



# Jersey Blues

The Newsletter of The New Jersey Bluebird Society, an Affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society ~Volume 4, Issue 1 - Spring, 2020

## BUBBA SPEAKS - A Word from our President, Allen Jackson

Here it is early March and I have yet to shovel any snow, simply because we haven't had a winter yet. I am not disappointed about that but am concerned about climate change and its impact on our environment. I have taken advantage of the weather to do maintenance work of existing boxes and put out new boxes. Probably 30 new boxes have been put out in Salem, Camden, Cumberland, Gloucester, Middlesex and Atlantic Counties. Many thanks to our NJBBS members and those County Coordinators who are motivated to look for new sites. I am fortunate to be located near to and enjoy working with these people. I consider going in the field a bonus, not a chore. Most of all it helps educate us to the requirements of bluebirds.

That brings to mind that in 2019 we fledged ~4000 bluebirds. Now stop and think about that. You, the members of NJBBS, are responsible for 4000 more bluebirds added to our State in 2019. Be proud of that, go ahead and brag to others what you have accomplished. Let's take it a step further: the past 4 years we fledged 14,000 bluebirds, mostly all in the southern part of the state!

I am overjoyed at what we have accomplished the past few years. We have added more County Coordinators (welcome Sue Meany for Middlesex County in 2019, and Chuck Kanupke in Camden County in 2018), continue to erect more boxes, have an ongoing production of boxes thanks to Ed McCay of McCay Wood Products in Nesco and Dave Moyer's woodshop class in the Middle Township Middle School, financial support from Citizens United Maurice River, Atlantic Audubon Society and donors like Wild Birds Unlimited and Betsy Loyle.

Our banding program continues to grow (I ordered 3000 bands for 2020) and encouragement from the North American Bluebird Society has helped make our organization great, but most of all, you who monitor and maintain bluebird trails and work towards our goal of benefiting bluebirds in NJ deserve the credit. *(continued on page 2)*



Photo by Bernadine Visalli



**MONITORING BLUEBIRDS DURING COVID-19** While we are directed to stay inside, my believe is that this is a personal choice whether to monitor or not. So far, getting exercise is recommended by Governor Murphy and as long as one does this alone (avoiding contact with others) then monitoring should be safe. Read the executive order here:

<https://covid19.nj.gov/faqs/nj-information/general-public/governor-murphy-announces-statewide-stay-at-home-order-closure-of-all-non-essential-retail-businesses>

If one is not comfortable alone, take a buddy and keep the recommended 6 feet apart, and be off the roads by 8 pm! Above all, be cautious and safe. If

you are not comfortable monitoring, please don't. Allen "Bubba" Jackson

(continued from front page) We have developed many partnerships: NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife (numerous wildlife management areas), Landis Sewerage Authority, Appel Farm, Atlantic County Park in Estell Manor, Egg Harbor Township officials who allowed John Layton to add boxes in developments, EHT Environmental Commission, Ocean County Parks, various nurseries and vineyards, Wild Birds Unlimited stores (in Cherry Hill, Sicklerville, Middletown and Scotch Plains) and so many individual landowners throughout the State. The list goes on and on as we grow. Recently the 1400 acre Holly Farm in Millville was acquired by the State. This area lies between the Menantico and Manumuskin Rivers and will be added to the Menantico Wildlife Management Area. The Nature Conservancy-owned land on the Manumuskin River will also be donated, making for an over 6000 acre tract of land. It has been a 30-year battle trying to protect the Holly Farm from being developed, so this really is a monumental success story.



Congratulations to Lori Jo Jamieson and Lynn Wood who displayed their photographic talents at the Atlantic County Historical Society. Naturally, bluebirds were included in both their exhibits. We are fortunate to have many expert photographers in the NJBBS - Jenn Nelson, Jim Priest, Bernie Visalli, and Cheryl Osolinski, just to name a few.



