



The Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania

AN AFFILIATE OF THE NORTH AMERICAN BLUEBIRD SOCIETY

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- Editor: Joan Watroba • bluebirdhappy365@outlook.com • www.thebsp.org



A Message from the President

*Dr. Dean C. Rust,
BSP President*

JUST WHEN WE THOUGHT we might have an early spring this year, Mother Nature had other plans for us in Pennsylvania. April was one of the coldest on record and the Bluebirds were trying to figure out if they had misread their calendars. But May has been absolutely inspiring with warm days and our Beloved Bluebirds have been in high-gear all month with shaping grasses & pine needles in nesting cavities, clutches of eggs appearing routinely with 2 week incubation cycles and newly hatched chicks are full-speed ahead. The Blues may have gotten a late start but right now they are in overdrive, and wait till you see how fast they build their 2nd nests of the year. I love the spring of the year and Bluebirds are the “icing on the cake”.

There is a palpable excitement about Bluebirds here in PA. I recently visited a local bird store in my area and talked with the owner who has been at his location for 20 years. He told me that he sold more Bluebird houses in March 2018 than any year since he was in business. It was hard for him to keep nest boxes in stock. Of course, he loves that kind of sales interest. People are seeing Bluebirds in their back yards for the first time ever and they get excited about purchasing a nest box for their yard.

Don Eister, Williamsport Home Bluebird Trail, contacted me this week with the 05/11/2018 report of their 21 boxes. “These boxes are checked weekly by Paul & Evelyn Seaman, Jane Clement, Bertie & Don Koons. Currently they have 4 Tree Swallow nests and 4 Bluebird nests with 3 & 5 eggs. At the bottom of his Nest Box Activity report was this Note: House sparrows are very undesirable pugnacious birds that have plagued our nest boxes since the beginning of the bluebird trail in 2005. In 2017 the decision was made to add a skylight to all the nest boxes and this was finally completed by the end of the nesting season. At the beginning of the 2018 season all 21 nest boxes had the skylight added. So far in the 2018 nesting season the monitors have noted THERE HAS BEEN NO HOUSE SPARROW NESTING ACTIVITY!!! Keep your fingers crossed for the remainder of the nesting season...May, June July and early August”.

In early February of 2018 I got an e-mail from Nacogdoches, TX on the President’s Hotline Forum. Linda M. described her 5 Bluebird boxes on 10 acres with a large pond and some woods. She has a large barn on the property. She described how badly her Bluebird experiences were in 2017. She lost 52 BB eggs and 3 adults last year and assumed raccoons and copperheads (they have plenty of each). But it was House Sparrows. She has her boxes 100 yards apart. Her question to me was: what can I do? I suggested baffles, skylight roofs and trapping. Her husband said they can implement all 3 of those ideas for their 5 old boxes.

This week I also got an e-mail from Linda M. “On May 15, 2018, Four of my five nests have already fledged, with 3 or 4 birds in each one! Before I was able to clean out the first nests, there is now one egg in one nest, and

[A Message from the President](#) continued from page 1

two eggs in another so far. No problem with HOSP, (only caught one), although I must admit I questioned the skylight down here in Hades (Texas in summer). It works! Summer weather is early, as we are in humid mid-90s (awful). Hopefully, we'll have 3 broods everywhere...I am optimistic now, because of all your help and instruction. Thank you so much! This old birdwatcher is happy. Best regards, Linda M.

NEWS FLASH! A new technique using an Infant Baby Monitor—Philips Avent –SCD 510–DECT Audio Surveillance. I am always willing to try new techniques and this is one of those “out of the box” experiences I want to introduce to our BSP members. Jen Hess is a friend of mine from Lititz, PA and she has wanted me to try this innovative way to set up a “listening backyard for birds”. Most of us learn to identify birds by sight...with this technique you will learn to identify birds by sound. Jen writes, “I must admit that I am a crazy natureholic. I started on this journey when we built my house. There was an empty lot beside us that was overgrown with grasses and weeds. SO MANY BIRDS! But what were they? So that led me to purchase my first bird identification book. I learned the different species, but which one was making which sound? Enter Peterson’s Field Guide to Bird Sounds. All they had then were cassettes, so every time I would get into my car, I listened to bird sounds. Now I could put a sound to that bird! My husband and I spent a full week in Kissimmee, FL, the first full week of March one year. We would see and hear many species of birds then come home to quiet. I KNEW the birds were singing. I could hear them when I went outside! But it was either too cold, rainy, or snowing to open the windows. I am one to think “outside the box”. There HAD to be a way to bring these bird sounds into the house. Enter my... wait for it...wait—a Baby Monitor. I figured if I put the baby unit OUTSIDE, and the parent unit INSIDE, I maybe would be able to hear the outside sounds. It worked! I use a Philips Avent Dect 6.0 baby monitor (I have three). They don’t interfere with each other, nor any other electronic devices. I just buy the basic one

with no temperature, picture or anything. First, I put the baby unit in a ziplock sandwich bag with a couple of those anti-dessicant things they put in supplements. Then I zip the bag shut with the zip at the bottom to keep the elements from leaking in. Then I take the plug that goes into the baby unit and push it through the plastic into the monitor, basically plugging the hole. I then put it in a plastic window bird feeder (with suction cups) that has a roof and sides to further protect it. I attach mine to windows where I can hear the most sounds. Make sure you have the monitor facing out so it can capture the sounds. It also helps to have an electric outlet nearby. I get double the fun in the spring from my method. You won’t believe what birds I get coming through during migration! I get to hear birds sing during the day and then the frogs and toads at night. THEN, when the birds stop singing around the end of July, the crickets, click beetles and other night bugs come out. So when it is too hot and humid to again have my windows open, I can hear my night sounds also!



