

The Florida Bluebird Society

Dedicated to the Protection and Conservation of Bluebirds in Florida



Volume 8, Issue 3

2018

FBS 2019 Bluebird Calendar

We have received many positive comments on our first calendar. It is gratifying that the product of much time and effort is being appreciated. A calendar supplement with the photographers' descriptions of their photos is attached to this email. The calendars would make a great holiday gift!

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.



Donations of at least \$10.00 will receive our Calendar as a thank-you gift.



The Florida Bluebird Society calendar is filled with stunning images of our favorite birds. It includes monthly information regarding bluebird activity in Florida.

Meet Our New Life Member - Dick Yeager

In this season of giving thanks, Florida Bluebird Society (FBS) has Dick Yeager on our list of people to whom we are grateful. Dick is a proud alumnus of Notre Dame. He moved to the Penney Retirement Community in Penney Farms, Florida in 2006. He noticed all the numbered nestboxes mounted on polls around the campus. He was intrigued, and soon discovered they were bluebird nestboxes maintained by the Penney Birders club led by Bill Pennewill.

When organizing the FBS was mentioned, Dick volunteered his computer expertise to set up our website. He designed our initial website and was our first Web Master.

Dick's next major contribution to FBS was after a discussion regarding nestbox temperatures. A preliminary study had documented successful nestings in boxes where temperatures far exceeded the 105F others claim to be fatal for bluebirds. Dick researched and provided ibutton temperature loggers that were ideal and accurate in determining and recording nestbox temperatures.

This year when Dick received his membership renewal notice he decided it was time to become a "Lifer". We are so very glad to have him as a Life Member.



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

Life Members

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
Libby Beese—Palm Coast
Candace Bridgewater - Fernandina Beach
David Foster - Jacksonville
Ann Harwood Nuss—Jacksonville
Shannon Joyce - Clermont
Jean Middleton— Amelia Island
Michael Singer - Hernando

Patrons

Ulla Benny - Gainesville
Delilah Gwaltney—Wildwood
Ed Kawecki—Jupiter
Allison Marsak - Ponte Verde
Cheri Martin-Spray - Inverness
Nancy Stokes - Fleming Island

Organizations

Native Nurseries of Tallahassee, Inc.



FBS Spreads Bluebirding

Members of the Community and Future Problem Solvers group at Flagler Palm Coast High School in Palm Coast reached out to FBS for assistance with a project to help the Eastern Bluebird population in their area. On September 27, FBS Board Members Faith Jones and Jim Nichols met with the students and their teacher/advisor Diane Tomko .

The students had developed a number of ideas, and done some research. We were able to provide them with additional information, resources, and ways to access available data. Faith presented a PowerPoint that included the importance of birds, information about bluebirds, the problems faced by bluebirds, things bluebirds need, how to provide a safe place for bluebirds to reproduce, and the importance of nestbox monitoring.

We believe they gained an understanding of the responsibilities involved when installing a nestbox. We were able to answer many questions, and provided them with much food for thought as they work out the plans for their project.



Upcoming Programs & Meetings

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 p.m. 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/>

Sunday January 6, 2019 at 2:00 Trout Lake Nature Center, Eustis 32736

Ocklawaha Valley Audubon Society will host a presentation of Florida Bluebird Society's *May All Your Blues Be Birds*. This instructive program will be beneficial for anyone with an interest in bluebirds.

Monday January 14 at 10:00 a.m. 1820 Smith Street, Orange Park 32073

The Towhee Circle of the Garden Club of Orange Park will host a presentation by the FBS.

Saturday March 23 Region 4 Get Together—Save the Date for this fun-filled day. Details in next issue.

Bats in the Belfry

Part Two

Cheri Martin-Spray



Notice the tiny heads hanging down out of the box

A few years ago I wrote a piece about my bat house, which was a gift, and was erected on our property. It was installed in May, about 17 ft. high, in the perfect spot, and facing east. I then played the waiting game for bats to find my bat house. No bats found my bat house the first year. But the woodpeckers found it, and they excavated the lower portion of the inside center panel, making it a few inches shorter.

