



The Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania

An Affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society

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A Message from the President

Dr. Dean C. Rust, BSP President

The following is an excerpt from Dorene H. Scriven's book, *Bluebird Trails: A Guide to Success*, 3rd Edition, 1999, which summarizes how bluebirds capture our hearts and inspire us to get involved in bluebirding:

"We hope this guide will help solve some of the dilemmas of the more experienced bluebirder frustrated by problems, will answer many questions of the novice bluebirder, and will entice those who had never even thought of being "caught" by bluebirds. But be forewarned: once you have attracted that first beautiful devoted pair of bluebirds, you are trapped! Your life will change! You will be beguiled by their beauty, their courtship, and their loving care of their young. The "time you couldn't spare" will be spent watching them, worrying about them, constantly improving your trail, moving your boxes, solving problems, outwitting predators, and boasting to anyone who will listen that you have helped bring "your own" beautiful blue thrushes into a better world!"

The frosty ice and snow of another winter has breathed its last breath and morphed into the best time of year for the bluebirder: Spring. It is "SHOW-TIME". The boxes are ready, nests are being woven into tidy cup-shaped art forms, eggs are arriving each morning with regularity as the dew is evaporating and new life forms are magically bursting forth from their eggshells on a daily basis. Along with this great joy for the parents is the reality of the increased workload to find thousands of juicy insects for their

hungry nestlings over the next 5 to 6 weeks. The life cycle of the bluebird is a beautiful thing to observe and enjoy. We bluebirders have a front row seat for this entire show as it plays daily in locations all over PA. Now is the time to have your monitoring kits ready along with your notebooks and sunscreen. Enjoy each new day with a keen sense of excitement and awe knowing that spring is the most special of seasons for those who love bluebirds.



Photo by David Kinneer

One of the special job descriptions as the President of the Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania is being the contact person for the President's Hotline Forum. BSP's website, thebsp.org has an email question form directed to the BSP President, my email address. Almost daily I get emails from all over PA and many

A Message from the President

other states as well. Reading and responding to these emails is one of my favorite duties. It is both enjoyable and rewarding to troubleshoot the bluebird problems people experience. Sometimes it requires 3 or 4 emails and a few days time until the problem is resolved. If I can't decide what to suggest, I can request the help of Keith Kridler, Mt. Pleasant, TX, and he always has a solid and reassuring answer.

This President's Hotline Forum has had many interesting question and answer dialogues over the past 3 years and I have highlighted some of these scenarios in my recent book on bluebirds, ***The Beloved and Charismatic Bluebird*** (see Chapter 12 entitled: Troubleshooting). Each day I look forward to what challenging question might come my way via The President's Hotline Forum and how I can best help that person with their specific bluebird questions.

Since 1976 there have been 7 books written about bluebirds (not including children's books). Considering the number of people living in North America who absolutely love bluebirds, it seems like a small number of books over 40 years. Recently this question was posed to me: "Why did you write a book on bluebirds?" I was not very eloquent in my initial response but the question was a good one. It caused me to do some serious thinking on the matter and I came up with this reason. "I wrote, ***The Beloved and Charismatic Bluebird***, to share my love of bluebirds with others in a concise, organized, practical, how-to-be-successful format that will insure memorable adventures with bluebirds on trails or backyard nest boxes".

For any sport or hobby to be fun, one has to learn, take lessons, or practice basic skill sets before they can have any true enjoyment or pleasure. For example, tennis is not fun if you can't hit the ball over the net at least once before chasing the ball and no one will want to play if you can't ever return the ball. Think about golf, swimming, basketball, softball ----- if you don't have any ability or skills, you prob-

ably will move on to another sport or hobby. The same is true of bluebirds --- one needs to know some basics before they can have any fun. Education is the key to enjoying a favorite pastime.

I selected a title using the word BELOVED: syn. darling, dearest, precious, adored, treasured, cherished, prized, admired, and revered. I also chose CHARISMATIC: syn. charming, fascinating, magnetic, captivating, beguiling, attractive, appealing, alluring, and winning. My book can be purchased online at: www.bluebirdconservation.com.

The Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania has a new Jr. BSP Member Program. If you have grandchildren, a niece or nephew, or neighbor who is under 16 years of age, enroll them as a Jr. BSP Member. This program is directed to growing a new generation of young bluebird enthusiasts here in PA. There is a registration form online at thebsp.org. Fill it out and send it to Marilyn Michalski at: emeraldmm@verizon.net. I think we are the 1st state bluebird society to initiate such a program. Please help us grow this fledgling group of **new** BSP members.

Our 2016 Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania Conference was a huge success on April 8-9 at the Holiday Inn, Grantville, PA. Phil Durgin did an outstanding job as Conference Coordinator, our speakers were superb, and the food was great. As always, the silent and live auction brought many laughs and smiles. People just enjoy having fun bidding on "special items" that only a bluebird lover would like. If you have never experienced a BSP Conference, please make a special effort to attend next year! We want to meet you. Thanks to everyone who attended this year's conference ----- I think it was one of our best conferences ever.