Dean C. Rust, DDS
President, Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania
May, 2018

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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, it is the beginning of May, and due to the cold, wet Spring, the nesting activity in my nest boxes has been delayed by at least two weeks from previous years. I usually have bluebird eggs in early April, but this year, I did not find any bluebird eggs in my nest boxes until the end of April. This cold weather has also delayed the arrival of other migrating species, but with the warmer weather, the catbirds and house wrens have arrived within the past two days. This timing may cause even more competition for nest boxes.

I have been amazed at the number of bluebirds which stayed over for the winter, and I have observed them feeding at the dried mealworm feeder and especially at



Susan Renkel photo

the log feeder in our yard, which was kept full of the homemade suet. Main ingredients of the suet: yellow cornmeal, sunflower hearts, chunky peanut butter, a square of commercial suet, raisins, and dried cranberries. Many other songbirds ate the suet, including Downy woodpeckers, Red-Bellied



Male Bluebird at Wildwood Park, Harrisburg, PA by Leslie Thompson

woodpeckers, Tufted titmouse, Black-Capped chickadees, and White-Breasted Nuthatches.

As we bluebirders focus on providing nesting opportunities for bluebirds and other cavity-nesting species, we should also be thinking of ways to improve our habitats by providing a water feature (bird bath) and also to plant native plants which produce berries and fruits to supplement their food supply.

A list of native plants suitable for the Mid-Atlantic states can be found at: <http://choosenatives.org/native-plants-nesting-birds-top-12-picks>

Consider adding one or more of these plants to your yard or neighborhood. Encourage others in your communities to add native plants to their environments to provide natural food resources for beautiful and beneficial songbirds.

Wishing all of you a very enjoyable Summer which offers many happy times along your bluebird trails

Joan Watroba
Joan Watroba
Editor

BSP Mini-Grant Rules and Guidelines

If you are an active BSP member and would like to apply for funding for a project to promote the education, conservation or propagation of bluebirds or other native cavity-nesting songbirds, please submit an application for consideration.

- 1.) Grants must further the mission of the BSP.
- 2.) Maximum grant amount is \$500.
- 3.) Grants must be approved by a majority of the Board members.
- 4.) Project activities must take place in Pennsylvania.
- 5.) Contact individuals must be current BSP members.
- 6.) Disbursement of funds is at the discretion of the BSP Grant Coordinator (Philip Durgin) Ideally, funds would be disbursed after items are purchased and based on documented receipts, but there will likely be situations where this is not feasible.

Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania-Mini-Grant Application

Contact name: _____ Email: _____

Phone: _____ Mailing address: _____

Is the contact person a current BSP member (required)? Yes No

Brief description of proposed project: _____

Will the project take place in Pennsylvania (required)? Yes No

Explain how the proposed project furthers one or more of the following:

a.) Protect or propagate the Eastern Bluebird and other cavity nesting species in Pennsylvania and elsewhere: _____

b.) Provide and promote educational activities related to bluebirds and other cavity nesting species: _____

c.) Conduct research related to bluebirds, other cavity nesting species, food sources, habitat and trails: _____

d.) Build, maintain and monitor bluebird boxes and trails: _____

e.) Provide social opportunities to share information and experiences related to bluebirds, birding and related conservation and restoration projects: _____

6.) Approximate time frame of the project (begin) _____ - (end) _____

7.) Itemized anticipated expenses:

a.) _____ \$ _____ b.) _____ \$ _____

c.) _____ \$ _____ d.) _____ \$ _____

e.) _____ \$ _____

8.) Amount requested of BSP (\$500 maximum): \$ _____

9.) Other pertinent information: _____

Attach any additional pages if necessary

Troop 14003 Bluebird Box Trail

On March 22, 2018, Girl Scout Troop 14003 voted to create and monitor a “Bluebird Box Trail”, located at “Thomas B. George, Jr. Park”, Lower Paxton Township, Harrisburg, PA. This project will enable all the girls to earn their “Girl Scout Bronze Award”. Upon choosing this project all girls have an understanding that there are many steps required for all of them to complete, before they earn their Bronze Award. They all agreed to complete all the steps and requirements for this project.

Their first step was coming up with a project. Thanks to Bill Strauss and his influence on Noelle Haig, the troop completed their first step, when they agreed to take on this project. But there were many more steps that needed to be completed. Although, they had the support of Bill Strauss, they needed the approval from the, “Lower Paxton Township Parks and Recreation Board”, to establish a “Bluebird Box Trail” at “Thomas B. George, Jr. Park”. So, on Wednesday, April 4, 2018 a few of the girls gave a presentation to the, “Lower Paxton Township Parks and Recreation Board” and asked that they approve their “Bluebird Box Trail”. Due to their presentation and enthusiasm the board approved of their project.

The next steps were to build the Bluebird boxes and place them at appropriate locations; the



Girl Scouts built 5 boxes on April 12th and placed them at the park on Saturday, April 14th. However, due to this being a large troop, we needed to build 2 more boxes and place them at the park as well. On April 16th and 18th, the troop placed box 6 and 7 at, “Thomas B. George, Jr. Park, Lower Paxton Township, Harrisburg, PA”.

On Thursday, April 26th we held our regular meeting at the park. In groups of 3, all girls were educated and trained on monitoring the Bluebird Box Trail. For the next 22 weeks each girl has signed up and committed to monitor the trail. They all have the commitment and are very excited to keep this trail intact for years following. However, they will need to educate the public about the Bluebird Box Trail and the importance of not disturbing the boxes. So, on August 7, 2018, “National Night out for Safety”, Girl Scout Troop 14003

will set up a booth at, “Thomas B. George, Jr. Park” to educate the public and build excitement in the youth about Bluebirds.

