

The Florida Bluebird Society

Dedicated to the Protection
and Conservation of Bluebirds in Florida



Volume 9, Issue 4

2019

ANNUAL MEETING Saturday _ Aug 24, 2019

LOCATION

Penney Retirement Community
Commons Building
4390 Wilbanks Ave.
Penney Farms FL 32043

AGENDA

9:30 a.m.—10:00 a.m. Meet & Greet
10:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m. Meeting & Election
Light Lunch afterwards



Seating is limited.
PLEASE R.S.V.P. by 21 Aug 2019
To FloridaBluebirdSociety@gmail.com

Visit our website at www.floridabluebirdsociety.org for further details

Meet Our Newest Members, Danellen & Jim Dotts

Story and Photos by Cheri Martin-Spray



Dani contacted the Florida Bluebird Society as she was in need a good nesting box. She had a decorative metal teapot, which bluebirds found and nested in. The babies fledged. Dani knew this was not a house the bluebirds should be nesting in, and it was actually an accident that they did. So, she contacted the Florida Bluebird Society.

I did not have any nestboxes on hand. But, my husband & I quickly constructed a FBS design nestbox, so we could get it to the Dotts before the blues came back for a second nesting.

Dani agreed on the pole and baffle design for her new nestbox. Again, I enlisted my husband's assistance to build the 8" x 24" raccoon baffle. For the pole, we

purchased a 1" metal conduit, and 1 1/4" plumbers PVC pipe to fit over the metal conduit. We followed Bill Pennewill's advice on mounting the larger pole. Between my husband Shawn, and Dani's husband Jim, the nestbox and baffle were installed in about an hour.



Dani shared with me that the very next day the bluebirds were checking out the nestbox.. And...the day after that, there was a male and female that appeared to be starting a nest. What a great story.

It's another case of "If you build it, they will come".

We welcome Danellen and Jim Dotts to the Florida Bluebird Society, and wish them a very successful nesting season.





Bluebirds at Fish Hatchery

FBS is assisting St. Johns County Audubon Society (SJCAS) and Welaka National Fish Hatchery to establish a bluebird trail at the Welaka National Fish Hatchery. There are a few old boxes at the edge of one of the ponds, and bluebirds have been seen in an electrical box. SJCAS contacted us for guidance on nestboxes (design, placement and number), predator guards, monitoring, etc.

In June, FBS Board members Joanne Heinrich and Faith Jones made a site visit to the Welaka National Fish Hatchery. We met with Tim Coons, a Master Naturalist and Board Member of SJCAS, and Jorge Buening, a Fish Biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. During the visit we stressed the importance of monitoring and not going overboard with the number of nestboxes. This often leads to overwhelming recordkeeping that does not get done or shared. We suggested a manageable number for weekly monitoring. We also suggested design for nestboxes, predator guards, and placement locations.

We have offered to provide a training class for anyone interested in assisting with the project, and look forward to working with SJCAS and the fish hatchery staff on this project that should increase the bluebird population in the Welaka area.



Ponds at the Welaka National Fish Hatchery in Welaka, Florida

During our site visit we learned that in addition to the 4.5-5 million fish raised annually at the hatchery, they also raise Eastern Indigo snakes and Gopher Tortoises. Their newest endeavor is to help Florida Grasshopper Sparrows, North America's most endangered bird. There are estimated to be fewer than 50 breeding pairs of this ground-nesting species left in the wild. A conservation-breeding program has been established at White Oak Conservation north of Jacksonville which has proven successful at producing young birds. The young birds will be brought here and raised in an aviary under construction on the grounds of the Welaka National Fish Hatchery prior to release. This captive breeding program could save the species.



Future Florida Grasshopper Sparrow Aviary by Jorge Buening



Florida Grasshopper Sparrow

by Ken Schmidt



Reward for Helping Others

A few years ago, Libby Beese gave her sister and brother-in-law, what we all know is the perfect gift. A bluebird nestbox. She helped them install it near their home in Naples. It took a couple years, but this Spring a female bluebird finally chose it for the location of her nest. There was a clutch of five eggs, and five baby bluebirds fledged.