Have a great summer. May your days be filled with Blessings, Blue Skies, and Bluebirds!

Dean C. Rust
President of the Bluebird Society
of Pennsylvania

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Good News!

- From Bill Wenger**
- Allegheny CC. 01/16 — Presented a Bluebird Program at the Wexford Store of Wild Birds Unlimited — 24 attendees. 01/24th–bluebird presentation was given at the WBU Monroeville store–18 people attending. 01/20–Met with Frank Schmidt about getting a bluebird trail on the Diamond Run Golf Course in Sewickley. BSP/ Dean Rust will give him 10 new boxes in March- for this golf course rehab, (already approved by Board)
- From Nancy Putt**
- I got a rave report from my sister, Dale (she was there) about Ken Leister’s program “All About Bluebirds” held at Brandywine ACE Hardware (Chester County). on February 18th. Sixty people attended (some standing) and all seemed extremely interested in what Ken had to say. Some said they had gotten interested in Bluebirds at our Farm Show booth, others came quite a distance and some said they found out about the program on FACEBOOK! Everyone who had pre-registered took home a free bag of mealworms and several people bought Ken’s nest boxes.
- WOW...great Job Ken!!!

From the Editor

by Joan Watroba

Songbird Sightings

Early May brought rain, rain, and more rain, but also the return of the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, Wood Thrushes, Gray Catbirds, Eastern Towhees, Red-Breasted Grosbeaks, and House Wrens to our yard. The Hummers have been busy at the nectar feeder, and the catbirds are enjoying the suet. Still waiting to see the Baltimore Orioles (Northern Orioles) and the Indigo Buntings. The flute-like song of the Wood Thrushes and the calls of the Eastern Towhees from the back woods celebrate the beginning and ending of each day.



Brown Thrasher

A Brown Thrasher has been a regular visitor to the suet feeder in the yard, and he provides a continuous repetition of the songs and calls of many other birds.



Gray Catbird

For that reason, birding by ear can be deceptive in identifying specific songbird species. I must actually see the bird to make sure that bird is making the call and not the Brown Thrasher.

Spring Weather

Beautiful warm and sunny weather in early Spring motivated the songbirds to start their nesting activity, then colder, more rainy weather caused a delay of the nesting process. It was certainly a challenge to monitor nest boxes between the raindrops, and I made a few trips to the nest boxes to deliver mealworms.

Annual BSP Conference

I was happy to see and talk with so many of you at our annual conference on April 8 and 9. It was a very well-attended event and was lots of fun. Even though I have been actively in-

involved in bluebirding for almost 20 years, I always learn something new at the annual conferences. Hope that you can attend our conference event next year. The Conference Committee will be announcing the date and venue for the 19th Annual BSP Conference in the near future.



Eastern Towhee

Annual Nest Box Report

Included with this mailing is the *Annual Nest Box Report Form*. If you monitor any nest boxes, please keep track of the activity and submit a report to our Nest Box Reporter. Report forms received by October 15th, 2016 will qualify for a random drawing of your choice of an item from the BSP Store: thebsp.org

Wishing everyone a wonderful summer full of nature surprises, and hope to see you at upcoming events, which are listed in this issue.

Joan Watroba
Editor

BSP Events

York Garden Expo

March 4-6, 2016

BSP participated in the 3 day celebration of Spring at the PA Garden Show of York, PA

Our booth was visited by many persons interested in attracting bluebirds. We answered lots of questions and shared the joy of bluebirds! We welcome the 37 new members who joined the BSP at this event. Box builders helped 16 children make their own nest boxes. Volunteers at our booth and box building event were: Shelyv Morehead, Richard and Barbara Brown, Joanne Slavinski, Joan Watroba, Kathy Clark, Zachary Cochran, Dale Barber, Dale Cook, Philip and Susan Durgin, Dave and Barb Cox, and Jim and Darlene Crone. Thanks for all of your help!

Nancy Putt, Event Coordinator and BSP County Coordinator/York County

Editor's Message:

Had fun at the York Garden Expo on Saturday. It was quite steady with visitors to our educational booth throughout the day-obtained many new members, and the BSP Booth looked beautiful!

Bluebird Program and Nest-Box Building Program

March 16, 2016

Joan Watroba and David Price, BSP Co-County Coordinators for Cumberland County presented a bluebird program and nest box building activity to 11 Cub Scouts in ,Pack No. 197 at the Good Samaritan Church on Trindle Road in Camp Hill. The children and their parents enjoyed the video, "Inside the Nest Box" DVD which shows the complete nesting cycle of bluebirds from nest building to the young bluebirds leaving the nest. The children had great questions, and enjoyed building the boxes using the mini electric screwdrivers.

Bluebird Workshop at Loyalhanna Watershed Office

March 19, 2016

A Bluebird Workshop was held at the Loyalhanna Watershed office with 36 registered attendees. An

informational program "Calling all Bluebirds" was held and the Bluebird Video was shown.