I want to give you some more impressive numbers regarding NABS members by state. Here are the latest figures: NABS has 1523 members as of 12/31/19. Pennsylvania has the most members with 104 and Virginia second with 103. Lurking in the background is NJ in third place with 89. Some of these numbers will increase as there are members who have not renewed yet. My belief is that we are close to 100. In 2015 we had 33 members. Since that time we have added ~60 new members. No other state has seen an increase like ours. Jim Burke, 2nd VP for Community Relations routinely praises NJ for their membership achievements. Praise can be extended to NJBBS members (including myself) holding joint memberships in NJBBS and NABS. Nothing would please me more than for NJ to be #1, and we are not far off! In

January, the NABS Board Members voted to increase single person dues to \$25 and household membership to \$35. This will be in effect when you read this. Please renew your membership or join now! It is money well spent. NABS is there to support us and offer more and more support for the affiliate organizations. We are #1 in so many ways, let's include our efforts at a national level by being a part of NABS.

Shortly before this Spring issue went out, some of us attended "NABS 2020" in Kearney, Nebraska, hosted by Bluebirds Across Nebraska (BAN). hosted this event March 11-15, 2020. This is the third time they have hosted a NABS conference, this time in the Platte River Valley during the height of the northward migration of the sand hill crane. **An article on the event can be found on page 9.** I have heard rumors that the next conference will be within driving distance for us, but I'll keep the secret until it is confirmed! A NABS conference is truly an event one must attend, featuring great expert speakers, superb organization, silent auctions, field trips and camaraderie with other bluebirders.

So, finish getting your boxes ready for the nesting season and keep up the good work. We are a force to be reckoned with and have fast become a leader nationally in benefiting bluebirds. ~ Allen Jackson

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#### **A NEW COUNTY COORDINATOR AND PARTNERSHIP IN SOUTH BRUNSWICK, MIDDLESEX COUNTY**

Welcome our newest County Coordinator, Susan Meaney! Sue has been a Rutgers Environmental Steward since 2014 and lectures on efforts to support the native Bluebird population in Central Jersey. We are proud to count you as "one of us" at NJBBS. You may contact Susan at [meaneysusan@hotmail.com](mailto:meaneysusan@hotmail.com).

Allen Jackson, Susan Meaney, Laura Stone, NJBBS' VP Central Region; and Eric Gehring, Middlesex County Parks Naturalist/Open Space Coordinator, embarked on a new partnership in November 2019 establishing a bluebird trail at Davidson's Mill Pond Park in South Brunswick. Four complete bluebird setups were located on park property. The site already has nesting bluebirds so upgrading the existing situation will vastly improve the situation for the bluebirds. Four unmaintained boxes which were located on 6" x 6" wooden posts without predator guards will be removed. The boxes and posts showed claw marks from raccoon predation. More importantly, this partnership can lead to more projects in Middlesex County as there are a number of County Parks that have suitable bluebird habitat.



**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 that are located in suitable habitat while utilizing and promoting recommended bluebird management practices (proper housing, protection from predators, and nest monitoring.). We also recognize the importance and necessity to promote management of bluebirds in backyards. We provide expertise and guidance to 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.

**So...Why Bluebirds?** Bluebirds are secondary cavity-nesters, meaning they cannot excavate their own nesting sites in trees. They have struggled to survive due to loss of habitat to development and changes in land management. Since they readily accept nesting boxes humans provide and because they respond well to habitat management, we are in a unique position to benefit these beautiful birds.

Bluebirds are primarily ground feeders, with insects making up as much as 90% of their diet during the spring and summer months. They perch to hunt the ground for grubs, grasshoppers and caterpillars. Open areas with sparse or low vegetation provide the best potential habitat for bluebirds to find insects. Other important factors are places to perch and structure for fledglings to fly to on their first flight. Agricultural areas, parks, even back yards and cemeteries can provide this habitat.




**WE MISSED YOU at Our Annual Meeting!**

**Save the date NOW for November 14th, 2020**

**LOCATION TO BE DETERMINED!**

See page 8 for 2019 meeting photos



## Jersey Blues

*The newsletter of The New Jersey Bluebird Society*

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## ATLANTIC COUNTY

Coordinator, Jim Watson



Allen, Jim Watson & Jim Priest put up a new box at David Pfeiffer's house in Galloway, Atlantic County, around 11am on March 8th. These photos were taken in the afternoon. What a great start for a nesting pair!

