

Florida Bluebird Society

**Dedicated to the Protection
And Conservation of Bluebirds in Florida**



Volume 3, Issue 1

January 2013

Florida Bluebird Society Initiates Grant Program

FBS takes step To Learn More About Bluebirds in Florida

The Florida Bluebird Society (FBS) has announced establishment of a research grant program to help further knowledge of Eastern Bluebirds in Florida.

Announcement of the program in December was made by Bill Pennewill, Founding President of the Florida Bluebird Society, following approval by the board of directors.

Elena Sachs, FBS recording secretary, will serve as chair of



What it's all about

the Florida Bluebird Society's Grant Committee.

All research funded by FBS Research Grants must be conducted in the State of Florida and be primarily intended to further knowledge about the ecology and conservation of Eastern Bluebirds or other federally protected cavity nesting species in Florida.

FBS Research Grants will be awarded yearly, contingent on funds available. Maximum amount awarded each year will be \$2,500.00. This award may be granted to one or several applicants, depending on the objectives and significance of the proposals submitted.

Priority will be given to applications received from individuals or organizations with a demonstrated interest and ability in conducting research beneficial to or expanding knowledge of Eastern Bluebirds in Florida. Applicants must be members of the Florida

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Bluebird Timeline

Now that the new season is about to begin, a quick look at the nesting timeline (info from Sialis.org):

- ☺ Nest building: 2-6 days;
- ☺ Egg laying: 5-7 days (5 eggs – average clutch);
- ☺ Incubation: 12-14 days; "full-time" regular incubation doesn't start until all eggs are laid;
- ☺ Fledging: 16-21 days, typically 17-18 days.

Help Wanted! FBS Board Seeks Input on Reporting Nest Box Activity

One of the primary goals of the Florida Bluebird Society is to learn more about bluebirds in Florida. To do that, the FBS needs your help. In the months ahead the FBS board of directors will be exploring various ways to collect and compile information about the breeding activities of bluebirds in Florida. The FBS board will discuss existing avenues for reporting this information, such as the Cornell NestWatch Program, or the National Phenology Network program, both of which have their advantages and disadvantages. Or perhaps there is a better way to collect and compile this information about bluebirds in Florida. In the meantime, as a preliminary step, recording the following information would be helpful:

- Summary of nest boxes for -- -- season (EX – Summary of nest boxes for 2013 season);
- Location of bluebird nest box trail (county, town, address or location; NP - Report Each Trail Separately);
- Habitat (mixed open areas such as golf course, open yard in suburban development, cemetery, park, open forest, etc.);
- Number of bluebird nest boxes in this trail (how many

boxes were placed in the trail);

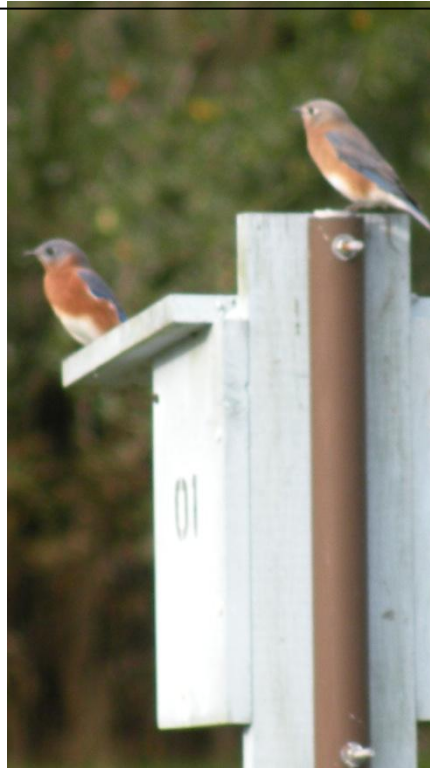
- Total number of active bluebird nest boxes in this trail (boxes utilized by bluebirds at least once by a breeding pair);
- Date of first nest attempt;
- Date first egg laid;
- Date last egg (clutch) laid;
- Total eggs laid in all nest boxes in this trail (for all active boxes);
- Number of hatchlings from nest boxes in this trail (for all active boxes);
- Number of birds fledged from all nest boxes in this trail (for all active boxes);
- Date last bird fledged from nest box in this trail;
- Total number of nestings in this trail (for all active boxes); and
- Brief comments: include especially any observation of predation or of animals eating new fledglings, or loss of nests because of other disturbances; if there was any loss due to human interference; whether birds are supplemented with food or living in an irrigated area.



