

Jersey Blues

The Newsletter of The New Jersey Bluebird Society, an Affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society ~Volume 3, Issue 1 - Fall, 2018

BUBBA SPEAKS: BLUEBIRD SEASON FLEW BY ONCE AGAIN... BUT SUCCESSFUL IT WAS!



Overall, I believe our 2018 nesting season was successful! We had the usual burps in the weather which are always a factor, but it was a productive year. We are still crunching the numbers. I urge you to familiarize yourself with our revised summary form before you send it into Dave Gilcrest. In most cases, if your bluebirds were banded, you do not have to report anything. The bander will do the reporting.

We banded 1850 young bluebirds this season, thanks to a number of dedicated monitors. You can also thank Jim Watson for volunteering to learn the banding program, which is how we report our data to the bird banding lab. This has not been an easy task but I give lots of credit to Jim for stepping up to the plate. Originally I ordered 1500 bands but ran out in July and needed to order 500 more to get us through the season. The banding program is a great way to maintain interest with monitors and communications with the individual landlords. It is a great way for growing our program. Most landlords appreciate someone taking the interest in and providing motivation to band their young nestlings.

Opportunities

New boxes, new trails and new members continue



each year. We partnered with the South Jersey Transportation Authority and put up 16 boxes at various exits along the Atlantic City Expressway. Thanks Jim Leslie, Safety Specialist, SJTA and Chuck Kanupke and Spencer Bennett who monitored many of the boxes.

Our partnership with Audubon Wildlife Society and Wild Birds Unlimited in Cherry Hill has opened up new opportunities in Camden County. Chuck and Spencer have spearheaded this effort. There are too many instances to mention all the positive results in this section but check out the **Growing The Program** feature on pages 6 & 7.

Elections of officers and Board Members will be a subject at our annual meeting. Please check our website to see if there are any positions that you may be interested in. My term is up as President, and I would like to have someone else with more organizational skills show interest in assuming this position. For those of you who may not have heard, Jim Newquist, VP North suffered a heart attack and is not able to continue at this time. *(cont. on page 2)*

Annual Meeting, Jackson, NJ

Save the date - **November 10, 2018** for our annual meeting at FREC in Jackson, NJ. More info to follow as we get closer. Our meeting usually last from **10 am to 2 pm** with lunch available for a nominal cost. It's a nice opportunity to converse with your fellow members and meet new members!

Forest Resource Education Center - 495 Don Connor Blvd, Jackson, NJ 08527

(Bubba Speaks, continued)

County Coordinators are crucial!

We owe a lot to our County Coordinators. These people are the core of our organization and in a position to make a vital difference in our future endeavors. Not only do they monitor and maintain their own bluebird nest box trails - they also train, encourage and inform monitors in their county. Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Passaic, Sussex, and Warren Counties are all vacant, and Morris County's Jim Newquist is currently unable to be County Coordinator due to health issues. Can you step up to the plate?

Please consider volunteering if your county is listed as "vacant." We are available to provide support and assistance if you need it, and you only spend as many hours as you can. For more information, or to volunteer, call me at (856) 327-4861.

A special thanks to Jack Cimprich, Mayor for Upper Pittsgrove Township, Salem County. Jack introduced himself to me in April 2018 at Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River and its Tributaries' annual Chili Bowl. Jack lives in Elmer and owns a sawmill. He graciously volunteered to donate lumber to make bluebird boxes. After thinking how best to utilize this opportunity, I decided to use his wood to build Gilwood boxes, which Jim Watson has agreed to make. I picked up a load of lumber August 24th and got to spend some time talking with Jack and quickly learned his values to protect our environment were something special. I plan to return to his farm in October and erect some bluebird boxes for him and his wife to monitor next year. I am always impressed with the people I get to meet who have such a huge appreciation for our natural resources. We have given Jack an honorary membership in NJBBS.

~ Allen "Bubba" Jackson, President, NJBBS



New Jersey Bluebird Society: Our Mission Statement, Goals & Methods

Our mission is to provide education and guidance in order to conserve and promote Bluebirds and other cavity nesting birds in New Jersey. Our primary goal is to produce a healthy and productive bluebird population in New Jersey by establishing trails in suitable habitat while utilizing and promoting recommended bluebird management practices (proper housing, protection from predators, and nest monitoring). We provide expertise and guidance to both trail monitors and backyard bluebird enthusiasts, monitor yearly population trends

by surveying the number of young fledged from nest boxes, and provide public education about bluebirds to interested people in the state of New Jersey.

Jersey Blues

The newsletter of The New Jersey Bluebird Society

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IN THIS ISSUE:

<u>2018 Season Summary</u>	<u>page 4</u>
<u>Bluebirding with Jim and Jen</u>	<u>page 6</u>
<u>Bluebirds + Blueberries</u>	<u>pages 12,13</u>
<u>Bubba Speaks</u>	<u>cover, 2</u>
<u>Dave Gilcrest Article</u>	<u>pages 4,5</u>
<u>Gandy House Welcomes Bluebirds</u>	<u>page 13</u>
<u>Great Swamp Refuge Report</u>	<u>pages 14, 15</u>
<u>Growing the Program</u>	<u>pages 10,11</u>
<u>Looking Inside (Natural Lands)</u>	<u>pages 18,19</u>
<u>Membership</u>	<u>back page</u>
<u>NABS News</u>	<u>page 7</u>
<u>Out and About</u>	<u>pages 15,19</u>
<u>Perseverance Pays Off!</u>	<u>page 9</u>
<u>Roosting Boxes</u>	<u>page 8</u>
<u>Who's Counting? NJBBS Heroes</u>	<u>page 3</u>

NJBBS OFFICERS

President: Allen Jackson

Vice President North: Jim Newquist

Vice President South: Laura Stone

Treasurer: Gemma Major

Secretary: Jenyfra Nelson

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Past President: Frank Budney

At Large: Nels Anderson, Shelly Cucugliello

Dave Gilcrest, Lori Jo Jamieson, John Layton,

Gary Pilling, Jim Watson, Ed Zboyan

WHO'S COUNTING?

June 15, 2018 marked the third trip during the school year to David Moyer's Woodshop Class at the Middle Township Middle School in Cape May County. The trip was to pick up another load of bluebird boxes, representing over 130 boxes for the year. It also surpassed 600 boxes his classes have made for the New Jersey Bluebird Society (NJBBS). Who's counting? I am, because of the importance of this program. Without Dave's assistance, neither the NJBBS or our bluebird population would be where it is today.

With the support of his school's administration (Principal Jeff Ortman in particular), Dave has quietly coordinated with me since 2012 (7 years) to build a box that meet NABS' design standards. Those boxes help ensure a safer environment for bluebirds to nest in. But the story is much more than simply building boxes, it is an opportunity to develop partnerships with other groups that can complement the process. Some of the partners include:



McCay Wood Products - Ed McCay owns and operates a saw mill in Nesco, NJ. He has regularly supplied Atlantic white cedar to build these boxes. Atlantic white cedar is a light weight, disease resistant wood prized in NJ to build boxes.

Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River and Its Tributaries - provides funding, promotes advocacy, supports NJBBS and is a major voice in the local area to help promote proper management.

NJBBS - provides County Coordinators, trail monitors, technical assistance and motivation to work with various groups and landowners to promote proper bluebird management.

Middle Township Middle School administration, woodshop students and of course Dave Moyer.

Atlantic Audubon Society supports NJBBS, identifies trails, provides monitors & financial support.



The box program has allowed the NJBBS to grow, slowly increasing membership, adding more boxes, instilling interest in what we are doing. Having a box program has allowed NJBBS to make people and organizations aware of what we are doing. As we grow, new members bring new ideas and abilities. We finally are in a position to recognize others for their contributions. Dave Moyer is the first to receive this recognition from the NJBBS.