Then each participant was encouraged to paint their Lenker or Gilbertson nestbox, which hopefully can be placed out soon, as Bluebirds have been spotted in Westmoreland County. Each participant was encouraged to add native plants to their yard that help meet the food needs of the bluebirds and to have a water source available. One participant reported that bluebirds overwintered in her yard this winter. Seven new members signed on during the workshop. We have a 14 box bluebird trail at the Watershed Farm property.

Wilma C Light MD.,
Westmoreland County Co Director

Event Report from Dean

March 24, 2016

Today at 1 p.m. I gave a bluebird presentation to 23 members of the Women's Garden Club of Lancaster County, which was held at St. Thomas Episcopal Church. Three persons joined BSP during this event, and we thank the Club for their donation of \$75.00 to BSP.

Dean C. Rust
President of the Bluebird Society
of Pennsylvania

Bluebird Event at Cabela's Store – April 2, 2016

Morning Bluebirds,

Thanks to your entire team for making the day more than a total success. I cannot tell you about all the positive comments from both customers and Outfitters plus all the smiling faces on kids who built a box. I cannot say enough about the your entire team and their interaction with all those involved. If I can be of any help to your organization in the future, please do not hesitate to contact me. Look forward to seeing you at Steel Stacks in June.

Ron Leh,
Retail Marketing
Manager, Cabela's,
Hamburg, PA



Good evening.

I just wanted to say thank you for sponsoring the free, birdhouse building event at Cabela's this past Saturday. My four-year-old daughter had a great time. We ended up painting our birdhouse and put it in our yard along with a new bird feeder and nesting material box.

Thanks for starting off an educational day!

Jamie
Lancaster County



BSP Annual Conference – April 8 & 9, 2016

The 18th Annual BSP Conference, which was held at the Holiday Inn, Harrisburg/Hershey was a well-attended event with 125 registered attendees. BSP Members from across PA and also members from New Jersey, Virginia, New York, and Connecticut attended this year.

To all BSP Conference leaders:
I thank all of you for making the 2016 Bluebird Conference a great event. Everything went well, and the talks were outstanding!

To Phil: You deserve our special 'thanks' for the major effort you put into this event.

We in the BSP are proud of this Conference. I had a superb time – met lots of special individuals who work on behalf of many avian species, and had a lot of fun!

Marilyn
Chester County

***For a visual tour of the 2016 BSP Conference, go to the Bluebird Society of PA Facebook Page-Enjoy!**

Thanks To Our 2016 Conference Vendors:

Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania
WWW.THEBSP.ORG

BSP STORE

www.thebsp.org
P.O. Box 756, Mechanicsburg,
Pa. 17055
Contact:

Doris Hoffman, BSP Store Manger
717-766-3877

Bluebirding Supplies, House sparrow traps, Predator Guards, Logo clothing, Books, and Gift Items

North American Bluebird Society

<http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org/>
NABS Membership includes the seasonal publication, *Bluebird* and resources for education about all species of bluebirds

Thanks to **Allen Jackson** of New Jersey, who serves as a member of the NABS Board of Director for hosting the NABS booth at our conference

Sparrow Solutions

Contact: **Chuck Musser,**
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Innovative House sparrow control solutions, including traps, and gadgets to deter house sparrows

For the Birds

jettrail1739@embarqmail.com
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Thanks to our Excellent Speakers:

- **Pamela Dimeler**
- **Bet Zimmerman Smith**
- **ZooAmerica**
Hershey-Patrick Miller

Thanks to our Venue

Holiday Inn/Harrisburg/Hershey for providing a great venue, lodging, and tasty food choices.

Thanks also to the Following

Emily Johns, Auctioneer, and her Dad, Paul Johns, who served as our Auction Clerk for handling our live auction. It was a very lively, enjoyable and profitable activity. Thanks to those who donated such a wonderful variety of bluebird and nature-related items for our live and silent auctions.

Proceeds from the auctions are used to fund educational outreach to the public related to promoting the successful nesting of bluebirds and other native, cavity-nesting songbirds.

(Special Thanks to our regular **Auctioneer, David Birmingham** and his partner, **Pat Larthey**, for arranging for Emily to serve as our Conference Auctioneer, as they could not attend this year due to the death of a family member.)

Thanks to the many members who made monetary donations and for donations received from the Amish Quilt drawing.

Amish Quilt Drawing Winners:

Happy to announce the Winners of this year's Amish Quilt Raffle!

The winning tickets were drawn at the conference, and all items have been delivered to the following Winners:

1st Prize-QUILT:

Rose Katsianis

2nd Prize-WALL HANGING:

Jack Gardner

3rd Prize-PILLOW:

Robin Kuleck.

Nancy Putt,
Quilt Chairperson

Wetlands Festival

We had a good day at the “Wetlands Festival” on Saturday, April 30 from 10:00 to 4:00, at The Wildwood Nature Center in Harrisburg. Cathy and John Blair helped me set up and worked the morning shift. Phil and Susan Durgin took over from 1:00 to closing, and hauled everything back to the Bird Cage storage. We were located in this forested “hidden gem” of nature, surrounded by nature-related activities, that was a huge attraction for families with children.

