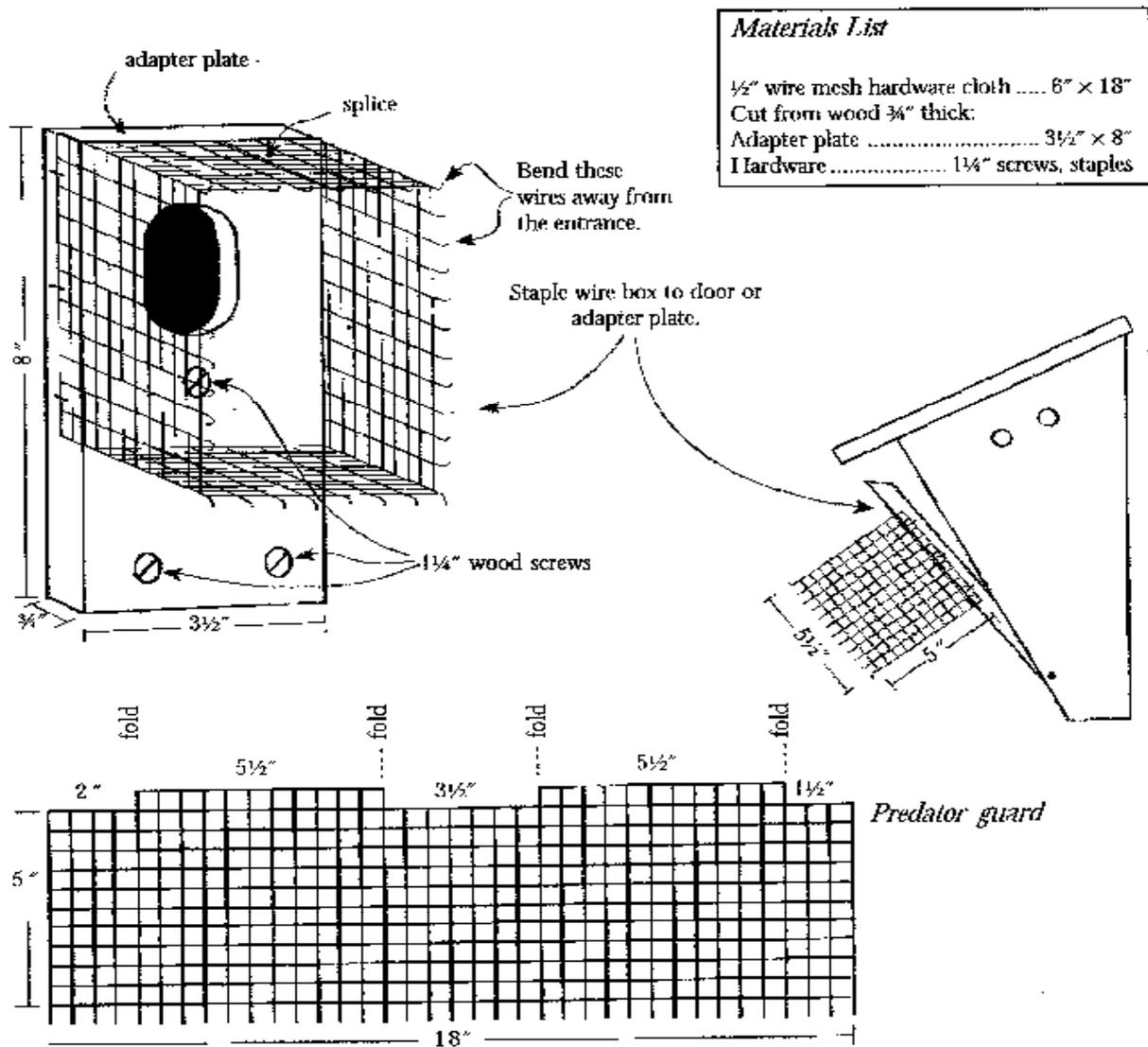
Thanks,

*John P. Karkoski, Fuquay-Varina*



# Baffles: A Defense Against

## A Plan for a Noel Predator Guard



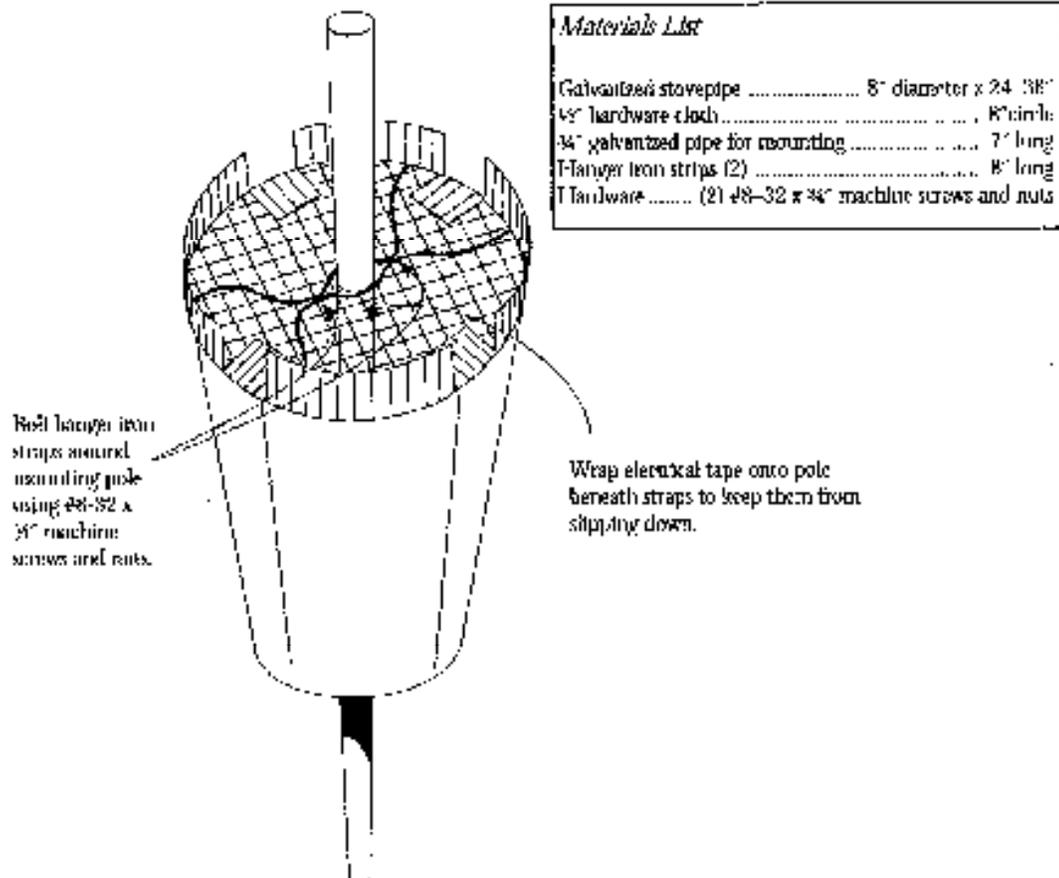
The wire mesh guard may be attached directly to the box front by stapling along the edges of the door. (Edges may need to be planed to allow for the thickness of the wire.) To make the guard more versatile, staple the wire mesh to an adapter plate with an entrance hole that matches your nest boxes. The adapter can be screwed onto box fronts as needed. To further impede predators, you can string a piece of wire across the guard. Connect the wire to each side of the guard and position it across the entrance hole and about three inches away from the hole. Noel guards are most effective when installed after the first egg is laid.

Printed with permission from *Bluebirds Forever* (Toops 1994)  
Original design by Jim Noel  
Adapted by John Thompson

Connie Toops was a speaker at NABS 2005 in Asheville. Her book is a delight and paperback copies are available on Amazon along with some used copies.