The picture at left shows me presenting Dave with a Certificate of Recognition which reads, *"For his dedication and guidance to his Middle Township Middle School Woodshop Class students, teaching the importance of building bluebird boxes that meet recognized design standards. Under his supervision, his classes have built over 600 boxes which have been located throughout the State, providing community service, benefiting bluebirds and supporting the mission of the New Jersey Bluebird Society. The bluebird box program has made a significant difference in the bluebird population."*

Partnerships get people involved, spread advocacy and instill pride with those involved, knowing what they are doing is providing a valuable service. Best of all is to see the joy and hear the satisfaction from people who have never seen a bluebird be able to host nesting bluebirds in there back yard. This is the engine that drives the program. ~ Allen Jackson

New Jersey Bluebird Society Summary Form: Submitted Data

Reported # of Bluebirds Fledged - Results for Last 3 Years

County	2018	2017	2016
Atlantic	684	536	514
Bergen	0	0	0
Burlington	332	320	142
Camden	13	0	0
Cape May	203	235	75
Cumberland	649	603	407
Essex	0	0	0
Gloucester	387	261	208
Hudson	0	0	0
Hunterdon	21	0	0
Mercer	0	0	0
Middlesex	61	50	55
Monmouth	84	88	162
Morris	265	286	291
Ocean	694	730	219
Passaic	0	0	0
Salem	243	222	112
Somerset	15	55	43
Sussex	0	0	0
Union	0	0	0
Warren	0	0	0
Total	3651	3386	2228

A big thank you goes out to Dave Gilcrest for compiling, updating and submitting these important statistics!



Dave Gilcrest removing the baby bluebirds from the box to band them on July 3.

County promoting growth of bluebird population:

Specialized boxes are built to keep predators away, encourage nesting ~ by Anthony J. Mazziotti III,

The Washington Township Sun (reprinted with permission)

In an effort to boost the bluebird population, the Washington Township Environmental Commission partnered with the Gloucester County Nature Club and the New Jersey Bluebird Society to build bluebird boxes across the township. As of this season, there are 10 boxes with the opportunity for more.

The bluebird boxes are little birdhouses on posts with a guard to stop predators such as snakes and raccoons from breaking into the box. The hole to get into the box is one and one quarter inches in diameter, allowing the bluebird to fit while stopping predators from entering. They are strategically placed in parks and open spaces around the township where the bluebirds have access to trees and wooded area. **Dave Gilcrest, the Gloucester County coordinator of the New Jersey Bluebird Society**, described how they choose an area. *(continued on next page)*

(Gilcrest, continued)

“There’s an open, low-grass area, with plenty of perching area for adults,” Gilcrest said. “They don’t mind human interaction so that’s not an issue.” With a new box comes a volunteer to monitor it to see if bluebirds are using it. Gilcrest spoke of the importance of the monitors.



One of the baby bluebirds after it was banded on July 3.

“It’s important to monitor the box between five and seven days to determine when eggs are laid,” he said. “Bluebirds lay one egg per day and they hatch 14 days after the last egg is laid. We have seven to 12 days to safely band the birds.” (The band is a sequential number that is placed on the leg of the bluebird for tracking purposes but is not harmful to the bird. If the bird is recovered, it can be traced back to the day and location it was banded. The seven to 12 days is crucial for the banding because their skeletal system is strong enough to be handled but they are small enough so they won’t fly away when the box is opened.)

The goal of the boxes is to provide habitat to sustain and increase population for the bluebirds. Gilcrest illustrated the nesting habits of the bluebirds.

“Bluebirds are cavity nesters, they can’t make their own cavities,” he said. “They find holes in trees or manmade bluebird boxes to make their nest in. As habitat diminishes and becomes less available, it’s good to put out manmade boxes to supplement where the bluebirds can nest.”

The newest bluebird box, located on Winchester Drive in Sewell, produced its first hatchlings in late June. A native bluebird laid three eggs in that box, which is good considering it was only built on April 12.

“It’s a first-year box so it can take a while for the bluebirds to find it,” Gilcrest said. “They can have up to three broods a season.”

Gilcrest added a bluebird can lay up to six eggs at a time – so one bluebird can lay up to 18 eggs in a season. He has banded 110 bluebirds this season, which runs from late March to the end of July. He added the bluebird boxes don’t have to be in township-owned space. Residents can contact the New Jersey Bluebird Society if they want to have a representative see if their space could support a box.



A bluebird perched on its box in the open field on Winchester Drive on July 3. (Note the approaching tree swallow at left.)

For more information, **contact Dave Gilcrest at djgilcrest@aol.com or visit www.njbluebirdsociety.org**. To get in contact with the township’s Environmental Commission or Open Space Committee, visit the township’s website at **www.twp.washington.nj.us** or stop by a meeting. The Environmental Commission meets the first Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at the Municipal Building, and the Open Space Committee meets the second Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. at the same location. Both meetings are open to the public. *Photos by Anthony J. Mazziotti/The Washington Township Sun*

“Faith is a bluebird you see from afar, it’s for real and as sure as the first evening star. You can’t touch it or buy it or wrap it up tight, but it’s there all the same, making things turn out right.” ~ Rufus Wainwright

ATLANTIC COUNTY: “Beautiful Bluebirds in Mays Landing” at Woodview Estates with Jim and Jen



Photo by Jen Nelson

NJBBS Atlantic County Co-Coordinator, Jim Watson – and NJBBS board member/field assistant, Jen Nelson – each “brought something to the table,” when they appeared before an enthusiastic audience at the Woodview Estates Assisted Living Center in Mays Landing, Atlantic County, on April 18, 2018.

Sponsored by the Senior Citizen Advisory Committee (SCAC) of Hamilton Township (Ruth Zahn, representative), the event was open to all township residents, and titled, “Beautiful Bluebirds in Mays Landing.”

As they drove around the complex, before time to appear, Jim and Jen noted a good number of bird feeders in the residential apartments’ backyards, so they knew the residents would be open and captivated by the possibility of attracting bluebirds to their lovely properties.

Jim came prepared to educate and enthuse with bluebird nest boxes, informational materials, and his wide knowledge about attracting, feeding and nurturing the once-endangered Eastern Bluebirds to local feeders. Jen came prepared with a large slideshow presentation of her 265 photographs of bluebirds from all around the township, titled “265 Reasons to Love and Nurture the Eastern Bluebird: A Slideshow of Photographs of the Little Bird with the Color of the Sky on Its Back, and the Earth on Its Breast!”



Jim, displaying – and describing – an approved bluebird nesting box (with the blue cupcakes offered by the SCAC especially for our event).

Jim opened the presentation with tips for successful blue-birding, including information about the best nesting box designs approved for productive bluebird nesting by the North American Bluebird Society (NABS). He described proper placement of boxes with regard to avoiding invasive vegetation and facing the boxes in an easterly direction to take advantage of the morning sun and avoid overheating in the afternoon.

Jen and Jim took turns talking about predators of the eastern bluebirds, and methods in box design that will deter house sparrows. Jim described different guards, etc., that he has used/built in sturdy nest boxes. He also stressed that too many boxes in a close area can attract other bird species and cause problems as those birds can aggressively take over the boxes, chasing the bluebirds away.

As this community’s residents live in close proximity to each other, Jim addressed how to create and maintain a nice bluebird trail by keeping the trail open for bluebird activity and nesting.