Of course our booth with the nest/eggs exhibit was a magnet for the kids. One child signed up as a Junior member and we had five new members and one renewal at this event.

Nancy Putt
Event Chair

“After Action Report” for Sat April 30th, 2016

5th Annual Lancaster Native Plant & Wildlife Festival

Bob Goodhart, Dan Thomas and Dean Rust manned the BSP Booth from 9 a.m., to 3p.m.; we had an active bluebird nest right behind our booth with five eggs under incubation; perhaps as many as 35 children and parents got to visit the nest during the day

12 NEW BSP MEMBERS WERE SIGNED UP!

Dr. Dean C. Rust
BSP President

About the Scrub Jay and U.S.A State Birds

Ken Smith sent this article from a Florida newspaper.

Ken Smith writes: Here is an article of interest I thought you could use in the newsletter. It seems that the Florida scrub jay has some very similar traits as our blues; eating out of hands, family participation with feeding young and such. I have experienced the eating from hand behavior on the golf course in Florida. They are usually waiting for golfers on the 14th hole.



BSP Member, Ken Smith, sent an article to BSP about the attempt by State Rep. Mark Pafford to designate the Florida scrub jay as the official state bird of Florida instead of the current state bird, the Mockingbird. The change was discussed but not passed. However, during that time, interesting facts emerged about the Florida scrub jay, and studies indicate that it is a biologically and genetically different species, and it is entirely restricted to Florida. Long-term studies document that Florida scrub jays maintain faithful, lifelong pair bonds and they live in close-knit extended family groups. Young jays remain with their family members to defend the nesting sites and even

assist parents to feed their parents' offspring the following year. Since visitors to Florida seek out this special species, it may have been a good idea for designating the Florida scrub jay as the official bird of Florida.

To learn more about this interesting species found exclusively in Florida, check out: <https://www.audubon.org/guia-de-aves/ave/florida-scrub-jay>

The following states have designated species of bluebirds as their state bird:

Mountain Bluebird:
Idaho and Nevada

Eastern Bluebird:
New York and Missouri

The Western Bluebird
was selected as the California Audubon Bird of the Year for 2015 after a tally of more than 4,500 online votes.

Bermuda features an **Eastern Bluebird** on their \$2.00 bill. I was lucky to see this beautiful currency in a tip jar at a music venue refreshment kiosk.

However, the **Bermuda petrel**, (*Pterodroma cahow*) a nocturnal ground-nesting seabird is the national bird of Bermuda and can also be found on Bermudan money.



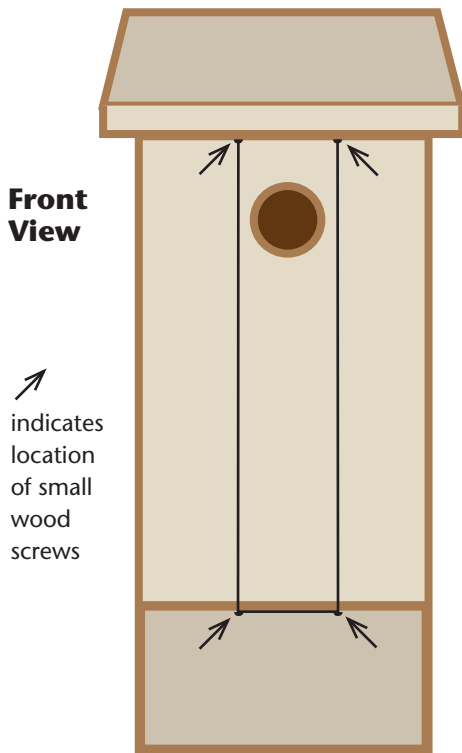
Using Monofilament Fishing Line on Nest Boxes to Deter House Sparrows

by Joan Watroba

MANY BLUEBIRD MONITORS are installing monofilament fishing line on the front of nest boxes to deter House sparrows from using nest boxes. I have personally used this method for about 15 years and with very good results. It does not seem to deter other native songbirds such as tree swallows, house wrens, titmice, or chickadees

from using nest boxes, as I have had successful nestings of all of these other songbird species in nest boxes with the line installed.

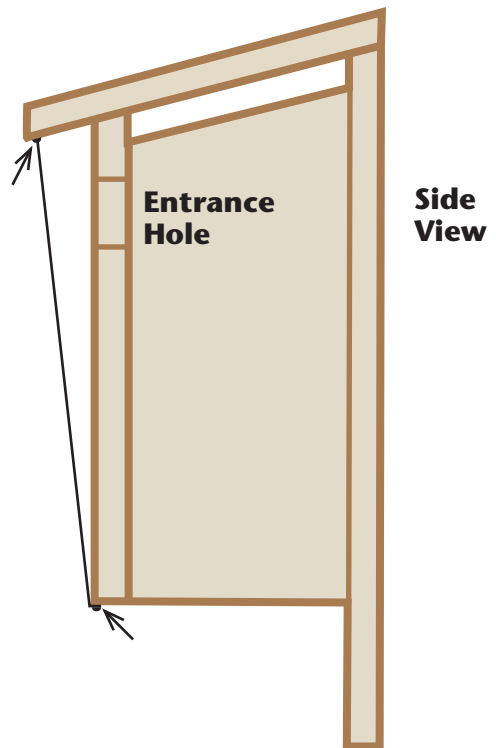
I have spoken with many other bluebirders at our educational booth at events who have also reported good results.



