

BLUEBIRD NOTES



Bluebirds of North Carolina Welcome You to Autumn 2019



Kimberly Miskiewicz snapped this bluebird bunch in her Raleigh yard recently. She thought they appeared to be scouting out nest box locations for next spring. Thanks, Kimberly, for these photos and a reminder from this bluebird crew of how important it is to always keep nest boxes in mind. See page 5 for some helpful nest box maintenance tips (from website of NABS). And don't forget this year's next box survey data. See page 13.





North Carolina Bluebird Society (NCBS) Mission Statement

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

NCBS is an affiliate member of the North American Bluebird Society.
www.ncbluebird.org

Report from NCBS Immediate Past President

Hi Bluebirders!

The 2019 bluebird nesting season has now concluded and it is time to report our nesting results! Stella Rideout, who has been compiling our nest box information for many years, is handing the data survey function over to new Board member, Ari Grimsley. Thanks so much, Stella, for all you have done to support this important task and for your continued support of the NCBS as the Warren County Coordinator, as well as helping in Halifax County going forward. We are all appreciative of Ari for stepping up to handle the nesting data management. See instructions for submitting your 2019 nest box monitoring data on page 13. In order to report results in the winter newsletter, please send your results to Ari by December 1st!

It is also a great time to clean out and perform maintenance on your existing nest boxes! Let's keep the Baby Blues coming in the year ahead. Tips for nest box maintenance can be found on page 5.

More exciting news! Your Board of Directors has voted to hold our next conference at Sylvan Heights Bird Park on May 16, 2020. This is truly a unique venue ... one you will not want to miss! Kay Hindsley has worked diligently with the folks at the park to make this happen. Scotland Neck is just a short drive from the Raleigh / Greenville / Rocky Mount areas, so a wonderful day trip for some and or a delightful overnite excursion for others. See page 3 for more details! Happy Autumn! Ken

Bluebird Notes

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Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter

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SYLVAN HEIGHTS BIRD PARK — 2020

Save The Date For The NCBS 2020 Annual Meeting in Halifax County

Saturday, May 16 at Sylvan Heights Bird Park in Scotland Neck, NC

You heard it here first! The NCBS Board of Directors voted to change things up for next year's Annual Meeting in several ways. We will be meeting in a new place, Sylvan Heights Bird Park, and we will be spending part of our day learning about other bird species.

We anticipate that NCBS members will be excited about this change in venue and will welcome the opportunity to expand our knowledge of waterfowl, owls, parrots, and flamingos. Rest assured we will also be addressing current bluebird issues and North Carolina Bluebird Society business.

We are planning a fun and busy day, to include:

Coffee, juice and danish at registration

Lectures

Catered lunch

Tours of the bird park

Silent auction and door prizes



Sylvan Heights Bird Park has over 2000 birds from around the world, 200 species of birds, and is world-renowned for breeding rare and endangered waterfowl. It claims to have the largest collection of waterfowl in the world.

- Their exhibits also include parrots, parakeets, cranes, flamingos and owls.
- The park is separated into aviaries representing the continents of the world.
- Be prepared to stroll around the park, meet with Sylvan Heights Bird Park founders, Michael and Ali Lubbock, be a perch for parakeets, and feed flamingos.

You can learn more about Sylvan Heights Bird Park on their website:

<http://www.shwpark.com>

Scotland Neck, NC is located in eastern North Carolina, about 22 miles north of Tarboro

- Just 30 miles northeast of Rocky Mount and 85 miles northeast of Raleigh
- Lodging is available nearby, if you wish to arrive the day before the conference
 - * Scotland Neck: Scotland Inn Hotel
 - * Tarboro: Tartan Inn Bed and Breakfast and Best Western Hotel
- Look in the winter NCBS newsletter for registration forms and detailed agenda.
- But, in the meantime, be sure to mark your calendar and save the date:
 - * Saturday, May 16, 2020.
 - * See you there!