Questions were raised during the presentation, and again as the talk ended. Jim addressed the concerns and interests to the satisfaction and pleasure of all attendees. All gathered in a meet-and-greet to enjoy light refreshments, including cookies and cupcakes – with blue icing, of course! ~ Jen Nelson



March 5, 2018 - Jim Watson, Allen Jackson and Jen Nelson at a similar presentation about the Eastern Bluebird at Horizon Woods Landing Community in Mays Landing where Jen is the co-chair of the social committee. Subsequent to this, a 6 box trail was set up, and we were asked to do a similar event at Woodview Estates. The information and excitement about the beautiful Easter Bluebirds in New Jersey spreads through outreach such as this. (Event Photos by Neal Nelson)



NABS NEWS

My participation on NABS' Board of Directors (BOD) involves monthly conference calls. I serve on 4 committees: Nestbox, Education, Journal Advisory, and Development Committees and am NJBBS' contact person for NABS. While tasked with many responsibilities, the BOD looks for ways to better benefit the affiliate groups. I believe NJBBS does a pretty good job of coordinating our NABS and benefiting bluebirds. We have been updating Fact Sheets, reviewing grants and developing a better way to strengthen the organization. Go to www.nabluebirdsociety.org and spend some time viewing their website.

As the NJBBS' contact for NABS I remain available to listen to your concerns and coordinate with the BOD to better achieve a two-way dialog. Bernie Daniel, NABS' President, asks that if you have concerns or need materials like the Fact Sheets, to please go through me, rather than directly to Bernie. He has a major responsibility and would appreciate responding to affiliate reps rather than to more than 1,500 individual members. I generally know what is available and how best to get it.

The NABS' BOD has representation from across North America (60 affiliate groups) which includes active groups in Canada. On our September 2018 conference call we voted in 2 new affiliate chapters: the Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation in Wyoming and Sand Bluff Bird Observatory in Illinois. There are 3 bluebird species that live in North America: the Eastern Bluebird, Western Bluebird and the Mountain Bluebird. Most of NABS' membership is located in the Eastern US so it is refreshing to see our friends west of us joining the bandwagon. Although a national organization, NABS' membership is not that large. The NABS is the expert on bluebirds and many groups look nationally for advice and management on bluebirds.

The Board of Directors (especially Kevin Corwin, 1st VP for Affiliate Relations and Jim Burke, 2nd VP for Community Relations) have been working diligently to secure an affiliate group to host a NABS Conference. These conferences have been held throughout the US and Canada. John Layton and I have attended conferences in South Carolina in 2013 and Quebec in 2015 and I attended the conference at the Ellis Bird Farm in Alberta, Canada in 2016. The conferences have expert speakers, exhibitors, workshops, a banquet and interesting field trips held over a 3-4 day period. The next location for the conference is set for **March 12-15, 2020 in Kearney, Nebraska**. *Bluebirds Across Nebraska* will host this event, which is timed to coincide with the peak northward migration of Sandhill Cranes and other waterfowl. Amazing viewing opportunities will be available from photo blinds. For birding enthusiasts, this could easily be on your bucket list, and I am encouraging NJBBS members to attend. It is a 2-day drive for those who wish to see the country by vehicle rather than fly. Whatever you decide, I guarantee you will enjoy getting together with people who have similar interests. Details to follow in the coming months.

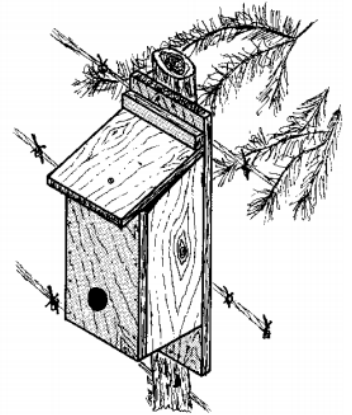
That brings up another thought: membership in NABS. New Jersey is a leader in number of members in NABS. Considering NJBBS only became established in 2011, that is a significant achievement. There are only a few states that have more members than New Jersey. If you are not already a member of NABS, I encourage you to join. The cost is nominal at \$20 per year, and the quarterly publication of *Bluebird* is well worth the membership price. NABS and the affiliate chapters need to work together to support each other and promote bluebirds. The state affiliates are the "boots on the ground" and NABS does a great job guiding and supporting us.

Did you know that NJBBS is a sponsor of NABS at the **True Blue Level**? Our logo prominently stands out on the back inside cover of *Bluebird*. Our past President, Frank Budney deserves the credit for promoting this sponsorship. ~ Allen Jackson

ROOSTING: How do birds that don't migrate stay warm in the winter?

Birds have enough feathers to keep them warm in the winter IF they have enough food and IF they remain dry and out of severe winds. To stay warm, they fluff up their feathers, draw their head in or tuck it under a wing, and shiver. They may scrunch down by bending their legs, or tuck one foot up under their feathers to further reduce heat loss. They may also huddle together with other birds. During the night, the body temperature of birds like bluebirds and chickadees may drop 10-15 degrees, and their metabolism slows down to conserve energy. (This is called nocturnal hypothermia.)

Bluebirds spend about 50% of their lives roosting. (*Pitts, T.David*) A roost is a place or support where birds settle down to rest or sleep. A communal roost is a bunch of birds roosting together. Some birds roost on branches of trees like pines, cedars or oak, or in shrubs/vines. Others roost in cavities. A roost box is like a nestbox, only it is designed specifically for roosting. Steve Gunn has designed a simple roosting box to be made from a single 1 x 6 board, 5 feet long. Plans can be found here: <http://www.birdwatching-bliss.com/support-files/winter-bird-house-plans.pdf>



There are not a lot of reports of large flocks of bluebirds using roost boxes, but bluebirds often roost in a regular nestbox, especially in northern states. They may also roost in a box in the daytime during particularly inclement weather (e.g., high winds.) Evidence that a box is being used for roosting includes downy feathers (which sometimes fall out when birds are preening and fluffing), fecal material, and seeds/food residue. Birds often enter a cavity to roost just before sunset. They may enter or leave several times before settling in for the night. They leave right after sunrise.

Advantages of a Box for Roosting

A box or cavity not only provides protection from the elements - it also helps keep them safe from hungry predators. Thus it may be best to just leave boxes up all winter so they can be used for roosting if desired. Also, that way you won't have to go out in January or February to put them back up before nesting starts. Weather-proofing standard nestboxes helps, as the birds sit on the floors. To some extent, deeper nestboxes will keep the drafts from chilling birds on the floor of the nestbox.

Options to prepare a box for winter roosting: a nestbox will do. It doesn't need a hole in the bottom of pegs - if it's really cold, and multiple birds roost together, they will stay warmer on the floor of the box. Seal up the ventilation holes (don't forget the floor). Duct tape on the OUTSIDE can do the trick nicely (if it sticks to the waterproofing). You can use rolled caulking (e.g. "Mortite") but again only on the outside of the box!

Add an inch or so of SMALL wood chips (avoid sawdust and commercially sold cedar bedding, and do not put in large wood chips that might get stuck in the hole and trap a bird inside) or a layer of soft grass, or some moss. Or you can line the floor with silver foil (which insulates and seals), bringing it up to the front of the nestbox under the entrance hole, and then add some dry grass. You can also put a 1/2" styrofoam, cut to fit, on the bottom of the nestbox.

Location and Predator Protection:

Mount roost boxes on poles with predator guards to keep the contents from being eaten, and to prevent mice from wintering in the box. Face the entrance away from prevailing winds - south is probably best for greatest warmth. (*Used with encouragement by <http://www.sialis.org>*)

Quick Tips: Leave nestboxes up all winter long (with entrance hole facing south or east, but away from prevailing winds) to provide a place for birds to shelter during cold weather. Insulate them by closing up ventilation holes and adding a layer of dried grass on the floor.

Persistence Pays Off! For two years I have been trying to get a response from the officials in Woolwich Twp. (Swedesboro) NJ about a possible bluebird trail on their parks and athletic fields. They received donated land that was originally a farm, which they turned into a wildlife trail a few years back. When I saw the announcement in the paper I knew about where it was and did a Google map review before taking a drive over. From the map I could see it might be a great place to find bluebirds.

I did a Facebook search and found the township page, and made my first attempt to make contact. Finally, after about a year, I received a response in April. The mayor and director of economic development were both super interested in meeting with me. We made a date for a site visit.



