



BLUEBIRD TRAILS & TALES

Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania

An Affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society

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Fall/Winter 2011

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~ www.thebsp.org ~



Hello BSP Members,

Fall is surely inviting after those long, hot summer days. Fall is a beautiful time of year in Pennsylvania. What I like about the end of the nesting season is watching the juvenile bluebirds growing. After following mom and dad around for about a month, they now fend for themselves. Still with that speckled feathered look, “known to all thrushes” they really do look cute. As Junior matures, molting begins to take place and the colors of an adult bluebird begin to emerge.

Also growing is the Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania. I am happy to report the BSP is now 13 years old and is a very strong, productive and vital organization. Communication has improved by implementing the BSP Meeting Place online and by teleconferencing for Board Meetings. Don’t forget to Blog from thebsp.org website. And BSP is now on Facebook! All are welcome to join in these new exciting ways to communicate with BSP members across Pennsylvania and beyond. Just give me a call at 724.285.1209 and I will gladly assist you in connecting with all of the resources that the BSP has to offer.

Speaking about growing, **The BSP needs two volunteers**

to chair the Education Committee and Publication / Artwork Committee. If you are interested in serving in these areas, please contact me for more details at 724 285 1209.

The full team of dedicated volunteers is listed on the BSP Meeting Place on line. Goggle website.
<https://sites.google.com/site/ameetingplacefortheboard/>

A BIG Thank You to BSP Committee team members for serving and sharing your talents!

We welcome our members to get involved with the BSP and to share your talents. Speaking of special talents, our new Publicity Chairpersons, Rob and Michelle Carson have special talents which will be featured on the BSP web site. Rob Carson is a Voice Artist and he will be adding some interesting and entertaining audio links to entertain and educate our web site visitors. Keep checking our website www.thebsp.org for these new and exciting web site enhancements.

The BSP is always trying to improve in all areas within our organization. For example, our newsletter will be available online. Please consider this option and help the BSP to GO

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GREEN. This concept will save the BSP much expense and you will be able to read the newsletter in color and receive it much faster. Just think about all of the paper being used in each newsletter for each member, the postage expense, and printing expenses throughout the year. So please join us in this cost- savings effort and help make the Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania successful in going GREEN. Join the many BSP Members who have already chosen the Green Choice Option for the delivery of their BSP newsletters.

Also, the Newsletter Team is adding a New Member posting in each issue. If you become a New Member and we miss posting your name and county, please contact the Newsletter Editor and we will post it in the following issue. Please share with our members your unique nesting experiences, like Dan Thomas does in this issue. Dan had a surprise songbird species nest in one of his nest boxes.

Reminders:

1. Our membership rate is increasing on January 1, 2012. So, regardless of the renewal date of your membership (printed on the label of your newsletter) you can continue your membership for three years beyond your normal renewal date under our current rate and save on the cost of your BSP Membership.

2. Our 14th Annual BSP Conference is scheduled for next year on April 13 & 14th, 2012 at the Penn Stater Hotel in State College PA. Our 2012 Conference Coordinator is Lisa Wheeler who served us so well as Conference Chairperson last year. More information will be available on the BSP web site and in a special mailing to all members in January of 2012. Attending our conferences is an awesome experience. If you have not attended a BSP Conference, you are missing out on a wonderful experience as expressed by attendees:

“I loved socializing with wonderful bluebirders.”

“I learned about new trail monitoring tips.”

“I never knew that about that songbird (or other wildlife)”

“That display was very interesting!”

“That vendor makes such wonderful bluebird boxes!”

“That luncheon was Delicious!”

“We had such fun at the live Auction-we were bidding against each other” said by a husband/wife-Ha!

“The Penn Stater accommodations are excellent!”

“The Friday night program and Social was so much fun!”

Mark your calendar for 4/13 and 4/14 of 2012 and plan to attend.

I extend my gratitude to all of the many volunteers who make this organization the best that it can be and to all the BSP Members who support us financially. We all can be very proud of the Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania and for what it stands for.

Wishing each of you Peace and Blessed Holidays.