# Snakes, Cats & Raccoons

## A Plan for a Stovepipe Predator Baffle



Using tin snips, shape hardware cloth into a circle. Make a small cut in the center so it will slip over the mounting pole. Bend the edges of the hardware cloth down and slide it snugly into the stovepipe. Cut four tabs on the top end of the stovepipe. Bend them inward, over the hardware cloth.

Bolt the hanger iron straps together in the center, around the mounting pole. Bend the free ends outward to support the hardware cloth. A few wraps of electrical tape below the strap attachment will keep it from slipping down the pole. Slide the stovepipe assembly over the top of the mounting pole, resting it on the hanger straps. Attach the nest box onto the pole, with the bottom of the box about six inches above the top of the baffle. Smear a heavy-duty wax (for example, carnauba wax) on the pole beneath the baffle to repel ants.

Printed with permission from *Bluebirds Forever*, Toops 13041

Plan design by Ron Kingston - *Stake* 13(2):56-57

Art reference from "Enjoying Bluebirds More" in *Bird Watcher's Digest* (1-800-804-2472)



## *Bluebirds, Inside the Nest Box*

Recorded by the Cornell Birdhouse Network

Summer 1999

Produced by the North Carolina Bluebird Society

DVD available for \$12.00 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 _____	= _____
Lands End blue knitted shirts with NCBS Logo (S, M, L, XL)	\$ 35.00	X _____	= _____
Cloisonné Bluebird Pins (1inch, 4 colors)	\$ 5.00	X _____	= _____
<b><i>Bluebirds Forever</i></b> (12 page booklet)	\$ 3.00	X _____	= _____
2 copies	\$ 4.50		
3 copies	\$ 6.00	X _____	= _____
<b><i>On the Wings of a Song</i></b> —CD	\$ 8.00	X _____	= _____
<b><i>Bluebirds, Inside the Nestbox</i></b> DVD	\$ 12.00	X _____	= _____
( DVD special 2 for \$20; 3 for \$30; 6 for \$60)			
<i>Roberta Lee</i> Bluebird Poster 18" x 24"	\$ 12.50	X _____	= _____
Metal Nest Box Tags (10 tags)	\$ 6.00	X _____	= _____
<b>New Item: 550 piece puzzle of Dempsey Essick's "The Fledgling".</b>	\$ 20.00	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 12/2010      Date of your order is \_\_\_\_\_

## Some Activities to help Bluebirds in the Winter

Often, the bluebirds “make my day.” This summer they occupied the nest box just off the patio. The camera mounted in the ceiling shared their daily activity on the television set in the Carolina Room. They took their baths in the birdbath just outside the windows of that room and I often woke to their song as the males sang from the top of the nest box or the top of the trees in the backyard.

Now, with winter approaching, what can I do to make sure they are around in the spring.