*(photos by Jim Priest)*

## CAMDEN COUNTY

Coordinator, Chuck Kanupke



### New Nestboxes at Frank Donio Memorial Park

On December 18th, a committed group went out to Frank Donio Park, in Camden County, on a very, very cold and windy day to save our precious bluebirds. Allen Jackson, Chuck Kanupke and Jim Priest met up with Cedric Smith from the Winslow Parks Department in Camden County and installed two boxes on the upper part of the park. Allen is very confident that these will produce birds. If these work out well we will probably be able to add more.

Thanks to Jim Priest for being the official photographer. The brave group would have loved to walk the whole way around the park and work up a plan for the site but it was just too darn cold. It has good habitat with possibilities of 6 more boxes.

Chuck Kanupke is the Camden County Coordinator and is identifying a number of parks in the area that offer possibilities for bluebird trails. We hope to partner with Wild Birds Unlimited to find monitors to assist in our endeavor. Allen will plan to band the young if it works out. Thanks for all you have done Chuck - your efforts will pay off.

*(Photos by Jim Priest)*



### The New Brooklyn Park Project

Allen Jackson, Chuck Kanupke and Jim Priest are rebuilding the 28 bluebird nest boxes at New Brooklyn Park. They are changing the design and moving them to better locations, while taking out the old ones. They believe the park will wind up with 18 new boxes. Fabulous work, fellas! *(Photos by Jim Priest)*

# CAPE MAY COUNTY

Coordinators, Gail Fisher and Rae Griffiths (apprentice)

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## Hello Bluebird Monitors and/or Land Hosts,

The bluebird season has begun! Welcome to the new 2020 season Monitors, and welcome back to all of you who are veteran Monitors! Happily, it is still possible (and important) for all of us go outside to keep an eye on our nestboxes during the current difficult virus situation.

Two days ago I checked 16 nestboxes. Five of them had full nests, and eggs will arrive any day now. It is time to begin active monitoring. Please be sure that any winterizing materials have been removed, such as styrofoam or duct tape. As I mentioned before, be cautious if pine needles were added. In some boxes the birds have used them as the nest base and just added a soft liner. In others, they built a full nest on top. In these cases, I lifted up the full nest, removed the pine needles, and lowered the nest down, so that it sits lower down, farther away from the entrance hole.

The invasive house sparrows are also busy trying to take over. I've already pulled out a full nest, and will set a trap to-day. if you get house sparrows, DO NOT LET THEM NEST! If you need assistance, please contact me.

Tree swallows have just arrived this week, and they are also competing with the bluebirds for the nestboxes. If you are unsure what they look like compared to a bluebird, you can find them with a google search, or by going to the North American Bluebird Society's Monitoring Bluebird Nestboxes Fact Sheet here: <http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org/PDF/NABSFactsheetMonitoring.pdf>

As soon as you see a bluebird nest, please begin recording info on your data sheets, found in your blue monitor folders. You might want to make extra copies to keep on hand first. If you are new to this and need help, please feel free to contact me by phone, text or email. When you spot the first egg, please contact me, so I can add your box to my banding list. Next, please tell me when you know the total eggs laid, remembering that the female will lay one egg per day (in the early morning, so don't check till later). Three to five eggs is normal. If you get what we call a 6-pack, you have a very healthy female! In about 12% of the cases, if both parents carry a recessive gene, eggs could be white instead of the regular blue ones, so don't think another type of bird laid them if they are white...it means you have a special pair! Knowing when the eggs were laid allows me to map out the rest of the banding schedule. If possible I like to group your boxes together on any given banding day to save time and gas, so I really appreciate it when you give me as much lead time as possible.

I would like to share with you some personal information. In November of 2015 I was appointed as your Cape May County BB Coordinator, and I have enjoyed every minute of it. It has been most rewarding to see the local bluebird population increase each year, thanks to all of you who monitor and/or host boxes on your property. I have met so many caring, dedicated people and made many cherished friends. Time does have a way of moving along, though. For the past four years Jim and I have had our names on a wait-list at a continuing care retirement community (CCRC) in Lexington, VA. Today is Jim's 78th birthday. Even though I am a few years younger than him, we must both be healthy to move in and we don't want to push our luck! We are now on the "ready" list, which means we will be putting our house on the market soon and relocating within a year. One big concern was finding someone to replace me as your coordinator.