I was pleasantly surprised to find out Tranquility Trail is over 300 acres! They have planted perennial wildflowers in the open space and the habitat is perfect. On our walk, I committed to putting up two boxes on that property. It was a lively discussion between the three of us on

my choice of box placement! The boxes went up that day. After much deliberation, I decided to put up another box in a quiet area near where I saw a male bluebird sitting on a sign as I walked the fields.

During my discussion with the mayor, he mentioned they really wanted more bluebird houses at the municipal building. We all know that more isn't always better, so I headed over there alone, since they had to get back to the office. Unfortunately, the placement and condition of the boxes, and lack of predator guards was a bit concerning. Tree Swallows were in one box and tons of House Sparrows were all around. Although our need to be sensitive in public space sometimes limits our ability to control who is nesting in the boxes, I am hoping I can get them to take one box down so I can replace it with a set-up close to the community gardens. Blue birds do nest in a box they currently have, but after asking the right questions, they did admit they have had a snake in the box. Hoping this fall or early spring to

revisit the discussion with Alan Jackson and Dave Gilcrest in attendance.

So - on to the good news! May 11th the boxes went up and we had a bluebird nest on May 29th with an egg! The other box was housing a Tree Swallow. On the athletic field the box housed a wren. I found out from the grounds crew that we needed to move it due to the midget football practice starting in August. With the drought at that time, I decided to just take down the box after they fledged and put it up again this fall in a better space. The grounds crew and trail maintenance workers have been great. I do need to take my weed whacker over to Tranquility Trail every week. They do mow a path but stay away from the houses there. We did fledge 4 bluebirds in this first year!



This was my first time trying to get local municipalities involved, and I have learned a few people skills along the way. You need to be a good listener, don't argue a point, you don't have to be right in every conversation (Negative Nancy) and most of all, don't budge if you feel it's not in the best interest of the



bluebirds. I also kept up my communication with everyone interested at the township and provided photos of all the houses and the different stages.

(eggs/hatching/nestlings)

Along with my own trail, monitoring these other sites kept me busy, but I love it! Learning about different habitats and the challenges at each site make it very rewarding. What works in one area doesn't hold true for all....

One last thought. The lively box discussion I mentioned above was about the site of our first nest.....sometimes it feels sooo good to be right!

~ *Bernnie Visalli*

GROWING THE PROGRAM



“Outreach” (talks, display tables)

Atlantic/Cape May Counties- Gail Fisher put together a very organized and informative display table that she uses for onsite, including the Clemenson Farm Native Nursery plant sale on May 12 and again June 16, generating interest and leading to more onsite and more bluebird boxes in the field. Jim Watson, Cheryl Osolinski and Allen Jackson gave a talk about bluebird management and then conducted nest checks on 5 boxes in Atlantic County Park, Estell Manor. Attendance was good at 24. During the nest monitoring they got to see a nest, nest with eggs, and developing young up to banding age. Both NJBBS and NABS literature was made available. This talk led to an onsite in Milmay, a box of bluebirds to band, a new NABS/NJBBS member and new contacts, including an experienced bander in Burlington County.

Burlington County - Allen gave a talk to the Medford Leas Birders about purple martin and bluebird management and conducted an onsite of their bluebird trail. Boy Scouts had built and erected boxes in their 25-acre field. The grass was not maintained, it had too many boxes which did not meet design standards and all the boxes were overrun with tree swallows. Allen offered to come back in the fall and reevaluate the setup, improving the boxes and designing a management plan that will benefit bluebirds.

Camden County - Chuck Kanupke, Spencer Bennett and Allen spent an afternoon at the Wild Bird Unlimited Store in Cherry Hill to meet and talk to customers interested in bluebirds. Onsites were planned for the future. Chuck has really stirred things up in Camden County. His newspaper article caused many to take more interest in bluebirds.

Cumberland County - Successful nesting along with our banding program has been constant this nesting season. Allen monitors about 200 boxes and continually observes ongoing successes with the bluebird trail program. Of 10 boxes put up since last year in association with the Landis Sewerage Authority, 80% have been successful. 60 eggs hatched and 56 young fledged this year alone, doubling output from last year. More boxes will be added to the trail for 2019. Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center has had a productive year with their 2 bluebird boxes (4 broods) and purple martin colony which had 22 of 24 gourds that were productive. The Nature Trail was visited regularly. 2 of 4 wood duck boxes were productive with a 3rd having down in the nest but no eggs laid. More native shrubs were planted.

Gloucester County - Dave Gilcrest and Allen gave a presentation in Washington Township to about 35 people. The program was sponsored by the WT Environmental Commission and was in conjunction with Dave’s erecting boxes at 7 locations. All locations will have monitors and the WTEC will be buying boxes for interested residents. Dave Gilcrest and Vicky Bennett encouraged a newspaper reporter to do a write-up about a successful bluebird box in Washington Township. Dave banded the young while others watched and help celebrate the successful nesting in one of the boxes located in their township. See the article on page 4 and 5.

Salem County - Allen met with Jim and Yvonne Grant at The Inn at Salem Country Club to provide literature for an upcoming talk Jim is doing. He provided information on NABS and the NJBBS. Allen previously did an onsite in Pilesgrove Twp in April which resulted in a successful nesting at Laurie Kuczykowski’s residence. Laurie had attended the talk in Washington Township.

“Partnerships” (activities with other groups)

Cumberland County - NJBBS, CU to Protect the Maurice River and the Landis Sewerage Authority improved their partnership for 2018. A purple martin gourd rack was installed in April and 3 more bluebird boxes were added. At the Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River and its Tributaries annual chili bowl, \$400 was raised through the live auction to support avian activities in the Millville area. CU is a major supporter of our bluebird program. They have provided financial assistance for many years.

Growing the Program will have a new format in the Spring issue of Jersey Blues. All items will simply be listed under the county in which they occur. Remember, this feature is intended to keep members informed of the things the NJBBS are involved in. You are encouraged to submit short blurbs of your activities that ultimately benefit bluebirds and help sell our program to the public! Please submit items of interest to Lori Jo Jamieson at bluebirdLJJ@gmail.com. Thank you!

GROWING THE PROGRAM



Hunterdon County - April Tarantino and Allen conducted an on site with Katie Ellis at Profeta Farms in Readington. 5 boxes were installed on this 400-acre farm, which offers opportunities for more boxes and educational possibilities.

Middlesex County - Allen conducted a field trip to the Mapleton Preserve in Princeton to set up and improve a bluebird trail that will be managed by the Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands. He met with Anne and Mark Zeeman. 3 pairs of boxes were installed along with 2 single setups.

"Real Estate" (boxes added)

Atlantic County - Lori Jo Jamieson installed a nestbox in the cemetery at Asbury United Methodist Church, where her husband, Peter, is Pastor. The first brood was a "six-pack" and two broods followed for a total of 15 birds, banded by County-Coordinator John Layton.

Cumberland County - Allen did maintenance on boxes in Port Norris, finding old bluebird nests in a number of boxes. Some boxes were replaced, some relocated, some left as is. Tony Klock will monitor the boxes. About 20 new boxes will replace old ones at the Buckshutum WMA in Millville. These boxes are monitored by Mike Golla.

Burlington County - Allen met with Chuck Kanupke and Spence Bennett at the Westfield Friends School in Cinnaminson to discuss potential for placing bluebirds boxes as part of a school program. He provided a Gilwood box to initiate the project and left literature.

Salem County - Allen conducted an onsite at Laurie Kuczykowski's residence in Pittsgrove to evaluate why bluebirds aren't nesting there and added a Troyer slotted box to the front yard. He provided a Van Ert trap to control house sparrows and recommended plan to reduce too many boxes. The 2 boxes at Roy Duffield's residence both successfully fledged young.

