

The Florida Bluebird Society

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



Volume 3, Issue 4

August 2013

Participants Label Regional Meeting "Smashing Success"

The Florida Bluebird Society's initial Area Meeting in Orange Park Aug. 3 will serve as a prototype for similar meetings expected to be scheduled throughout the state.

Eighteen bluebird enthusiasts attending the meeting put a resounding "stamp of approval"

on the opportunity to meet, share ideas and experiences, ask questions, and display their photos. At the end of the meeting they overwhelmingly voted to hold another area meeting in February, prior to the start of the 2014 nesting season.

There was no formal agenda for the meeting and only one focus -- bluebirds. That was enough to spur spirited conversations throughout the morning. Participants had the opportunity to share stories about their bluebirds, Ce Worley entertained the group with photos, including a nest with five white eggs, and Kym Belvin shared photos of bluebirds nesting in a gourd in her backyard.



A BLUEBIRD DAY - Bonnie Foster, left, and Ann Harwood-Nuss attend Regional and Annual meeting of Florida Bluebird Society at Orange Park Library on August 3rd.

This also seemed to be a productive year for bluebirds in northeast Florida. Most reported three nestings this year

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Regional Meeting Given "Stamp of Approval"

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and two members reported having four nestings.

More Questions Than Answers

With folks attending being experienced bluebirders, questions covered about every imaginable facet, with many of us knowing we would be doing some more research when we returned home.

Questions ranged from "What is the molting process of bluebirds?" (the subject of a future newsletter article) to "Can you have honeybee hives near a bluebird nest box?" (Anyone had any experience with that!) Has anyone noted predation of the fledglings by crows? These are just a sampling of topics discussed during the meeting.

How to "Snake-Proof" a Box

There also was interest in finding a "fool-proof" way to deter predators -- particularly snakes -- and fire ants from getting into a nest box and in the use of nest cams.

In reporting members' suggestions, the FBS does not endorse any product. Information is available on the Internet for the products mentioned below.

When the topic of keeping snakes out of nest boxes was raised, some members reported success with Liquid Fence Snake Repellent. Use of food-grade Diatomaceous Earth (Red Earth) was suggested for combating insect problems, such as fire ants. It is composed of natural ingredients and reportedly



THIS IS HOW IT'S DONE - Mike Esposito, of BASCA, shows Ce Worley, left, and Faith Jones, FBS Treasurer, one of the many jigs used to construct products, such as bluebird nest boxes, by developmentally handicapped individuals in an injury-free workshop.

effective for up to nine months. One member warded off insects by placing Red Earth in the bottom of a nest box and around the base of the support pole. One downside on using Red Earth is that rain washes it away.

Use of Nest Cams

Use of nest cams, an excellent way to observe what is occurring inside a nest box without opening the box and disturbing the nestlings, was discussed. The Hawk Eye Nature Cam is being used by some FBS members. Word of caution: watching a nest cam can become addictive as well as being educational! It was noted that because of unforeseen circumstances the two nest

cams at the Penney Retirement Community posted on the FBS' web page were "down" this season. They are expected to be operational in 2014.

The second part of the meeting included a brief overview of what the FBS is doing. Two areas stressed were importance of the twice-yearly statewide bluebird blitz and the newly initiated seasonal summary. Both will help the FBS gain a better knowledge of the distribution and breeding status of bluebirds in Florida.

It was noted that the blitz has a practical side. A California resident inquired about

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August is the month when all FBS annual memberships come due. Thanks to all of you who have already renewed your memberships.

We give special thanks to our members who have joined or renewed at the following levels:

Sponsor

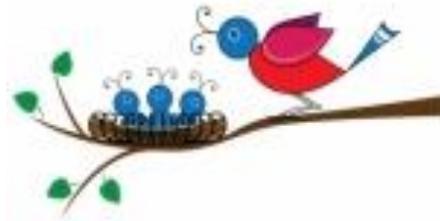
David Foster
Dick Yeager

Patron

Janet Baksh
Candace Bridgewater
Bruce Darnell
Ann Harwood-Nuss
Jean Middleton

Organization

Wild Birds Unlimited
of Julington Creek
450 SR 13 N., St. Johns



Welcome to the Nest

The FBS extends a warm welcome to the following new members

Robyn Sieron	Jacksonville
Anna Hadrava	Jacksonville
Michael Lamoree	Chiefland
Bob Sutter	Tampa
Pat & Lee Yoder	Penney Farms



If you have not yet renewed, please send your annual dues to:

Faith Jones, FBS Treasurer
763 Mallard Dr.
Sanford FL 32771

This year you also can join or renew your FBS membership on PayPal.