I am thrilled to tell you, that the bluebirds themselves led me to a highly qualified and enthusiastic person who is willing to do just that!. In February I gave a talk at the Wetlands Institute, and shortly thereafter, Rae Griffiths called, and I put up a nestbox at her home. Our conversation led to a meeting, which led to her saying YES! This summer, as best as we are able to figure it out (and stay socially distant!), Rae will intern with me. At the end of the season, I will turn over the position to her. I hope to be able to have each of you meet her in person, if possible, when I come to check boxes and band your birds. In the mean time, **on page 6, you will find her introductory letter.** As you will see, she is very knowledgeable and has worked with all age groups. She is also very friendly and approachable, and I know you will enjoy working with her starting in 2021. "For the birds," ~ *Gail Fisher*

# CAPE MAY COUNTY

Coordinators, Gail Fisher and Rae Griffiths (apprentice)

## Meet Cape May County's 2021 Coordinator, Rae Griffiths

Greetings! My name is Rae Griffiths, and I am excited to assume the role of Cape May County Coordinator for the New Jersey Blue Bird Society in 2021 when Gail Fisher retires to Virginia. I know we will all miss her unbounded enthusiasm and expert organization of the blue bird recovery effort here. She is leaving HUGE shoes to fill, and I will do my very best to honor her legacy.



I am a new resident to Cape May County, having relocated here in August 2019 from western Massachusetts after spending many years visiting this area to bird and recreate. My background is in zoology and environmental education, and I have worked as a researcher and educator for many organizations including The Whale Center of New England, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the Franklin Park Zoo, the Massachusetts Audubon Society, the Boston Museum of Science and the New England Aquarium. From 2004-2019, I ran my own educational outreach program called Teaching Creatures, which brought live mammals, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates to schools, libraries and community events throughout southern New England to teach about basic animal biology and natural history. In that time, I also did a lot

of teaching, and became a MA certified early childhood educator in January 2019.

Since moving to Upper Township, I have joined the Board of the Friends of Forsythe NWR where I have been assisting with outreach and on-site education initiatives, and I am thrilled to be part of the summer camp teaching team at the Nature Center of Cape May this season. I feel very fortunate that I will be apprenticing with Gail this season to learn the ropes of the bluebird monitoring program in Cape May County. It will be a great pleasure to meet fellow bluebird enthusiasts and help support you in your efforts to increase the bluebird population in south Jersey. ~ Rae Griffiths



### **Put Your Time and Muscles Where Your Interests Are - Help Clean Up Cape May Point Invasives! (After Social Distancing Is OVER!)**

*Hi Bluebirders, Pat Sutton here. Have you enjoyed walking the trails at the Cape May Point State Park in recent years? I know I have. For a time it was like walking through a tunnel of Phragmites. So many invasive plants, like Porcelainberry and Sweet Autumn Clematis, had smothered shrubs, trees, and native wildflowers along the trails. But now, with the terrific effort to stay ahead of invasive plants, wildflowers are again prolific and blooming along the trails spring through late fall.*

*The invasive plant work is ongoing and headed up by the Cape May Point State Park Naturalist, **Matt Pelligrini**. Matt welcomes volunteers and cool weather is a good time to tackle invasives: no mosquitoes, it is not crazy hot, and long sleeves and long pants can protect your arms and legs from thorns during invasive plant removal. Matt shared the following history of the project at the Cape May Point State Park:*

**REFORESTATION at Cape May Point State Park IS FOR THE BIRDS. AND THE BUTTERFLIES. AND THE TREEFROGS. AND THE BATS. AND YOU!** It all happened so fast. I remember when we thought Multiflora Rose, Porcelainberry, Sweet Autumn Clematis, and Japanese Honeysuckle were beautiful, harmless and even useful vines. After all, the birds ate the fruit. As exotic vines adapted to Cape May's mild climate, they started burying shrubbery and climbing trees. Before we knew it, the trees were smothered. Park visitors saw green trees and did not realize they were actually looking at dead trees covered in vines. That's when the trees started to fall. It was like a horror movie. *(continued on page 10)*