The only bats I saw for the next two years were, believe it or not, on Halloween evening. How appropriate. I was about to give up and just forget that it was there, waiting. However, earlier this year, maybe March, my husband was taking the dog out early one morning, and said he saw bats returning to the box. I was so excited they had finally found my bat house.

So I started watching for them to leave around dusk each evening. First I would see the two nighthawks fly by, then one bat would drop down out of the box and fly off, then the others would follow. Usually a big group would drop down out first and fly off, then a few, then another group of about 10, then several, and then a group, until finally after about 15 mins. or so, they were all out.

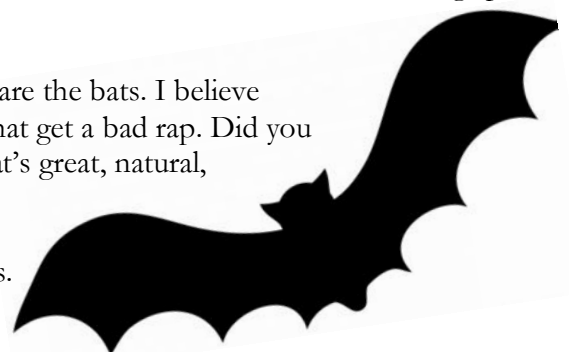
One night I decided to try and count how many bats were in the box. So I sat on the porch, and with the setting sun as a backdrop, I could see the bats dropping. The first night I counted about 65, the second night about 75. So I asked my husband to sit out there with me and count to see how many he could see. The same pattern followed every night. The two nighthawks would come by first, then the first bat dropped down, and then a large group dropped down, and so on. That night we both counted about 100 little bats leaving our bat house. Wow! I had no idea that many could fit in that house. According to what I had read, for this size box, it would hold about 50.

During the day when you walk near the house, you can hear them chatting and squeaking at each other. Or at me. I guess with all the trees that have been cut down in the area where I live, the bats lost their roosting spots, and that's why they finally found my bat house.

So, as with our native cavity nesting birds losing nesting places, so are the bats. I believe they had babies in the box too. Bats are such beneficial creatures that get a bad rap. Did you know that a single bat can eat thousands of insects each night? That's great, natural, mosquito control.

I'm sure the mosquito spray could not be good for these little fellas. What poison is good for any living animal.

So, do your own research, and consider erecting a bat house on your property.



Louis Nipper

We recently learned of the death of Louis Nipper, the first Life Member of the Florida Bluebird Society (FBS). Louis was a much loved volunteer who generously gave his time and energy to FBS. He lived a full and productive 91 years

After he retired, Louis spend many hours and took numerous trips as a volunteer with Habitat for Humanity. When he moved to Hernando. Louis began building Peterson-style bluebird nestboxes. Using his garage workshop, he spent about 13 hours assembling each box, cladding the wood with aluminum to prolong its lifespan. His passion for bluebirds motivated him to build and install hundreds of nestboxes on the Withlacoochee State Trail, as well as in and around the Citrus Hills community.



It was a newspaper article about Louis, his nestboxes, and the Withlacoochee State Trail that brought Louis to the attention of the FBS. A gift membership was given, and our relationship began. Over the years, Louis accepted a position on our Board of Directors, he organized informational meetings at libraries in Citrus and Hernando Counties, planned and hosted annual and regional meetings. Louis was an asset to FBS, and the bluebird population in west-central Florida is definitely larger thanks to Louis' efforts.

Faith Jones, Treasurer FBS



Ken Custer, Louise Nipper, Leonard Guffey

Louis Nipper was an inspiration to most of us - especially to the members of the Florida Bluebird Society (FBS). After one of our FBS regional meetings several years ago, Louis hosted my next door neighbor and fellow FBS member, Leonard Guffey and myself on a private tour of his bluebird trail (over 200 nestboxes) along the "Rails-To-Trails of the Withlacoochee" in Inverness, FL. I returned home determined to start my own bluebird trail along the Suncoast Parkway (along Rt. 589) Bike Trail in Land O' Lakes (Pasco Co.), FL. I will always remember Louis' loving devotion to the FBS.