Finally, the girls needed to report back to the, “Lower Paxton Township Parks and Recreation Board”. Two girls gave the report on May 2, 2018, using a map and pictures the showed the location of each box. In addition, they showed the board members their monitoring kit and explained all the items in the kit. The members were very pleased to see how fast the girls made this happen. Each girl will sign a contract, obligating her to the Bluebird Box Trail, and give quarterly reports back to the “Lower Paxton Township Parks and Recreation Board”.

Note: Troop 14003 is very committed to monitoring and taking care of this new bluebird trail. Here is a document written by Noelle Haig which outlines the

Troop 14003 Bluebird Box Trail continued



follow-up activity to keep the trail in good condition:

Bluebird Trail Pledge

This states that Troop 14003 will be responsible for the George Park bluebird trail in Lower Paxton Township and that we will preserve the 6 bluebird houses on the George Park Trail. Troop 14003 will be responsible for the maintenance

and caring for the bluebird houses and the trail. We will monitor the activity according to the Society's guidelines for cleaning out the boxes and keeping them in good condition.

If a girl decides to leave the troop, she must find a different girl to take her place. Part of the Girl Scout's responsibility is to care for them. These are some of the guidelines that the girls must follow. The

guidelines will be supported and set forth by Bill Strauss, a member of the North American Bluebird Society and an active member in the local bluebird group.

Written by: Noelle Haig

x _____
Member Signature

x _____
Date

Attached are photo's of Bill and GSA Troop "Girl Scouts in the Heart of PA Troop #14003".

Editors Note: *BSP salutes Noelle and her Girl Scout Troop members for their level of commitment to monitoring and maintaining the nest boxes. They understand that installing nest boxes is only the first step, and that follow-up efforts are vital to keep a nest box trail safe and productive for the songbirds.*

BSP also thanks Bill Strauss, BSP County Coordinator for Dauphin County for sharing his time and talents regarding bluebirds with people of all ages.

Obtain Help for Injured, Ill, or Orphaned Wild Animals

If you observe an injured, ill, or orphaned wild animal, contact a nearby Wildlife Rehabilitation Center. These persons are certified and trained to care for these animals. The goal is to return them to their natural environment if possible.

A list of Wildlife Rehabilitators in the counties throughout PA are available from the Pennsylvania Association of Wildlife Rehabilitators at their web site: <http://pawr.com/>



If you are interested in learning more about Wildlife Rehabilitation activities, they also offer periodic training programs to prepare persons to be licensed to do so.

There is also a link to this resource on the BSP web site: www.thebsp.org On the main page, select More... then scroll down to A Bluebird Needs Help- Wildlife Rehabilitators

2017 BSP Annual Nest Box Report

Submitted by Shirley Halk, BSP Annual Nest Box Reporter

Thanks to those who sent in their 2017 Nest Box Report to BSP. The complete report by County is posted on the BSP web site www.thebsp.org Scroll to MORE...then select 2017 State Monitor's Report from the drop-down box.

Here is the Summary of the nesting data:

Bluebirds

Number of Boxes Reported: 3147
Number of Bluebird Eggs: 7576 total (7338 blue eggs, 238 white eggs)
Number of Bluebirds Fledged: 6137

Other species Fledged:

Tree Swallows: 3108
House Wrens: 1773
Black-Capped Chickadees: 393
Tufted Titmice: 15
White-Breasted Nuthatch: 7
Carolina Wrens: 6
Great-Crested Flycatchers: 4

Editor's Note: The main problems reported by monitors again this year were caused by House Sparrows. If you have nest boxes, please do not allow House Sparrows to nest in them. House Sparrows are non-native birds which aggressively compete with native songbirds, and they will kill both adult and young of all native songbird species.

House Sparrows are NOT PROTECTED by the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and it is important to remove their nests and eggs. The best way to control House Sparrows is by trapping them.

Included in this issue is the Annual Nest Box Report Form. This information is really helpful to our Society to measure the combined results of our efforts to promote bluebird propagation.

Early Bird Contest Drawing!

*Please submit your Annual Report by October 15th, 2018 to be entered into the Early Bird Contest, a random drawing of nest box reports received for prizes from the BSP Merchandise Store.

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

New Feature of BSP Web Site

If you know of a bluebird trail that needs someone to monitor the nest boxes, please contact the webmaster to post them on the link at www.thebsp.org

Monitors Needed—Golf Courses & Private /Public Landowners

This new name link will allow us to place monitors needed notices for both Golf Courses and Private/ Public landowners. They are listed in alphabetical order with two columns.

Thank you.

Sincerely Harry Schmeider,
BSP Webmaster

Information Needed:

- Specific Location of Nest Boxes:
- County:
- Number of nest boxes:

Contact information:

- Name:
- Phone Number:
- e-mail address:

BSP Appreciation Award for 2018—Ken Leister

Ken has served on the BSP Board of Directors for many years

He is the BSP State County Coordinator and maintains contact with Coordinators (one for each of the 67 counties) His goal is to assist them in every aspect of bluebirding.

At every BSP Bluebird Conference, he chairs a meeting of BSP County Coordinators

- He participates in BSP's box-building programs, including Cabelas, Steel Stacks, the PA Farm Show, and other locations.
- He communicates with Eagle Scouts on their pursuit of the Bluebird Trail Award, urging them to find monitors for all of the boxes they install.
- In the past decade, he has personally established several new bluebird trails and obtained monitors for them.



Ken is congratulated by Shirley Halk who presented the award

He generated and implemented a new category of BSP Membership, the Junior Membership Program, which he delegated to Marilyn Michalski and Nancy Fraim for day-to-day management.

- As a resident of Chester County and State County Coordinator, Ken responds to requests from BSP members and the general public. He is knowledgeable and generous with beneficial and practical advice. If needed, he will make a personal visit to solve a bluebird problem.
- Using his powerpoint program on the Eastern bluebird, he gives bluebird talks when requested. He has presented this program to garden clubs, scout troupes, civic organizations, retirement homes, and schools.

