



Publication

Dedicated to Bluebird Enthusiasts

The Florida Bluebird Society's mission is the conservation and protection of bluebirds and other federally protected cavity nesting bird species in North America. The FBS encourages a collaborative effort from its members and readers to provide information, ideas and articles to help collect and disseminate pertinent and relevant information pertaining to bluebirds in Florida.

The FBS is an affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society.

Nest of Contents

Page 1- Introduction

Page 2- Tales from the Trails

Page 3-4 - USA National Phenology Network

Page 5 - Bluebird Trivia

Page 5 - Welcome New Members

Page 6 - Help Wanted

Page 7 - Annual Membership

Page 8-9 – Calendar of Events

Page 9-13 - Q and A Section

Page 13-14 Thank you to FBS Contributors

Page 14-15 - FBS News and Online Information

Tales From the Trails



We would love to fly into your backyard and see pictures of your bluebirds or nesting cavity birds with informative and interesting stories you may have about them. Please keep pictures to a maximum of 5 for each submission and a short story if you have one. We may have to edit your submission to accommodate space or to complement other newsletter content for that issue.

We can use several submissions per monthly issue so we will save multiples received for future issues.

Please email your nature pictures and stories to Barbie Arms, FBS Corresponding Secretary at Floridabluebirds@yahoo.com

Our Bluebird nesting season appears to have ended down here at Foxfire Golf and CC Community in southwestern Florida in Collier County and Naples. The final count from our 57 boxes is a record setting 129 fledglings (previous record was 121) and doesn't include three Red-bellied woodpeckers that fledged from a box that was commandeered by a pair of handsome parents! Predation was a problem, as always. Some of our boxes have been placed on accessible tree trunks and we have raccoons, feral cats, squirrels, black racers, corn/rat snakes, blue jays, owls, grackles and many other avian rascals!! This year was our first with a nest cam -the camera revealed the lady of that house laid 13 eggs in three clutches that fledged 11 beauties. Observing same on our computers created much more interest among our membership and broadened our educational opportunities regarding same. Likewise, revenue contributions have been somewhat more generous! We may be able to enhance the nest sites with more expensive furniture!

Incidentally, in our 15 or so years of bluebird involvement, we have never been graced or privileged with a four clutch showing - three clutches are not unusual and two is expected. One clutch most likely represents a first time performance.

Good birding,
Bobbie and Hal Dowell

Deadline for submissions for the September issue is September 12, 2012



Photo courtesy of Jacquie Ott in Lutz, FL.

FLORIDA BLUEBIRD SOCIETY EXPANDING KNOWLEDGE ABOUT
EASTERN BLUEBIRDS THROUGHOUT FLORIDA
Florida Bluebird Society Partners with the USA National Phenology Network



The Florida Bluebird Society (FBS) and the USA National Phenology Network (NPN) have begun working together in an effort to learn more about the status of the Eastern Bluebird in the Sunshine State.

Through the efforts of Barbie Arms, representing the Florida Bluebird Society, and Theresa M. Crimmins, Partnerships & Outreach Coordinator of the USA-NPN, the two organizations have formed a partnership to post Eastern Bluebird nest box information on the USA-NPN web site.

Posting the nest box information on the USA-NPN web site will show the distribution and status of the Eastern Bluebird population in Florida.

Posting data about the Eastern Bluebird on the USA-NPN is not limited to members of the Florida Bluebird Society. In an effort to gather data about the Eastern Bluebird in Florida, any individual who monitors Eastern Bluebird nest boxes – whether one or 100 – in the Sunshine State is eligible to post information on the USA-NPN web site.

FBS encourages bluebird enthusiasts throughout Florida to share their bluebird observations. Instructions are available to sign up with USA-NPN and enter observations or retrieve data by visiting the FBS website <http://www.floridabluebirdsociety.com>

The Florida Bluebird Society was organized in August 2009 to help foster the conservation and protection of Bluebirds and other federally protected cavity nesting bird species in North America through educational programs and the collection and dissemination of pertinent and relevant information. Working with the NPN is another step in the FBS' efforts to collect more information about the Eastern Bluebird in Florida.

Phenology refers to recurring plant and animal life cycle stages, or phenophases. The USA National Phenology Network utilizes citizen scientists, government agencies, non-profit groups, educators and students to monitor the impacts of climate change on plants and animals in the United States. The network harnesses the power of people and the Internet to collect and share information, providing researchers with far more data than they could collect alone.

