

# The Florida Bluebird Society

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



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## Nest Box Web Cam Project

Our plan for a live feed on our website from a nest box this season is progressing on schedule. Ken Bell, our Web Master and technical director for this project, has located a camera that should fit our needs.

After trying to work with a standard computer, Ken decided instead to build Raspberry Pi. No, a Raspberry Pi is not something edible, it is a tiny computer designed for use when learning to program computers. He then decided to make this an educational opportunity and enlisted the help of two students, Matthew and Lindsey.



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## Papa's Bluebird House

By Wanda Canaday

Papa, known to others simply as "JH" worked and retired as a truck driver for the company now known as Smurfit Stone Container Corp. He lived on the company land as caretaker of their pine tree nursery research and development. After purchasing his own mobile home he was allowed to move it to their land and live on the property. Smurfit Corp, or possibly someone from this company wanted to know about the environment and especially bluebirds. So, as an experiment Papa built two bluebird nest boxes and mounted them on poles attached to the fence surrounding the property. He built those houses in the early 1990's. Our daughter, his

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## Fall 2016 Statewide Bluebird Blitz Results

In an effort to determine where bluebirds find food and shelter during the non-breeding season, the Florida Bluebird Society has conducted a Blitz every fall for the last seven years. We are also interested in determining where non-breeding bluebirds can be found in Florida.

Over a two-day period last November, we received reports of bluebirds in 41 of Florida's 68 counties. We had 183 reports documenting 638 bluebirds.

Looking at the map of our results, one wonders if there really were not any bluebirds in those missing counties. Or, is it more likely there was just no one looking for them.

Our complete Blitz data is found on pages 3 and 4.

November 2016  
Statewide Bluebird Blitz Results



Find us on:  
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## Total number of bluebirds reported by county

County	2010 Fall	2011 Spring	2011 Fall	2012 Spring	2012 Fall	2013 Spring	2013 Fall	2014 Spring	2014 Fall	2015 Spring	2015 Fall	2016 Spring	2016 Fall
Alachua	19	4	49	11		27	55	18	35	26	25	26	68
Baker				1	2					2			2
Bay			1		4	13	7	6	3	10	21	10	6
Bradford									5	11			
Brevard						4		1		9	3	1	7
Broward													
Calhoun										9		2	
Charlotte		4	4	4		7	10	12	7	9	6	19	7
Citrus				22	3	32	13	38	51	62	23	10	7
Clay	37	26	6	50	41	28	41	28	46	55	13	40	22
Collier	6	18	8	9	7	21	36	12	6	30	24	4	11
Columbia	75	1	28		58			0			5		4
DeSoto								1					
Dixie			14	1						2			
Duval	11	31	23	9	11	30	70	26	44	75	55	41	50
Escambia	11	55	14	1	21	14	19	6	6	8	20	9	42
Flagler	9		1	5		1	2	7		5		7	6
Franklin	1			3		4	1			9	2	9	18
Gadsden							1	9		18		4	1
Gilchrist	4		52							7			
Glades				5	3								
Gulf							3						
Hamilton							3	4					
Hardee					5	3		2		2			
Hendry			2										2
Hernando	11	23		4	20	12	5	10	30	41	49	14	30
Highlands		5	23	38	22	13		48		18			4
Hillsborough	35	84	21	6	18	18	15	19	103	32	41	17	22
Holmes										8		3	
Indian River						2							
Jackson			6			4	3	1	16	3	3		
Jefferson	3	5			5	1	1		0	3	2	3	7
Lafayette										13			
Lake	93	59	33	8	13	5	58	39	17	48	37	22	28
Lee		1	1		19	3	6	5		12	1	8	8
Leon	36	49	15	16	26	20	15	11	36	41	29	22	47
Levy	3	4	16		12	7	1	5		4		9	
Liberty								2	1	4		2	
Madison	1									2			
Manatee	1	2				1	1	2			2	2	5
Marion	10	6	64	52	26		42	2	12	13	14	6	8
Martin		2		11		3		1	0	1		1	
Miami-Dade	3				2	2		1	3	1		1	
Monroe							1						
Nassau	14	12	4	1	2	23	10	1		2	2		4
Okaloosa	33	1	8	6	37	7	22	3	25	12	13	13	18
Okeechobee						1							
Orange	31	28	3	16	4	6	5	17	2	18	12	6	18
Osceola	10	2	5	5	10	14	1	4	4	12	6		6