Somerset County - April Tarantino received permission to improve the bluebird trail at the Oak Spring Girl Scout Camp in Somerset, Somerset County. An onsite was conducted April 24, 2018 and 5 boxes were located in appropriate habitat. April is also investigating other potential properties.

Miscellaneous - Allen met with Mark Bond, a purple martin and bluebird enthusiast from Texas. Mark has some interesting management practices he uses in Texas to get bluebirds more interested in using boxes. He puts a wooden dowel on top of the box for the adults to perch on. Rather than use kerfs on the front and inside of the box, he places a small piece of wood horizontally under the hole on the outside and inside of the box. He uses his Dremel tool to smooth out the hole entrance so the BBs will not damage their feather entering and exiting the box: small things that may matter. His practices would especially be useful where there are few tree limbs for the adults to perch on or in instances where we have to put out our boxes more in the open to discourage wrens from nesting in the box.

Last, but not least...congratulations to Mary Roche who, after her third season monitoring the bluebird trail at Forsythe NWR and Veterans Memorial Park in Galloway, finally got 2 successful broods of young bluebirds that were banded. The tree swallow issues are major in this area because both sites are along the coast in prime swallow habitat. Tree swallows have outcompeted bluebirds, destroyed eggs or killed young to ruin what she hoped was going to be successful nestings. She did not get discouraged and persisted to finally have young banded 7/15/18 at Galloway and in August at Forsythe. There are widespread issues with tree swallows and we are trying to figure out how best to manage this problem in order to have a productive bluebird population.

Were you there at just the right moment?

If you've captured great images of Bluebirds with your digital camera or phone, send them to me, attached to an email in jpeg form, to BluebirdLJJ@gmail.com

Please include who took the photo, where and when they were taken, and any background information, if desired. I will do my best to use them in an upcoming issue of

"Jersey Blues." Thank you! *Lori Jo*





Ed McCay and his nephew, Bert Kovacs

Bluebirds + Blueberries ~ by Gail Fisher

Back in July, Allen Jackson emailed me and said “ You know that Ed McCay mills the Atlantic White Cedar that I take to the Middle Township Middle School woodshop students, and they make our bluebird boxes. Did you know that Ed also has an organic blueberry farm in Chatsworth, and it is open to the public for U-pick visits?” Well, I had to follow up on this news!

A few days later, my husband, Jim, and I got up early and arrived just as Ed was opening the fields, aided by his nephew and best fishing buddy, Bert. What a great experience! An enormous field with rows and rows of arched, berry laden branches awaited.

The unexpected treat, however, was getting to talk with Ed McCay himself. After he gave us our picking instructions for the morning, we talked a bit about the farm. Allow me to share with you some of Ed’s story, much of which is from an article written about him for the 2017 Ocean County Decoy & Gunning Show.

In 2017 Ed received The Hurley Conklin Award, presented to people who have lived in the Barnegat Bay tradition, by living close to the land, and in honor of the last of the Great Old Time Barnegat Bay Carvers, Hurley Conklin. Ed was born in Mt. Holly NJ , grew up in Tabernacle and now lives in Nesco, with his family. Growing up, he learned all the skills of water, woods and land. At 10, he began earning income by trapping, and then hunting, fishing, collecting birch whips, grapevine, pine cones, sphagnum moss and clams. He carved some decoys, farmed crops and built houses. He’s worked for the NJ Park Service for 30 years, working at Wharton State Forest and running the water-powered sawmill at Historic Batsto Village. He then he spent 14 years as a supervisor at Allaire State Park. In his home woodshed he builds furniture, boats, molding, and a variety of carpentry projects, and sells decoy wood throughout the United States. He’s a District Fire Warden for the Forest Fire Service, too.

Then there’s the ten acres of blueberries. He grows them 100% organically, which takes extra work and attention. I could tell right away that he cared deeply about them. After Ed purchased the blueberry farm, his father worked the fields with him, but when his dad’s health failed, the blueberries went unattended for awhile. Under Ed’s care they are thriving, and this is the second summer they have been open to the public again. Ed is proud to be an independent grower, not a member of the Ocean Spray Cooperative, whose fields surround his.

As mentioned, Ed mills the Atlantic White Cedar boards used in some of the NJBBS nest boxes. This wood is lovingly tended by Ed at every stage. He has highly specialized knowledge of the 200-year-old milling operation. He conscientiously manages the forest so that the cedar will come back, and not be crowded out by pine, gum and maple. He minimizes his forest footprint carefully and believes that if you cut down a tree, you are responsible to use it the best way you can, even including the sawdust. *(continued on next page)*



Some of Ed’s beautiful blues!



Someone left a present for the Tree Swallows...

(McCay, continued)

Boards are dried in his solar kiln, which speeds up the drying process. The uses for cedar have changed over time, but it is still in demand for specialized restoration work in places like Cold Spring Village and Cape May. As Jim and I loaded our three 10-pound boxes in the car (picked in 1.5 hours!), Ed mentioned that he hoped to be establishing a bluebird trail here on the farm this fall, with expert help from Allen Jackson. It just seems right that there will be blues among the blues!

If you'd like to read more about Pinelands traditions, Ed McCay was featured in the book, *People of the Pines*, by Bob Birdsall. If you'd like to meet this humble, multi-talented man, and go pick some of his magnificent berries next summer, save the info below. He'll even loan you a picking basket that you tie around your waist so you can pick with both hands! Yum!

McCay Blueberry Farm - Russ Anderson Blvd, Chatsworth, NJ 08019 (609) -204-7680

CAPE MAY COUNTY: Blue Birds Welcome at Upper Township Historical Gandy Farmstead

Blue Birds will be calling the Gandy Farmstead home with a new project announced by the Historical Preservation Society of Upper Township (HPSUT).

The HPSUT has been developing this new project, in conjunction with the Cape May County Chapter of the New Jersey Blue Bird (BB) Society and the Upper Twp. Green Team (GT), and a new nesting box has been installed at the Gandy Herb Garden. In addition, Sonia Forry, HPSUT member, has volunteered to monitor Gandy BB box for the coming year.

Gail Fisher, Cape May County Coordinator with the New Jersey Blue Bird Society met with HPSUT and GT members in September and conducted an orientation session.



Gail Fisher (l) with Monitor Sonia Forry (r)

While the Blue Bird Society has a system for checking the box(s) on a regular basis, the main role for a box monitor is in the Springtime, when the baby bluebirds hatch. Working with the monitor information, Gail will determine when to come to Gandy and band the birds next year. If the Gandy Herb Garden location works out for this first box, there is the potential for adding a 2nd box, in the open field, near the back of the Farmstead, beyond the fruit tree orchard, next year.

Note: The Upper Twp. Green Team is interested in partnering with other groups to facilitate additional bird boxes under the CMC Chapter of the NJ Bluebird Society. For example, several locations along the Amanda's Field walking trail have been scouted by Gail Fisher and the Green Team and the Township has approved initial installations, when volunteers are signed up. Please contact the Upper Twp. Green Team via email: UpperTwpGreenTeam@yahoo.com if you'd like to volunteer to monitor Amanda's Field Blue Bird boxes or just want to learn more details about the program. You can learn more about bluebirds at njbbs.org or nabs.org, and by joining one or both organizations.

*Thanks to The Historical Preservation Society of Upper Township NJ Inc.
www.UpperTwpHistory.org for providing this article.*

GREAT SWAMP NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE 2018 BLUEBIRD NEST BOX REPORT

Unusual spring weather (cool April and wet May) hindered nesting for the second year in a row. Both bluebird and tree swallow fledglings were well below their ten year averages for the Refuge. The monthly average temperature in April was about 3 degrees below normal. This delayed bluebird nesting. The first bluebird egg of the season was laid on April 19. The peak date (most eggs laid in a day) for the season was May 8. Both dates are the latest for bluebirds in the last 10 years.