Harry Schmeider, BSP President

Editor’s Note: Check out Harry’s wonderful web site: ambassadorforthebluebirds.com



Photo - Susan Renkel



Photo - Susan Renkel

From the Editor



It is now mid-August and another nesting season is winding down, but I will continue to monitor my nest boxes to check for late-season nestings. Last year I was surprised that two new bluebird nestings started in early September and their young successfully fledged in late September. I believe that it was the third nesting of the same two bluebird pairs, as they re-nested in the same boxes.

This year the weather in South Central PA was a challenge to both nesting songbirds and trail monitors. Cold temperatures in April reduced the food supply of insects. Then there was torrential rain with strong winds and some local areas were hit with tornados. One of my trails of six nest boxes is located in a local community park, and during one of the storms, which was later determined to be a tornado, many large trees were uprooted and many large branches were blown down. I was amazed that although many large branches fell very close to the nest boxes, none hit or damaged any of them, so the nesting songbirds were spared. Whew! Then the high temperatures exceeded 90 degrees with high humidity. It was certainly a season of extreme weather conditions! In spite of this, many bluebirders are reporting very good nesting results.

As bluebirders, we must be able to understand that in spite of our best efforts, sometimes our bluebird nestings are not successful and it is important to release the guilt that we could have done something to prevent those nesting failures. As difficult as it is, we need to rejoice in the successes and not focus on the failures. Songbirds are very resilient, so we can learn that lesson from them.

Note: Please remember to send in your Annual Nest Box Report to BSP so that your bluebirds and other native cavity-nesting songbirds will be counted in the totals. It is very important for us to be able to measure the results of our combined efforts.

Joan Watroba
Editor

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RECENT EVENTS

Bluebird Program offered through West Shore Recreation Commission

On Thursday evening, June 16th, BSP volunteers presented a program, *“How to Attract Bluebirds”* and also offered a nest box building activity to 13 enthusiastic participants through a program sponsored by the West Shore Recreation Commission. The event was held at the Lower Pavilion of Lower Allen Community Park in Lisburn from 7-8:30 p.m.

BSP volunteers were Joan Watroba, Dale Cook, Phil Durgin, Doris Hoffman, and Joanne Slavinski. It was a rainy, stormy night, but we were set up under a large, covered pavilion and all 13 of the pre-registered attendees came out to learn about bluebirds and seemed to be very excited and eager to become actively involved in bluebirding. As Phil said, “Neither rain, nor sleet, nor hail, will keep people away from their chance to learn about bluebirds.” We had barely loaded all of the display and educational materials into the vehicles when the skies opened up. Whew!

Joan Watroba, Event Coordinator

Ned Smith Festival –Phil Durgin

We had another beautiful day for this year’s Ned Smith Festival (July 30) at the MYO Park in Millersburg, PA along the banks of the Susquehanna River. For those who have never been to this event, it’s a fun, educational event with 50 or more nature/wildlife/conservation and community groups, art and nature programs, exhibitors, and delicious food vendors. Joan Watroba gave her *“Attracting Bluebirds”* presentation before an enthusiastic group of bluebirders and future bluebirders. Bill Strauss and his buddy Jack, Dale Cook, Phil Durgin, and two PA Game Commission officers helped youngsters and their parents assemble about 80 bluebird boxes during the PGC box-building activity. Doris Hoffman staffed the BSP store and answered bluebird questions, with help from Joan, Phil, and Chuck and Bonnie Musser. In addition to answering lots of questions, we signed up 9 new BSP members!

A fun and productive day all around!

Phil Durgin, Event Coordinator

“Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished.” –Lao Tzu

PA Backyard Beekeepers Association Event

Thanks to all who volunteered on Sept. 17 at the 1st annual HoneyFest and Green Expo sponsored by the Pennsylvania Beekeepers Association held at Ashecombe Farm in Mechanicsburg. Thanks to Dale Cook, Phil Durgin, Ken Leister, Doris Hoffman, Joyce Stuff, Joan Watroba, Lindsay Delp, and Joanne Slavinski. Special thanks to Shirley Halk for a great bluebird presentation. We had a successful day of box building and educating people about bluebirds. Welcome to our 11 newest members!

Barb Cox
Event Coordinator

New Members who joined at this event!

