



The Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania

AN AFFILIATE OF THE NORTH AMERICAN BLUEBIRD SOCIETY

- Volume 20, Issue 3 Fall/Winter 2018
- Editor: Joan Watroba • bluebirdhappy365@outlook.com • www.thebsp.org



A Message from the President

*Dr. Dean C. Rust,
BSP President*

The 2018 Bluebird nesting season was a difficult one for Pennsylvanians. At the inception of the season, April was one of the coldest Aprils ever on record. That was followed up by one of the wettest Mays in recent history. The Bluebirds were thrilled to see June arrive and they got busy with one of their favorite activities -- building nests, laying eggs and having a family. BSP members around the state breathed a sigh of relief and welcomed some great weather -- finally. An old adage comes to mind, "Better late than never."

My father-in-law, Hiram Royer, lives at Brethren Village Retirement Community, 3001 Lititz Pike, Lancaster, 17606. They have a 23 box Bluebird Trail at that location and the trail is monitored weekly by a resident, Gloria M. Denlinger. Three years ago my wife and I donated 2 bluebird boxes, HR224, and installed them on a retention basin near his condo. One of his boxes this year had a nest of Tree Swallows but the other one, close to Cottage 400, was a "SUPERSTAR."

This Bluebird pair pulled off a miracle -- they had a "three-nest season" fledging 15 Bluebirds!! Their 1st nest had 6 eggs and fledged all 6 on or about May 25th. Evidently the wet weather in May did not discourage them? They followed up with a 2nd nest just days after Nest no.1 was vacated. The 2nd nest had 5 eggs and that group fledged all 5 on June 21. After a short break in the action, this pair followed up with their 3rd nest with 4 eggs. These 4 juvenile blues fledged around July 28. The residents in 4 or 5 cottages that viewed the activity of this HR224 box were treated to an exceptional nesting season watching this pair of Bluebirds do what they do best!

A few years ago I discovered an article, One Box Does Make A Difference by Tom A. Barber, as it was printed in Sialia, Winter, 1994. Sialia was the original NABS newsletter prior to the current BLUEBIRD Journal that NABS publishes 4 times a year. I would like to share this article from 25 years ago as written by Tom Barber.

"I think many people are intimidated by bluebirders with large trails. They feel because they have only one or two boxes that their contribution to the "Save the Bluebirds Campaign" is of little importance. This is untrue; my experience illustrates why.

I started out with four boxes in 1984. One of those boxes was in my backyard. After all, isn't that how most bluebirders start? That backyard box has produced 83 bluebird fledglings in the past decade. This is, without question, the most productive box of the 60 that I monitor today.

>> continued on page 2

A Message from the President continued from page 1

If everyone living outside of urban areas had just one bluebird box and monitored it faithfully once a week, just think how many more bluebirds there would be! Of course, that could never happen, but my point is that one box can make an incredible difference.

Bluebirds have double-nested in that original backyard box for 10 years in a row. One year they even nested three times. They have had only two failed nesting attempts in 23 tries. What a success percentage for this box despite its share of problems.

The nesting pole was climbed by a raccoon last year. Because the pole was greased and a brick was holding down the lid, the raccoon failed to get the eggs. The brick held the lid on because it had become loose over the years. Although the brick was dislodged and lying on the ground, the lid was still on. When I checked the nest, the eggs were still in the box. I quickly applied a very thick layer of grease, and put the brick back on. The raccoon did not return.

One year a male House Sparrow took possession of the box in the early spring. I had a Joe Huber sparrow trap so I set it. Guess what I caught -- a male bluebird! What was really exciting was that he had a band on his leg. I wrote the number down and released the bird. When I checked my records, I found he had fledged from a box in a neighbor's yard one-half mile down the road. I kept trying to catch that male sparrow. It took about a week before I finally succeeded. The very next day Mr. Banded Bluebird and his lady were taking up house preparations. It seemed they had just been waiting for me to rid them of Mr. Nasty Sparrow so they could have a family.

At one of our annual Ohio Bluebird Society meetings we had a round table where everyone talked about their bluebird stories for that particular season. I can still remember a gentleman saying he was somewhat embarrassed to talk about his one bluebird box that he was so proud of because other bluebirders had these "large trails".



Photo: Dean Rust

One Nest Box with a Predator Guard=Great Success

If you are involved enough to monitor that one box and to be concerned to do all you can to prevent predation, you are a true bluebirder --- just as much as is the person with the big trail. My one yard bluebird box has proven that."

Just a footnote. Gloria Denlinger writes: "By my calculations this spring/summer BV fledged 48 young bluebirds from 23 boxes. I continue to be enthralled by the bluebirds! There is something very special to see that very neat nest with blue eggs that hatch into tiny babies, quickly grow with spotted feathers and eventually take off for the great unknown! Thanks for your input into my bluebird education."