Four small screws: two on top, two on the bottom of the nest box spaced 1-3/4 inches apart

Six pound test Monofilament fishing line placed vertically, pulled taut long the length of the nest box.

For side opening boxes, there is no need to move the line when monitoring the nest box. For top or front opening boxes, it is best to tie the line permanently to the upper left screw, then bring it down and wind along the bottom screws, then bring up to the top right screw and leave a little extra line that can be wound around the screw to be secured by the threads of the screw. Always tighten the screws completely on the top of the nest box to prevent any injury.



Some factors which affect the effectiveness of this method include:

Timing of the installation of the line:

If the house sparrows have already been using the box and have developed a bond to that particular nest box, including activities related to building a nest or laying eggs, they will be more persistent in continuing to enter the box in spite of the line.

Length of the roof overhang:

If the roof does not have at least a 2" overhang, there will not be enough space between the line and the front of the nest box, which will make it ineffective.

The configuration of the installation:

The standard method is to install the 6 pound test (clear) line vertically just outside both sides of the entrance hole, and attached at the

bottom of the nest box so that it does not dangle, which would increase the chance that the birds could become tangled in it.

With a standard entrance hole of 1-1/2 inches in diameter, the distance between the two strands of line would be 1-3/4 inches.

The Bluebird Society of PA Junior Member Page

We welcome these new Junior Members into the Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania. They are between the ages of 8 and 16, and they enjoy birds and want to help them. They each have an adult sponsor and they have provided the Junior Membership program with their information.

- Adrienne King
- Rhea Singh
- Ashrith Anand
- Christian Piona
- Tommy Baylis
- Julia Cooney
- Srsti Niceorgaw
- Krista Inman
- Lauren Inman
- Himasai Tummala
- Ian Hargreaves
- Gwentyth Fitzpatrick
- Peter B. Mudge
- Mackenzie A. Murtland
- Ishani Kaushik
- Jack McGovern
- Zoe McGovern

Here is what our newest BSP Junior Members are telling us and why they want to be Junior Members:

- ☞ *We enjoy the bluebirds at our property.*
- ☞ *I can help bluebirds and learn more about them.*
- ☞ *I love studying the birds in my backyard.*



- ☞ *To help bluebirds and protect them.*
- ☞ *I want to help the birds.*
- ☞ *I am interested in how bluebird babies grow.*
- ☞ *I have monitored boxes with my grandad since I was small.*
- ☞ *Learn more information and help the bluebirds. I'm doing a Girl Scout Project. I'm building houses for the birds.*

For questions, applications, and other information, please contact one of the SPONSORS:

Marilyn Michalski
 P. O. Box 662,
 Kimberton, PA 19442
 610-933-0497
 emeraldmm@verizon.net

Ken Leister
 1423 Gary Terrace,
 West Chester PA
 19380
 kenapeg@aol.com

From a Junior Member:

February 9, 2016:

Dear Marilyn,
 Thanks for being at the Farm Show! I have lots of plans for my Daddy and me to build bluebird boxes.

We are feeding cardinals, chickadees, blue jays, tufted titmice, juncos, woodpeckers, and other birds with all the snow on the ground. It's fun to watch them.

God is amazing in His details of Creation. Ready for Spring,

Danielle Long

Mailbag

QUESTION:

Are we allowed to trap and kill House Sparrows in PA? Also I have 2 boxes. Bluebirds are looking at one, and house sparrows are in other one. Should I leave the sparrows alone?

Brian

Hi Brian—House Sparrows are a non-native species and are not protected by the Federal Migratory Bird Act, and yes, you are allowed to trap and kill them in Pennsylvania. The European starling is another non-native bird which is also not protected, and you would be allowed to trap and kill those also. Since the entrance holes of most standard bluebird boxes is too small to allow European starlings to enter, they would not pose a threat to the nesting bluebirds which use the standard nest boxes unless the

entrance hole has been enlarged. They are a threat to those bluebirds which use natural cavities in trees, such as woodpecker holes.

I would suggest either:

1. trapping the House sparrow or
2. installing the fishing line on the front of both nest boxes to deter the house sparrow to use them.



European Starling



House Sparrow

If they persist in using the nest boxes even after the line is installed, I would remove the House sparrow nests as they build them; they do not like to navigate the line to repeatedly re-build their nests. Please refer to the diagram for installation of monofilament fishing line found on page 9.