If you did not receive a renewal notice, please notify us at floridabluebirdsociety@gmail.com

Area Meeting Features Bluebirds, Pizza and Field Trip

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bluebirds in Collier County. The chart on the FBS webpage showed that during every blitz bluebirds were reported in Collier County.

Reminder: The FBS 2013 Statewide Fall Bluebird Blitz will be held Friday, Nov. 8, and Saturday, Nov. 9. Check the FBS web site (floridabluebirdsociety.com).

With the present nesting season winding down, members were reminded to complete the seasonal summary previously emailed to them and emailed to members along with this newsletter. The form is to be added to the FBS home page.

There were a variety of positive responses when the FBS asked what more it could be doing to help its members. Answers included adding clickable links to other bluebird sites on the FBS home page, increased participation at nature-related events, more publicity, and an active Facebook page.

Robyn Sieron accepted the latter two challenges and will take over the FBS Facebook page. She also offered to use her contacts at a local TV station to get the FBS some air time in the Spring.

After a pizza break at a local restaurant the meeting was capped by a tour of BASCA, a non-profit organization serving developmentally handicapped

individuals (see article in January 2013 FBS Newsletter). Members toured the impressive injury-free workshop BASCA has created. Using specially created jigs, individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities can saw and assemble an assortment of wood products, such as bluebird nest boxes created to FBS specifications, without fear of hurting themselves. BASCA is a successful tribute to the vision and creativity of John Cone, executive director, and a "must visit" for anyone in the area.

Interested in meeting other bluebirders in your area? If so, contact Bill Pennewill at billsbluebirds@yahoo.com, who will work with you in planning a meeting of past, present (and future!) FBS members. A "core" county will be selected and invitations sent to all past and present FBS members in that and the surrounding counties. Members also can invite non-member bluebird enthusiasts to the area meeting.

FBS Elects 2 Board Members During 2013 Annual Meeting

The Florida Bluebird Society named two new board members during the 2013 Annual Meeting held in conjunction with the area meeting in the Orange Park Public Library on August 3rd.

Named to serve "at-large" on the board were Cheri Martin-Spray, of Inverness, and Sandra Zubrowski, of Middleburg.

The meeting ended the tenure of Elena Sachs as Recording Secretary. Elena had been with the FBS since its inception in 2009 and will be greatly missed. Elena was the calm voice of reason who could provide useful insights when the board was struggling with difficult issues. She will be

hard to replace.

Zubrowski indicated an interest in following up on the suggestion made during the meeting that the FBS pursue the possibility of increasing its presence at community activities and events and perhaps "piggy-backing" with other groups to help spur interest in the FBS' mission to conserve and protect bluebirds.

Martin-Spray will assume the task of helping to coordinate the FBS' teleconferences.

Bill Pennewill was re-elected FBS President for another one-year term.





MEETIN' AND EATIN' AT AREA MEETING - In bottom photo Bill Pennewill works the projector and Ce Worley discusses her bluebird pix during the FBS' first area meeting in Orange Park Library on Aug. 3. It wasn't all bluebirds, as folks in top photo enjoy their pizza before BASCA tour.



A POWERFUL BLUEBIRD - Bob Sutter, of Tampa, a new FBS member, submitted this photo of a bluebird which built a nest in a power box on the Hillsborough River, less than a mile from downtown Tampa.



NAME THAT EGG - Debi Stinchcomb is asking if this is a cowbird egg. This unusual egg -- just about the size of a bluebird egg but cream colored with brown spots -- was found during the third nesting.

BLUEBIRD ON HORMONES - David Williamson, of Geneva, sent the FBS this sequence of pix showing unusually large nestling, which is about 12 days old in bottom photo.

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