Dr. Dean C. Rust
President of the Bluebird Society
of Pennsylvania

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Our Mission Statement

To take all action deemed by the Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania to be beneficial to the protection, enjoyment and propagation of the Eastern Bluebird and other native cavity nesting species in Pennsylvania and elsewhere.

- Provide and promote educational activities relating to bluebirds, birding, conservation and related subjects.
- Monitor and conduct research relating to bluebirds, other cavity nesting birds, food sources, habitats, and trails
- Build, maintain, and monitor bluebird boxes and trails.
- Provide opportunities for people to become involved in efforts that assist bluebirds and other native bird species.
- Provide social opportunities to share information and experiences relating to bluebirds and related conservation topics.

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From the Editor

Joan Watroba
Editor

As I write this message, it is mid-August and the nesting season is winding down. I have had a couple of repeat nestings of bluebirds from the same nest box, but it looks like there will not be a third nesting cycle this year due to the delayed arrival of mild Spring weather. Once Spring arrived, it got warm very fast, and that caused more competition for nesting sites from Tree Swallows and House Wrens. Also, the very hot, humid, and wet weather during the Summer seemed to slow down the nesting activity of all songbird species. At this time, I only have a couple of active House Wren nestings on my trails.

I was thrilled that a pair of bluebirds successfully fledged young from one of the nest boxes in our yard. Since the yard borders a dense wooded area, it is only marginal for bluebird habitat. A major factor in attracting bluebirds to our yard was providing a consistent and reliable food source of dried mealworms and a homemade peanut butter suet during the winter months and into the early Spring. At any given day, we had 7 or 8 bluebirds of both sexes at a time feeding from these food sources. (See Chuck Musser's recipe for the suet and the photo of the type of log feeder that I used to offer the suet on page 16 of this issue.)



"More food, please" Photo by Susan Renkel

I was pleased to have several successful nestings of Black-Capped Chickadees this season, and also had a successful nesting of Tufted Titmouse. House Sparrows were very aggressive, and I found two pecked, dead Tree Swallows in nest boxes. In one case, the House Sparrow built a nest directly on top of the dead Tree Swallow. ***Please do not allow any House sparrows to use your nest boxes. They are a non-native, non-protected species and will cause major problems to bluebirds and other native cavity-nesting songbirds.*** Active methods include using in-box or ground House Sparrow traps and removing their nests and eggs. Passive methods include using Sparrow

Spookers on the top of the nest box and/or Monofilament Line installed on the front of the nest box. Avoid feeding the cheaper bird seed mixes, which include cracked corn and millet, as these food sources will bring in the House Sparrows.

The Ruby-Throated Hummingbirds are currently very active at the nectar feeder. We have seen an adult pair plus one young hummingbird drinking a lot of nectar. (mixture of 1 part sugar to 4 parts water) They usually increase their nectar feeding as the migration season approaches, so I hope we will have a bit more Summer weather left and not transition to Fall weather too soon.

>> continued on page 5

From the Editor continued from page 4



Butterfly weed with Monarch butterfly

The Monarch butterflies are very busy depositing their eggs on the host plant, Swamp Milkweed. We have counted **more than 50 Monarch caterpillars** so far. It is quite remarkable to have that volume of caterpillars, as we only have two rows of plants, and each row is only about six feet long. The female Monarch places her eggs,



Common milkweed

one at a time, on the underside of the milkweed leaves. The eggs then turn into caterpillars, which feed on the milkweed leaves and pods, they grow very fast, and then they go into their Chrysalis stage. They then emerge as beautiful, adult-size butterflies. It is fascinating to observe this wonderful, natural transformation.



Swamp milkweed

If you have a sunny location on your property, consider planting Swamp Milkweed, Common Milkweed, or Butterfly Weed. They are all native plants, and serve as host plants for the beautiful Monarch butterfly.

Joan Watroba
Joan Watroba
Editor

BSP County Coordinator Changes

Thanks to **John Stoltzfus from Montgomery County**, and also to **Doris Heil from Northampton County** for their past service as BSP County Coordinators. They have both moved out of the area, so they will no longer be serving in this capacity.

* If you would like to serve as BSP County Coordinator and be a resource of information about bluebirds to people in your county, please contact Ken Leister, State BSP County Coordinator at: 610-696-5271 or Kenapeg@aol.com



Editors Note: If you would like to share information about bluebirds with others, please access the wonderful resources from NABS, The North American Bluebird Society.

As a BSP County Coordinator, I find these resources very helpful in answering bluebird questions from people in my County.

Web site: North American Bluebird Society

<http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org/nabs-fact-sheets/>

New BSP County Coordinators

New County Coordinators for Cambria County

Bob and Winnie Illig

814-533-9237

winillig@hotmail.com

Thanks, Bob and Winnie, for volunteering to serve as County Coordinators for BSP.

*Annual Nest Box Reports Due Now

Please submit your Annual Report by October 15th, 2018 to be entered into the Early Bird Contest, a random drawing of 3 nest box reports received for prizes from the BSP Merchandise Store. However, data from reports received by December 15th, 2018 will still be included in the compiled report.