1. I will check out the four boxes that are in my yard to make sure they are clean and not in the need of repair. Two of these boxes are devoted to chickadees and nuthatches and have the one and half inch holes reduced to one inch.
2. I will also check 80 or so boxes that are on the Foxfire Golf Courses and in the Foxfire Village Green Park.
3. I will be studying the boxes that lost many eggs this summer to predators that pulled part of the nests out while raiding them for these eggs. It may be time for some baffles or noel guards.
4. I will get out my birdbath with the thermostat and heater. There has been many a winter morning when the regular bird bath and the water garden are frozen solid. The heated birdbath has a little steam coming off it and the birds enjoy a drink.
5. In the kitchen I will be fixing a batch of No Melt Suet Recipe. This recipe actually has several names, but the basic ingredients are as follows:
  - 1 cup of creamy or crunchy peanut butter
  - 1 cup lard
 Melt together and add 2 cups oatmeal, 2 to 3 cups cornmeal, 1 cup flour.  
 Optional additions— 3 Tablespoons of Cayenne pepper to keep the squirrels away or currants, cut up raisins, white millet or sunflower hearts.  
 This mixture can be cut up and put out in either a platform feeder or just on a pie tin. It can be kept in the refrigerator until needed.
6. If you are blessed with a workshop, November is the perfect time to build a few birdhouses. It is also the time to share your birdhouses with children in schools or organizations (Boys & Girls Clubs, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts) Follow the link from [www.ncbluebird.org](http://www.ncbluebird.org) for plans.
7. Another great woodworking project is an enclosed bluebird feeder with one and half inch holes at either end. Put “bluebird feeder plans” in the browser. Check out [www.Help-for-Bluebirds.org](http://www.Help-for-Bluebirds.org).
8. I will be placing an order for mealworms. In the past, I have used:
  - Nature’s Way (1-800-318-2611)  
<http://www.thenaturesway.com/>
  - or
  - Grubco (1-800-222-3563)  
<http://www.grubco.com/>
 But I am trying a North Carolina Company Camillies Vita-mealies® (1-828-260-2356) [www.vita-mealie.weebly.com](http://www.vita-mealie.weebly.com)  
 See their special offer for NCBS Members.

NCBS lists these companies for your convenience and asks you to understand that although we list non-profits on the website, we cannot include for-profit companies there or here in the newsletter. However, if you want to order meal worms, it is nice to have some place to start.

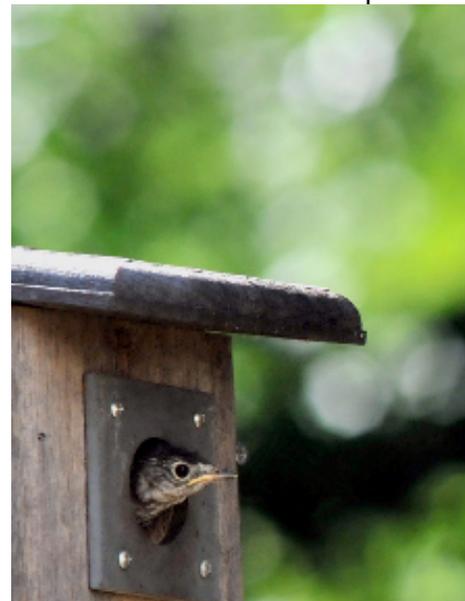
Simple directions for raising mealworms can be found at <http://www.sialis.org/raisingmealworms.htm>. I keep my mealworms in plastic boxes in the garage. It is do-able, but I end up ordering them. The only problem I had was when two mealworms fell into my husband’s hat. He put it on his head. They bit him!

I do not really like to write an article that has I, I, I in it. However, this is what I do.

If you have any questions or comments, feel free to email me at [hsmunro@ac.net](mailto:hsmunro@ac.net) or call me at 910-673-6936.

*Helen S. Munro, Editor*

# Bluebird Feeding Sequence



In the new member packet we just received there was the magazine *Bluebirds Forever*. It's a good piece for broad range of information and explanation of the nesting and life cycle.

We make note cards of bluebird pictures and would like to have some of *Bluebirds Forever* available when we do presentations.. We primarily sell our cards in NC, so it would be informative but might also attract some new members to the Society.

Thanks.

*Kay and John Daughtry,  
Charlotte, NC*

# From Kay & John Daughtry

*Editor's Note:*

*They say that a picture is worth a thousand words and so here are seven thousand words that I couldn't begin to match.*