LENORA CUCCIA	CUMBERLAND	GRAY FAMILY	CUMBERLAND
JOAN WELS	CUMBERLAND	DENNIS MAWHINNEY	YORK
DIANA CORRELL-GIUFFRIDA	YORK	BEVERLY REIHART	YORK
HEATHER MERRYMAN	YORK	JAMIE STEINKAMP	CUMBERLAND
TRINA SIMCOX	BERKS	CYNTHIA TAFT	CUMBERLAND
KATHY KRINKS	BLAIR		



Birds don't always follow "the rules". This spring, I had an Eastern bluebird place a layer of cherry stems, followed by layer of dried grass, followed by pine needles - nice parfait.

I sometimes have Tree Swallows make entire nests out of pine needles, and don't know it is them until they add their feathers on top.

This was the first season for the new Purple Martin rig installed at the golf course trail that I monitor and was my favorite finding this year when the birds placed a golf tee in their nest - perfect...

Paula

Thank you-to everyone that makes our newsletter so interesting and informative.

Pat G.

Mr. Ken Leister, from the Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania, spoke to our 5th graders here at Springton Manor Elementary School on March 17 & 18, 2011. He explained to our students that a nesting box trail consisting of 10 boxes on our school property will need to be monitored. Mr. Leister placed the boxes on the school property last school year. After listening to Mr. Leister, our students have been eager and excited to check the boxes several times weekly. At last check, there were 12 nestling eggs; hopefully to hatch soon. Mr. Leister has encouraged our students to become advocates for the bluebirds. He will be awarding four of our 5th graders bluebird boxes at the year-end completion ceremony to encourage their focus to save the bluebirds. Our thanks to Mr. Ken Leister of West Chester, PA.

Sincerely, Barbara Coyle

Michael Whiteley

Springton Manor ES, Glenmoore, PA

Ms. Coyle,

Thanks for informing us of Mr. Leister's work with the students about bluebirds. This is the age to reach people. Who knows what seeds that are planted that will sprout later?.... Thanks again for sharing this with us....this is a true grassroots activity.

Dan Sparks, NABS

Editor's Note: Ken currently serves as BSP State County Coordinator and BSP Chester County Coordinator. He is committed to educating young people about the importance of getting actively involved to promote the nesting of bluebirds and other native songbirds.

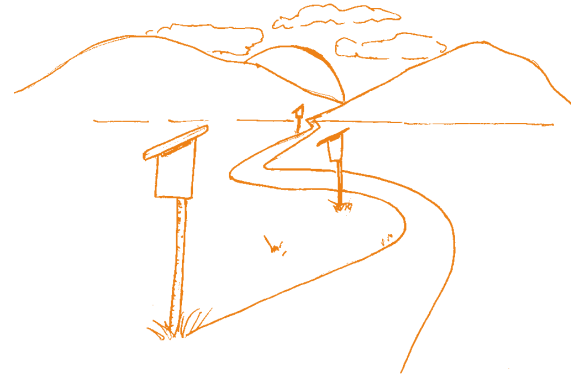
Mail Call

A Bluebird Trail History

By Jim Lenker

My bluebird trail started in 1990 with 8 boxes. I added 6 more boxes, for a total of 14 boxes. The Bluebird Society started in May of 1998 with 8 founding members of which I was one of them. By 2002 there were 600 members and by 2005 we were already up to 1425 members. In 2000 I tried some special plywood called Oriental plywood (it looked like chips of wood glued together). I made 3 Peterson and 2 Lenker- style boxes with that wood. I put them up in the Fall of that year to see how they would weather over the Winter. The following Spring, the 3 Peterson boxes were occupied before the Lenker boxes. Today after 11 years they are still in fair condition. In 2003 I added 4 more boxes by the bus barn for a total of 24 boxes. In 2010, I requested a trail monitor to handle the trail and now it has been taken over by BSP member, Lindsay Delp. After 20 years I have fledged 614 bluebirds.

Editor's Note: Thanks, Jim for submitting your comprehensive trail report. The productivity on your trail throughout the years is amazing and continues to be strong. Thanks so much for all that you have done for BSP and for the bluebirds throughout all of these years. Thanks, Lindsay for continuing to manage Jim's bluebird trail.