GOOD NEWS FROM DURHAM COUNTY

Farm Animal Day - Duke Homestead 2019

On June 22, 2019 the North Carolina Bluebird Society participated in the annual Farm Animal Festival at the Duke Homestead State Historic Site in Durham. This event was held to communicate the importance of animals, both domestic and wild, and to celebrate the success of farms both historically and today. In a minor but important way, the songbirds we enjoy contribute to the balance of nature by consuming their share of insects that can harm to the crops we raise. And we all know that Bluebirds are bug eaters, particularly when raising their young.

Joan Oldham and I manned the NCBS tent, handing out pamphlets and answering questions about the types of native cavity-nesting birds in our state. These included the titmouse, wrens, chickadees and (best-of-all) BLUEBIRDS. Adults and kids alike enjoyed squeezing the stuffed replicas of those birds, listening to the sounds each make, and noting the different coloration.

On display were numerous photographs of bluebirds in flight, as well as a sample birdhouses. Folks were shown the important characteristics of houses that are built specifically for bluebirds and encouraged to install a bluebird box at their home. Ms. Bonnie Hamby (pictured in center below) was so taken by the possibility of watching the nesting cycle, she had one installed in her back yard in Durham.

What made the presentation extra special was the presence of a Bluebird Trail of five boxes on the Duke Homestead property. This trail was installed a few years ago by Ken Kernodle. It is currently monitored by a group of volunteers from the Duke Energy Retirees Association. All of the boxes were checked prior to the festival, with one being active with chicks about two weeks old. Being able to literally “point” to a nest box across the field housing a clutch of four young birds made the promise of “if you put up a box, they will come” a reality for those visiting the tent. What an enjoyable and educational way to spend a summer day!

Steve McDaniel, Durham County Coordinator



NABS IS GREAT BLUEBIRD RESOURCE

Don't Forget the Nest Boxes

The North American Bluebird Society (NABS) has a wealth of nest box information available on their website. Suggestions of good materials to construct the nest box, as well as what to avoid using, and detailed tips regarding nest boxes can be found at *NABS Factsheet* at the following link:

<http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org/PDF/NABS%20factsheet%20-%20Nestbox%20Recs.pdf>

Some highlights of this highly regarded bluebird and nest box resource are included below.

Maintenance / Repair Checklist Suggestions

Confirm the entrance hole size is not enlarged and no hole in roof.

Ensure cracked or rotten wood is fixed and rain and snow are not getting in box.

Roof considerations include ways to keep minimize effects of weather on the box and deter predators.

Roof materials to avoid include plexi-glass single sheets or galvanized metal roofs (due to concern of overheating). Plastic, Hardie Board or roofing shingles (if sufficient underneath insulation) are typically good roof options.

A *NABS Frequently Asked Questions* document includes nest box tips, as well as other bluebird advise. Check out his helpful resource at the following link:

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

Per these NABS reference materials, convenience of monitoring/maintenance and bluebird comfort/safety should be considered for many aspects of nest boxes. A box mounted lower than 4 or 5 feet is at greater risk of predation. Always consider adding a predator guard if your habitat warrants it. Entrance holes should face away from prevailing winds and direct sun. A nearby tree will provide young bluebirds with a place to fly to when they first leave the nest, and shelter from the elements and predators.

Check out the PDF documents provided above for more details. Additionally, an abundance of online resources regarding bluebirds can be found on the website and Facebook for NABS per following links:

Website: <http://nabluebirdsociety.org/index.htm>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NorthAmericanBluebirdSociety>

NABS is inviting all bluebird lovers to migrate to Kearney, Nebraska March 11-15, 2020 to attend its annual conference. What a great way to meet with bluebirders from all over North America! This spectacular event will include various workshops and lectures, as well as the opportunity to take NABS-sponsored field trips to see sandhill cranes and other species during the height of migration season.