Submit Reports by regular mail to:
Shirley Halk
42 Park Drive,
Grantville, PA17028.
Annual Nest Box Report Forms can be obtained from the BSP web site:
www.thebsp.org

photo by Leslie Thompson



Cedar Crest Bluebird Community Expands *By Dave Solon, Cornwall-Lebanon School District*

Lots of new bluebird boxes popped up on the Cedar Crest High school / Middle School Campus in Lebanon this winter! The District Maintenance staff has maintained a number of bluebird boxes on the campus grounds for over 20 years , thanks to Kelly Peffley, the district's Maintenance Group Leader. Kelly, along with Gene Dreibelbis, the Grounds Supervisor, opened their personal wallets

and purchased wood for several needed replacements as well as 24 new boxes. Over the winter, teacher John Weitzel's woodshop students at CCHS cut all the pieces needed for the new boxes. District Maintenance staff then assembled the boxes, and Tim Putt along with John Brossman dug 24 holes for new posts all around the Cedar Crest campus. There are now 40 bluebird boxes on the CLSD campus!

Several years ago, the Audubon Society stated that the Cornwall-Lebanon School District main campus is one of the most successful properties for bluebird nesting areas in the region. CLSD is proud of this accomplishment and hopes to maintain this successful bluebird habitat for many years to come. We also send special thanks to Lowes of Lebanon for donating the 4" x 4" x 8' posts.



Nancy Fraim – New BSP Membership Chair

We are happy to report that Nancy Fraim has volunteered to serve as BSP Membership Chair. Thanks to Joanne Slavinski, who has performed these duties for so many years and is now assisting Nancy to serve in this role.

Please note that BSP now has two mailing addresses:

- For BSP NewMembers/Renewal, send to: BSP, P.O. Box 12, Exton, PA 19341
- For other BSP Business, send to: BSP, P.O. Box 756, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

Eggs in the Nestbox, but No Nest

Hi Dean

It's Celine and Tom from Lititz. I thought you'd find this interesting...while checking our boxes along the park in Lititz...I found four eggs in the box and no nest was made! Luckily we had kept an old nest from another box and gently placed the eggs in the nest then into the box. Maybe momma bluebird was in a hurry to lay the eggs! Enclosed is the picture of the bluebird eggs which were laid on the wood base and also the nest we had saved.

We've had great success at the park...and our bluebird babies in our yard fledged yesterday. Mom and Dad bluebird are really having a rough time keeping them out of the pouring rain today!

Celine & Tom



photo by Celine

BirdNote[®] | *Stories about birds,
the environment and more*

Check out: <https://www.birdnote.org/>

This is a wonderful resource of information about identifying the various species of birds. Includes beautiful photography, live web cams, and acoustic recordings of bird songs from the Macauley Library of the **Cornell Lab of Ornithology**.

Also includes educational resources for teachers of K-12 students to inspire them about birds and the natural world.

- BirdNote also highlights a different songbird species every day which includes fascinating information about that bird.

Adventures with a Nestbox

I'm dedicated to Bluebirds and other cavity nesters in the spring/summer of each year. I monitor about 100 nestboxes, with my biggest Bluebird Trail being at Camp Hill Village, near Phoenixville, PA, where I have 60 boxes. On June 6th, a friend helped me check nestboxes – used mainly by Eastern Bluebirds and Tree Swallows.

I taught him to tap on each box before opening it – to enable any adults in the box to leave. I was with him as he opened a box along the main driveway; at first he didn't see anything inside, except a bird nest and a dark shape on top of it. This shape did not move when he touched it. We both approached

close to the nest interior, but we couldn't see inside, because the day was dark and cloudy, with threatening rain. "Is it alive?" my friend asked, "Because it looks as if it's dead," referring to what was on the nest. We knew Tree Swallows were nesting there. My friend then extended his hand deep into the box and stroked the inert bird on top of the nest. The white feathers around the nest prevented us from seeing clearly. There was no motion in the box, and no response from the bird inside. My friend kept his hand on top of the dark shape and told me, "It's warm." We both knew then it was alive. I was about to touch the bird's body myself

when it turned its head around and looked at me -- a female Tree Swallow – healthy and alert, so I pulled out my hand and told my friend, "She fine, she's just incubating eggs." And we closed up the box and walked away. As we did this, the male swallow approached his nest in dive-bomb fashion – and we knew that "Daddy" had come home to defend his territory. We didn't tell Daddy that his wife had just been petted by a human being. It isn't often that we get to show affection to wild birds.

Marilyn Michalski
BSP Board Member and
Chair of BSP Junior Memberships

BSP Newsletter Submission Contest

The BSP Newsletter Committee is very excited that many members are submitting material for the BSP newsletter, and we want to encourage more members to do so. By submitting your questions, nesting experiences, and field observations, we will be able to offer a wider variety of articles and materials that are of interest to our readers.