Here's great news: The Meadowlands Bluebird Trail is having another outstanding year. As of May 27, 2016, we have nine active Tree Swallow nests and six active Bluebird nests. These nests all have eggs or nestlings. Meadowlands is an excellent location for birds of many species.

I hope you and your golfers have noticed how seldom they (and you!) *are bothered by bugs!* Thanks to the healthy appetites of Bluebirds and Tree Swallows, most of the grubs and flying insects have been eliminated! and this includes mosquitos – which are taken out of the air by Tree Swallows.

Regarding the Great Horned owl nest – the two owlets have taken off – they are learning how to feed themselves with the help of their parents. You may have seen that a lot of the animal life on the fairways and greens has been eliminated. Great Horned owls are omnivorous. Have you seen how FEW baby Canada Geese there are?! This is courtesy of the Great Horned owls!!! And it means that in 2017 there will NOT be as many Canada Geese on the grounds – because they cannot reproduce successfully when GHO's are hunting in the area.

Sometimes it is important to move boxes which are not being used so that more Bluebirds will establish

successful nests. After moving Box No. 9, I found that a pair of "Blues" liked the new location and built a fresh nest. At this time the female is incubating five eggs. This is the kind of news that makes us all happy!

More Information: This Golf course Trail is located at the Meadowlands Country Club in Blue Bell, PA – Montgomery County. The primary purpose of this club is golfing. In 2014 Superintendent James Lynagh responded to an invitation from President Dean Rust, in which Bluebird Trail help was offered. I established the Meadowlands Bluebird Trail in 2015, and I am continuing work this year with the assistance of an excellent grounds-keeping crew, who are eager to promote natural habitat for birds, aquatic life, and mammals. This March we put up 16 nesting boxes, all of which are being used by Eastern Bluebirds and Tree Swallows. An exciting event this year was the establishment of a Great Horned Owl nest in a cluster of tall pine trees early in the Winter.

Marilyn Michalski
Chester County Coordinator

The Mailbag continues on page 16

All Native Songbirds are Protected

by Joan Watroba

REMINDER: The Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act prohibits the hunting, killing, capturing, possession, sale, transportation, and exportation of birds, feathers, eggs, and nests. This treaty has international connections, and its goal is to protect birds to ensure bird diversity for generations.

The Act makes it illegal to have possession of native birds, their feathers, their eggs, and their nests.

*If you are a bluebird monitor and someone who also educates others about bluebirds, it is important to know that not all bird species are protected under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Birds that are considered nonnative, human-introduced species include House sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) and European starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*). House sparrows and European starlings were introduced to the United States from Great Britain in the 1880's. Due to their non-native status and aggressive behavior which threatens biodiversity, it is legal to remove and dispose of these birds, their nests, and their eggs from nest boxes. It is fortunate that these two species were excluded from these protections, as they aggressively compete for nesting sites with native songbirds, including bluebirds, tree swallows, purple martins, chickadees, tufted titmouse, and house wrens. They will kill the adult birds and the*

young of native cavity-nesting species to take over their nesting sites.

Bluebird monitors have found adult native birds and their young dead in the nest box with their heads pecked by the non-native House sparrow. Because European starlings are larger than the smaller cavity-nesting birds, they will not be able to enter a nest box with a standard-size entrance hole of 1 and ½ inches in diameter. They will, however, be able to enter the box if the entrance hole has been enlarged, and are a serious threat to native songbirds nesting in natural cavities such as snags and old woodpecker holes.

As a trail monitor, it is important not to interfere with active nesting activity of any native songbird, and to never be in possession of any native songbird, feather, egg, or nest. The penalties are very severe—up to 6 months in jail and fines up to \$15,000 per bird. Special Salvage Permits are needed in order to collect or display non-viable eggs and abandoned nests of native species for educational purposes. The Bluebird Society

of PA has been issued such a permit for a display to educate the public about how to identify the songbirds which are nesting in their nest boxes.

Some native species can also be very competitive in their nesting activities, but it is illegal to remove their eggs and nests from your nest boxes. In such cases, nest box placement can be effective. Some trail monitors use paired boxes to reduce competition between species. For example, I have had luck with paired boxes and have successfully fledged bluebirds and tree swallows in nest boxes placed within 10 feet of each other. This action reduces the chances that they will fight and injure one another to compete for the same nesting site. House wrens can be very aggressive and can peck the eggs and even remove the young of other songbird species. Since house wrens prefer wooded or brushy areas, do not install nest boxes within 200 feet of wooded or brushy areas to reduce the incidence of house wrens interfering with active nestings of other species.

BSP Awards

Bluebirder of the Year Award Jim Lenker

Jim Lenker of Harrisburg, PA is one of the original founders of the Bluebird Society of PA, which was incorporated in 1998. BSP was started by six local persons who were interested in bluebirds and wanted to form a local Bluebird Club to share their interest in bluebirds and to share tips to promote successful nesting of bluebirds and other native songbirds. That enthusiasm resulted in the formation of the Bluebird Society of PA, a non-profit 501 c3 organization which is now a statewide organization which has members throughout the entire Commonwealth of PA and even attracts bluebirders of other states to become members as well. BSP then became an active Affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society.