Spaces for the field trips are limited and discounts for registrations are given to those who register before January 1st. You do not need to be a member of the North American Bluebird Society to attend the conference. Find out all you need to know about the conference on events section of the NABS website:

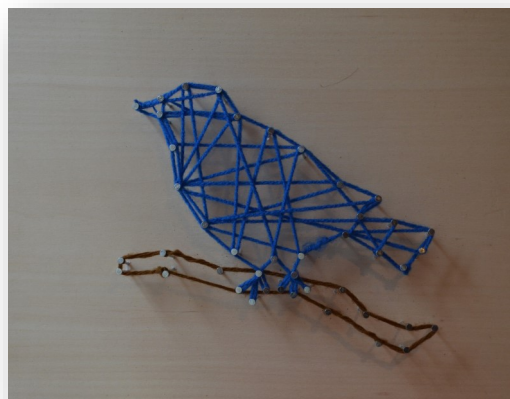
<http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org/events/>.

BLUEBIRD ITEMS — THOUGHTFUL GIFTS

Heartwarming Handmade Bluebird Presents

It is wonderful to see an interest in bluebirds from a young age. We found this photo in our archives of Bill Satterwhite, the “Bluebird Man” of Wake County, posing with a bluebird picture created by his grandson Charlie. Can’t you tell how much he loves this item from the look of a “proud grandfather” in the snapshot below left. Nice job, Charlie.

Similarly, Gene Moore of Hickory submitted a photo of a creative craft plaque he received from his 13 year old granddaughter for a past Christmas gift. How interesting that pine, nails, and blue cording could be assembled into such a cool item. Even more precious as it was custom made especially for Gene to honor his enthusiasm and concern for bluebirds. We love it!



On the subjects of gifts, the year-end holidays are just around the corner. Now is a good time to think of your shopping list. NCBS membership subscriptions make fantastic gift ideas for a wide range of folks ... parents, grandparents, teachers, mail carriers, colleagues, siblings, friends. Anyone who loves bluebirds, birds, or nature would appreciate this present that gives a quarterly reminder of how much you care.

If you are looking for an easy solution to check off some holiday shopping quickly, and help a good cause, you can email contact@ncbluebird.org or call Glenda @ 919-802-1241 to get the ball rolling.

Our online store is another great option for finding bluebird related merchandise for bird and nature lovers. The excellent photography of our Buncombe County Coordinator, Russ Bauman, can be found on many of the products we offer. See samples in photos below. Greeting cards, puzzles, and coffee cups are some of the items that feature pictures of bluebirds by Russ. How fun would it be to use bluebird featured ornaments during the holidays! We also have the NCBS logo on select items, including hats and shirts.

The online store can be found from ncbluebird.org or cafepress.com/ncbluebirdsociety.



BLUEBIRD TALES: PART I (1 OF 2)

Longtime Love of Birds had Guided Path to NCBS Coordinator of 3 Western Counties

My start with bluebirds began as a child growing up in Canton, Ohio with parents who “birded.” As we vacationed we would add birds to our Life List. Binoculars, scope, and bird books were part of our gear. A special trip with my parents as a young adult included touring the Gaspé Peninsula in Canada and back home through New England. We could identify warblers by their song, thanks to the opportunity to hear tapes with this sweet music many times. The black throated green warbler, with “Zee zee zoo zoo zee” is unforgettable. Other memorable adventures include taking the Blue Nose Ferry to see pelagic birds and boating to Machias Seal Island to see puffins. What fun!

I had a good foundation for my love of birds, which I have passed forward to my children, Eldon and Emily Peters. Emily and her friend Bonnie Smith belonged to the Interact Club, a community service club, at Murphy High School. On their own they came up with the idea to write a Lowe’s Hero Grant for a bluebird project. They were awarded poles and lumber for the Voc Ed students to build one hundred nest boxes. This was our START to bluebirds in Cherokee and Clay Counties in the most western tip of our state.