Ready or Not, 2013 Nesting Season About To Take Flight

Now that the new year has arrived it's time to start thinking about the fast approaching bluebird season. Some folks have reported that bluebirds already have been checking out their nest boxes. By the end of February some birds probably will have started building nests. Last season I made my first nest check on February 27, the last Monday of the month. (I normally check my boxes each Monday throughout the season.) During that first nest check I found activity in 15 of the 39 boxes in the trail I monitor at the Penney Retirement Community in Clay County. Bluebirds had started building nests in 13 of the boxes and two of the boxes contained completed nests. This season I plan to start the weekly nest checks the third Monday in February.

Preparing for the new season really can be a continuous process flowing out of the previous season. After the last birds have fledged, a final after-season survey of the nest boxes will reveal which ones need repairs or replacement. This provides some idea of what will be required during the off-season. Then in December, after a follow-up survey, work begins in earnest on getting all the nest boxes ready for the new season. Starting early allows ample time to build and replace



boxes or to repair those boxes which may have needed an emergency application of duct tape during the previous season. In one cedar box a knot fell out of the roof and into an active nest in the middle of the season. Duct tape was placed across the resulting hole in the roof. The knot was saved and this month it was fitted back into the hole and glued in place.

When the new season begins, let us know when birds start nesting in your boxes. The Florida Bluebird Society would be interested in learning if there is a significant variation in the start of the bluebird nesting season in different parts of the state.

Georgia Professor Asking Florida Birders for Data

Dr. Renee E. Carleton, DVM, PhD, an assistant professor of biology at Berry College, Mount Berry, Ga., is asking members of the Florida Bluebird Society to assist her in collecting data needed for a scientific study aimed at determining the effects of drought on Eastern Bluebird reproduction.

Dr. Carleton, a native Floridian now teaching in Georgia, has been monitoring the Eastern Bluebird population on the Berry College campus since 2003 and has banded more than 1,200 bluebirds. She currently has 60 nest boxes on her bluebird trail. She has been collecting data on her study site in Georgia since 2003, but needs additional data from other locations in the Southeast.

She said, "Our region has experienced periods of severe drought conditions since my study began and I realized that especially during the drought of 2006-2008 my birds produced fewer eggs and fledged fewer chicks. There has to be a connection."

Dr. Carlton stressed that she

NABS, FOS Plan Meetings in 2013

The Florida Bluebird Society has been notified of two meetings of interest to birders.

The Florida Ornithological Society will hold its spring meeting in St. Petersburg on April 19-21. The meeting is being hosted by the St. Petersburg and Clearwater Audubon Societies

Mark Obmascik, author of the "The Big Year," and Greg Miller, the real life "Jack Black" character, will share their insights and obsessions with birding during the April 19 banquet.

George Fenwick, president of the American Bird Conservancy, keynote speaker at the April 21 banquet, will talk on "Birders and Bird Conservation in the Americas."

Speakers and their topics during the April 20 Afternoon Bird Identification Workshops are Dr. Karl Miller, member of the FBS Board of Directors, "Focus on Kestrels"; Dr. Peter Merritt, "Warblers in Motion"; Marianne Korosy, "Florida Scrub-Jays" and "Project Jay Watch;" Greg Miller, "Bird Songs and Birding by Ear";

Dr. Jerry Jackson, "Woodpeckers and Woodland Birds"; and Adam Kent, "Sparrows."

The meeting will include field trips, reports of breeding birds from the field and an update on Breeding Bird Atlas 2.

The North American Bluebird Society will hold its 36th annual meeting in Aiken, SC, on October 3-5.

Theme of the conference being hosted by the South Carolina Bluebird Society is "The Art of Bluebirding." The conference will include speakers, tours and field trips. Among scheduled speakers and their topics are Dr. Whit Gibbons, Professor Emeritus, University Of Georgia, Savannah River Ecology Lab, "Bluebirds, Reptiles & Amphibians Have a Lot in Common"; Dr. Harry Shealy, Professor of Biology, University of South Carolina - Aiken, "How Nonprofits Can Help Conserve Wildlife Habitat"; and Bet Zimmerman, Certified Environmental Professional, "Managing Challenges: House Sparrows, House Wrens & Paper Wasps."