Bluebirds Come to Shaull Elementary School

Danny Tosiano, with the help of Boy Scout Troop 196, recently designed, constructed, and installed 17 bluebird boxes at Shaull Elementary School in Enola, PA. (Hampden Township) The bluebird trail is Danny Tosiano's Eagle Scout Project. The houses are constructed of non-wood decking material donated by Kirby's Remodeling and Flooring. Within four days of installation, a bluebird built a nest in one of the houses! Volunteers from the Bluebird Society of PA and Mary Welte, a Wildlife Biologist, will monitor and report on nesting activity. Bluebirds are a native species whose population has declined due to loss of habitat and competition for nesting areas. The bluebird trail is part of a larger project whose aim is to certify Hampden Township as a community wildlife habitat. For those wanting a closer look at a bluebird house, there is one on display in the Shaull Elementary School Library as well as an informational poster created by the YMCA before- school students.

Barbara Tosiano



Editor's Note: On July 14th, BSP County Coordinator, Joan Watroba and BSP member Phil Durgin met with Dan, his sponsor, Evan Jenkins, Dan's mother, Barbara, and the bluebird trail monitor, Mary Welte at Shaull Elementary. It is a beautiful, mowed, open habitat with occasional trees for perching. We provided instruction about how to identify nests and eggs and tips to monitor a trail. We checked each of the 17 boxes, noted the findings, and saw many bluebirds. Even though the trail was just erected in mid-June, some of the nest boxes were already active with nests, nests and eggs, and even young bluebirds. We were happy that the badge sponsor, Evan Jenkins guided Dan in this project to set up a monitoring schedule to insure nesting success. Mary became a BSP member and will receive the BSP newsletter and support from BSP. Congratulations to Dan for achieving his Eagle Scout Badge. This bluebird trail will provide needed nesting opportunities for bluebirds and other native cavity-nesting songbirds.

BLUEBIRD TRAILS WANTED & BLUEBIRD TRAIL MONITORS NEEDED

There are many BSP members who would like the opportunity to monitor a bluebird trail in their area, and other bluebirders who already have a trail and would need to get a monitor to take over their monitoring activities on an existing trail. BSP can post this information in the newsletter so that nest boxes on bluebird trails will be able to be monitored on a continuous basis.

If you would like to monitor a bluebird trail or want to find someone to monitor your trails, please submit the following information:

Name, Phone Number, E-mail Address, Number of nest boxes requested to monitor or need to be monitored –requested location - Town, County and State.

*Indicate whether you are *requesting a trail or need a monitor for an existing trail.*

To submit your request: e-mail to: sunshinebb@msn.com or send to: BSP, P.O. Box 756, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
Attn: BSP Newsletter Editor.

BIRDSEED SALE - September 30 & October 1

Appalachian Audubon Society, the local chapter of National Audubon Society, will sponsor its annual birdseed sale on September 30th from 3pm-8pm and October 1st from 9am-2pm at the side entrance of Boscov's in the Camp Hill Shopping Center near Harrisburg. The wild bird seed selections and preorder information will be available on the website www.appalachianaudubon.org. Limited amounts of extra seed will be available on sale days for those who have not preordered and a variety of bird feeders will also be available at the sale. A free children's activity will be offered on Saturday, Oct. 1st. Funds raised through this event will support many activities that promote the care and enjoyment of nature, including field trips and monthly programs that are open to the public and scholarships to environmental education camps. Check the website for more information and a schedule of activities.



Best local wildlife-preservation effort is.....BSP

The Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania was recently honored by
Pittsburgh Magazine's 2011 Best of Burgh Award for
conservation activities performed by its members related to bluebirds.

See details at: <http://www.pittsburghmagazine.com/>

[Pittsburgh-Magazine/July-2011/Best-of-the-Burgh-2011-Sports-and-Recreation/](http://www.pittsburghmagazine.com/July-2011/Best-of-the-Burgh-2011-Sports-and-Recreation/)

Editor's Note: THANKS to all of our members for making BSP the Best!