Jim was instrumental in the impressive growth of this young organization. He served on the BSP Board for several years, set up and monitored several bluebird boxes, taught others how to monitor nesting boxes, volunteered at numerous events, and designed the standard nesting box, the **Lenker Box**, which continues to be the main nest box design used by BSP today.



During the early years of BSP, Jim and his wife, Anna hosted many BSP meetings at their home, and they were very gracious in providing an inviting place for volunteers to meet to discuss important topics related to this new organization and Jim contributed many important suggestions as how best to promote educational outreach to the public.

Jim also handled all of our printing needs. He housed the BSP printer in his home and processed the copying of numerous handouts for educational events and also printed the BSP News-

letter. He also handled all of the bulk mailing activities related to the delivery of the newsletter to all of our active members.

In recent years, Jim successfully found monitors for his bluebird trails and continues to monitor a nest box in his yard. He continues to enjoy nature and watching the birds which check out his nest box throughout the year.

Due to the many years of industrious service to BSP and to the bluebirds,

Jim Lenker is a very deserving recipient of the highest BSP Award, The Bluebirder of the Year Award for 2016.

Editor's Note:

We are very sorry to report that Jim passed away at the age of 88 on February 27, 2016. Due to his failing health, he was presented with his award plaque and write-up prior to the conference. Per Shirley Halk, Award Chairperson, Jim was very happy and honored to receive this special award for his many years of service to BSP and to the bluebirds. It was displayed during his funeral services. Many members of BSP attended his beautiful service of tribute, and I read his award presentation at the funeral service so that others would know about Jim's passion for the bluebirds.

BSP Awards (continued)

Presentation of BSP Blue Feather Award to Todd Lyons by Shirley Halk BSP Award Chairperson

We have within our bluebird family a member that has 20 years as a Penn State Master Gardener, is a PCH Certified Horticulturist and has spent his last 15 years working in the Green Industry trade. He is extremely knowledgeable in herbaceous plants, trees, and shrubs.

Along with his Green Industry experiences, he is also an avid birdwatcher, and his love of bluebirds carries over to his job. He educates the public about bluebirds, their specific requirements, and the plants that will entice them and other species to their back yards.

Todd has been into bluebirding for over 10 years, and has multiple nest boxes at his home. He keeps excellent



records as to when all of his species return, their first nest-building attempts, when the first egg is laid, when his birds fledge, and any problems along the way. As he is leaning out of a kitchen window, his bluebirds feed on mealworms from his outstretched hand.

Questions—he has plenty, and his phone calls are always fun and informative. He encourages others not only to put up bird houses, but to monitor them. He is to House Sparrows what the Lawn Doctor is to weeds.



Todd's enthusiasm, dedication, and desire to conserve and protect our native species and their environment make him a worthy recipient of the Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania's Blue Feather Award for 2016.

Presentation of BSP Blue Feather Award to Charles Lucas by Shirley Halk BSP Award Chairperson

Charles Lucas of Munhall, PA, Allegheny County, is certainly a friend to BSP and to the bluebirds. When he first joined BSP, he indicated on his membership form that he would be willing to assist BSP with the newsletter. He enthusiastically offered to perform the activities related to the layout and design of the BSP Newsletter. He is very generous with his time,



and demonstrates an attention to detail to make the finished product so educational and visually appealing to our readers. He also lends his skills to other non-profit organizations, by assisting them with their

publications and printed communications to their members.

Charles enjoys traveling with his wife and enjoys the wonders of nature. He is an avid birdwatcher, artist, and photographer, and also monitors bluebird boxes. Since an early age, he has been captivated by the natural world and he shares his love of nature with others.

For his generous service to BSP and to the bluebirds, Charles Lucas is a deserving recipient of the BSP Blue Feather Award for 2016.

Upcoming Events:

BSP Board Meetings:

07/28/16 - Thursday evening
6:00 p.m.

10/27/16 - Thursday evening
6:00 p.m.

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

Please plan 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 phone number 717-669-0167 or e-mail: july7ds@aol.com

- **Come and join us at our meetings. All meeting dates listed above and below are open to all members and to the public.**

Saturday, July 30, 2016
Ned Smith Nature and Arts Festival 2016
9:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.

MYO Park, Market Steet
Millersburg, PA
<http://www.nedsmithcenter.org/festival/>

FREE ADMISSION - Annual celebration of nature and the arts along the beautiful Susquehanna

River at MYO Park in Millersburg! Fun for the entire family. Featuring over 70 programs and performances, the Nature and Arts Festival is the perfect way to celebrate summer! BSP will host an educational booth, a bluebird program, and assist with a nestbox building activity.

Volunteers are needed to host the BSP educational/store booth and also to help out with the PA Game Commission's nest box-building activity from 10:00 a.m.- 12:30 p.m.