Nest boxes were put up at Murphy Elementary, Murphy High, The Learning Center, John C. Campbell Folk School, and throughout our village of Brasstown. Eager to find information to correctly maintain a bluebird trail, a google search found the North Carolina Bluebird Society. Being from Murphy means we are a good six hours from Raleigh, so online help was vital. I volunteered to be a county coordinator and received a notebook full of helpful information. Ray Welch answered questions by phone. My husband, Ed Reid, is a woodworker. Ray provided some great tips regarding the nest boxes Ed makes with cedar wood.

Emily, Bonnie, and I drove two hours to Asheville to attend a state, I believe, NCBS meeting. We were brand new to bluebirding and were eager to gather information and learn. Ed and I found a national NABS meeting held in Athens, GA. So from the start we found valuable resources that were not too far from our remote corner of the world. Attendees were most friendly and helpful in our early endeavors.

Over the years we have made wonderful friends with other bluebirders. For this edition my bluebird discussion includes Ray and Betsy Welch. Ray was President of our NCBS at the time I became involved. I was teaching at The Learning Center (TLC), in Murphy. This charter school does a community service project each 9/11 Day. The director, Mary Jo Dyre, asked if I could help educate the students on bluebirds. Of course, I was happy to assist. September is lovely in our mountains of Western North Carolina, so the autumn weather added to the enjoyment of this endeavor. Ray and Betsy, from Winston Salem, generously offered their help with this presentation.

Students viewed the educational DVD – “In the Nest Box”, studied the nest box donated by Ray Welch, and learned the life cycle of bluebirds. The younger students colored bluebird sheets so they could identify bluebirds from other blue birds like blue jays or indigo buntings.

After this educational presentation, Mary Jo Dyre and I studied the campus to find the best place to erect the new nest box. Mary Jo suggested it to be placed out front and near the office. This was a busy spot, but we gave it a try. Since September was after the nesting season, we had to wait until spring to see if any bluebirds would fill this vacancy.

BLUEBIRD TALES: PART I (2 OF 2)

The next spring just before Easter break (in late March that year) it happened that Mary Jo and I were next to the box. I inquired “Mary Jo, it is a bit early for bluebirds, but let’s check out his box.” I knocked a couple times on the door and gently opened the nest box. WOW... there was a beautiful BLUE egg! Mary Jo was hooked. She asked if we could add more bluebird nest boxes to the campus and one in her adjoining yard. She wanted her grandchildren to care for bluebirds.

The following week, I monitored about 40 nest boxes in Brasstown where I lived. We have trails around John C. Campbell Folk School, at the Community Center, and through out our village. We found NO other eggs. So the bluebirds at TLC had indeed filled that vacancy and were the FIRST to lay an egg in the box donated by Ray Welch. We have always thought that the good spirit of service and the good work of NCBS was present in this box.

I have been volunteering as the representative for three counties in the remote western tip of North Carolina: Cherokee, Clay and Graham. I have also recently been added to help Joye Stephenson in Wake County, as a second County Coordinator. Wake County is the place with the most members of NCBS, a quarterly bluebird club meeting, and various bluebird events and activities. I am looking forward to working with Joye and others in this place with so much interest in bluebirds. I am glad to be able to handle as much as possible to help NCBS and their bluebird conservation goals.

Until the next time ... Wishing you bluebirds.

Carol Reid, Cherokee, Clay, Graham County Coordinators/Wake County Co-Coordinator

WAKE COUNTY BLUEBIRDER CLUB NEWS



Bluebirders of Wake County had a good turnout for their summer quarterly meeting, held August 12. It was great to see Bob Wolk, past NCBS Board member, as well as NCBS Honorary Director Bill Satterwhite in the audience (pictured above center). Wake County Coordinator, Joye Stephenson, planned and guided this informative and fun meeting. Those attending were treated to a visual presentation of wildlife at Lake Mattamuskeet by Doc Ellen Tinsley. Doc Ellen is an outstanding nature photographer who often shares her wildlife knowledge and photography with the Wake County Bluebirders. Her work can be seen at dreamingsongsphotos.com. The next meeting for this club is scheduled for February 9, 2020 from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm at Mordecai Historic Park in Raleigh. Check out bluebirdersofwake.org for more details.