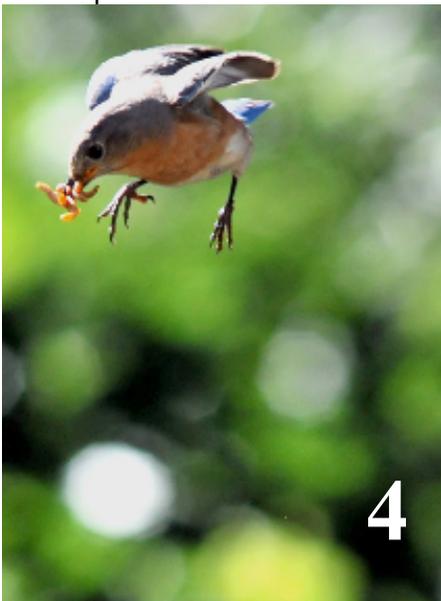
*I have mailed John and Kay Daughtry a dozen of the Bluebirds Forever. Their photographs speak to the beauty of the bluebirds and the nest boxes that have aided in their comeback.*



7



6



4



5

# North Carolina Bluebird Society

## NORTH CAROLINA BLUEBIRD SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

North Carolina Bluebird Society Dues:

( ) 1 Year (\$10.00)

( ) 3 Years (\$25.00)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State & Zip \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer to access the NCBS Bluebird Notes newsletter via the Internet rather than have it mailed to me.

Yes	No
-----	----

Access information will be sent to the E-mail address you furnished including advance notification of membership expiration.

If you elect to receive the Bluebird Notes newsletter by mail, your Membership Expiration appears on your Mailing Label.

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

North Carolina Bluebird Society  
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  
22 Bobolink Rd. Jackson Springs, NC 27281  
Phone - (910) 673-6936 Fax - (910) 673-7345  
e-mail - hsmunro@ac.net

## NCBS 2011 Nominating Committee

The NCBS Nominating Committee is chaired by Bob Wolk and includes Joye Stephenson, Jim Jochum and Bill Satterwhite. This year it is their job to seek out qualified members to fill the vacancies for Vice-president and Directors for the election at the 2011 Annual Meeting. This includes a director that will take the position of State Co-Chair for the County Coordinators replacing Chuck Bliss.

If you would like to volunteer for a position, you should feel free to contact a committee member. (See page 2 for contact information.)

Should you be approached by the Nominating committee to fill a vacancy, please give careful consideration and an affirmative response to their request.

## County Coordinator Information

The lists on the current newsletter and website should be correct. Please review your listing on these items. If you find any errors, please advise Helen Munro or Glenda Ryan. (See page 2 for contact information.)

## Attention On-Line Members

Your On-Line membership saves paper and postage. In recognition of this, you, the On-line Members, qualify for a 10% discount on anything that you order from the NCBS Store. Christine Ammons, Store Manager, will have the list of all the On-Line members. Just total the cost of your purchases and subtract 10% when you mail your order and check.

# Artist welcomes bluebirds to sanctuary

By [Steve Huffman](#)

(The Dispatch of Lexington, NC, Davidson County's News Source. Reprinted with permission)

Dempsey Essick has a goal.

I want to welcome bluebirds to Welcome," he said. Essick, a nationally-acclaimed artist and past president of the N.C. Bluebird Society, has a petition at his studio that he's inviting Davidson County residents to sign. The petition calls for Welcome to be declared a sanctuary for the Eastern Bluebird. Essick plans to present the petition to the Davidson County Board of Commissioners in January. Any Davidson County resident is encouraged to sign the petition — not just those who live in Welcome.

"I thought it'd be an asset to the community," Essick said of the designation. "It might be an encouragement to other communities to do the same."

Being designated a bluebird sanctuary would involve a bluebird trail that would stretch throughout Welcome. A bluebird trail is a series of houses in which the birds can nest.

Essick said if the bluebird trail becomes reality, residents will clean the houses and keep track of how many eggs are laid and the number that hatch. Bluebirds, Essick and his wife, Shelley, noted, are one of the few birds that don't migrate south for the winter.

"They're with us all year," Shelley said.

The designation is more symbolic than anything. The effort is a volunteer one, with residents monitoring the houses, as well as purchasing or building them. There won't be a tax increase to pay for the designation, Essick promised.