- He developed the "Bluebird Chat" program at local hardware stores. This program, usually hosted once a month, enables customers to talk about birds and ask questions about nest boxes, bird behavior, and care of the bluebirds.
- In the past 5 years, inside of his back yard shop, Ken has constructed more than 1000 nest boxes, most of which he gives to needy causes.
- Every year he donates nest boxes to schools, parks, community projects, conservation efforts, scout troops, charities, and requesting organizations.
- He keeps a "Mealworm Farm" alive in his home so that he can provide larvae to bluebirds all winter long. He also teaches others how to set up mealworm farms.

His Appreciation Award reads:

Appreciation Award Presented to Ken Leister
With our deepest gratitude for your Dedication,
Uplifting Attitude, Commitment, and Tireless
Effort to Teach and Share Your Knowledge
as State County Coordinator of the Bluebird
Society of Pennsylvania, 2018

Important County Coordinator News

New County Coordinator For:

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Richard Leatherman

215-723-6476

e-mail: rich-rach@juno.com

URGENT—The following Counties are in Need of County Coordinators:

- Bradford • Cambria • Green • Lackawanna • Mifflin • Snyder, and
- Susquehanna.

Please contact Ken Leister at 610-696-5271 or e-mail: kenapeg@aol.com if you are willing to serve as BSP County Coordinator.

Phil Durgin on the April 6th & 7th BSP Annual Conference

The Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania's 20th Annual Conference was held this year at the Eden Resort in Lancaster on April 6-7, 2018

Our Friday evening speaker was John Everhart, who spoke about the annual Bedford County Youth Field Day. One of the highlights of the day is building bluebird nest boxes from local trees that are donated and processed by local businesses and schools. Ken Leister and Nancy Fraim also spoke about their activities involving schools and nest box cameras.



Speaker, John Klucsarits discusses his ongoing work with American Kestrels

Saturday's speakers were Professor John Klucsarits of Alvernia University who spoke on his work with American Kestrels; BSP



Author, Kathy Miller with her Chippy Chipmunk books

President Dean Rust, who gave a presentation on The Ecology and Management of the Eastern Bluebird; and Kathy Miller, an award-winning photographer and author, who gave ideas and suggestions on how to improve your bird photography and give creative purpose to your images.

David Birmingham of Camp Hill (717-730-8602) donated his time and entertaining personality again this year as our Auctioneer, and Patricia Larthey volunteered her services as Auction Clerk.

One hundred forty participants attended this year's conference, including 22 county coordinators, 17 first-time conference attendees, and several attentive children. Connie Solon

of Lancaster, PA won the raffle of the coveted President's Basket.

Many thanks to all those who helped to pull the conference together, with special thanks to our long-time BSP membership and conference registration volunteer, Joanne Slavinski, who is planning to move out of state and will no longer be able to help. We'll miss you dearly!



A mom and her young daughter enjoy refreshments during a conference break

And thanks to everyone who donated and bid on auction items and supported our store and vendors!

Phil Durgin,
BSP Conference Chair

Dean Rust - Bluebirder of the Year Award for 2018

Dean Rust, of Lancaster, PA has served as the President of the Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania since the Spring of 2014 and he continues to do so. His leadership has been instrumental in increasing the number of active BSP members, and many people outside of PA have joined BSP due to his educational outreach through the Contact the President feature on the BSP web site.



Dean is an active bluebirder who also serves as BSP County Coordinator for Lancaster County. He has established many new bluebird trails and trains volunteers to monitor them. He also monitors many nest boxes on several bluebird trails. Dean is a champion of bluebird education and outreach, and inspires everyone to roll up their sleeves and get actively involved in bluebirding.

Through his many educational programs and presentations, he has shared his knowledge of bluebird habitat, nest box design, and monitoring tips with hundreds of people. He launched the PA Golf Course Bluebird Trail Initiative Program, which promotes the establishment of bluebird trails on golf courses, and obtains volunteer monitors to check and maintain the nest boxes.

Dean is also a published author of a wonderful bluebird book, *The Beloved & Charismatic Bluebird*, which is a beautifully illustrated, and practical how-to guide to bluebirding with a goal of promoting optimum nesting success.

His energy, enthusiasm, and support have inspired BSP Board Members, Ken Leister and Marilyn Michalski to launch the Junior BSP Membership level,

and active BSP members can sponsor young people who have an interest in bluebirds to join BSP at no cost. This will insure that BSP will share the joy of bluebirds with young people who can become the bluebirders of the future to continue the important goal of promoting the propagation of bluebirds and other native cavity-nesting songbirds.

Here is Dean's story of his interest in bluebirds:

I was born and raised in a small town in southwestern Ohio. From age 12 to 18 it was my job to keep our backyard bird-feeding station stocked with suet, thistle seed, sunflower, and safflower seeds. I could identify many species of songbirds, both male and female, and those visiting birds made our backyard special. To this day I continue the tradition of feeding songbirds and enjoy the wide variety of birds that are attracted to food and a heated birdbath. After 4 years of college in Indiana and 4 years of dental school at the Ohio State University, my wife, Shirley and I moved to Strasburg, PA. I practiced general dentistry for 33 years in the Lancaster area retiring in 2005. In 2006 we were visiting Marilyn and Rick Canada, in South Carolina and we saw Eastern bluebirds in a park along the May River. I was captivated by their beauty, and it motivated me to build some nest boxes for our backyard. I made Mother's Day gifts-nest boxes for our three married daughters that year. We all were successful in attracting Bluebirds that 1st year and I was hooked. I started making boxes for friends, relatives and neighbors. I was enthralled with "a Bluebird hobby" and decided that what I really wanted was my own bluebird trail.

