

The Florida Bluebird Society

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



Volume 8, Issue 2

2018

FBS Annual Meeting



There was a good turnout for our Annual Meeting which was held on August 25th in Penney Farms. Ken Custer, Florida Bluebird Society (FBS) President, welcomed everyone. After introductions, he shared information from Cornell's NestWatch program. As FBS encourages members to submit their nestbox data to NestWatch, it was appropriate to share some of their

statistics. Did you know the Eastern Bluebird is NestWatch's most reported species? Or, that Florida is second only to Texas in the number of nests reported? Visit <https://nestwatch.org> to find the information that was discussed and to submit data from your nestbox.

Dr. Brett Moyer provided an update on his bluebird projects at The Bolles School in Jacksonville. Bluebirds are now part of life on all three campuses, and have been incorporated into the teaching of art and science. This is a link to a short video that was showed at the meeting. <https://www.facebook.com/bluebirdpharmacy/videos/2124884457774979/>

Last year Bill Pennewill gave a presentation on the bluebird trail at Penney Retirement Community. A number of nestboxes on the campus that had been productive, were not used in recent years. A reason for their lack of use could not be determined. Moving the boxes was considered, but the position of only one was slightly altered prior to the 2018 nesting season. Much to his surprise and bewilderment, the nestboxes that had gone unused in recent years were used and productive during the 2018 nesting season.

The final presentation was the debut of the FBS 2019 Calendar.. As an educational tool, we wanted to produce a calendar that would not only contain pictures of bluebirds, but would have information about FBS and monthly information of anticipated bluebird activity. A photo contest for images to be considered for inclusion in the calendar was organized by Rhonda Ockay via our Facebook page. There were over 100 entries. Rhonda showed the cover photo, the twelve photos chosen for each month, and of few of the smaller photos used in the calendar. As the photos were projected Rhonda, or the photographer, explained how the image was captured. See Photographers Describe their Calendar Photos on page 5 of this issue.

Congratulations to our three door prize winners, and our gratitude is extended to Jan Nichols who painted and donated the wooden bluebird plaques that were used for door prizes.



MEMBERSHIP STARTS WITH ME.

Here is how you can renew....

Credit card payments can be made via the membership section of our website, floridabluebirdsociety.org

OR

Mail a check to: Florida Bluebird Society, 763 Mallard Drive, Sanford FL 32771

Membership Levels:

\$15 Regular	\$100 Sponsor
\$25 Family	\$500 Life
\$50 Patron	\$ 10 Senior

We are Thankful for Our Special Members

The Florida Bluebird Society thanks the following individuals and organizations for their generous financial support.

Life Member

Madison E. Alderson - Williston
Joanne Heinrich - Jacksonville
Louis Nipper – Hernando (dec.2017)
Pam Overmyer - Panama City
Richard Yeager—Penney Farms

2018-2019

Sponsors

Susan Beittel - Sanibel
Candace Bridgewater - Fernandina Beach
David Foster - Jacksonville
Shannon Joyce - Clermont
Michael Singer – Hernando

Patrons

Ulla Benny - Gainesville
Allison Marsak - Ponte Verde
Cheri Martin-Spray – Inverness
Nancy Stokes – Fleming Island

Organizations

Native Nurseries of Tallahassee, Inc.



WELCOME

NEW MEMBERS

Patricia Bjorling	Jacksonville
John Black	Land O Lakes
Jim Burke	Colfax, NC
Kathleen Clavenna	Healdsburg, CA
Brinda Curran	Beverly Hills
Lorene Custer	Cutchogue, NY
Carol Fitzpatrick	Lake Suzie
Margaret Fox	Jacksonville
Nathan Gant	Chuluota
Dee Hall	Green Cove Springs
Philip & Karen Lemmons	Middleburg
Vickie & Jamie McNair	Middleburg
Allison Marshak	Point Verde
Laurie Marvin	Jacksonville
Jim Parham	Lakeland
Roseann Santore	Hudson
Michael Singer	Hernando
Karen Stansell	Sun City
Elizabeth Stiles	Fernandina Beach



Welcome New FBS Board Member



Jim Nichols accepted the nomination, and was elected to our Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting. Jim is a semi-retired Senior Engineering professional with over thirty years of experience with Texas Instruments, Solid Systems Inc. and most recently D.O.D. contracting in Virginia Beach with Special Operations Forces. Jim with his wife Jan have lived in Palm Coast since 2004. Jan is a retired Flagler County school administrator. The couple has twin grandsons in Oklahoma.

Jim's hobbies include golf. His volunteer work includes piloting for Angle Flight Mission, webmaster of the Blue Knights Law Enforcement motorcycle club, and now he happily adds Director of the Florida Bluebird Society.