Continued on Page 4

*Continued from Page 03***Total number of bluebirds reported by county**

County	2010	2011	2011	2012	2012	2013	2013	2014	2014	2015	2015	2016	2016
	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall
Palm Beach					2								
Pasco	79	13	20	102	11	12	52	40		47	38	22	58
Pinellas	25	4	30	55	8	7	32	1	20	29	10	17	17
Polk	14	14	3	22	5	5	14	11	5	15	1		8
Putnam						2	6			4			
Santa Rosa	31	10	15	2	16	3	17	4	4	17	23	4	19
Sarasota	3	3		4		7		3	7	3		5	10
Seminole		7		4	3	9	24	5	16	2	2	3	2
St. Johns		16	4	2		13	3	14	15	11	13	8	22
St. Lucie													
Sumter		32	9		16		2	2	13	51	20	6	5
Suwannee		2	8					9	1	2	9		
Taylor						4		3		6		2	4
Union													
Volusia			26	10	8	1	1	4	1	3	10	1	9
Wakulla	2	3	1	3	1	7		1	3	2	6	2	14
Walton		1		8	12	13		2	2	7	7	1	5
Washington			1			2			3			2	7
<b>Total # Reported</b>	<b>611</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>598</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>864</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>638</b>

**Nest Box Web Cam Project***Continued from Page 1*

With instruction from Ken, Matthew and Lindsey build the Raspberry Pi, connected it to the camera, and installed the camera in the enlarged nest box constructed by Shawn and Cheri Martin Spray. Next step is testing the link between his equipment and our web site. The final step will be installation of the nest box and hookup at Fern Kinion's in Tampa.

*Camera attached to Raspberry Pi***Share Your Bluebird Story**

Have you had an interesting interaction with bluebirds that you are willing to share? If so, we would like to hear about it. Please send your story with any related photos [floridabluebirdsociety@gmail.com](mailto:floridabluebirdsociety@gmail.com).

If so, can you help us?

In order to hold a Regional Meeting we need someone who lives in the region to work with the Board in finding a suitable location. We have meeting rooms at libraries usually work well.

If you are willing to assist with such a meeting, or would like more details, please send an email to [floridabluebirdsociety@gmail.com](mailto:floridabluebirdsociety@gmail.com).

**Regional Meeting in Your Area**

The Board of Directors of FBS is very interested in holding regional meetings around Florida. We feel this is the best way to spread the word about the bluebirds we all love.

**Would you like to have a FBS Regional Meeting near your home?**

**Did You Know?**

American bluebirds are in the genus *Sialia*. They get their name from the Greek *sialis*, meaning "a kind of bird". You would have thought they could have come up with something more interesting than that for such a beautiful and charismatic species.



## Papa's Bluebird House

*Continued from Page 01*

granddaughter was still quite young and he'd take her by the hand and they'd walk to the houses and check for activity. It was a special event, and much ado was made over it at every visit. I recall it so clearly all these years later.

Once he even had baby bluebirds and he was so proud, we all went out there to have a glance at the new life. Then year after year countless bluebirds nested in that box. Papa passed away in 2002.



One afternoon, at my sister-in-law's home I thought up the idea of going out to the property to see if those two bird houses were still there. We jumped in the car almost immediately. We were delighted to find the houses where Papa had placed them.

The poles slid easily up off the fence mounts. We took both of those bird houses, one for her and one for me. I chose the one that I remembered first ever seeing new bluebird hatchlings. After Papa's passing, his home was to be removed and the company land was eventually sold. The bird houses would have been removed along with the fence and most likely trashed.