Dempsey said he feels the community being designated a sanctuary will help residents take pride in protecting bluebirds. Essick said he hopes business owners will get in the spirit, erecting bird houses outside their offices and shops.

Essick, 57, grew up on a farm, but said that as a child he never saw a bluebird. Mass land clearings that took place in the 1920s, '30s and '40s was one reason as the birds lost their nesting habitats. Another reason the bird's population declined, Essick said, was the urbani-

zation of the United States. Wooden fence posts with cavities where the birds nested largely became a thing of the past.

At one time, bluebirds were considered endangered. Their number has increased now to the point where their population is now designated "challenged." That's better than endangered, Essick said, but he noted their numbers could still be better.

"This will be a step toward helping them," Essick said of declaring Welcome a bluebird sanctuary.

Essick's studio is at 5968 Old Highway 52 in Welcome. The studio is across the street from the RCR Racing Museum. There's a 14-foot-high hummingbird Essick sculpted in front of his business.

Steve Huffman can be reached at (336) 249-3981, ext. 217, or [steve.huffman@the-dispatch.com](mailto:steve.huffman@the-dispatch.com).



1	The entrance hole is too big. A hole larger than 1 1/2" diameter will allow starlings and other predators to reach into the box.
2	There are House Sparrows in the neighborhood. House Sparrows may destroy bluebird eggs and nestlings, and kill adults.
3	The box has a perch. A perch invites House Sparrows.
4	There is no overhang on the roof. Water could get through the entrance hole, wetting and chilling nestlings.
5	The roof is not slanted to shed water.
6	The box and roof are painted a dark color. This may cause the box to overheat, killing eggs or nestlings.
7	The box does not have a predator guard on the pole to prevent raccoons, snakes and other predators from climbing it.
8	The box is located on a fence, which acts as a predator highway.
9	The box is too close to a brushy area that is House Wren habitat. House Wrens may puncture eggs of other birds, kill young nestlings, and fill up boxes with "dummy" stick nests.
10	The box has no ventilation holes in the sides. This may cause the inside to get too hot.
11	The box is too deep. Nestlings may be unable to get out of the box when they are ready to fledge.
12	The box is made of very thin material. Wood used to make nest boxes should be at least 3/4 - 1" thick.

Answers

<http://www.sialis.org>

- 10
- 9.
- 8.
- 7.
- 6.
- 5.
- 4.
- 3.
- 2.
- 1.



See how many you can find before checking the answer below!

## Name Ten Things That Are Wrong with this "Bluebird" Nest box

# The POWER of a SINGLE Bluebird Nestbox

Back in late 1984 my construction company got the bid to add on 5,000 square feet of office space to an existing 8,000 square foot warehouse and we built the then "New Mt. Pleasant Daily Tribune" newspaper printing complex and news office.

While working on a project, large or small I normally put up bluebird nestboxes and we can observe them while we work from dawn till dark.

This particular nestbox was mounted to a power pole in the employee parking lot and it immediately attracted bluebirds. Being easy to open and check, quite a few of the employees would open the box and look in on the eggs and baby birds that fledged month after month. The owners set up a picnic table/smoking area really close to this nestbox and again most of the employees would take their multiple cigarette breaks during the day and watch family after family of bluebirds move into this nestbox. There were actually three pairs of bluebirds nesting on this small piece of property by the spring of 1985!

PAGE 4 BLUEBIRD NEWS / April, 1990



Keith Kridler (left) and Robert McKinney of the Bluebird News inspect bluebird eggs in a Project Bluebird "Trails Across Texas" nesting box. The Trail is now complete from Texarkana, Arkansas through Mount Pleasant, Texas then on through Pflugberg, Canton and is now down to Athens, Texas. We only like about 110 miles to Hartsville. After the trail is complete to Huntsville we plan to extend it to Austin and from there to the LBJ ranch. Due to our many dedicated bluebirders here in northeast Texas, we have an abundance of bluebirds and are willing to share them with others. We need to blaze them a trail to your area. Please help.