Contest Rules:

1 Your entry can be a general question or article about bluebirds or other nature topics, a write-up about something that you observed in your yard or on your trail, an original poem, a trail monitoring tip, or any non copyrighted material. Please send copies only of printed materials or PDF's/word documents of electronic submissions and jpeg files of photos.

2 To submit by regular mail, write: Attn: Newsletter Submission Contest on the front of the envelope and send to: BSP, P.O. Box 756, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-0756

3 To submit by e-mail, include Newsletter Submission Contest in the subject line of your e-mail and e-mail to: bluebirdhappy365@outlook.com

One submission will be randomly drawn at the cut-off date for each newsletter edition, and the person whose entry was randomly picked will have their choice of any item offered in the BSP Merchandise Store website: www.thebsp.org

4 The latest date to submit items is the following: Spring - January 7 Summer- May 7 Fall/ Winter-

September 7 The Newsletter Editor will then review the items and reserve the right to include your submission in an upcoming edition. Since we cannot return any items, please send copies only of materials and/ or photos. Please include your contact information-name, address, phone number or e-mail address (optional) with your entry.

Congratulations! Newsletter Submission Contest Winner-Stephen F. Stoltzfus Jr.

Please select an item from the BSP Store at www.thebsp.org and then call BSP Merchandise Manager, Susan Durgin at (717) 732-5325 to arrange for the delivery of your prize.

Field Notes Submitted by Stephen F. Stoltzfus, Jr., BSP Junior Member

At 3:00 a.m. on Friday, May 25, me, my brother Paul, and my Dad stood up to do the chores. We had planned to go turkey hunting. At 4:00 a.m. our driver was here. I quickly grabbed my back-pack and shotgun-then we drove away. There was a long drive right beside the river, and we hiked up to the top of the ridge. It was pretty steep! Somebody had logged on top of the ridge, and there were brush piles everywhere. It was perfect bird habitat. We heard Ovenbirds, Eastern Towhees, Scarlet Tanagers, a White-Breasted Nuthatch, Red-Eyed Vireos, a Baltimore Oriole, a Louisiana

Waterthrush, and many other birds. We heard no gobbles, so we went to another spot out in some big fields. There was a long lane out to the fields. When walking out to the fields, he heard a gobbler about six or seven times. There were about four or five big puddles, or swamps with a Wood Duck box at each puddle. We were walking out to the fields when all of a sudden I heard this "please, please, pleased to MEETcha". Right away I recognized it as a Chestnut-Sided Warbler, being my first time to hear one, but I had read in the field guide what sound it made, and therefore knew right away what it was. We heard it

very often after that. We also heard another Louisiana Waterthrush and a Magnolia Warbler. There were lots of other birds there, too. On the way home I heard a Yellow Warbler.

We put up a Purple Martin house this Spring, and on May 24, we saw a female. On May 25th, we saw a male and a female. And on May 26th, we saw a male and two females. It's very exciting! Hopefully we can get a colony started!

Stephen F. Stoltzfus, Jr.
BSP Junior Member

Editor's Note: This field note and hand-drawn rendering of the Hooded Warbler by Stephen F. Stoltzfus, Jr. was sent to Marilyn Michelski, BSP Jr. Member Chair. Stephen is 11 years old.

Her reply to him:

To Stephen: Thank you so much for your letter and free-hand drawing of the Hooded Warbler. We are happy to learn that you recognize so many of our native American birds. Our world would certainly benefit if more young people and adults learned as much about birds as you have.

Here is Stephen's beautiful free-hand pencil drawing of a Hooded Warbler:



Congratulations!

Newsletter Submission Contest Winner
Stephen F. Stoltzfus Jr.

Congratulations! Newsletter Submission Contest Winner-Stephen F. Stoltzfus Jr. for his article **Field Notes** and the rendering of a hooded warbler shown at right

What do Bluebirds Eat? by Joan Watroba

A common question that visitors to our educational booth ask is "What do bluebirds eat?"

During the late Spring and Summer months, the most popular food items are insects, especially grasshoppers, crickets, and beetles. Fruits and berries from native plants and trees, including wild cherries, mulberries, wild grapes, viburnum, native dogwood berries, and holly berries are main food sources in mid to late Summer. During the Winter, bluebirds travel in flocks to find food, and they may stay in the area as long as the Winter weather is not too extreme. Ice storms can

cause the remaining food supplies such as poison ivy berries and sumac berries to be inaccessible.

In the Winter and into early Spring, the natural food supplies may be greatly diminished, so the offering of supplemental food can be very important to carry them through until the natural food sources become available.

Supplemental foods that you can offer:

Live or dried mealworms, homemade suet (recipe on Page 16 - you can substitute a commercial suet cake in place of the lard), commercial suet cakes, especially the

fruit-flavored ones, mealworm suet cakes, shelled sunflower seeds/sunflower chips peanut hearts, currants and cranberries.