# GLOUCESTER & SALEM COUNTIES

Coordinators, Dave Gilcrest, Allen Jackson and Bernie Visalli

## Gloucester / Salem County Update by *Bernnie Visalli*

A busy March - Three new sites, all farms! **J&S in South Harrison Township**, a 50 acre farm with good bluebird sightings and habitat due to vegetable farming with very limited chemical intervention. **D&V Organics in Swedesboro**, a certified organic farm that does Farm Shares with the public! <https://dandvorganics.com/csa-farm-share> I am very excited about this partnership and noted bluebirds while picking up my produce last year. When putting up boxes on this site, a male bluebird came and hung out in a tree nearby.



**New Monitors Spotlight - Chris and Sarah Sokos**, in South Harrison Twp., purchased a 30-acre farm in 2019, saving it from a developer. Chris is from a farming background and is very excited to learn about bluebirds and monitoring. As Chris and I were chatting about a possible purple martin rack (next year's goal), a bluebird pair was checking out a box near his welding shop. Sarah, Chris and their young baby take walks daily around the farm and I have high hopes for the location. Getting a new young family involved in bluebirds energizes me and give me high hopes for the future.



## DANGER OF IRRIGATION RISERS ~ *Bernnie Visalli Gloucester/Salem County*

*"The way to change the world is through individual responsibility and taking local action in your own community."* ~ Jeff Bridges

The issue of irrigation risers was brought to my attention when the farmer leasing our farm installed irrigation. For no reason but me being nosy, I looked inside one of them, and to my dismay found **6 dead bluebirds**.

Bluebirds, being cavity nesters and inquisitive little buggers, don't realize going down a 5ft tube would end in disaster. After seeing the awful sight, I put cinder blocks on top of the risers, but those got knocked off during storms (hard to believe) because the tubes move in the wind and the blocks are dislodged. When I realized the blocks were not an answer, I started an internet search and discovered a thin cap (called a "test cap") that could be installed with PVC adhesive. (The 4" is available in the box stores but the 6" I needed to order online). For extra insurance I also put a couple of small screws at an angle so not to injure the person removing the tube.

After attending "3 Billion Birds Gone Missing" at Stockton University in March and learning the plight of all birds, I will be discussing the issue with all farmers I visit or whose land I set up trails. Everyone I have talked to has been open to capping off their pipes and I have successfully installed caps at two farms.

I have found the caps on various sites that sell PVC pipe. The most economical ones are successfully installed with the glue and screw option. If anyone is interested in purchasing them, I have an email into the company and hoping to get a deal if we have a bigger order. My order is for 6" and 4" because that was what we had on my farm. Most farms have 6" from my experience.



***This cap has proved 100% successful and has stayed in place over two winters.***



Please make this a talking point when doing site visits or communicating with your friends that are farmers. We owe it to the bluebirds and birds in general to do all we can to make a difference. One small action will save birds!

*(photo of this year, starling, during my install at one of my new sites)*

Contact me directly [buttonwood61@yahoo.com](mailto:buttonwood61@yahoo.com) if you are interested in ordering the test caps. If anyone has a better contact please let me know. The minimum order is normally \$200 but I am in discussion with the company via email and I hope they will waive that requirement.

# GLOUCESTER & SALEM COUNTIES

Coordinators, Dave Gilcrest, Allen Jackson and Bernie Visalli



I went to a training class that Dave Gilcrest gave at Scotland Run Park in Clayton, NJ. There were 9 folks there and Dave gave a very interesting talk on how the monitoring should be done: things like how often to monitor, how to approach a box, what to do with the old nests that are removed, and of course, all about counting eggs and timing their hatching. We had a very informational class, and Allen was there also making sure everything was right. ~ Jim Priest

## FACT: HEAT AND DROUGHT DO IMPACT BLUEBIRDS

Studies show that drought/heat do not affect the number of eggs laid but it does impact hatching and fertility. During the 2019 nesting season, many monitors reported eggs that did not hatch and fewer young surviving to fledge.