There are a number of lessons from this story including:

Patience is a virtue.

It is worth helping others set up nestboxes.

Built it and they will come.

Baby bluebirds are so darn cute!

Unusual Bluebird Nests

This year FBS received an increased number of reports from members finding five-egg clutches in their nestboxes. One nestbox in Longwood has had nothing but five-egg clutches for the last two years. Imagine this bluebird landlord in Longwood's surprise when she checked the nestbox and found a 6-egg clutch this Spring. Only five bluebirds fledged from that nesting.



April 19, 2019 Longwood by Karen Reilly

The summer issue of **Bluebird: Journal of the North American Bluebird Society** contain an article about an **eight-egg nest** in South Carolina and a **nine-egg nest** in Virginia. Both of these nests were in nestboxes used simultaneously by two female Eastern Bluebirds.

The landlord of the South Carolina nestbox reported one male feeding both females. He also reported eight bluebirds fledged from that nesting. The landlord of the Virginia nestbox reported finding two females sitting side by side on the nest of nine eggs.



Longwood FL nestbox by Karen Reilly

Submit Your 2019 Nestbox Data

If you have not already done so, it is time to submit the information you gathered during your 2019 nestbox monitoring to NestWatch.org.

Still keeping only paper records? Cornell Lab of Ornithology's NestWatch app could change your life. Every visit to each nestbox is recorded in real time. You have results (1st Egg; season total for each species; etc) in real time while you sit back and enjoy the birds, your families, and other priorities. App users have a permanent record of each season's complete results stored in a database that can easily be downloaded as an Excel spreadsheet.



NestWatch App Logo

Regional PEYA Award for Florida Bluebird Project

“Florida Bluebird Project” was conceived by a group of Flagler Palm Coast High School students. Under the direction of their instructor, and with assistance from FBS Board member Jim Nichols, their project included educating the community about Eastern Bluebirds, constructing and installing six nestboxes with predator guards at six locations where ongoing monitoring will be possible.



As a result of their project the students were the recipients of the President’s Environmental Youth Award (PEYA). PEYA is an annual award administered by the Office of Environmental Education at EPA. Since 1971, the President of the United States has joined with EPA to recognize young people for protecting our nation's air, water, land, and ecology. It is one of the most important ways EPA and the Administration demonstrate commitment to environmental stewardship efforts created and conducted by our nation's youth.

The country is divided into ten regions and each year the PEYA program honors one grade 6-12 project in each region. They honor a wide variety of projects developed by school classes to promote environmental awareness. FBS congratulates all the students and their advisors, including Jim Nichols, on their project and this award.

Through environmental education and stewardship activities, students develop the critical thinking skills experience to make informed decisions and take responsible actions to address difficult environmental issues.



FBS Program



Joanne Heinrich, VP of FBS, spoke at one of the local chapter meetings of the P.E.O. in July at the Timuquana Country Club in Jacksonville. The members were interested in how to attract bluebirds. P.E.O. is a philanthropic organization where women CELEBRATE the advancement of women; EDUCATE women through scholarships, grants, awards, loans, and stewardship of Cottey College and MOTIVATE women to achieve their highest aspirations.

Fake Dead Crow Deters Nuisance Crows

After we distributed the article about our former Board member Linda Ashley's success at keeping crows away from her feeders and nestboxes with the use of a stuffed crow, we have received a number of additional testimonials from FBS members who have had similar successful experiences with fake dead crows. Crows, and other members of the Corvidae family, are known for their intelligence and excellent memories. Apparently they do now want to hang out in a location where a relative may have died.



Creative Monitoring Method

Heritage Pines Country Club Bluebird Trail Monitoring



When we monitor a nestbox the data we are seeking should be obtained quickly and with the least disturbance possible. On the Heritage Pines Country Club Bluebird Trail (Hudson, Florida) a new monitoring method is being used that allows data collection without opening the nestbox.