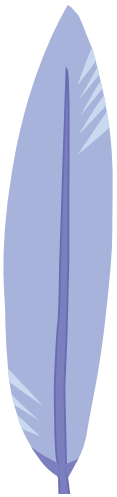
In 2010, I joined BSP and started monitoring the Lancaster Country Club trail and started 4 other new trails that year. In 2011 I added 9 other trails and presently I monitor 14 trails with over 300 nest boxes in 3 counties. I enjoy speaking with civic groups and organizations about my trails, experiences and my love for bluebirds. It is a thrill for me to watch others get involved in and enjoy the beautiful and beneficial bluebirds!

For his many years of service to BSP and to the bluebirds, Dean is certainly deserving of being honored with the Bluebirder of the Year Award for 2018.

Wilma C. Light, M.D. - BSP Blue Feather Award for 2018

Wilma Light currently serves as BSP Co-County Coordinator for Westmoreland County.

She is enthusiastic about bluebirds, and is very active in promoting BSP and inspiring others to become actively involved in bluebird conservation activities. Through her educational outreach programs, she has encouraged many people to become active participants in bluebirding and to become members of the Bluebird Society of PA.



Shirley Halk details the many accomplishments of Wilma C. Light, recipient of the Blue Feather Award

This is a partial list of her involvement in bluebird activities:

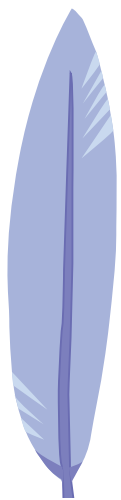
- Westmoreland County hosted a workshop in March of 2017 at the Loyalhanna Watershed Nimick Family Education Center. She and other BSP volunteers planned for 30 participants, but reservations kept coming in and they ended up with over 60 people making nest boxes.
- In June of 2017, they provided an educational outreach booth at the Ligonier Country Market and offered nest box kits, and this effort resulted in 15 new BSP members .
- She and other BSP volunteers monitor a 19 nest box bluebird trail at the Loyalhanna Watershed property. In 2017, those boxes fledged 9 Bluebirds , 9 Tree Swallows, and 8 House Wrens.
- A new bluebird trail was established at the Ligonier Valley Trail with 10 nest boxes in mid-summer of 2017, and five volunteers have helped to monitor the trails.
- In 2017, a new project at the Watershed property was to add valuable plants which provide food and/or shelter for bluebirds. At this point, 45 fenced areas are in place, and three large areas are accommodating the plantings. They have added Northern Bayberry, Eastern Red Cedar, Black Chokeberry, Cotoneaster, Flowering Dogwood, Silky Dogwood, Elderberry, Hackberry, American Cranberry, Winterberry Spice Bush, Red Mulberry, Blueberry, Serviceberry, Red-Osier Dogwood, and Alternative-leaved Dogwood. Educational programs concerning the environment have been ongoing ,and this year a new STEM/Environmental Educational Program for elementary school children has been added. These plantings are available to the public to see to encourage them to add them to their home environments and are located along accessible paths on 9 acres of the Watershed. They also have Purple Martin houses up, and are awaiting the first customer, hopefully in the Spring of 2018. The Bluebird Society of PA helped with a grant for this important habitat-improvement project, and additional funding was provided by the Ligonier Valley Educational Trust.

For all that she does to promote successful nesting of bluebirds and other native-cavity-nesting species, and for her efforts to improve habitats to accommodate their needs, Wilma Light is very deserving recipient of a Blue Feather Award for 2018.

Marilyn Michalski-2018 Blue Feather Award

Marilyn's family roots began in the Mid-West, mainly Detroit, Michigan, where her father was a Lutheran Minister. Marilyn watched American robins and Northern cardinals as a child. When she saw her father give peanuts to the cardinals, she knew that BIRDS had captured her heart. She did not see an Eastern bluebird until she moved to Pennsylvania to start her career. Marilyn has a M.A. Degree in American Literature from Ohio State University

- 2008-2009-Installation of several American Kestral nestboxes in appropriate locations in Northern Chester County, and one pair successfully nested at Camp Hill Village
- She supports the Kestral Nestbox Program at Hawk Mountain
- In 2014, she was voted onto the Bluebird Society of PA's Board of Directors



Marilyn Michalski (left) receives BSP Blue Feather Award from Shirley Halk, BSP Awards Chair

- Marilyn was a public school teacher at Lower Merion School District for 28 years-she is now retired She is married with a supportive husband, who is also retired.
- In 1980, she studied cavity-nesting birds, and various types of nestboxes were installed in her yard and the neighborhood The first pair of Eastern bluebirds nested on her property in 1996
- In 2004, Marilyn established a bluebird trail at Camp Hill Village in Kimberton, PA. Now in its fifteenth year, this trail has 63 nestboxes, and 128 bluebirds fledged in 2017.

- With her Mentor, Ken Leister, she helped develop the BSP Junior Membership Program
- She writes articles for the BSP Newsletter, including "The Origin of Feathers" and her recent article of 2018, "How To Help Bluebirds and Do No Harm"
- In 2015, she took over a bluebird trail at Bluestone Country Club, a golf course and country club in Blue Bell, PA. This trail, which had not been monitored, was infested with House sparrows. The goal was to eradicate the non-native birds. In 2017, this trail fledged 38 Eastern bluebirds

- In 2017 she helped an Eagle Scout initiate a bluebird trail at Pocopsan Park.
- She monitors four bluebird trails every year
- She and a friend at Camp Hill Village developed a sliding mount for a Kestral Nest Box, which enables the monitor to raise and lower the large nest box to check the nesting activity.

For all that Marilyn has accomplished for cavity-nesters of Pennsylvania, she is most worthy of BSP's Blue Feather Award for 2018.