Georgia Professor Asking Florida Birders for Data

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would very much appreciate receiving data from individuals monitoring 10 or more nest boxes. She said data should be submitted for individual nest boxes and include the following: Box number, number of boxes, date nest initiated, number of eggs laid, number of eggs hatched, and number of hatchlings which fledged. If a box is used more than once, each nesting attempt should be listed separately. Also, if there is a nest failure, the cause should be reported, if known.

Individuals interested in sharing the reproductive data from their nest boxes with Dr. Carleton should contact her at rcarleton@berry.edu.

Although not bluebird related, a nesting pair of bald eagles on the Berry College campus can be seen on a live feed at www.berry.edu/eaglecam.



BSCA – dedicated to improving the quality of life for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities in Northeast Florida

Two organizations – BASCA and the Gainesville Garden Club – have renewed their memberships in the Florida Bluebird Society. This month the FBS is recognizing BASCA’s continued support at the Organizational level. The second organization – the Gainesville Garden Club - - will be recognized in a future issue of the newsletter.



A GROWING PROGRAM – With everyone pitching in to help build the greenhouse, the program has become a favorite where individuals learn to plant, nurture and cultivate a wide variety of plants.

This is BASCA’s story.

Housing for special needs individuals and housing for bluebirds – both are provided by BASCA.

BASCA is a non-profit organization founded in 1994 by Jacksonville area parents concerned about a quality of life for their children with developmental and intellectual disabilities. During the 18 ensuing years BASCA has grown into a multifaceted organization providing living, working, educational, social and recreational opportunities for special needs children and adults.

BASCA’S four residential homes are intended to create a safe, caring, family environment. Live-in staff ensures day-to-day supervision

and guidance with decision-making and life skills. Residents in the homes can enjoy family dinners, group outings, attending church on Sunday, or just relaxing and enjoying their favorite TV programs in the evening. Individuals living in residences receive transportation to and from work, ADT program, and other non-residential activities, such as the “Miracle League” special baseball league, or “Club Arc,” which provides a time for friends to just “hang out” and have a good time.

BASCA also provides a number of “learning experiences” through its “Life

Skills Development Services.” This includes life skills classroom training, supported employment, and supported living, which allows individuals to live in their own homes or apartments.

Two other major facets of the Life Skills Development Services are the manufacturing center and the green house center, both of which are designed to teach employable skills and also produce items which can be sold to the public.

In the Greenhouse Program staff members and individuals

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FBS Grant Program Spurs Bluebird Research

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Bluebird Society at the time the grant proposal is submitted. The sole decision on awarding the grants will be

the prerogative of the Florida Bluebird Society. The Florida Bluebird Society's decision will be final and binding.

The grants will be for a one-year period but may be renewed yearly for extended research projects, depending on the funds available.

Individuals With Developmental, Intellectual Disabilities Receive A Helping Hand at BASCA

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work side-by-side planting, nurturing and cultivating a wide variety of plants.

In the "Custom Creations" manufacturing center more capable individuals learn to use specially adapted power tools fitted with safety equipment which allows them to build wood products without being able to access the moving parts that could be harmful to them. While learning potentially employable skills, individuals also are creating bluebird nest boxes built from plans provided by the Florida Bluebird Society. They also make a host of other wood items, such as bird feeders and benches and tables.

More information on BASCA, or to purchase a bluebird nest box or



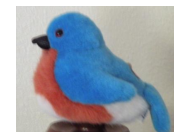
BASCA front-opening Bluebird Nest Box

other items can be obtained from John Cone, BASCA President and Executive Director, at johncone@bascainc.org.

During the initial year of the program all proposals will be due by February 15, 2013. The Florida Bluebird Society will announce the awarding of the grants by March 15, 2013. Copies of the grant guidelines, application forms and Grantee Letter of Agreement are available on the FBS Web Site.

(floridabluebirdsociety.com)

The Florida Bluebird Society was organized in 2009 to foster the conservation and protection of Eastern Bluebirds and other federally protected cavity nesting bird species in North America through educational programs and the collection and dissemination of pertinent information.



The Florida Bluebird Society is a registered IRS 501(c)(3) non-profit organization
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