Although bluebirds had essentially the same nestings in 2018 compared to the 10 year average, the number of bluebirds that fledged was only 80% of the 10 year average.

<u>NESTING STATISTICS</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>10 yr avg</u>
Bluebird Nestings	64	65
Average Clutch Size, eggs	3.9	4.2
Nest Failure, % (no fledglings)	27	22
Bluebird Fledglings	164	204

NO BLACK BEAR PREDATIONS IN 2018

Below is a comparison of the nest box predators for the 2017 and 2018 seasons:

<u>PREDATOR</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>
House Wren	8	4
Black Bear	2	0
Raccoon	3	11
Snake	0	2
House Sparrow	1	0
Unknown	3	8
TOTAL	17	25

Both wren and bear predations were significantly lower in 2018 versus 2017. However, predations from raccoons, snakes and unknown predations increased by 3 times. The unusually high raccoon predation rate is probably due to the unusually high water level in the Refuge during the nesting season. Raccoons prefer foraging along the edge of ponds and streams. As the water level rises they extend their foraging into adjacent areas.

This is a photo of a Black Racer, taken by Tom Gula. This was first time a snake was seen near nest boxes that were predated. Black racers are



large climbing snakes that have a habit of raiding bird nests. Nests raided by snakes are empty and undisturbed. Some unknown predations could be by snakes as there were no signs indicating wrens (pierced eggs), raccoons (scratches on box and/or disturbed nest) or bears (post bent and box broke or open). The high water levels also may have driven snakes to drier areas with nest boxes.

HOUSE WRENS FLEDGE OVER 100 YOUNG FOR THIRD CONSECUTIVE YEAR

House wrens continued their high rate of nestings in 2018. They fledged over 100 young for the third consecutive season. This is more than twice the 10 year average for house wren fledglings. We consulted with the Cornell ornithology lab nest box program leader about the increased amount of house wren nestings in the Refuge. Cornell reviewed their data that indicated house wrens did have higher nesting rates in recent seasons in the North East USA. They also commented that house wren populations do cycle over the years.

Wrens have the habit of destroying the eggs of other birds to gain a nest site and/or reduce competition for food. House wrens peck open eggs and drop them out the nest box entrance. Nesting wrens also reduce opportunities for bluebirds to nest. In 2018 thirteen times house wrens nested in one of a box pair while tree swallows nested in the other paired box. Only once did bluebirds and house wrens nest at the same time in boxes that were paired.

The guideline for minimizing house wren nesting in bluebird boxes is to place the boxes in open fields at least a few hundred feet from shrubs or the tree line. In the past few seasons house wrens have nested in boxes that they have not used in the past. In 2018 wrens nested in 17 box pairs. Thirteen of these box pairs were not used by wrens in 2017. Four pairs of house wrens fledged two clutches this season from the same pair of nest boxes. House wrens fledged from 87% of their nestings. *(continued on next page)*

(Great Swamp, continued) As in previous years box pairs will be moved to more open areas to make them less attractive to house wrens. The priority will be to relocate box pairs used twice by wrens in 2018 and those with multiple year use by wrens.

EXPANDED MOWING IMPROVES BLUEBIRD HABITAT - The refuge increased the number of fields that were mowed prior to the 2018 nesting season. Four sets of bluebird boxes were placed in these newly mowed fields. Bluebirds fledged two clutches. No house wrens nested in these boxes that were far from the tree line. Three of these four fields will become less productive as vegetation grows between mowings that are on a multiyear schedule.

NEST BOX MONITORS INCREASED TO FIVE

The bluebird trail provides volunteer opportunities for those who wish to work with wildlife. Since the Friends' became responsible for the bluebird trail, thirteen different volun-



teer First year monitor Tom Gula (7 male and 6 female) have monitored part of the bluebird trail for at least one season. This was first season with five monitors as Tom Gula began monitoring a section of the trail. The plan is to add a sixth volunteer for the 2019 season. Refuge interns (Carmine Colasurdo and Blair Gomes) accompanied all the volunteers on a monitoring visit to their nest boxes. They took GPS readings for the boxes and created maps showing the location of the nest boxes.

The two visitor center bluebird nest boxes that have cameras were used during the season. Bluebirds fledged a clutch from one box. Visitors were able to view the activity inside the nest boxes on the monitor in the map room. A few complete bluebird and tree swallow nests were abandoned by adults. The eggs did not hatch. These nests were turned into the Visitor Center to be put on display for visitors.

Many thanks to Jim Mulvey, Nancy Felicito, Joe Balwierzak and Tom Gula (first year) who monitored nest boxes and reported their findings on a weekly basis during the 2018 nesting season. ~ Leo Hollein



photos by LJ Jamieson

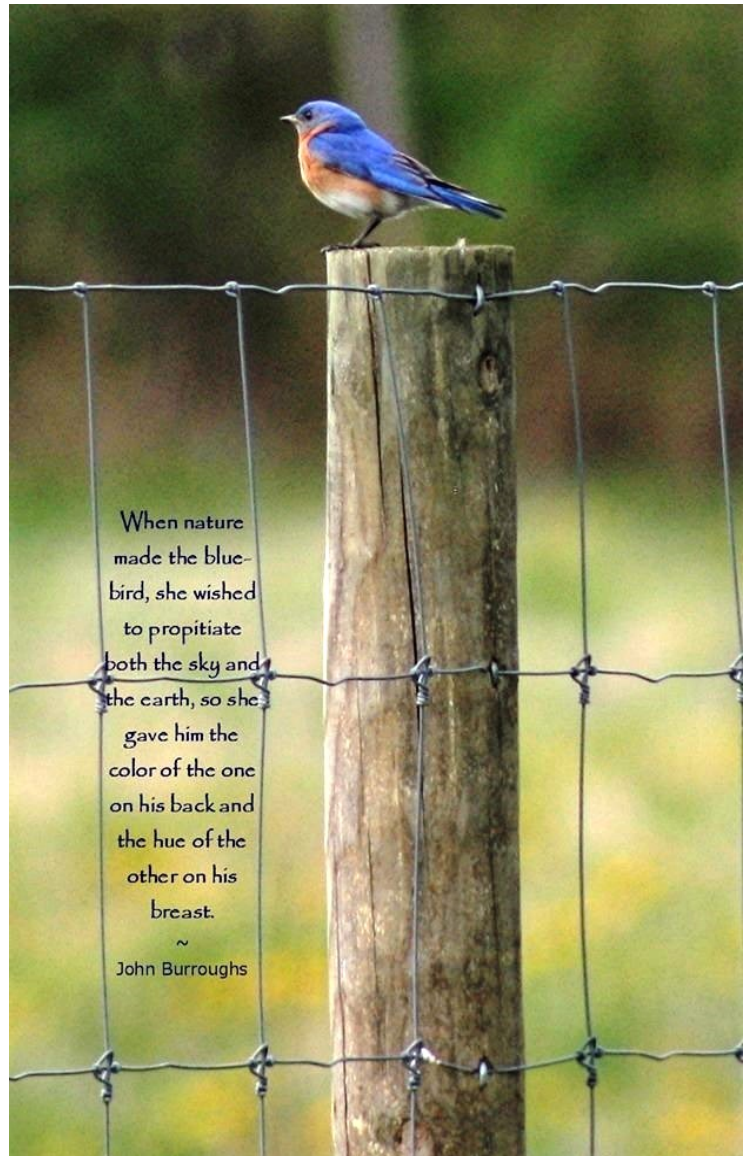


Photo by Jenyfra Nelson

2018 Nestbox Results – John Layton, Atlantic County

Stockton University: 27 Boxes

Monitors: Diane Kady and Linda Mancuso

Eastern Bluebirds 70 chicks banded and fledged

Tree Swallows	5
House Wrens	14
Chickadees	4
Carolina Wrens	10

Personal Trail: 20 Boxes monitored by John Layton

Eastern Bluebirds - 81 banded and fledged.