Save the date—21st Annual BSP Conference 2019

April 26-27, 2019 • Toftrees Golf Resort • One Country Club Lane • State College, PA (814) 234-8000 • toftrees.com

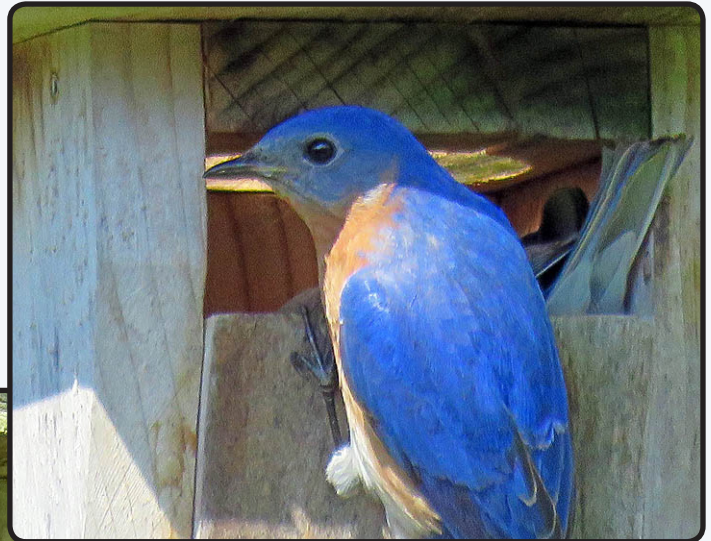
A special conference mailing will be sent to all active BSP members in early February of 2019.

Registration Forms and conference details will also be posted on the BSP web site www.thebsp.org closer to the event.

Mailbag

Hi Dean,
It's been fun watching the busy Bluebirds lately. Although I haven't opened the front door (it's very tight and I have to tap on it to close it) to look at young ones... I did see three of them at the slot the other hot day (to get some air). Attached photos are from a number of days ago. What is the normal range of days old for fledging? I have also seen a couple of other male Bluebirds here as they know where to find water and dried mealworms.

John



Hatch Day!

John,
CONGRATULATIONS! You have worked so hard and now the big day is here. Think of what you have learned on this Bluebird odyssey. ENJOY watching the nestlings grow with each new day and the parents feed them tirelessly from dawn to dusk. Now your backyard is a very exciting place with an active Bluebird pair nesting.

Dean



photo by John Hornberger

Good morning Joan,
Subject: Bluebird Arrival I live in the Newville/Newburg area and was wondering if you could give me an idea when we should see bluebirds here. We have one nesting box in our pasture and had much enjoyment last season by seeing two broods hatch from that box. We attracted the birds by using live meal worms and a mealworm feeder box. Then we switched to the dried mealworms. Want to put out live mealworms for attraction but not sure

when to do so. Thank you in advance for your response to my question.

Eric Hoerner

Editor's Reply: Hi-With the warmer weather, the bluebirds are getting ready to start their mating season, so they will be checking out the nesting boxes very soon. I would suggest that you put out the live mealworms in

Mailbag (continued)

the morning as long as it is above freezing. In the winter months they are more likely to have gone a bit South or have been moving around in flocks searching for natural food in wooded areas.

We live in Mechanicsburg and have been fortunate to have had a flock of bluebirds visit our yard all winter to feed at the dried mealworm feeder and enjoy the suet that I have made with corn meal, suet, raisins, shelled sunflower seeds, and peanut butter. Lately I have seen the males become more territorial by chasing away the other males at the feeders, and have heard the mating calls. Both male and female bluebirds are also checking out the bluebird boxes by going in and out. My first active nesting usually starts in early April, so you should see some nesting activity by then. It may be the same nesting pair as last year or may be a different pair or they may have different partners. I will send a pair of bluebirds your way by telling them that there is nest box waiting for them in the Newville/Newburg area.

I would also suggest that if the pasture is not mowed, then move the box to an open, mowed area in your yard to avoid predation and to avoid getting ticks when you check the box when the grass gets high.

Reply from Eric

Hello Joan, thank you so much for the valuable information. We will place our live meal worms out when above freezing. We will also look into making the suet combination you spoke of. Is it okay to offer both at the same time? We keep our pastures mowed so, that is not a problem. Thanks again for your response.

Editor's Reply: Yes, it is O.K. to feed both items at the same time. These supplemental food sources can also be very important to sustain the birds during chilly, rainy weather patterns in the early Spring, even into May. Many times monitors are surprised and upset to find fully-feathered, young bluebirds dead in the nest box due to starvation and hypothermia in the early spring

Thanks for including the yearly State Parks report! And feel to share my updated information with anyone with questions or who is interested in monitoring in one of our parks. Thank you!

Carly Broder

Natural Resource Program Specialist
Department of Conservation & Natural Resources
Phone: 717.783.3344 - Carly

Editor's Note: Contact: cbroder@pa.gov

if you are interested in monitoring any of the bluebird trails within the State Parks in PA.

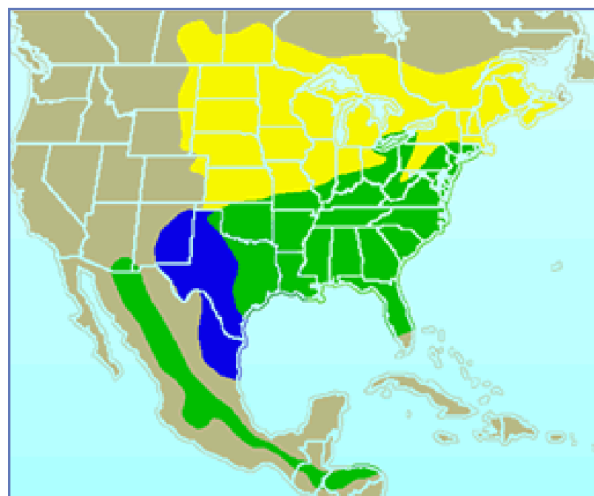
Correction

Please note that the color codes on the **Distribution Map of Eastern Bluebirds** were inadvertently labeled incorrectly on Page 1 of the Spring issue of the BSP newsletter.