Robert McKinney is on the right and that is Keith Kridler on the left just over 20 years ago now. Robert was the computer Guru of Mt. Pleasant back in the early 1980's. He predicted that "someday" maybe our great grand children would be able to own a computer small enough to carry with us in cars as we monitored nestboxes!!!! Their computer in 1984 used 36 inch diameter reel to reel magnetic tapes that were 1&1/4" wide to record newspaper data. We moved FOUR TONS of back up data on these reels to the building in 1985! Anyway Robert became OBSESSED with the bluebirds in this nestbox and convinced me and a group of bluebirders to join him and put out a MONTHLY 8 full pages of current bluebird information because NABS only printed a journal every three months. We started locally but by the time this photo was taken Robert was printing out nearly 1,000 newsletters and sending them to seventeen different states and four Canadian Provinces.

This was "EASY" for him to do because he was in charge of



Keith Kridler visited Jack Finch in Bailey, NC, after NABS 2005 held in Asheville and sponsored by NCBS.

production and was cranking out a whole "daily" newspaper every day!!! He sent these free to libraries and everyone was encouraged to get copies and have them in every barber shop, every women's hair stylist shop, dentist and doctor office. Gas stations and convenience stores got free copies.....

Robert named the newsletter "The Bluebird News" and we had been in print more than two years before the Minnesota Bluebird Recovery formed and copied or used the same name for their newsletter. Then the original North Carolina Bluebird Society formed and also used this name before disbanding years later only to be re-formed again.

Robert coined the term "Project Bluebird Trails Across Texas." We had tee shirts, caps and metallic aluminum name plates for the nestboxes. He also coined the term "Project Bluebird Trails Across America" a while before NABS began really pushing their "Transcontinental Bluebird Trail" project. We were working with the various state bluebird groups back in the 1980's sharing bluebird information and with older NABS members.

Wonderful time back then! Sandy and I had been married for 15 years by the time of this photo. Back then we fell in love while going on motorcycle "dates" while in High School. She wrote down the data on my bluebird trails while we were checking the nestboxes, tooling around back country roads on an XL-250 Honda Dirt Bike. Not a whole lot of room on one of those bikes! We became REALLY close friends because of "The Bluebird of Happiness".

You just NEVER know who you will inspire when you put up that first nestbox as you begin your first bluebird trail.

*Keith Kridler Mt. Pleasant, Texas  
Reprinted with permission*

# Have Chicks, Need Parents

## By Kent Hall

We all have pulled some stupid tricks while monitoring but I have two that are in a class by themselves. Both situations had good outcomes but could have led to the loss of chicks, unnecessarily. But more than anything else, these examples show how adaptable birds (in this case, bluebirds) are.

**Case 1.** While moving boxes in the fall of 2006 I came up to one box that had not had any bluebirds for several weeks, so I had quit monitoring the box. When I prepared to remove the box and mounting post, I got distracted by the land owner and forgot to open the box to check for contents. I tossed it into my trailer and proceeded to drive 10 miles to start putting boxes into new positions. After putting in 6 or so boxes, I reached down to pull out the aforementioned box and heard cheeps. Gulp. I opened the box to see 5, 11-day old chicks who turned and looked at each other and said "mommy?" (Boy Scouts Honor!). I hastened to put them into my front seat, tidy up the nest and hurry back to the original box site. There, perched on the wires, were both parents with frowns on their faces (honest, or so I thought). With guilt flooding over me I hastened to put up the mounting post and nest box, tidied up the nest some more and walked away with my fingers crossed. So what happened to the 5 chicks that had traveled in a bouncing trailer for 10 miles and were brought back over the same 10 miles in luxury and been away for 3 hours? You are right—the parents kept on truckin' and did not abandon them. They continued to feed them and fledged them a few days later—what adaptability! And to think that our biggest monitoring myth is opening the box causes parental abandonment of the nest! But wait until you read about case #2!