These items can be served on a flat, raised tray or from a special bluebird feeder which will keep out the larger birds such as European Starlings.

Also, offer a source of fresh, clean water throughout the year. Birds need water to drink, bathe and to preen their feathers to keep them healthy for insulation. Add a heating unit to your birdbath to keep the water from freezing during the winter months.

BSP Event Report

Ned Smith Nature and Arts Festival, Millersburg, PA

Saturday, July 28th, 2018

by **Phil Durgin, Event Chair**

This wonderful family event celebrates the wonders of nature and art and is inspired by Millersburg Naturalist and Artist, Ned Smith. This year it was held at a new location, the Ned Smith Center, instead of MYO Park. This year marked the 25th Anniversary of this annual event. The Ned Smith Center had been busy planning to host this event at this new location for the past year. If it would have been held at MYO Park, it would have been cancelled this year due to the recent heavy rains and flooding in the MYO Park location.

Joan Watroba presented a bluebird program to about 15 attendees, and utilized one of the

NABS powerpoint programs to share general information about bluebirds. It has beautiful photos and offers a very comprehensive overview of bluebird conservation. Topics include the three main species of bluebirds, why they need our help, other native cavity-nesting songbirds, the invasive, non-native species (House Sparrows and European Starlings) predators, trail management, and the importance of providing good habitat and nesting sites. It also explains the importance of providing a water source, and explains the types of natural and supplemental food that bluebirds will eat.

The presentation also included an explanation of the important features of a suitable nest box. Additional visual resources, including the cavity-nesting poster, Noel guard, and the nest and egg display,

which prompted many interesting questions from the attendees. Those who currently have bluebird boxes in their yard shared their joys of seeing the bluebirds and observing nesting success. After the program, many stopped by the BSP booth to pick up handouts, view the displays, and many new members joined BSP during this event.

Phil and Susan Durgin transported the BSP Educational Display and Bluebird Merchandise to the event. Steve Horner, John Shemwell, and Phil Durgin helped with the nest box building activity sponsored by the PA Game Commission, and Susan Durgin, Joyce Horner, Doris Hoffman, and Joan Watroba assisted at the BSP Educational Booth.

BSP Volunteers Assembled Nestbox Kits *all photos by Nancy Putt*

On June 14th, members of the BSP Woodworking Committee and other volunteers assembled 100 kits from 600 pre-cut kit pieces. Thanks to Doris Hoffman, who reserved the pavilion for BSP at the Lower Allen Park in Lisburn. Doris monitors a very productive bluebird trail within the Park.

Thanks to the following volunteers: Dean Rust, Bill Strauss, Phil Durgin, Ken Leister, David Price, Nancy Putt, Bill Frantz, and his 8 year-old grandson, Brandon Edwards.



This important activity was completed in just two hours due to the efficient, assembly-line system. A supply of nest box kits are always needed for box-building sessions, for setting up/maintaining bluebird trails, and for large events such as the annual PA Farm Show and the Cabela's nest box building event. After the kits were packaged, volunteers enjoyed a picnic lunch at the Park.

Nancy Putt



2019 BSP Conference

MARK YOUR CALENDAR — PLAN TO ATTEND!

The 21st Annual BSP Conference

April 26-27, 2019,
Toftrees Resort in State College
<https://www.toftrees.com>

The BSP Annual Conference offers excellent speakers, demonstrations, vendors and an opportunity to learn from, and socialize with people who share your love of bluebirds and enjoy the wonders of the natural world. A special mailing regarding the conference, including registration information and itinerary will be sent out to all active BSP Members in early February, 2019. More information will also be posted in upcoming newsletters and on the web site: www.thebsp.org

as details become available. BSP will reserve a block of rooms at the Toftrees Resort, so please let them know that you are attending the BSP Conference when you reserve your lodging.

Friday 7- 8 p.m. Build a BSP nest box, bird feeder, or predator guard to take home. BSP will provide the materials.

Scheduled Conference Speakers:

Robyn Graboski from Centre Wildlife Care will speak about the important work of caring for injured, orphaned, sick, and displaced wildlife with the goal of releasing them back in the wild. Centre Wildlife Care is a 501c3, non-profit, tax-ex-

empt, licensed organization located in Port Matilda, PA.

They provide professional care to more than 1500 mammals, birds and reptiles per year.

Scott Weidensaul is a Pennsylvania-based Naturalist and has authored more than two dozen books on Natural History. He is a contributing editor for Audubon, and will present his fascinating presentation on Snowy Owls.

Harry Schmeider is a Past President of BSP and currently serves as BSP Webmaster. He is an Experienced Bluebirder who will entertain and inform us with his extensive knowledge and love of Bluebirds.

BSP Calendar of Events

MARK YOUR CALENDAR — PLAN TO ATTEND!