Additional information about becoming involved in this project is available from our website or from the USA National Phenology Website <http://www.usanpn.org>



Bluebirds bring Happiness

In December 17, 1820, John James Audubon and his entourage were traveling down the Mississippi River on one of his trips documenting the birds of America. They were about 200 miles north of New Orleans. It had been a miserable, rainy day. That afternoon they had seen *Spanish Beard* (moss) for the first time on this trip. They stopped for the night at Pointe Chico. Audubon noted in his journal, cotton, corn, peach and apple trees flourish, but sugar will not grow here. The highlights on these days were always the birds. On this day his journal entry includes, “Many red winged starlings and Many Bleu Birds – these were pleasing to me, the sweet Note of these is always welcome to Mine ears.”

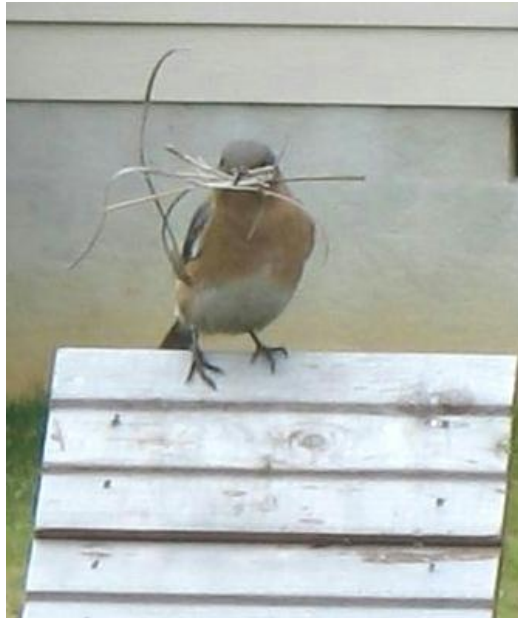
Welcome New Members



Richard Barnhart	Inverness, FL.
Ken Bell	Sanford, FL.
Louis Nipper	Hernando, FL.
Roger Williams	Hernando, FL.

We are glad you joined our nest!

HELP WANTED



The Florida Bluebird Society is looking for a few good people to help expand its efforts to conserve and protect bluebirds and other federally protected cavity nesting bird species in the Sunshine State.

Specifically, the Florida Bluebird Society is looking for a volunteer who has experience publishing a monthly newsletter. Barbie Arms, the current editor, has had to resign from her position and the August newsletter will be the last one she will be working on. We desperately need a volunteer who would take over the monthly newsletter to publicize the activities of the Florida Bluebird Society. This would include writing, editing and layout. Please email floridabluebirds@yahoo.com

The Florida Bluebird Society also is looking for avid and knowledgeable bluebird enthusiasts who would be willing to share their experiences and expertise with other interested individuals. These volunteers would have the opportunity to help provide the best available information on creating and maintaining bluebird nest boxes in Florida. Individuals serving as a regional county coordinator also would have the added opportunity of meeting other people from their area who share their interest in bluebirds.

Of course, all volunteers would be expected to comply fully with the mission and policy guidelines of the Florida Bluebird Society.

Contact email floridabluebirds@yahoo.com

It's time to Renew your Membership in the Florida Bluebird Society



As a member of the Florida Bluebird Society (FBS), you join with other individuals across Florida who share your enthusiasm and commitment to bluebirds in Florida. Organized in 2009, the FBS is dedicated to conservation and protection of bluebirds and other federally-protected cavity nesting birds in Florida.

During the past year, your membership and participation has helped FBS:

- Produce a monthly e-newsletter. Our newsletter is distributed via e-mail and includes articles regarding bluebirds. It is also used to keep you informed of our activities.
- Conduct Fall and Spring Statewide Bluebird Blitzes. The information we gather from each Blitz is helping to achieve one of our initial goals, to determine the location of bluebirds in Florida during nesting and non-nesting season.
- Form a partnership with the U.S. National Phenology Network (NPN) for the collection and analysis of bluebird nesting data.
- Comply with State and Federal regulations regarding nest monitoring. We have also drafted a Code of Ethics for the FBS.
- Expand our research on nest box temperatures, and start a project to determine the importance of cleaning nest boxes between nestings.
- Maintain our web site, floridabluebirdsociety.com, as a resource for our members and other individuals interested in bluebirds.