Tree Swallows	16
House Wrens	10
Chickadees	16
Tufted Titmouse	11

Egg Harbor Township Retention Basins: 24 boxes

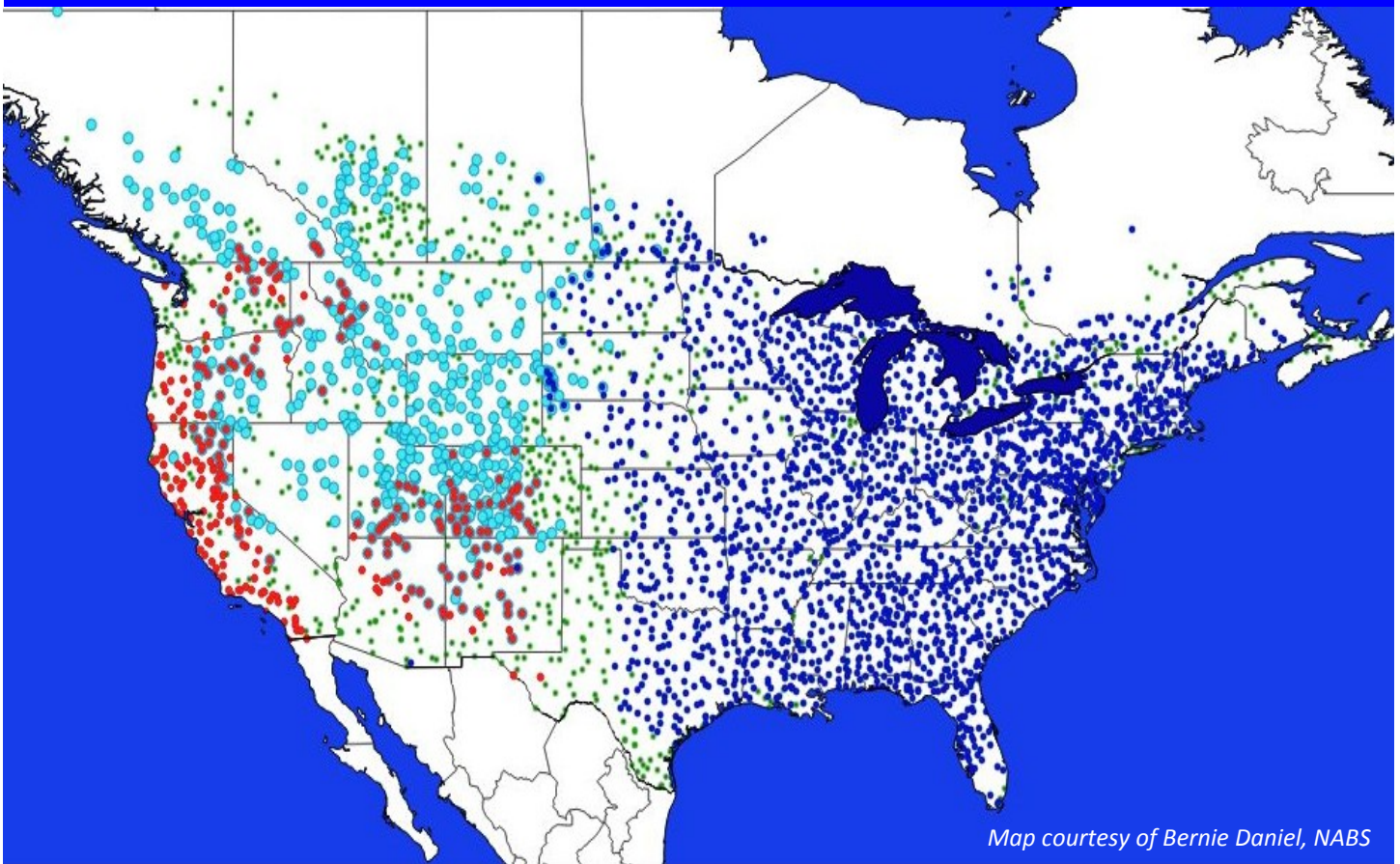
Eastern Bluebirds - 74 banded and fledged.

House Wrens	6
Chickadees	12
Carolina Wrens	0
Tufted Titmouse	6

SEASON TOTALS FOR 2018

Eastern Bluebirds (banded and fledged)	225
House Wrens	30
Chickadees	28
Carolina Wrens	10
Tufted Titmouse	17

This map indicates where bluebirds are seen in the North American Breeding Bird Survey each year. All three species are displayed.



The **dark blue dots** are all the routes where Eastern Bluebirds (EABL) are detected each year (2131 out of 3750 routes) -- you can see they cover the eastern half of central North America -- certainly the eastern half of the USA. The **turquoise dots** are Mountain Bluebirds (MOBL) (~580 routes) and the **red dots** are Western Bluebirds (WEBL) (~296 routes). The **green dots** are other routes that are counted each year but no bluebirds are seen.

BUBBA'S HOUSE SPARROW CONTROL STRATEGY

There are many ways to control House Sparrows (HOSP), some passive, some active. However, removing the nest is mostly an exercise in futility. And remember, throwing the nest material on the ground near the box infuriates the bird, causing him to search out and destroy eggs/young of other species in nearby nests. This is called "House Sparrow Revenge Syndrome." Trap the HS and eliminate it. Using a Van Ert House Sparrow trap is a simple and easy way to trap if you approach it the right way.

Purchase these two items and prepare ahead of time if you have House Sparrows near your bluebird box:

- 1) **Invest in a Van Ert Universal Sparrow Trap.** They cost \$9.50 each and can be purchased from: Van Ert Enterprises, vanert-traps.com 515 418-3787. (or contact aljaxn@aol.com) Follow the instructions to set the trap in your box, placing the 2 screws on the inside of the box under the entrance hole. You can leave the 2 screws in place when the trap isn't in use.
- 2) **Purchase a mesh laundry bag** and use that to cover the box after the trap has sprung. Check the trap at least 2 times a day - for stubborn sparrows leave the trap in over night.

Only use the trap when the sparrows are nest building! House sparrows build their nest amazingly fast, but you can follow guidelines to deal with the particular situation. If the nest is already built - use it to your advantage. Sparrows are easy to trap if you know how. Let's take 2 scenarios:

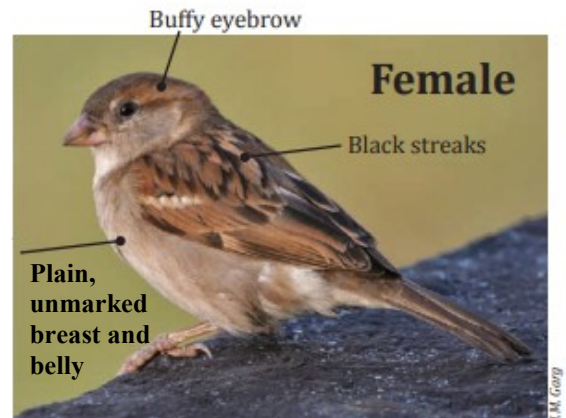
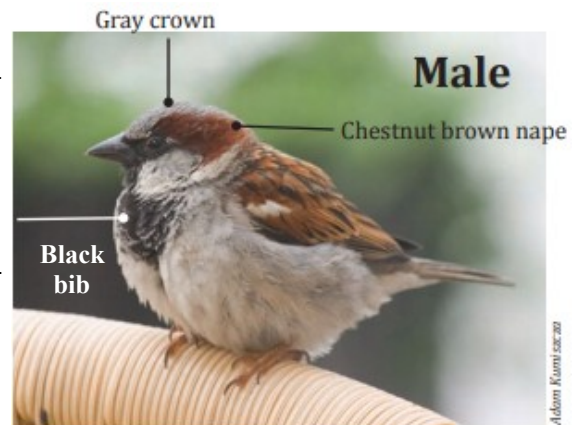
Situation A: Early detection of nest building.