PA Farm Show -2019

Sat, Jan. 5 thru Sat, Jan. 12, 2019
Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex
2300 N. Cameron Street
Harrisburg, PA
<http://www.farmshow.state.pa.us>

This is a fun event for the entire family, with interesting events, demonstrations, a variety of animals, vendors, and offers delicious PA food choices in the Food Court. Volunteers are needed to host the BSP Educational/BSP Store Booth. Contact Nancy Putt, Event Chair at 717-432-2647 or e-mail: bluebirds@pa.net to volunteer. BSP will refund parking fee for those who can fill a 4 hour time slot. THANKS

in advance for helping to educate others about bluebirds. New volunteers are always welcome, and you will be assisting another one of our volunteers who have helped us in the past. It is a great opportunity to learn about bluebirds!

PA Garden Show of York

March 1-3, 2019
York Expo Center
Memorial Hall
334 Carlisle Road
York, PA

Theme "Flowers On Parade"
web site: pagsy.com/

SHOW HOURS:

Friday, March 1: 10am – 8pm.
Saturday, March 2: 10am – 8pm.

Sunday, March 3: 10am - 5pm.

Attend the Pennsylvania Garden Show of York event which includes thousands of flowers, enchanting walk-through display gardens, and a bustling garden market with anything relating to gardens, or the gardening lifestyle.

Volunteers are needed to host the BSP Educational Booth.

Contact **Nancy Putt**, Event Chair at 717-432-2647 or e-mail: bluebirds@pa.net to volunteer

BSP Board Meetings—2018 & 2019

MARK YOUR CALENDAR — PLAN TO ATTEND!

October 25, 2018: 6:00 p.m.

2019 Board Meeting Dates:

Meeting begin at 6:00 p.m.

Jan 24, 2019

April 25, 2019

July 25, 2019

Oct 24, 2019

All BSP Members are invited to attend board meetings to learn about upcoming BSP activities and events and to share your ideas about a variety of issues related to bluebird conservation. If you cannot attend the meetings in person, we can arrange for you to attend via conference call. Contact Dean Rust, BSP President to make arrangements to

join BSP meetings by phone right from your home. Dean's contact number 717-669-0167 e-mail Dean at: july7ds@aol.com
Come join us at our meetings.
Location: Giant Conference Center
Upstairs Community Room
Camp Hill Shopping Center 3301 E.
Trindle Road

Mailbag

Subject: Success Story

To Dean Rust:

I'm Carole Walsh; my husband and I attended your presentation about bluebirds at the Chambers House Nature Center in White Clay Creek State Park last year. During your talk, you suggested that one way to discourage sparrows from nesting in boxes designed for bluebirds was to "upgrade" them with a "sun roof," by cutting a hole in the roof and covering it with plexiglas. We have had an old nest box on the end of our carport for many years that has always been occupied by house wrens. Early this spring, we took your suggestion and my husband put a sun roof on the nest box. Much to our delight, a pair of bluebirds nested in the box. As soon as we were aware of them we provided dried meal worms. I wish I had kept records on when they began nesting, when we saw eggs and when the baby birds fledged; unfortunately, I didn't. But we observed young bluebirds in late May; then a few weeks later there was another clutch of eggs, which hatched and fledged, and much to our surprise, the nest now has another family of nestlings. We don't check the box regularly; it's difficult to access and we don't want to disturb them. But, our back yard is full of bluebirds! We are thrilled!

Thanks for your presentation and your book, and especially for your enthusiasm for the "Beloved and Charismatic Bluebird."

Carole Walsh

Hi Carole

I love receiving e-mails like this one !!!

Dean



photo by Carole Walsh

Mailbag



photo by Robyn Waugh

I finally got Bluebirds at my house after trying for four years I have three babies and one more egg to hatch!
Robyn Waugh

Hi Dean-This is a picture of my next door neighbor's dog cage. He liked my idea, so he purchased a smaller one from Tractor Supply
Ken Davis

Editor's Note: Per Dean Ken is a BSP Member, too! This feeding cage keeps out the larger birds such as European Starlings.



BSP Summer Newsletter Feedback

Great job! Articles are super. Thanks for all of your hard work.
Bill Strauss

Mailbag (continued)

Dear BSP Friends,
My golf course bluebird trail in Blue Bell, PA, is making a big hit – I mean, it is quite successful this year. And I’m getting people involved in bluebirds.

Attached is a photo that Groundskeeper Pat Madden took on Monday, May 21st. While checking boxes, I showed Pat this nest box with bluebirds in the process of hatching. He was so impressed with this scene that he got out his own camera and took this “Winner” of a photo. Enjoy!

This bluebird trail is located on the Bluestone Country Club and Golf Course (formerly “Meadowlands”) where I began monitoring four years ago, when their Blue-



photo by Pat Madden

bird Trail was overrun with House Sparrows. Our efforts in reducing House Sparrow predation have been successful, and almost all of the 15 nest boxes have Eastern Bluebirds or Tree Swallows in them.