Ken Custer, President FBS

Watch a Bluebird Interview Online

As part of a Bolles School project, an interview of Bill Pennewill on bluebirds was recorded. The resulting 10-minute video is available for you to watch at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yTe-t6XqqSI>



Bluebird Quiz

1. What is the average number of eggs a female Eastern Bluebird will lay in a day?
2. If a bluebird survives the first year, what is the average lifespan?

Answers Page 7

Things To Do Before the Year Ends



Inviting bluebirds into your yard or a nestbox you have installed elsewhere involves some responsibilities. You do not want to invite them to any type of hazard. We have compiled a list of things that should be done before the end of the year.

1. Data

- A. Submit your nestbox information to www.NestWatch.org. Share your information, it is of little value sitting in a notebook on your desk.
- B. If you have more than one nestbox, chart your 2018 activities and compare to past years. Let FBS know if you see any significant changes or trends.

2. Nestbox & Predator Guard

- A. Nesting season is over. Now is the time to clean out your boxes.
- B. Inspect your nestbox for damage. Replace or repair any damaged parts. Seal any cracks with caulk.
- C. Inspect your predator guard and make any necessary repairs or adjustments. If you have a raccoon baffle it may be rusting. To lengthen its usefulness, consider sanding and painting it with a rust-resistant paint.
- D. If you see anything about your box or predator guard that might pose a hazard to birds now is the time to make repairs.

3. Re-install

- A. Bluebirds are known to huddle in empty nestboxes on cold winter nights, so your nestbox should be in place during the winter months.
- B. Have you considered a new location for your nestbox? If so, now is the time to choose it and install the box.. Remember bluebirds are territorial during nesting season and your boxes should be at least 100 yards apart.

4. Write Your Story

Take a few minutes to think about your 2018 bluebirding season. Did you observe anything unusual, or that made you smile? Write a few sentences about it and send it to floridabluebirdsociety@gmail.com. Attach a picture or two if possible.



Find us on:
facebook®

Your Online Shopping Can Lead to Donations for FBS!

Although we encourage you to support your local businesses, if you do any online shopping please consider using AmazonSmile.com. AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon that lets customers enjoy the same wide selection of products, low prices, and convenient shopping features as on Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on amazonsmile.com, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchase to the charitable organization selected by the customer. FBS is an approved organization.

On your first visit to amazonsmile.com you will be prompted to select a charitable organization from a list. Choose Florida Bluebird Society, Inc. and we will receive a small donation from every purchase. There is no additional cost to you.

Already an Amazon shopper? All the features of your current Amazon account including Prime and credits are available to you on amazonsmile.com.

Answers to Quiz on page 5



1. Female bluebirds usually lay one egg per day for a total of 4-7 eggs. I thought eggs were laid early each morning until we installed our nestbox camera in Lucy's nestbox in Tampa. Lucy seems to lay her eggs between 11:00 a.m. and noon. Guess all bluebirds are not "early birds".
2. As is true with most passerines (birds in the order Passeriformes—the order that takes up the back half of your field guide), more than 50% of bluebirds do not survive their first year of life. If they make it through that first year their life expectancy is 6-10 years. The record for a banded bluebird is 10 years 5 months

Faith Jones

2018-2019 Board of Directors

FloridaBluebirdSociety.org

FloridaBluebirdSociety@gmail.com

Ken Custer	President, Pasco Co. Coordinator	custerk@aol.com
Joanne Heinrich	Vice Pres., NE Region Coordinator	joanne.heinrich1@comcast.net
Rhonda Ockay	Communication, Clay Co. Coordinator	rhondaockay@gmail.com
Faith Jones	Treasurer, Membership, Newsletter	floridabluebirdsociety@gmail.com
Cheri Martin Spray	Citrus Co. Coordinator	awesomeblues.cms@gmail.com
Brett Moyer, PhD	Director	moyerb@bolles.org
Jim Nichols	Director	jnicholspc@bellsouth.net
Bill Pennewill	Founding President	floridabluebirds@yahoo.com

The Florida Bluebird Society, Inc. is a recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable organization
Donations to the Florida Bluebird Society, Inc. are considered tax deductible

A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE
DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICE BY CALLING TOLL-FREE WITHIN FLORIDA 800-435-7325.
REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE.

REGISTRATION NUMBER IS CH292P