A Surprise Nesting

Dan Thomas, New Providence, PA
BSP County Coordinator for Lancaster County



As I was walking to my vegetable garden which is approximately 150' from my house, I noticed this unusual bird on top of my paired bluebird box. That certain paired box is on a pole with horizontal steel channels and the boxes are 30 inches apart. I have been experimenting with paired boxes and most of them are 10 - 14 ft. apart.

At the end of May, I noticed some pine needles in the bottom of one of the paired boxes. I was excited because I figured it was a bluebird starting a second nesting. I did not have a first nest in that box. Each evening after work I would check the box and began noticing something unusual about the nest. On top of the pine needles were some small feathers and a small piece of snake's skin. I first suspected a tufted titmouse and was waiting to see what kind of bird was visiting the box.

When I finally saw the birds enter the box, I was very surprised at what I saw. When I caught my first glimpse of them, I realized they were definitely a different kind of cavity nester using the box. It was a Great Crested Flycatcher. I have never seen a GCFC and referred to my bird guide book to identify the bird. I did some research on this species and realized that most of the time they require a larger box and entrance hole. The hole in the box that they chose had been "enlarged" by a woodpecker and measured at the widest point 1 5/8 inches. It is a solid cedar box and the floor measures 4 inches x 4 1/4 inches.

While they were building the nest, there was some real competition between the GCFC and Tree Swallows. The TS were being very aggressive and it looked like they were winning the battle that was going on between them. As I continued to watch this go on, I realized I needed to interfere or I was going to have the TS take over the box and lose the GCFC. I took the one paired box that was not being used and moved it approx. 30 feet away from the GCFC box. The TS claimed that box and left the GCFC alone.

The nest was made up of mostly pine needles with a small piece of a snake skin weaved into the nest. (might be a trick to discourage predators) There were also some feathers on top of the nest.

On June 31 there were 3 eggs in the nest. The eggs are larger than a House sparrow egg, yet in a way they do resemble the HOSP egg. They are moderately glossy, ivory / cream / pink, and densely streaked with fine purple, gray, red, brown, or olive markings, often concentrated on the larger end of the egg.

These are a very "secretive bird" and would fly away as soon as I got close to the box. With my vegetable garden right next to the box, I was afraid I might spook the birds. But the more that I was around them, the more they tolerated my presence.

The Flycatcher is olive brown with a pale gray chest and a yellow belly. It has a white eye ring and two whitish wing bars. The wings and tail are cinnamon. It measures 7-9 inches long with a wing span of 12.75 to 14 inches. Male and female have similar plumage. Their sound is a loud squawking "wheep" or "phree-e-e-e-ep" call usually from high in a treetop.

I monitor approximately 100 bluebird boxes and to have this nest in my back yard was SO exciting. When I told folks about this nest there were questions and some doubt. Are you SURE it is a GCFC? Several folks stopped by the house to check out the box. I made a "blind" approximately 30 feet from the box and got some really good photos of the birds, and photos of insects they were feeding. As far as I know, with the research that I did, there are no records of any GCFC using a nest box in

Pennsylvania.

Watching them feed the young was also very exciting. Their diet consists of many different items. It has been said the GCFC species perform a natural pest control service. They consume more than 50 kinds of beetles, along with wasps, bees, mosquitoes, grasshoppers, crickets, katydids, moths, caterpillars, cicadas, and other insects. Their diet also consists of various berries such as mulberries, pokeberries, blackberries, wild grapes and others.

I tried to limit my monitoring of the box due to the fact that I did not know how tolerant of humans these birds were. I was never “dive-bombed” or harassed by them when monitoring the box. As the chicks got older the parents would scold me from high in the trees with their squawking “whreep” call.

A day before the chicks fledged, something very interesting happened. I was watching the nest box from my kitchen window with binoculars and witnessed one of the chicks come completely out of the box, hung onto the front and then re-entered the box. For most of my bluebird boxes I cut four saw kerfs (grooves cut in the wood) on the inside and OUTSIDE the entrance hole. Although the kerfs are not necessary on the outside of bluebird boxes, I always cut them on all my boxes. I believe it makes it easier for Ma and Pa to feed the chicks. The kerfs on the outside of this box definitely helped this little chick re-enter the box. I continued to watch, hoping to see them fledge, but they did not fledge until the following day, which I missed.