This REVISED chart correctly depicts the Bluebird Distribution:

Approximate Eastern Bluebird Range/Distribution Map

Author: Ken Thomas



- Winter only range
- Year-round range of the species
- Summer only range

Cats, Indoors, Please

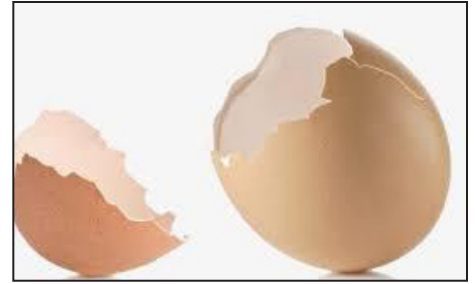
Outdoor domestic and feral cats are a recognized threat to global biodiversity. Cats have contributed to the extinction of 33 species and continue to adversely impact a wide variety of other species, including those at risk of extinction. When left outdoors, cats can also be injured and become ill due to a variety of outdoor environmental hazards.

For more information: <https://abcbirds.org/program/cats-indoors/cats-and-birds>

Offer Supplemental Calcium to the Nesting Birds

Calcium is especially needed in the Spring and Summer months when the female songbirds are laying their eggs. Web Cams installed inside of nest boxes have captured video of the female adult bluebird eating the eggshells of their young soon after they hatch, or they may remove the eggshells and carry them away from the nesting site.

If you want to offer a supply of calcium to the songbirds, place empty egg shells on a baking tin



and bake them at 250 degrees until they are dry. Crush them in very small pieces and place them in a feeder or on dry ground.

Lenker Park Bluebird Trail in West Hanover Township

On January 20, I began working with Nick Smullen on his Eagle Scout Project. Nick is currently working on an erosion

and beautification project in Lenker Park, West Hanover Township. We outlined and staked the bluebird trail. I assisted Nick with beginning

to build four of the eight boxes needed to complete his trail. This new bluebird trail that was installed on Saturday, March 3rd.



Nick Smullen



Bill Strauss, BSP County Coordinator with Nick Smullen and his two brothers. Not pictured-Their father also assisted with this project.

BSP Newsletter Submission Contest

Congratulations! Eric Hoerner Winner of the BSP Newsletter Submission Contest

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.

The Newsletter Committee is very excited that many BSP 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)

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 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.

Lyme Disease

For the past five years, Pennsylvania has reported the most Lyme disease cases nationwide.

The infection can cause fever, fatigue, headache, muscle aches and joint pain. The study says blacklegged ticks also can transmit the parasite causing Babesiosis, which can cause anemia and

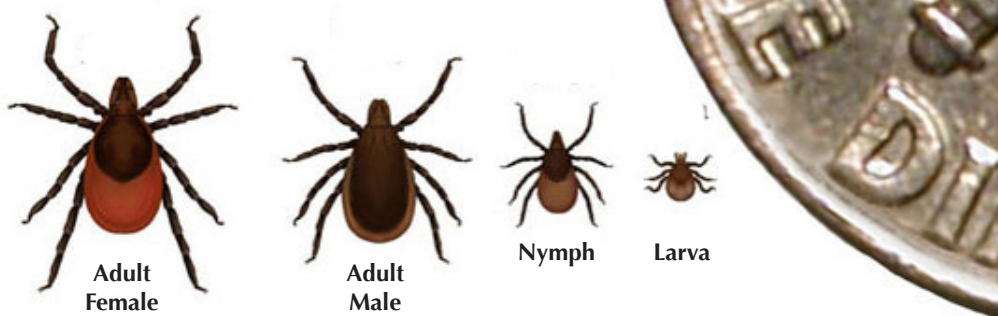
potentially be fatal. Anaplasmosis, another blacklegged-tickborne infection, causes fever, headache, chills and muscle aches, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states. If you experience any of these symptoms, you may want to check with your doctor to rule out or to confirm a diagnosis