INSPIRATIONAL REPORTS (1 OF 3)

Washington Native Contributes to Beaufort County Bluebird Society

Paul Credle, a native of Washington, NC, has recently made a generous contribution to the Beaufort County Chapter of the North Carolina Bluebird Society. Credle is a retired member of the Federal Senior Executive Service (SES) and a registered professional engineer with over 40 years of experience in private industry, research and development, manufacturing, engineering, and testing and evaluation. He retired from the Department of the Navy SES in 1998 as the Head of the Weapons Systems Department in Dahlgren, Virginia. Paul and his wife, Lisa, currently reside in Tennessee. Credle enjoys his bluebird crafting, international travel, and visiting with family.



The Beaufort County Chapter of the NC Bluebird Society is excited to announce that Credle is making and donating bluebird boxes in his wood working shop. He creates these boxes with wood salvaged from antique barns in Tennessee. Each bird house is built in memory of his grandmother, Nellie Miles Paul, a native of Beaufort County. He has already donated 14 new boxes which are waiting to be installed.

The Society members have plans to initiate a bluebird trail in which some of these boxes will be used. Credle has indicated an interest to continue this project in the future. The Beaufort County Bluebird Society wishes to express much appreciation for this generous contribution of time, skills, and resources.

The Society is currently taking new members. If you are interested in joining, you may contact Sandy Rhodes at srhodes7@hotmail.com or go to the North Carolina Bluebird Society's website, ncbluebird.org.

Sandy Rhodes, Beaufort County Chapter of the North Carolina Bluebird Society

Attracting Bluebirds to Nest in Guilford County

Jim Jochum, our Guilford County Coordinator and Past President, presented a program to 50 residents of the Whitestone Community in Greensboro in July 2019.

Jim talked about how to attract bluebirds to your property and get them to nest.

His talk was of interest to many, as indicated by the crowd listening intently.

Great job, Jim! Thanks for all you have done and continue to do for NCBS and the precious bluebirds of North Carolina.



INSPIRATIONAL REPORTS (2 OF 3)

NCBS Grant Money Put to Great Use

We recently heard from several of our grantees about the work they are doing for bluebirds. We are happy to share this information with our membership. Perhaps these stories will inspire others to undertake a project that NCBS would support.

In the fall of 2016 NCBS awarded a grant to the Foundation of Shalom Park in Charlotte. Jonathan Thull, a community member of the park, envisioned a bird trail on the 54-acre facility. He had some bird houses, but needed poles and predator guards. He engaged various volunteers to help, including Girl Scout troops. Together they set up 60 + birdhouses that have had customers, including bluebirds, chickadees and nuthatches. The hole-size restrictions on some of the houses to encourage nuthatches paid off. Jonathan continues to monitor and maintain these birdhouses. He welcomes other youth groups to join his efforts.

Also in 2016, a grant was awarded to Joe Sanders, NCBS County Coordinator of Henderson County, for the construction and placement of 11 nestboxes on the Oklawaha Greenway in Hendersonville. The Greenway is a 4-mile paved path in Hendersonville that runs along Mud Creek through wetlands, urban settings, and meadows. Joe used a hybrid design of the X-Box and Jack Finch's nest boxes. The boxes have aluminum roofs. Joe collaborated with the City of Hendersonville, the Apple County Woodcrafters, and the Young Naturalists 4-H Club for the project. What a great way to involve many people and spread the bluebird story! To date, 14 boxes have been installed. The 4-H Club is still monitoring four of the boxes on the trail.

In May 2018 NCBS awarded a grant to Jay Dawson of Kinston to support the bluebird trail at the Kinston Country Club. Grant money for paint and material to repair some of the existing boxes was put to good use. There were enough funds to also allow Jay and his team of four to purchase 15 new boxes from the State Employees Credit Union. The Kinston trail now has 30 boxes – all painted and in good condition.