The following is a letter that I sent to the Bluestone Country Club:

On May 21st, we took the attached photo of baby bluebirds – two of whom just hatched out of their blue shells. This is one of the remarkable sights seen on the beautiful Bluestone Golf Course. Baby birds don’t look like much – they are dark and featherless. But they develop quickly, as parent Bluebirds bring food to them many times every day – as often as every 15 minutes. Our Bluestone Bluebird Trail is doing well!

Marilyn Michalski,
Authorized Bluebird Trail Monitor
and BSP County Coordinator,
Chester County

Subject: 1st Baby Bluebirds

Dean-I am just excited because these are my very first baby bluebirds ever.

Sue Miller,
Pittsburgh Area



photo by Sue Miller

Mailbag (continued)

To All – Here’s a great letter from one of our BSP Junior Members, dated May 16, 2018. Stephen Stoltzfus, Jr., is Junior Member No. 130, and he joined on April 18, 2018, when I mailed him a decal and welcoming letter. I replied to his letter below and told him we would like to put it in our next BSP Newsletter. Marilyn

Dear BSP,

Thank you for your letter. We made six of Andrew Troyer’s birdhouses. Three are being used by Tree Swallows and Bluebirds.

One day my Dad cut a hollow tree. We cut a log about one foot long and put a roof and floor on. It already had a hole, so we didn’t have to drill one. I hung it on an apple tree. The bluebirds made a nest in it.

I hope they hatch some babies.

Last year a House Wren built a nest in our wren house. They hatched three or four babies. It was exciting to watch them build a nest -- going in and out with stick after stick. They finally had a nice little nest.

On April 18, when we came home from my uncle’s place, I saw a bird on our apple tree. I quickly grabbed my binoculars and found

out it was a Palm Warbler. I had never seen one before.

On Saturday, May 12, me and my dad and my two brothers went on a birdwalk with Aden Troyer in Juniata. The whole group altogether saw and heard 131 species, with 59 Tennessee Warblers!! So it was very exciting.

Stephen F. Stoltzfus, Jr.
Age 11

Recipe for Yummy Suet for the Birds

Submitted by Chuck Musser

- 1 pound of lard (available in a tub)
- 18 ounces of crunchy peanut butter
- Heat the above ingredients in a large pan on the stove on low heat until they are mixed together.
- Remove from heat.
- Mix in: one 2 lb. bag of yellow corn meal.
- Optional add-ins: raisins, shelled sunflower seeds.
- Refrigerate until using

* Serve from a log feeder or on a flat tray from October through April or in early May during periods of cold and wet weather when insects are not available



Photo by Chuck Musser

Here is a wonderful article about Ken Leister which appeared in the Countylines Magazine.

It is an amazing article and definitely captures everything about Ken’s passion for bluebirds. Ken currently serves as BSP Board Member and also the State County Coordina-

tor and was recently honored with the BSP Appreciation Award for 2018.

<https://countylinemagazine.com/article/the-bluebird-keeper/>

Mailbag (continued)

Different Songbird Species in the Same Nest

Once in a great while I will find two types of eggs in a nestbox – always a blue egg and a couple of white Tree Swallow eggs. The outcome is never certain – and I have yet to see fledges from these nests. Usually the nest is abandoned. That being said, I hope you have a better outcome than I did. The best that can happen is that both the bluebird and the tree swallow chicks will reach maturity and fly out on their own. This year especially there have been many bird fights – by the swallows and Blues. They

are fighting over nestboxes. Perhaps the solution is to put up more paired boxes – which I have done. But I do NOT put the two boxes close together – I install the two boxes about 30 feet apart, which means they can each have a box and not compete with each other. The trick is to get the two boxes far enough apart that they won't fight each other, but close enough so that two pairs of Tree Swallows will not nest in them. I've had one successful pairing of boxes like this at Camp Hill.

Marilyn Michelski

Here's the bluebird house with one Bluebird egg and three Tree Swallow eggs.

Samuel Laird



photo by Samuel Laird

Follow-up regarding the above nesting:
Per Ken Leister, of the 3 tree swallow eggs and one bluebird egg, one tree swallow egg disappeared, which left 2 tree swallow eggs and one bluebird egg. All 3 eggs hatched. The adult tree swallows fed the chicks. The bluebird was not involved after she laid the initial egg. The monitors kept close watch, and observed that all 3 chicks were growing well. They observed that the bluebird chick seemed to be growing faster than the tree swallow chicks, but all were growing. The bluebird chick fledged first and it took another 4 days for the tree swallow chicks to fledge.

Editor's Note: Very Interesting. The parent Tree Swallow may have removed the 1 TS egg when it did not hatch. Important to know that the Tree Swallows fed all three, and that all of the 3 songbirds successfully fledged.