Once the male selects a box and nest material added, trapping is at its easiest. A male house sparrow selects and defends the box to a fault. That is his downfall! If you do not already have the 2 screws placed inside the box, do so. You can leave the screws in the box, it will not bother any bluebirds that nest. Set the trap, making sure the nest material will not hinder the operation of the trap. Usually the HOSP is watching you from a distance. They are curious critters and should check the box soon after you leave. Check the trap about an hour or two after you set it, many times you will have the male trapped. If you trap the female, reset the trap and continue until you trap the male. Use your mesh bag to cover the box, open the door and let the HS fly into the bag to confirm you have trapped a house sparrow and not a bluebird!

Situation B: A House Sparrow nest with eggs or young.

Remove enough of the material so the trap will work properly. Leave an egg or young inside. You may catch the female first as she may be incubating the eggs or feeding the young. Eliminate the female and reset the trap for the male, leaving it in overnight if necessary. You may possibly trap both male and female HS at the same time so be ready if both are caught in the box. Consider yourself lucky if this happens!

The Humane Society of the U. S. recommends neck dislocation as the humane way to kill a HS. Chest compression also works well, just continue to squeeze the chest for about 45 seconds. You will be surprised how fast the Bluebirds react to eliminating those House Sparrows. **Bluebirds thrive on active management!**



Photos courtesy www.nabluebirdsociety.org



looking inside.

Editor's Note: When I read this article in my "Natural Lands" magazine, I heard the voice of a kindred spirit in John Barbis. We are all united in our love for the bluebirds, regardless of our locale, and that's why I chose to include the article. ~LJJ

During the height of their population, Eastern Bluebirds were as common as American Robins are today. Their numbers dropped drastically in the middle of the last century as farming practices changed and open space was lost to development.

Bluebirds prefer open meadows, which offer an abundance of insects that constitute the majority of their warm-weather diet. They build their nests in cavities, but their beaks are not strong enough to excavate their own nests so they re-use cavities created by other birds like woodpeckers.

Most of Natural Lands' 44 nature preserves include some meadow habitat, ideal for nesting Bluebirds. To give the population a helping hand, we've installed nest boxes on our properties—350 boxes, to be exact!

Volunteers are an essential part of this low-tech but effective initiative to augment natural nesting cavities. Every week from April 1 through the end of July, a cadre of volunteers monitors each of those 350 boxes, recording details like what species of bird takes up residence in the box, the number of eggs laid, and when and how many baby birds hatch and fledge. Volunteers also construct and install the boxes.

John Barbis joined Natural Lands' Force of Nature® volunteer program in 2016, and has been a Bluebird nest box monitor for the past two years. He shared his experiences "in the field" with *Natural Lands* editor Kirsten Werner.

Kirsten: What about the nest box monitoring program made you want to volunteer?

John: This may be childish, but I am getting to do something that every adult told me not to do when I was young. As a kid, I was fascinated by the Robins building their nests in shrubbery and the Pheasants that would nest in the bushes. But that curiosity was stifled by the warning: "Stop checking on them or you will make the parents abandon the nest and babies." Now I get to do it for science.

Also, this work is a chance to observe how one small part of nature changes with the seasons. There are the first signs of nest building, the amazing nests, the first eggs, the first hatchlings, the fledglings, and finally the empty nest. I clean out the old nest and pretty soon the cycle starts again, often with another species taking over the box. *(cont. on next page)*

(cont. from previous page)

K: What was it like the first time you opened a box and saw eggs or hatchlings inside?

J: Actually, for me, watching the progress as the birds build their nests is just as exciting as seeing the first eggs of different colors or the first tiny, naked baby birds. Until I started volunteering, I never knew how exquisitely beautiful and comfortable-looking Chickadee, Bluebird, or Tree Swallow nests were! Often the only way to get an accurate count of the number of eggs or hatchlings is to carefully reach into the nest and manually count them. Touching those warm eggs and tiny bodies is just plain moving.

K: Were you a birding enthusiast before volunteering?

J: I was a nature enthusiast and as such interested in birds. I would not consider myself a hardcore birder; I was more interested in birds' role in nature rather than

someone who was anxious to complete a list. I did not know as much about nest construction and having the opportunity to learn more about that was fantastic.

K: Has there been anything unexpected about volunteering as a monitor?

J: I've developed a dislike for House Wrens. I try hard not to ascribe human motives to animals, but the propensity of House Wrens to disrupt the nests of other birds is phenomenal. And they are like the Energizer bunnies of bird reproduction! How those small creatures can produce such large clutches—relative to their size—over and over again all summer long is astounding. Bluebirds are temporary renters at best; House Wrens own the boxes. Also, I was surprised at the personal investment I felt as the avian families that inhabit my boxes (they do become “my boxes”!) grow or sometimes fail. Sometimes a box is raided by a

predator, ants take over the nest, or House Wrens will build their messy-looking, stick-filled nests right over Chickadee or Bluebird eggs and young. I am monitoring nature, and death is an integral part of nature. So, in a way I've learned a bit about myself at the same time I learned about cavity-nesting birds.

***Natural Lands** is dedicated to preserving and nurturing nature's wonders while creating opportunities for joy and discovery in the outdoors for everyone. Natural Lands has preserved more than 125,000 acres in eastern Pennsylvania and **southern New Jersey**, including 43 nature preserves totaling more than 23,000 acres. Some 2.5 million people live within five miles of land under the organization's protection. Land for life, nature for all. natlands.org.*

“Out and About” - Photos from the New Jersey 2018 Season



What's a bluebird to do on a hot and humid South Jersey afternoon?



If John Layton's around, you jump in his truck and enjoy the air conditioning!

Photos by John Layton

ARE YOU CURIOUS about Bluebirds?
ARE YOU HOOKED on Bluebirds?
We Sure Are! Come and Join Us!



NJ Bluebird Society

Caring for the Bluebirds of New Jersey

Membership Has Its Rewards!

Sometimes we just need nature to get us motivated. In this case, we hope your concern for the well being of our native Eastern Bluebird has motivated you to join the New Jersey Bluebird Society. Bluebirds are one of our most desirable species. If you are reading this newsletter and still aren't a member, here's why you should be:



Many factors impact bluebird survival, including weather, food/cover, predators, nest competition, pests, and disease. Proper management can be the key to maintaining a healthy and productive bluebird population. By joining the NJBBS we can provide you with that up to date information. As members we can:

- ~ Provide education about bluebirds to interested people like yourself.
- ~ Provide expertise and guidance to trail monitors and backyard bluebird enthusiasts.
- ~ Provide data forms to help document the bluebird activities in your boxes. We encourage you to submit the number of young bluebirds fledged from your boxes at the end of each season. This precious data is used to monitor early population trends in New Jersey.

Now that you're thinking about it, why not go to www.njbluebirdsociety.org and become a member?

North American Bluebird Society

There are lots of advantages to being a member of both **NJBBS** and **NABS**. Joining NABS entitles you to receive "Bluebird", their colorful quarterly publication. This is a quality periodical of interest to anyone who appreciates bluebirds and other secondary cavity nesters. The North American Bluebird Society organization supports and helps unify the work of state chapters across America. For a small membership fee (\$15 special price the first year, then \$20 per year), everyone in NJBBS is encouraged to also join NABS and get a better understanding of what our bluebird friends are doing in North America.



You can go to our website, www.njbluebirdsociety.org and look for NABS's membership form that accompanies the NJBBS membership form. If you are new to the world of bluebirds, NABS's website, www.nabluebirdsociety.org is a goldmine of information, including printable (PDF) **fact sheets** on getting started, nestbox plans, predator control, monitoring guides and feeding recommendations. Even those of us who consider ourselves "experienced" find these resources to be very useful for our own use and as information for new monitors.