Your membership is vital for the continuation of the work we have started and to meet the goals for next season that will be finalized at our meeting on Saturday August 18, 2012 in Gainesville. Meeting details are in our Calendar of events and we hope you will be able to attend.

If you have questions regarding your membership please contact Faith at 407-330-4855, or via e-mail at floridabluebirdsociety@gmail.com.

Faith Jones, Membership Chair



2012 Calendar of Events

Saturday August 18th at 11:00 A.M.

FBS Pizza Party and Annual Meeting

The third annual meeting of the Florida Bluebird Society will be held on Saturday, August 18, 2012, at 11:00 A.M. The meeting will be held at Leonardo's Pizza of Millhopper, 4131 N.W. 16th Blvd., Gainesville, FL. 32605. This will be a very casual transitional-type annual meeting. During the meeting attendees will have the opportunity to provide input on the planning for future annual meetings.

The meeting will include a summary of FBS activities during the past 12 months, informal reports on preliminary studies of in-season removal of old nests and nest box temperatures and a discussion of the proposed Code of Ethics being developed by the FBS Board of Directors.

RSVP Elena at email elena.sachs@myfwc.com

or phone 352 732-1225. Here is the link to their location through mapquest

<http://www.leonardosmillhopper.com/location.html>



September 28-30 Friday, Saturday and Sunday

Attn: Lake County Members

The Florida Bluebird Society will have an exhibit at “Wings and Wildflowers”, Lake County, Florida’s inaugural birding festival. The Festival will be held September 28-30 at beautiful [Hickory Point Park](#) in Tavares. The FBS booth will be there on September 28 & 29.

If you would be willing assist at our booth, please contact Faith Jones at floridabluebirdsociety@gmail.com

We hope to see you there!



Here is a **new** Q and A section to help get your questions answered. Let us connect as members and help each other with our bluebirds!

Send your question so we can get the answer. Please let us know about any experiences you have regarding our questions. We will post your answers in the next newsletter.



Question from Bill Pennewill Do the same pair of bluebirds renest in the same nest box?

This is a question that I have asked myself numerous times when checking the nest boxes in the trail that I monitor at the Penney Retirement Community (PRC) in Penney Farms, in Clay County, just outside Jacksonville.

By the end of this season I hope to have the answer to at least one of the nest boxes through the efforts of Meret Wilson, bird bander at Tomoka State Park. Meret spoke at a meeting of the Penney Birders at PRC in March.

As part of her presentation, Meret put up some nets on the PRC to demonstrate bird banding. Meret was able to band both the male and female bluebirds nesting in one of the nest boxes. Since then both of the banded birds have been seen in the vicinity of the nest box.

At the time Meret banded both birds there was a completed nest in the box. By the end of April three eggs had hatched and the nestlings had successfully fledged.

The Scientific Collecting Permit issued by the Florida Wildlife Commission to the Florida Bluebird Society prohibits removing empty bluebird nests from a box until after the end of the season. The nest box will be monitored throughout the season to (1) see if the bluebirds will build a new nest on top of the first nest and (2) if a new nest is build, will be it be the same banded bluebirds which built the first nest?

Only time will give us answer to these two questions.

Question From Faith Jones

Have you ever heard of a successful nest box on the side of a house? Linda Neale sent in this picture.



Question From Jim Anderson

We live in a golfing community and have 20 bluebird houses scattered throughout the course. Many of the houses that we checked yesterday are empty, but there seems to be a family of small frogs taking up residency in some of them and removing them does not seem to help they tend to return. Can you tell me if frogs in the bluebird house will dissuade the birds from using that house? We do have one house that has 4 eggs but also had 5 small frogs (tree frogs?) in it. Will the birds continue with their activities or is there a way to keep the frogs out. Thanks in advance for your help. We are proud bluebird watchers.

Answer From David Kirk Naples, FL.

A solution to Jim Anderson's question would be to spread graphite grease on the poles holding the boxes, provided the poles are made of metal. This will keep out frogs as well as lizards, snakes, raccoons and other unwanted visitors.

Question From FBS

Has anyone else tried using graphite grease on their poles? If so, let us know how this works out. We're always interested in learning new ways to deter "critters" from getting into a nest box.

Question From Deb Kuhnly in Ormond Beach, FL.

Where should the pole guard actually be placed on the pole, is this too high or just right?



Question From FBS

Does anyone have any comments if this works?