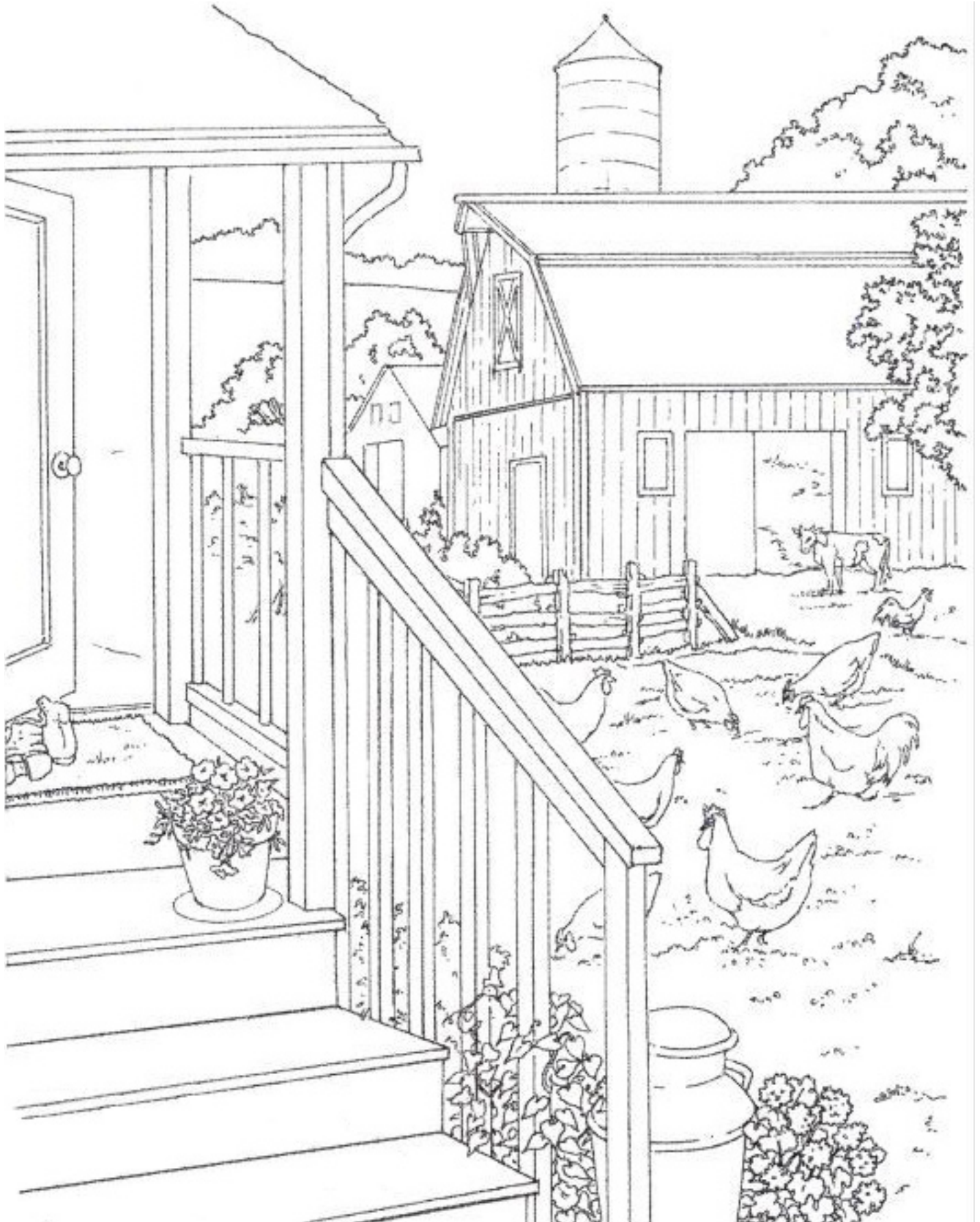
of Lyme disease. The administration of antibiotics is the most common treatment mode. To avoid such infections, wear light-colored, protective clothing outdoors, use insect repellents, and do a full-body check after being outside.

The illustration at left is from [cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) (Center for Disease Control and Prevention)

For more information on Lyme disease: <https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/tickbornediseases/tick-bites-prevention.html>

Blacklegged Tick (*Ixodes Scapularis*)





Summertime on the Farm, but please keep the cats indoors

Send to: P.O. Box 756, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-0756

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

Renew for 3 years and take advantage of our discounted rates!

New Member Renewal

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ Middle Initial: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City/Town: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____ County (if in PA): _____

Telephone (optional): _____

E-mail Address: _____ (Required if requesting e-mail delivery of seasonal newsletter, event updates)

Additional supporting donations are gratefully accepted and appreciated. Please make your check or money order payable to the "Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania" and return this application to:

Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania • P.O. Box 756 • Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-0756.

Additional Contribution (optional): \$ _____ Total Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

e-mail delivery Please enter your e-mail address here: _____

regular mail delivery

Member Interest Survey:

I/We would like to learn about assisting BSP with

Create/Monitor BSP Trails Telephoning Membership Finance Woodworking Fundraising

State Monitoring Education Speakers Bureau Photography State Conference Research

Publication/Artwork Newsletter County Coordinator Publicity Web Site/Web Content

Other: _____

Special Event Help:

Garden Expo Booth @ Farm Show Garden Expo Booth @ Hershey Gardens Ned Smith Day @ Millersburg

Annual Farm Show @ Farm Show (January) Tech Support @ State Convention Other Special Events:

Please tell us how you learned about us:

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Paid by: Cash Check Money Order

Website: www.the bsp.org



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Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-0756

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BSP 2018 Annual Conference Feedback

"Well-attended, people were very engaged during the entire event, the venue was super, and it was great to see so many young people in attendance!"

*Dean,
First, you and your team put together yet another fantastic conference. Thank you to all involved! Each year I have attended I always learn something new and enjoy the company of new and familiar faces. I am already looking forward to next year's conference!*
Carly

This was another WONDERFUL annual conference!

BSP RENEWAL DATES/Mailing Address Changes - Please check your mailing label on your regular mailed copy to see your renewal date. You can renew for one year or for multiple years, which will provide a discount. Both e-mail and regular mail members will also receive a letter by regular mail notifying of your renewal date. *If you need to update your mailing address, please send changes to: BSP • P.O. Box 756 • Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

Upcoming Events

BSP Board Meetings:

July 26, 2018, Thursday evening 6 p.m. October 25, 2018, Thursday evening 6 p.m.

Location: Giant Conference Center -Upstairs Community Room, Camp Hill Shopping Center, 3301 E. Trindle Road, Camp Hill, PA

July 28-Saturday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.- Ned Smith Nature and Arts Festival FREE ADMISSION

Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art, 176 Water Company Rd., Millersburg, PA

www.nedsmithcenter.org/festival

Join us for this annual FREE celebration of nature and the arts; the perfect way to celebrate summer! To be held for the first time at the Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art, 176 Water Company Rd., Millersburg, PA.

BSP will host the Educational Booth, present a bluebird program, and help the PA Game Commission with a nest box building activity.

Volunteers are needed. For more information and to volunteer, contact Phil Durgin, pdurgin@comcast.net 717-732-5325

DIRECTIONS: From Harrisburg and points South: • Take Rt 147/Market St. into Millersburg • Turn RIGHT at the town square • Follow Rt 209/Union Street out of Millersburg (Past Troutman's GMC) • Follow signs for Festival Parking From Points North: • Turn LEFT at the Square in the center of Millersburg, stay on Rt. 209/Union Street • Follow Rt 209/Union Street out of Millersburg (Past Troutman's GMC) • Follow signs for Festival Parking

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