This photo shows how they monitor their bluebird nestboxes. Instead of opening the nestboxes, they use an "endoscopic borescope". This is an inspection camera on a long probe that is put through the entrance hole of the nestbox. This camera can be used with a cell phone or tablet. Using this method they are not opening the nestboxes and disturbing what they find in the box. They snap photos and keep a database of their findings that is shared with NestWatch.org.

They report a very active season with many eggs and fledglings. They also have had many predators. They have 27 bluebird boxes on our trail that borders a golf course. It takes about one hour and 15 minutes to check all the boxes when the golf course is free of golfers. They monitor the boxes once each week during the season. They will be cleaning out boxes, repairing, building, and installing new boxes during the off season.

FBS is pleased to learn of this monitoring method, and commends the Heritage Pines group on the good things they are doing for bluebirds in the Hudson area.

FBS has two recommendations to this trail.

1. Nestboxes need predator guards. These can be purchased, or there is a pattern on our website for construction of a stovepipe predator guard. A cone will also provide protection from some predators. A cone used in combination with a stovepipe guard will deter most predators coming from the ground.

2. As boxes are worked on during the Fall and Winter, we suggest the roof be changed to a larger piece of cedar. We recommend at least 9" x 11". They might also consider an additional piece of wood, a 5.5"-6.5" square with a 1.5" circular hole in the center be placed over the current entrance hole for extra predator protection.





WELCOME

NEW MEMBERS

John Black	address not provided
Christine Danger	Thonotosassa
Leonard Pinelli	address not provided

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
 Teri Pollard—Jacksonville
 Michael Singer - Hernando
 Wild Birds Unlimited-Julington Creek-Jacksonville

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.



August is FBS Renewal Month

Each year, all FBS annual memberships expire in August. Renewing can be done on our website
<https://floridabluebirdsociety.org/membership/>

Or

A check can be mailed to the address listed.

Select your desired Membership type:

_____	\$15.00	Membership (single)
_____	\$25.00	Family Membership
_____	\$50.00	Patron/ Organization
_____	\$100.00	Sponsor
_____	\$500.00	Life Membership
_____	\$10.00	Senior (62 and older)
_____	\$10.00	Student

Mail your check made out to **Florida Bluebird Society to:**

Faith Jones, Treasurer
 Florida Bluebird Society, Inc.
 763 Mallard Drive
 Sanford FL 32771

Upcoming FBS Activities

- Sat. Aug. 24 **Florida Bluebird Society Annual Meeting**, Penney Farms
10:00 a.m.—12 p.m. Penney Retirement Community Commons Building, 4390 Wilbanks Ave.
This gathering will be a time to meet other bluebird-lovers and ask all your bluebird questions. In addition to releasing our revised Principles and Nestbox Monitoring Protocol, we will review our past, present, and future activities. We welcome your input at this meeting.
See details page 1 of this newsletter.
- Sat. Oct. 12 **Festival of Flight and Flowers**, Eustis
10 a.m.- 3 p.m. Eustis Community Center, 601 Northshore Dr.
FBS will have a presentation as part of this day packed full of exciting environmental programs and field trips throughout Lake County.
- Sat. Feb. 8 **Passionflower Chapter Florida Native Plant Society**, Clermont
10 a.m. Cooper Memorial Library, 2525 Oakley Seaver Dr.
FBS Board member Faith Jones will present our “May All Your Blues be Birds” program plus information on the importance of Florida native plants to bluebirds, and some of the plants they like.
- March 12-15 **2020 North American Bluebird Society Conference**, Kearney, Nebraska
This will be a weekend filled with educational programs, field trips, and the opportunity to see the 500,000 Sandhill Cranes that visit the central Platte River Valley each Spring. In addition it will provide an opportunity to meet and talk “bluebird” with rooms full of fellow bluebirders. Details on flyer sent with this newsletter.



2018-2019 Board of Directors

FloridaBluebirdSociety.org

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Ken Custer	President, Pasco Co. Coordinator	ken.custer1@floridabluebirdsociety.org
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Brett Moyer, PhD	Director	moyerb@bolles.org
Jim Nichols	Director	jim.nichols1@floridabluebirdsociety.org
Bill Pennewill	Founding President	floridabluebirds@yahoo.com

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

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