Another grant in May 2018 was awarded to Fernleaf Community Charter School in Fletcher, a project-based learning school with an environmental focus. They were able to purchase and erect 3 bluebird boxes on their school campus. FernLeaf Bluebird Trail is the name they selected for this trio of nest boxes. A group of 15 (self-selected) students from grades K-4 worked together to research bluebirds and their needs. They worked closely with the local bluebird expert Joe Sanders (NCBS County Coordinator for Henderson County). Joe taught them about where to locate the boxes, as well as how to monitor/clean.

In year one, two of the boxes produced two broods each, but one of the boxes was claimed by a group of tree swallows. This year, a group of kindergarteners who were studying winter birds monitored the boxes. Two of the boxes have each produced a brood each this spring and have been cleaned and readied for the next brood. The third box was, once again, claimed by tree swallows. In fact, the kids really enjoyed watching and learning about the tree swallows as well. They were really excited to see the tree swallows playing with feathers in mid air!

INSPIRATIONAL REPORTS (3 OF 3)

The kindergarteners were excited to watch and learn about the whole process and were very proud to be the ones 'in charge' of the boxes this year.

A 4-H club has established 3 boxes in the park across the street (Fletcher Park).

The school involved parents to help monitor the boxes over the summer.

The 4-H have taken charge of monitoring the campus boxes and the park boxes for the 2019-2020 school year.

What a great examples of involving people at a young age in the bluebird experience!

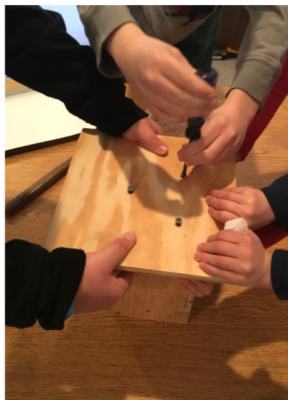
Nina Veteto, teacher at Fernleaf Elementary School, said it so eloquently in her report to NCBS:

“ It was wonderful to see how connected the students became to the birds. I believe this is one of the most important things we can do for our students--help them to develop a love of and concern for our world. Before we start burdening them with all the ills of the environment, we need to teach them to fall in love with the natural world.

Bluebirds are a perfect way to foster that love—it's hands on, it's engaging, and provides immediate gratification, but most importantly it opens our hearts to the natural world in such a powerful and beautiful way.

I watched it happen first hand. It works and I highly recommend it to others out there! Thank you for all your support and for all you do to help the bluebirds! Setting up the trail has been an amazing and engaging learning opportunity for our students.”

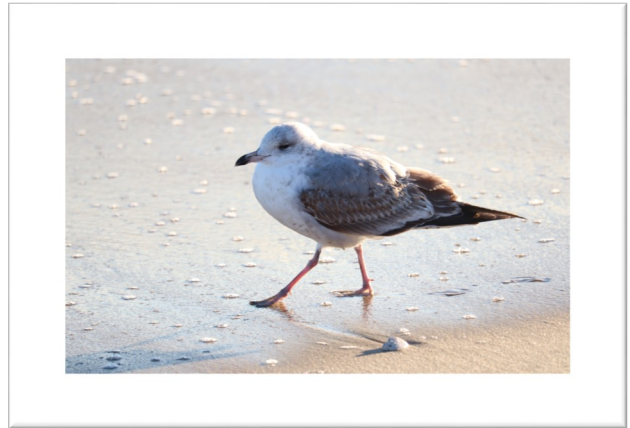
Kay Cameron, NCBS Vice President/Recording Secretary



AUTUMN VIEW: COASTAL BIRDS

Dare County - A Place of Natural Serenity for People and our Feathered Friends

Although many people like to go to the beach in the warmer months, I find that off-season is a perfect time to visit the Carolina coast. An early November Outer Banks trip was few days of heaven last year! My brother, Donald Ryan, visited from Indiana and saw this natural wonderland for the first time. The beach condo below (snapped at the Sea Foam Hotel yard in Nags Head) and bird strolling on the shore were a couple of my photos from this adventure.