**Bubba  
&  
Bubba!**

Certificates of Recognition were presented to Dave Gilcrest, Gemma and Andrew Major, Lori Jo Jamieson and Bernie Visalli by President Allen Jackson at the Annual Meeting on November 9, 2019. You are appreciated!

**Our Annual Meeting for 2020 will be on Saturday, November 14th. Stay tuned for location and details.**



# OCEAN COUNTY Coordinator, Laura Stone

## Whiting Wildlife Management Area Updates ~ By Andrew Major

About 4 years ago we moved from Monmouth County to Ocean County. In Middlesex & Ocean counties there were 3 bluebird trails I had been monitoring - one in Cheesequake State Park and two in Holmdel County Park. I found volunteers to take over the monitoring.

Once we settled in our new home I looked for suitable areas to start bluebird trails. There were a few properties but the owners/managers declined for various reasons.

Looking at the map I saw several rectangular clear cut areas in the Whiting Wildlife Management Area close to us. After some investigation I found out that they were meadows, created by the NJ Division of Fish & Wildlife, to increase habitat diversity. The fields were seeded with native (warm season) grasses and forbs, some fields already in early successional stage (junipers of various sizes).



I requested and received a permit to place nest boxes there, which I did. From the 19 boxes, over 100 bluebirds fledged there in 2019. There were other suitable areas in our neighborhood as well, fledging 25 bluebirds that year.

In 2019 Laura McMahon of the BASF Corporation asked me whether I would monitor the bluebird boxes on their property. Laura, as the Environmental Scientist there, is promoting sound environmental practices and education. The property is a Superfund Site in Toms River, acquired by BASF when the company bought Ceiba-Geigy Corporation. The area is now heavily vegetated and has a large deer herd, wild turkeys, even coyotes. Entry and activity is strictly controlled and monitored. Several bluebird boxes were already placed there, some of which were moved to different locations at my suggestion. The tally for this area: 39 bluebirds fledged.

This year, however there will be profound changes because most of the fields will be covered with solar panels. We were in the process of trying to locate alternate nesting sites, when the area became off limits due to the coronavirus outbreak.



## Report from the Field: NABS 2020 Conference ~ by Diane Kady

Two NJBBS members, Diane Kady and Linda Mancuso, traveled out to Kearney, Nebraska for "NABS 2020," hosted by Bluebirds Across Nebraska. Diane shares some of her memories:

*There was a room where many homemade items were for sale. These items were a display of creative talents. On Friday nightt they auctioned 3 of these items and all three brought a good price as they were all one of a kind. There was a dinner both Friday and Saturday nite with entertainment by member of the conference. The food was delicious and the entertainment was wonderful!*

*At the left is a picture of me (Diane Kady) where we had lunch on March 13th, the day of the birding trip. It was a wonderful trip that day. We saw eagles, white pelicans, mallards, wood ducks, Canada geese, hawks and of course sandhill cranes in the corn fields.*

*I will definitely try and make it to the next conference in 2024!*

*(Cape May Point Invasives - continued from page 7)* A healthy forest can resist vines, but seashore forests are stressed by floods, high winds and the salt air. Hurricane Gloria and other storms had flooded the Park with salt water, killing trees and allowing too much light to reach the forest floor. Soon the forest floor was a carpet of vines. Bayberry and blueberry bushes disappeared under the vines. Since the exotics were not on the menu of deer, rabbits and native insects, any tree saplings that survived the vines, were quickly eaten.

It soon became obvious that Cape May Point State Park, world famous birding mecca was going to turn into an endless tangle of vines. The vines would not provide roosting cover for migratory owls, hawks, herons and bats or homes for the state endangered Gray Treefrogs. Something drastic had to be done. The Army Corps of Engineers had hopefully solved the flooding issues. With the trees safe from salt water, it was now time to attack the vines. Much of the forest and shrubbery on the Red Trail was saved by laboriously pulling, mowing and spraying the vines. Much of the Yellow Trail was too far gone, so in 2005, four acres were mechanically cleared. It looked very depressing, but by fall the clearing was full of goldenrod, sunflower and other native flowers. Monarchs and other pollinators benefited.