FBS Spreads Bluebirding

In August, Joanne Heinrich, FBS Vice President, gave a presentation to the HA Chapter of PEO, a philanthropic organization that exists to be a source of encouragement and support for women to realize their potential in whatever worthwhile endeavor they choose, by providing scholarships to educate women. Joanne's well-received presentation included information on the importance of birds (bluebirds in particular), their economic impact, and the joy of an active nestbox in your yard.



Joanne Heinrich, Katelyn Bruno, & Phyllis

Upcoming Programs:

Wednesday November 14 at 10:00 a.m. in Jacksonville, Florida 32204

Dr. Brett Moyer will be the guest speaker at a combined circles meeting of the Garden Club of Jacksonville to be held on Wednesday November 14 at 10:00 a.m. in their facility located at 1005 Riverside Avenue, Jacksonville, Florida 32204. Dr. Moyer's program, How to Attract Eastern Bluebirds, will focus on the needs of bluebird and things we can do assist them. He will also discuss various bluebird projects at The Bolles School in Jacksonville. <https://gardenclubofjacksonville.org/>

Sunday December 9 at 2:00 pm in Sanford, Florida 32771

An informational program about bluebirds will be presented by Faith Jones at a meeting of the Seminole Audubon Society on Sunday December 9 at 2:00 p.m. in the meeting room of the North Branch of the Seminole County Public located at 150 N. Palmetto Avenue in historic downtown Sanford. The program will touch on the importance of birds, history of bluebirds in America, and what you can do to attract them. The meeting is free and open to the public. <http://seminoleaudubon.org/programs/>



Time to Clean and Repair Nestboxes

Nesting season has ended and now is the time to prepare for next season. We suggest you not only clean out your boxes, but take a good look at them. Do you see any damage? Are there any cracks that need to be sealed with caulk? If you see anything about your box or predator guards that might pose a hazard to birds now is the time to make repairs.

After any necessary repairs, return your nestboxes to it place. Bluebirds often will take shelter in the nestbox during cold weather.

The Charming Chickadee

By Rhonda Ockay

The Carolina Chickadee is a favorite of backyard birders and can be seen throughout the southeast region of the United States. This small bird wins us over with their big personalities, loud vocalization, and impressive acrobatics. When chickadees can't be seen flitting about tree branches, they are easily identified by their familiar "chicka-dee-dee-dee" call and "feebee-feebee" song. They readily use bird feeders and are known to "grab and go", taking one or two seeds then flying to a nearby tree branch to pound away on their treat. Their diet consists of seeds, nuts and insects. They are often seen foraging in mixed flocks with the equally endearing Tufted Titmouse. Carolina Chickadees have many cousins in other regions including the lookalike Black-Capped Chickadee, Mountain Chickadee, and Chestnut-Backed Chickadee.



Carolina Chickadee

Ken Schmidt

Similar to our Eastern Bluebirds, Carolina Chickadees are native cavity nesters and will use natural or artificial cavities. Because of their size, chickadees will typically lose territorial disputes with other species and are often evicted from their nesting cavity by bluebirds or the non-native and often deadly House Sparrow. If you have had the pleasure of being a chickadee landlord, you have seen the great detail that goes into nest construction and how attentive both parents are to their young. I have two nestboxes in my yard. Last year, after a brief territorial dispute, bluebirds nested in one at the same time chickadees nested in the other. This year however, the bluebirds evicted the chickadees from the nestbox and built a full nest over top of the partially completed Chickadee nest as can be seen in the picture. I added a hole reducer to my second nestbox, however the Chickadees were no longer interested in competing with the Bluebirds and moved on.



Bluebird nest over partially completed Chickadee nest

Rhonda Ockay

Although Chickadees are common, their numbers have declined by 17% over the past 50 years according to the North American Breeding Survey. Therefore, we must take care to protect our native chickadees the same way we do bluebirds. As much as we love it when a bluebird chooses our nestbox, we must be equally enthusiastic about chickadees. I have overheard bluebird enthusiasts complain that chickadees are nesting in their nestbox rather than bluebirds, and some will even remove the chickadee nest to make room for the bluebirds. Chickadees are a native species and are federally protected, so under no circumstances should their nest be removed for this purpose. Chickadees only have one clutch per year, so the same nesting cavity may be still used by multiple species. The same principals and protocol apply to monitoring chickadee nests, and we recommend mounting the nestbox on a pole with a predator baffle to decrease the risk of predation by snakes and raccoons. To invite both species to nest in your yard, a second box may be added with a smaller entrance hole of 1.25" to reserve one box for chickadees and the other for bluebirds. If non-native House Sparrow nest or eggs are seen, it should be removed and destroyed as House Sparrows will kill bluebirds and chickadees for their nesting cavity. House Sparrows are a non-native invasive species with no protection in the United States.