Data recorded was:

Nest building started approximately May 21

Three eggs were laid as of May 31

Three chicks fledged on June 29.

Upon examination of the nest after they fledged, it looked very much like a bluebird nest after fledging. It consisted of matted down pine needles and the feathers that were there after the egg laying were gone.



Per Jason Martin with Cornell (Nest Watch) he thought this was probably a young GCFC couple. He also was not aware of any GCFC using a nest box in PA. An interesting item he said was that these birds will often return to the same nesting site year after year. How “lucky” would I be if this special nesting would happen again!

As I reflect on this nesting experience I cannot help but think about how similar these eggs resembled the dreaded House sparrow egg. Wondering how many folks would see this nest and eggs and suspect they were HOSP eggs and toss them out. As a precaution, always make sure that we correctly identify the eggs and the species using the nest box before we toss any eggs out.

So what is next??? Do we build larger cavity nesting boxes with a larger hole and try to attract these birds?? I do plan to build a box to encourage them to return next year. Recommended size is a 6-7 inch square floor. 12-18 inches deep with an entrance hole of at least 1 3/4 inches. Mounting height is 6-24 feet. Per Bet Zimmerman’s bluebird web site, <http://www.sialis.org> Phil Berry in Florida has had a number of GCFC nest in boxes with a 1½ inch hole.

Unfortunately, Breeding Bird Survey and Christmas Count Census data show that populations of these birds are in decline. Being cavity-nesters, they must compete with Starlings and Flickers and other cavity nesters for breeding sites. Proper placement of nest boxes will likely help these birds recover to previous population levels as long as Starlings and Flickers do not take them over.



NEW BSP STORE ITEMS

(TAX INCLUDED)

BLUEBIRD CLIPBOARD

Bluebird clipboard with Bluebird on note pad.
Refills can also be purchased for clipboard
8 1/2 X 11 . Two refills in packet.

Price \$15.00 S & H \$6.00
Refill \$ 8.00 S & H \$6.55



STONEWARE TRAVEL COFFEE MUG

American Expedition Stoneware Coffee Mug to fit
in your car holder with pictures and information
on Bluebirds around the mug.
Insurance included with S & H.

Price \$18.00 S & H \$8.00



BLUEBIRD AUTO COASTER

Bluebird absorbent stone cup holder coaster for
your auto to set your coffee mug or drinking cup on
to absorb drips. Has a picture of two Bluebirds sit-
ting on a post. Standard size

Price \$2.00 S & H *****



BLUEBIRD BOOKMARKER

Bluebird bookmarker with two Bluebirds sitting on
the roof of a bluebird box with flowers blooming
from the bottom

Price \$2.50 S & H *****



ADVICE FROM A BLUEBIRD CARD

Bluebird Card with a Bluebird sitting on a fencepost
and a surprise when you open it up. A nice
“thinking of you” card.

Price \$5.00 S & H *****



BLUEBIRD COASTER

Bluebird Coaster 2 1/2" x 3" with Bluebirds on post

Price 1 @ \$1.50 S & H *****
4 @ \$5.50 S & H *****



NEW CLOTHING ITEMS

SWEATSHIRT-TAN

Tan sweatshirt with a Bluebird sitting on a Holly Berry bush. Picture on center of shirt.
S-M-L-XL PRICE \$22.00 S & H \$4.50
XXL PRICE \$25.00 S & H \$4.50



LONG SLEEVED TEE SHIRT

Long sleeved tee shirt white with Bluebird sitting on a limb. Picture on center of shirt.
S-M-L-XL PRICE \$18.00 S & H \$3.50
XXL PRICE \$21.00 S & H \$3.50



TEE SHIRT-WHITE OR LT GRAY

White or light gray tee shirt with Bluebird sitting on a limb on left side of tee shirt.
Tee shirt has no pocket.
S-M-L-XL PRICE \$15.00 S & H \$3.50
XXL PRICE \$18.00 S & H \$3.50

TEE SHIRT-TAN

Tan tee shirt with picture of a Bluebird sitting on wire between two fence posts. Picture on center of shirt.
S-M-L-XL PRICE \$15.00 S & H \$3.50
XXL PRICE \$18.00 S & H \$3.50



All clothing items have Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania lettering around the pictures. Items will not be available on the website until the new year. Please mail your order to BSP P O Box 756, Mechanicsburg PA 17055. For any questions contact Doris Hoffman, at 717-766-3877.