*November 2015 The addition of a woodpecker guard became necessary*



Today, I still have that bird house made lovingly by Papa's gentle hands. It is priceless. Papa was very special to us all, my father-in-law for 25 years before his passing, and the only real father I've ever had.



The bird house (I prefer to refer to it as a home vs. a box) still remains today in our yard in the same location I placed it back in 2002. It is worn, and it is raggedy, more

like a bird shack...oh, but the bluebirds still love it. It is home.

Over the years I've done minor repairs, the cedar wood he used is still in great condition on the inside away from the elements. The outside is in poor condition. I think often I need to replace it, and I'll know when it's time. When that time comes, I'll keep the bird house, I'll treat and seal the wood and bring it indoors possibly making it into a lamp or something useful. Papa was a very special person to me. The birdhouse is the only material possession I have that represents



him. Not a time I look at that house do I not think of him. I'm so thankful for him being a part in my life.



*October 2016 – Papa's Birdhouse Survived Hurricane Matthew*

## 6 Steps to turn your yard into a Sanctuary For Birds

Birds need your help! Populations of many kinds of birds are declining. Habitat loss and degradation, disease, collisions with man-made structures and a host of other factors contribute to these declines. You can help by turning your yard into a sanctuary for birds.

**Here are six steps you can take to make the future brighter for birds:**

### 1. Put out the welcome mat!

Habitat loss is the biggest challenge facing birds. You can help by making your neighborhood more attractive to birds by landscaping with native plants that provide natural food sources, shelter from the elements and predators, and nesting sites. Providing feeders, nest boxes and water also benefits birds. To learn how, stop by your local wild bird shop or garden retailer.

### 2. Prepare a proper menu.

Providing the appropriate foods year round will attract more birds to your yard and help ensure that they have a safe and nutritious diet. Refill feeders regularly with food desired by birds in your area. To pick the best menu, stop by your local wild bird shop.

### 3. Keep feed and feeding areas clean.

To help reduce the possibility of disease transmission in birds, clean feeders and feeding areas at least once a month. Plastic and metal feeders can go in the dishwasher, or rinse these and other styles with a 10% solution of bleach and warm water. Scrub birdbaths with a brush and replace water every three to five days to discourage mosquito reproduction. Rake up and dispose of seed hulls under feeders. Moving feeders periodically helps prevent the buildup of waste on the ground. Keep seed and foods dry; discard food that smells musty, is wet or looks moldy. Hummingbird feeders should be cleaned every three to five days, or every other day in warm weather. It's good hygiene to wash your hands after filling or cleaning feeders.

### 4. Birds and chemicals don't mix.

Many pesticides, herbicides and fungicides are toxic to birds; avoid using these near areas where birds feed, bathe or rest. Always follow directions provided by chemical manufacturers. For additional information visit your garden retailer.

### 5. Keep cats away from birds.

Scientists estimate that cats probably kill hundreds of millions of birds each year in the U.S. This is a big problem, but it's easy to fix. Many people who enjoy feeding birds also love cats. The best solution is to keep cats indoors. They will lead longer, healthier lives, and your yard will be safer for birds. Install feeders in areas not readily accessible to cats or install fences or other barriers to help keep stray cats from feeder areas. Collar bells, declawing and keeping cats well fed will not solve the problem.

### 6. Reduce window collisions.

Collisions with glass windows kill millions of wild birds every year. Depending on their size and location, some windows reflect the sky or vegetation, and birds are fooled into thinking they can fly through them. To eliminate this problem identify windows that cause collisions (typically larger, reflective windows, those near the ground, or those that "look through" the house). Attaching decorative decals or other decorations to the outside surface of the glass can reduce reflections. *[Attaching dryer cloths or pieces of cheese cloth to outside of the window creates motion that will deter birds.]* Feeder birds fleeing predators are vulnerable to window collisions. If this is happening at your house, consider moving feeders within three feet of the windows so that birds cannot accelerate to injury level speeds while flying away. Problem windows can be covered with a screen so that birds bounce off, rather than hit the glass.

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[www.backyardbirdcare.org](http://www.backyardbirdcare.org)



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