We love both bluebirds and chickadees, and invite you to share your stories and pictures

of both species with us!

Reminder: *The Mission of Florida Bluebird Society is 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.*



Seven chickadee eggs

Herb Unerlich



Newly hatched chickadee with eggs

Kelly Sandefur



Adult chickadee with hatchlings

Jennifer Day



Nestlings close to fledging have plumage similar to adults

Steve Galli



Photographers Describe their Calendar Photos

Our calendar cover photo was taken by David Kinneer of Fredericksburg, VA. "I made a long, narrow trough out of heavy paper and taped it to the far side of the lens, then put some meal worms in it. I was wanting to make something interesting to use with a powerpoint talk I was to give at the Texas Bluebird Society Spring Kickoff a few months later." This was one of many taken that day.

January - Andrea Nagy of Avon, OH. "I am so grateful you liked my photo. It was taken on Thanksgiving Day 2017. I went for a morning walk and the bluebirds were everywhere at my favorite park. I took over 50 shots that day of the bluebirds eating berries

Copies of the calendar are available via our website, Facebook page, or by mailing your donation to FBS c/o Jones, 763 Mallard Dr., Sanford FL 32771.

and flying back and forth into the shrubs and trees.

February – Rhonda Ockay of Fleming Island, FL.

"I took this photo in early February 2017. She was a first year female that was born in the very same nestbox she was starting to build in. I happened to be sitting on my patio when nest building began and was able to snap a few pictures."

March – Wade Kincaid of Ocala, FL.

"I got lucky. I had just put out some mealworms for the bluebirds. Mom and Dad just happened to grab some at the same time and landed on the roof of their house briefly, before feeding their babies. For once, my camera was in the right spot and this is the result!"

April – Kelly Sandefur of Watkinsville, Georgia captured this image in Niceville, Florida

"While on vacation in Florida, I noticed this natural cavity and a second one nearby so I decided to monitor them and take pictures. This group fledged the very next day. Sadly the other nest, which was slightly lower to the ground, was taken by a snake."

June – Sam Toscano of Spring, TX.

"This was taken while the hatchlings were growing. Papa was busy bringing food back and forth to the nest. Each time he finished the delivery, he'd fly to the branch. This provided an excellent opportunity for me to capture images of him landing, sitting and taking off."

July – Steve Liffmann of Salem, NH

"I have a pair of Bluebirds that have been year round residents in my yard for several years. This particular shot was taken while the male Eastern Bluebird was taking a bath. I was able to catch a moment between splashes with his mouth and eyes wide open."

August – Mike Serilla of Marietta Georgia

This Spring, after five Eastern Bluebirds fledged from my nestbox, Mom and Dad would still visit the mealworm feeder and water but there were no signs of the babies. The morning I took the picture I came out on my backyard patio with my camera and a cup of coffee, and sat down in favorite chair. Suddenly, Mom and Dad showed up with the babies. They first feed the babies mealworms and then Mom and Dad went to the bird bath and drank, it was like they were showing them the ropes. The parents then left and the babies stayed and took turns drinking water and bathing.

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Oct – George Varkanis of St. Johns, FL

“My backyard has a special time around sunset in which the bluebirds come out. They usually fly around together and I wait for the perfect shot. The area where I shot this is a small little lime tree and behind it is a lake which reflects light. It happened to reflect a beautiful bohkei light from the sunset.”

Nov – Steve Galli of East Fallowfield, PA.

“This female wasn’t happy about having to wait her turn at the feeder... she is the junior female of the two that I have here on my property... soon afterwards she took her turn...”

Dec – Cecelia Worley of St. Augustine

“I wrapped the crook with a silk poinsettia garland and waited, and waited, and waited. This is the family who wintered over and I am trying to shoot in December!! Anyway, the male was Huey and normally he was quite happy to pose for the photo op. But this particular morning, he would not turn around and face the camera. Every time I would set up and be ready to snap, he would move. In frustration, I took his back... but little did I know at the time, it would be the best of the day. And thank you, the selection committee, for thinking so, too!”

Bluebird Research Grants Available

Is there a question about bluebirds or other native cavity-nesting birds you would like to try to answer?

The Florida Bluebird Society has Bill Pennewill Research Grant Funds available. Information and application forms are located in the Resource section of our web site, floridabluebirdsociety.org.

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 to floridabluebirdsociety@gmail.com.



2018-2019 Board of Directors

FloridaBluebirdSociety.org

FloridaBluebirdSociety@gmail.com

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