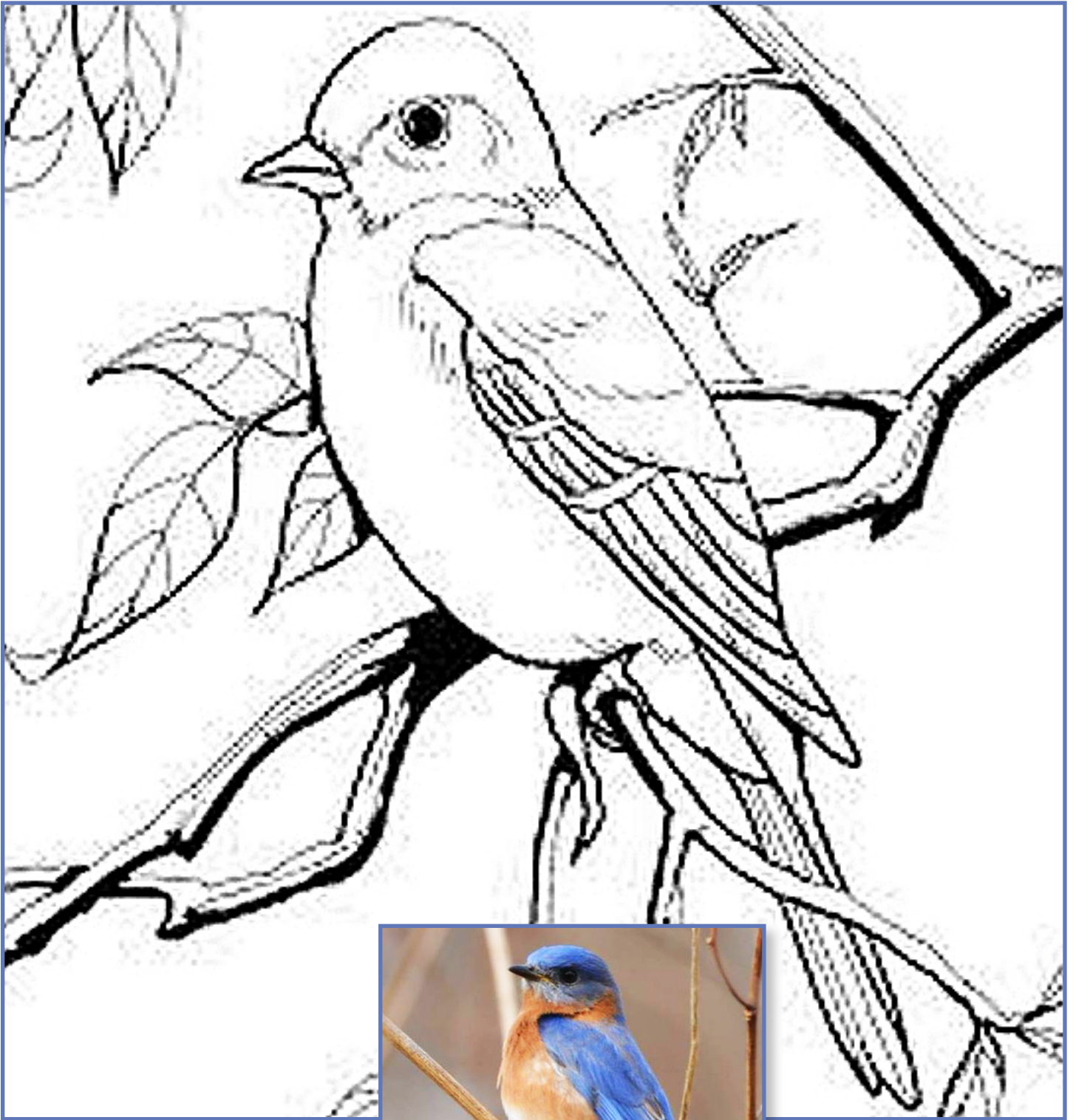
Editor's Note: Several years ago. Chuck Musser of Bainbridge, PA discovered a nest in a bluebird box with 2 bluebird eggs and several chickadee eggs. The chickadee pair actually fledged both the bluebirds and also their brood of chickadees. (See photo below)

photo by Susan Renkel



Bluebirds and Chickadees in the Same Nest

Color this Bluebird



*Male Bluebird color
reference for your
coloring pleasure*



photo by Leslie Thompson

2018 BSP MEMBERSHIP RATE INFORMATION

Student	Senior	Regular/Family	Organization/Corporate
1 year -\$10	1 year -\$12	1year -\$15	1 year -\$100
3 years -\$25	3 years -\$30	3years -\$40	3 years -\$275
			Lifetime Sponsor -\$375

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P.O. Box 12
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Chuck Musser sent me this beautiful \$2 bill from Bermuda with an Eastern Bluebird on it. Thanks, Chuck!

Note: The Eastern Bluebird, *Sialia sialis* is native to Bermuda. Bermuda is the only place outside of the eastern half of North America where it has ever been known to breed.

Bermuda also has a Bluebird Society:
[http://www.bermuda
bluebirdsociety.com/](http://www.bermudabluebirdsociety.com/)

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