**Case 2.** For two years I had learned my lesson well—no more stolen chicks. But it happened again this summer. One day my sidekick, Pat Perzynski, and I removed nest boxes, none of which had had eggs in them for several weeks when I quit monitoring them. This time there were several dozen boxes, none of them numbered be-

cause it is too much trouble with 1,124 of them to keep

track of. The next DAY, 24 hours after removing the boxes, I started putting them back up. While tossing a nest box around, I saw some nesting material fly by the hole and I said "oh, no, did I do it again?", and sure enough, I had. In spite of not eating for 24 hours, the 4, 9-day old chicks looked healthy and were "gaping" for food. But this time I had no idea where the box had been located as I had so many in my trailer. Now I was in real trouble. As chance would have it, I noticed a hen carrying nesting material to a box and I stopped to investigate. No eggs, but she was obviously motivated to lay eggs. I said, what if she would adopt the chicks before she laid and hatched eggs? I put the four chicks in the nest box and drove away about 100 yards and trained my binoculars on the box. Within a few minutes she brought more nesting materials to the box, peaked her head in and "surprise, chicks on board". She turned around and went after an insect and was back in an instant. I really was shocked, but exclaimed, "yeah". I watched for another 15 minutes or so and saw the male join her in the food line. I could hear them chattering and the hen interrupted to say: "No eggs, no hatching, what a deal!" I came back to observe the nest for two weeks and found that the chicks fledged successfully. Whew, off the guilt train for the second time. Of course, one lesson to learn from this is to be less careless. But as a scientist, I find it intriguing that the hen had what it took "hormonally" to skip egg laying and hatching and go directly to chick feeding. The Audubon Bluebird Trail has used adoptive parents on at least 75 occasions (85% success in rearing adopted young), but this was the first time we had ever tried to use a pair that were just starting nest building for adoptive parents. Anyone else out there ever have this experience?

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# Bird Guardians



2 Bird Guardians/Pack available for \$22.95 from [www.FiddleCreekFarm.com](http://www.FiddleCreekFarm.com).

These Bird Guardians have been designed to act like the Noel Guard (page 4 ). These are two different models that are available through the Internet.

They are advertised to protect **Chickadees, Wrens, Titmice, Nuthatches, Woodpeckers, Bluebirds, Swallows and more!** They keep the birds out of reach from blue jays, cats, crows, opossums, raccoons and squirrels.

The Bird Guardian fits birdhouse openings from 1" to 1 1/2"

*Editor's Note: Bill Abbey has used both these guards and finds that they work well.*



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AE2SCREWON in-Screw on in **Bird Guardian**  
Put "audubon entities bird guardian" into the Google browser.

## NCBS Board



The fall quarterly NCBS Board Meeting was held at the North Carolina Zoo education building on Saturday, October 16, 2010.

Standing left to right is Bob Wolk (Secretary), Joye Stephensen (Director), Helen Munro (Editor), David Hindsley (Records Chair/Treasurer), Glenda Ryan (Web Administrator) and Chuck Bliss (County Coordinator State Co-Chair). Ray Welch (President) is seated.

Items discussed included the annual meeting in April 2011 (see page 1), County Coordinator responsibilities, the November newsletter, NCBS website, membership (425) and treasurer's report (\$8,330.83).

All members are welcome to join the NCBS Board.

## Bluebird Nest in a Paper Tube



This picture was taken from the open end of a newspaper tube attached below a mail box.

This Bluebird deposited 4 eggs which were confirmed by touch since it's so dark in there. The flash on my camera revealed her on the nest. The flash didn't spook her, she stayed on the nest.

I'm sorry to report that the Bluebird eggs in the newspaper box didn't hatch. Perhaps the box became too hot or maybe they were infertile.

*Don Elsass, New Bern, NC*

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