If you can help out, please contact Phil Durgin, Event Coordinator:

at 717-732-5325 or e-mail: pdurgin@comcast.net

BSP County Coordinator Updates:

CHESTER COUNTY:
Marilyn Michalski
610-933-0497

BEAVER COUNTY:
Scott Parry
412-841-5071

**Welcome to NEW
County Coordinator:**

MONTGOMERY COUNTY
John W. Stoltzfus jwstol@gmail.com
610-781-1098

Miscellany

✓ Bluebirds--WHAT ELSE !

Dean,
Thanks for my copy of the latest and greatest edition of the Bluebird news letter. It has more timely information than previous editions and is very pro-

fessional. I really expected nothing less with you at the helm. I even found Urban Meyer's tips for maximizing player performance as a management tool which can be applied in the business world. We will not be back to attend

the conference in April but I'm sure it will be well attended and successful.

Our Best,
Shirley, Carol, and Larry,
Lancaster County

✓ Past Issues of the BSP Newsletter

Now that 2015 is behind us, BSP is happy to report that the Spring, Summer, and Fall/Winter issues of the 2015 BSP Newsletter are now posted on the BSP web site: www.thebsp.org

On the main page, on the top bar, scroll over to more...then select Newsletters, which is the first item in the drop-down box.

Mailbag (continued)

Trail Report Washington County, PA

Hi Ken (BSP State County County Coordinator),

Here's a little update from my neck of the woods. I am monitoring two trails in two separate parks. I am banding and color-banding the birds to look at nest site fidelity, overwintering, survivorship and productivity. In one park, out of 6 nest boxes, I currently have two Eastern Bluebird families; both fledging in the next couple of days; two Tree Swallow families, fledging in about 10 days. I had a House Sparrow incident at this park; sadly, they killed a Tree Swallow which returned for her third documented

season here. I tried trapping them, unsuccessfully. I put up a sparrow spooker on the box in which they attacked the Tree Swallow and they disappeared. The bluebirds in the box beside this one have been safe. I am surprised (and happy) at this success.

At my other park location, out of 11 boxes, I had one Eastern Bluebird family fledge last week; one has eggs; there are two active Tree Swallow nests and there were two Carolina Chickadee nests; one of which has successfully fledged and one which was unfortunately, abandoned. I expect that when I check again this week, there will likely be more activity.

It's a busy season and I'm enjoy-

ing it! I gave a talk about bluebirds to the staff of the Outdoor Classroom, an educational department within one of the parks in which I have nest boxes, and I am updating my blog as much as possible. The Outdoor Classroom and I are trying to get more involvement from the public in the form of their observations of the color-banded birds in the park, to help with the research. I think this will be a nice collaboration. Hope all is well with you!

Gigi Gerben
Washington County

*"Nature is not a place to visit.
It is home."*

Gary Snyder

Nest Box Builders Needed

Hello BSP Members - We are in dire need of nest box kits. Our supply is almost depleted, and we have events coming up that we will need kits for.

Cabela's is extremely anxious for us to return there for a box-building event.

The Cabela event alone will take at least 50 kits.

Are you available and are you willing to help? If so, what part of the kit are you willing to make? I can provide the plans for the individual pieces.

Is there any lumber outlet near where you live? Leezer Lumber has always given us the best price for No. 2 white pine. Please reply ASAP as we need to get the project underway.

If you have any questions, please call me.



The six pieces of wood that make up a complete nest box

Thank you for your kind consideration to assist us.

Bill Strauss
Dauphin County
Coordinator
e-mail:
mbstrauss@verizon.net.
(H): 717-541-9168
(C): 717-756-5914



A completed lenker nest box

BSP Newsletter Submission Contest Winner

Congratulations! JAMES GLICK

James, please select an item from the BSP Store at www.thebsp.org and then call BSP Store Manager, Doris at (717) 766-3877 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.

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

To submit by e-mail, include Newsletter Submission Contest in the subject line of your e-mail and e-mail to: sunshinebb@msn.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 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-tick-borne 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.

Eastern Bluebird Coloring Page



BSP Membership/Renewal Form

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



2016 BSP MEMBERSHIP RATE INFORMATION

Student	Senior	Regular/Family	Organization/Corporate
1 year -\$10	1 yr. -\$12	1 yr. -\$15	1 yr. -\$100
3 years -\$25	3 yrs. -\$30	3 yrs. -\$40	3 yrs. -\$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: \$ _____

Please indicate preferred delivery method of your newsletter by checking off one of the following options:

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 Events 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.thebsp.org

Website: WWW.THEBSP.ORG

Return Service Requested



PO Box 756
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-0756

Newsletter design by Charles Lucas

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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

Ellis
Bird Farm



2016 NORTH AMERICAN BLUEBIRD SOCIETY CONVENTION

Ellis Bird Farm, Lacombe, Alberta, Canada

July 8-10, 2016

*Unlocking the Mysteries of Bird Migration:
Using Technology to Track Avian Journeys*

www.ellisbirdfarm.ca/

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