Two of Donald's early morning beach bird snapshots are shown below. These *Beach Birds* deserve a spot in this newsletter as a reminder of the peace of fall on the North Carolina shore. I hope these feathered friends and ocean wave pictures add some beach magic to your autumn days!

Glenda Ryan, Newsletter Editor/Webmaster



Brunswick County - Interest in Bluebirds Increasing

Speaking of the North Carolina coast, Nancy Schiffman has been a busy representative for NCBS in Brunswick County lately. Her bluebird activities include speaking, teaching, and working on a Bluebird trail. We would like to thank Nancy for many years of service and send a shout out for her recent extra work.

If any one in her area wishes to help, volunteers are welcome. Nancy can be reached at 910-833-7011 or nanschiffman@gmail.com for more details.

Sherry C. Frye, State Administrator of the Volunteer County Coordinator Program

2019 NEST BOX SURVEY DATA

Name: _____

Email/Contact Information: _____

Nest Box/Trail Location (county, city, state): _____

Field Record Observation Notes Summary

Date of first egg laid (start of season) _____

Total number of nest boxes monitored this season

Total number of Bluebird eggs laid

Total number of Bluebird eggs hatched

Total number of Bluebird fledglings

Total number of other species cavity nesting eggs laid

Total number of other species cavity nesting eggs hatched

Total number of other species cavity nesting fledglings

Date of end of seasons last fledglings

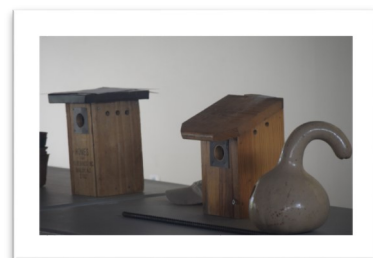
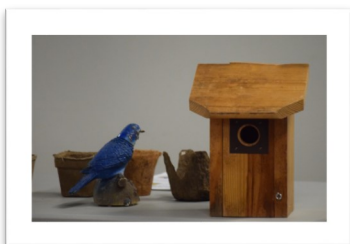
Comments:

Use an additional sheet or sheets of paper if necessary. Thank you so much for your concern for Bluebirds.

Please return by December 1, 2019 via email or postal address per information below:

Ari Grimsley, NCBS Board of Directors, 14 Lakeview Drive, Whispering Pines, NC 28327

Email: nestdata@ncbluebird.org / Telephone: 919-272-5263



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Watauga	Dr. Lynn Siefferman	director-ls@bluebird.org	828-355-9149
Wayne	Virginia Pickles	pic658@nc.rr.com	919-658-3062

BLUEBIRDS & FLOWERS

Flowers and bluebirds are some of my favorite sights. I snagged a cool bluebird coffee mug at my favorite thrift shop in Raleigh. What a lucky find! Adding blooms from the magical garden of Raleigh Bluebirder, Lyn Cochrane, made a nice autumn image. Thanks, Lyn, for these and so many other floral gifts, and for your bluebird concern and conservation.



I was fortunate to see many bluebirds this year and snap some pictures. The cutie below was photographed at Mordecai Park in Raleigh, which has a trail of several nest boxes.



Wishing you a wonderful autumn, Bluebirders.

Glenda Ryan, Editor /Webmaster

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- _____ Other (please explain)

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FALL GREETINGS FROM THE BLUES

Judi Brown of Crumpler submitted the splendid bluebird photo on the left. The colors of this image showcase the breathtaking Beauty of this Blue, which include highlights in shades of autumn orange.

The photo on the right with a sunset of heavenly colors was provided by Michael Haggerty of Roper. He snapped this fabulous silhouette of one of his bluebirds along the Albemarle Sound just east of Plymouth. Doesn't this coastal setting just look like the perfect way to end a scenic day in North Carolina.

Thanks, Judi and Michael, for sharing these fantastic pictures. Happy Fall to All.