In 2006, there was more clearing to make room for 3,600 tiny pine, oak, maple and gum seedlings. By 2019, these trees were quite impressive, but still not large enough to provide serious roosting habitat. However, without volunteer efforts to keep the trees and shrubs vine free, the Red and Yellow Trail could revert to a dying mess in as little as five years. Thankfully, New Jersey Audubon has adopted some of the Park acreage along Sea Grove Avenue and is also working to control invasives. It's a lot of work, but in the end, the State Park hopes to create a diverse, native, green environment so future generations can enjoy the magic of wildlife. The Cape May Point State Park needs your support! At present, we have very few or NO volunteers! There are many, many birders here, but not many volunteer to work.

If you would like to volunteer with the invasive plant control project at the Cape May Point State Park, Email me at [mattp1202@gmail.com](mailto:mattp1202@gmail.com). When I am permitted to recruit volunteers again, I will contact you. Many thanks, stay well!

*Matt Pelligrini*

### **Can I be arrested or fined for visiting N.J. beaches, state parks under latest Murphy orders?**

By Michael Sol Warren | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com When Gov. Phil Murphy signed a new executive order directing New Jersey residents to stay inside, he noted that people would still be allowed outdoors, as long as they practiced social distancing in effort to slow the spread of the coronavirus, officially called COVID-19. After all, fresh air and exercise are recognized as vital to good mental health, and the ability to manage stress makes individuals and their communities more resilient to the coronavirus crisis, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

But on Monday, Murphy and New Jersey Attorney General Gurbir Grewal announced that the state would be more aggressive in enforcing the new social distancing guidelines, with violators potentially facing criminal charges. So what does that mean for the Garden State's outdoors?

As of March 24th, New Jersey's state parks remain open for passive activities, like hiking, though facilities like campgrounds and visitor centers have been closed. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, which oversees the state parks system, said that most visits to state parks have been by small family groups. Any large groups have been reminded to follow social distancing guidelines but have not yet been ticketed, DEP spokesman Larry Hajna told NJ Advance Media.

"The DEP continues to remind visitors to follow the six-foot social distancing guideline," Hajna said. "Reminder signs have been posted and ample park staff and law enforcement are on hand to remind visitors." Hajna did not say if state park police would begin ticketing people who violated the social distancing guidelines.

The federal government is allowing superintendents of individual national parks to decide what restrictions are appropriate for those places. In New Jersey, the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and the Sandy Hook portion of the Gateway National Recreation Area are both still open to the public, though facilities have been closed.

On Sunday — after crowds surged on popular trails the day before — Delaware Water Gap officials urged people to avoid heavily used trails and parking areas.

"Use this opportunity to explore different areas of the Park," a message on the park's Facebook page read. "Visit our website to plan hikes to lesser known areas. If you encounter a crowded trailhead, go elsewhere."

**Get outside! [CLICK HERE](#) for list of New Jersey State Parks and Forests**



Three photos by Bernie Visalli, used by permission.



#### 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 [BlubirdLJJ@gmail.com](mailto:BlubirdLJJ@gmail.com). Please include who took the photos, where and when they were taken, and a description of each photo. I will do my best to use them in an upcoming issue of "Jersey Blues." Thank you! *The Editor*



**COVID-19  
and State Parks**

**Parks are OPEN**  
for passive recreation  
with social distancing

**CLOSED / CANCELED**

- Restrooms	- Nature centers
- Park offices	- Historic buildings
- Camping	- Events & programs

**More Info**



"Who Is That Masked Bird?" photo by Lori Jo Jamieson used by permission

**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](http://www.njbluebirdsociety.org) and become a member?



**ADDED INCENTIVE TO NEW MEMBERS!** If a new member joins at either the 1-year or 3-year level, **the remainder of the year is gratis** with the following year being counted as the first full year. So, joining in April 2020 gives a new member the remainder of 2020 and the full year thru 2021 for the low cost of a 1-year membership. The 3-year membership would result in 3 full years after the remaining initial partial year. Now that you're thinking about it, why not go to [www.njbluebirdsociety.org](http://www.njbluebirdsociety.org) and become a member of both NJBBS and NABS?

### 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, 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](http://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](http://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.