This is a new twist to killing fire ant colonies. For those not familiar with Walter Reeves, he is from the University of Georgia Agriculture Department, specializing in home gardening. His television show, 'Gardening in Georgia', is on every Saturday. I know fire ants are picky eaters and any type of poison that is effective takes seven feeding steps before the queen receives it. Plus, if the bait is stored in close proximity to any petroleum or fertilizer products they won't touch it. Contact poisons that are on the market just cause the colony to move away. A developed colony can be as deep as 30 feet and spread out some 20 to 50 feet from the mound center... This was documented by studies done in the early 60's when they were first sited in South Alabama. An environmentally friendly cure for fire ants has been announced by Walter Reeves on his Georgia Gardener radio program. Testimonials that it REALLY WORKS are coming in. Simply pour two cups of CLUB SODA (carbonated water) directly in the center of a fire ant mound. The carbon dioxide in the water is heavier than air and displaces the oxygen which suffocates the queen and the other ants. The whole colony will be dead within about two days. Besides eliminating the ants, club soda leaves no poisonous residue, does not contaminate the ground water, and does not indiscriminately kill other insects and it is not harmful to your pets. Each mound must be treated individually and a one liter bottle of club soda will kill 2 to 3 mounds. Spread the word.

Question from FBS

Is it possible for bluebirds to have 4 broods in a year? This is the latest I have had seen them start a fourth nest. I usually get 3 a year and this will bring them into August. Have

you heard of reports of this happening elsewhere in Florida? Must be a good year for them.

Answer

Very unusual -- but not impossible -- for four nestings. Don't remember ever having one during years monitoring nest boxes at the Penney Retirement Community. Have a lot of three nestings.

FBS would appreciate hearing from others about their experiences with four nestings in a season -- when first nesting started and birds fledged from fourth nesting.

And don't forget to go to the FBS web page for data on entering your information on the National Phenology Network (NPN) so the FBS will begin to have data on the status of bluebirds in Florida.

Questions from Fred Vroom Tallahassee, Florida

Do you think House Wrens are a problem for bluebirds in Florida, since this is the House Wren's winter home and they are not supposed to be in Florida during the summer?

Do you think Carolina Wrens cause any of the problems of House Wrens such as puncturing bluebird eggs and throwing bluebird eggs and young chicks out of the nest?

Do you think Nuthatches or Carolina Chickadees puncture eggs or throw out young bluebird chicks?

Answer

I personally have not experienced any problems with house wrens. Despite the presence of Carolina wrens, I have no evidence of them being a problem. Concerning chickadees, on the contrary I have seen on the nest cam that bluebirds will remove chickadee from a box. When monitoring nest boxes I have seen bluebird nests built on top of chickadee nests.

Why not put it in the Q&A section of the newsletter to see what experiences others may have had. You might tell him that's what you're going to do.

Bill Pennewill FBS President

Please send your Questions and Answers to Floridabluebirds@yahoo.com



Thank You

In 2011, the Florida Bluebird Society was fortunate to have Organizational Members, Sponsors, and a few generous contributors that we would like recognize. We acknowledge and thank the following special members for their support:

BASCA, Inc., Orange Park FL (bascainc.org)
Jeff & Marj Bryant
Bruce Darnell
David Foster (in honor of)
Fred Vroom
Gainesville Garden Club
Col. Burton Walrath
Wild Birds Unlimited, St. Johns (jacksonville.wbu.com)
Wild Birds Unlimited, Tallahassee (wbutallahassee@centurylink.net)

****Reminder****

If **you** are planning to change **your** email address please inform us and send updates to Barbie. Also if you would like to receive any back issues of our newsletters please contact Barbie at email address floridabluebirds@yahoo.com

Copy and Paste these links below!

Here is a link to a great article, thank you Karl for sharing this with us.

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/humaninterest/bluebirds-abound-on-withlacoochee-state-trail-thanks-to-retirees-bird-boxes/1239845>

Here is a beautiful bluebird photo gallery with music from Debra, so lovely!

<http://youtu.be/DtUBdZ2Ky4?hd=1>

Want to communicate with the Florida Bluebird Society, or simply have a bluebird question? Please visit our website

Website <http://floridabluebirdsociety.com/>

Or

Email: floridabluebirdsociety@yahoo.com

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Florida-Bluebird-Society/146994685328275>

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Goodbye!



Photo Courtesy of Debra Kuhnly