(All shirt and sweatshirt pictures courtesy of Chuck Musser)

Great items to add to your Christmas list!!!!

***** Due to cost of S & H being more than the item cost, they will only be sold at events

BSP is GOING GREEN!



Benefits of receiving the BSP newsletter by e-mail:

- * Quicker Delivery of the publication
- * Reduction of the cost for printing and postage fees to deliver the newsletter
- * Reduce the use of natural resources-trees to make paper and fuel to transport mail to its destination
- * Ability to view photos in color

Please consider going GREEN as your newsletter delivery option!

To receive the e-mail version, please send an e-mail from the e-mail address that you wish to receive your BSP newsletter to: **BT&Tnewsletter@thebsp.org**.

In your e-mail, please include BSP Newsletter Delivery in the subject line of your e-mail, along with the following:

1. Your name as it appears on the mailing label of your newsletter.
2. Your current mailing address.
3. Your phone number.
4. Retype your e-mail address.

~ Bluebirds Forever ~

Some of our members have expressed the desire to honor a loved one, either living or deceased, by making a donation to the Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania in their name. As a non-profit, 501(c)(3) charitable organization since 1998, BSP will graciously accept such donations and use the monies to promote bluebird education and also to purchase the materials needed to build and maintain nest boxes which provide nesting opportunities for bluebirds and other native cavity-nesting species.

With your permission, BSP will also post a notice of your donation in the BSP Newsletter, *Bluebird Trails and Tales* and will provide you with documentation of your tax-deductible donation for your tax records. This special type of contribution can help you to honor a loved one and also help us to keep the bluebird population growing within Pennsylvania and the surrounding states. Donations can be sent to: BSP, P.O. Box 756, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-0756.

Please include your name, the name of the person being honored, and your mailing address and advise if you would want a notice of your donation posted in the BSP Newsletter. We can post it with or without the donation amount.

BSP CALENDAR OF EVENTS

PA Farm Show-January 7-14, 2012

Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex and Expo Center Harrisburg, PA

This event offers a variety of things to see and do, and some of the tastiest PA food items are available in the Food Court. It also provides BSP with the best opportunity to talk with the highest number of people about the nesting and habitat needs of bluebirds and other native songbirds and to answer their questions about monitoring bluebird boxes. BSP will be participating by having an educational booth and providing a nest box building activity. **We need many volunteers** to assist at the booth and to help out during the nest box building activity. If you can help out for a four hour period, BSP will reimburse your parking fee. Time slots are 9-1, 1-5, and 5-9.

Please contact Nancy at 717-432-2647 or e-mail her at: bluebirds@pa.net to volunteer for this important event.

WE NEED YOU!

February 24, 25, & 26, 2012

PA Garden Expo

PA Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, PA

www.pagardenexpo.org

This is a wonderful event which celebrates the upcoming gardening season and features educational programs, displays, demonstrations, and exhibits of gardens, water features, and landscaping ideas. Learn how you can enhance your yard and community by adding native plants and trees, which provide food sources for wildlife. BSP participates in this event each year, and it provides many opportunities to talk with people about the nesting and habitat needs of bluebirds. BSP will host an educational booth and offer BSP membership.

Volunteers are needed and free admission passes will be made available to volunteers by calling Nancy at 717-432-2647 or e-mail: bluebirds@pa.net event.

BSP Board Meeting Dates:

Jan 26th, 2012-Thursday evening at 6:00 p.m

April 26th, 2012-Thursday evening at 6:00 p.m

July 26th, 2012 -Thursday evening at 6:00 p.m

Oct 25th, 2012 -Thursday evening at 6:00 p.m

Location:

Giant Foods Community Room, Camp Hill, PA

Plan to attend the 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 meeting in person, we can arrange for you to attend via conference call. Contact BSP President: Harry Schmeider harryschmeider@gmail.com or (724) 285-1209 to make arrangements to join the conference call.

April 13&14, 2012

BSP's 14th Annual Conference, Penn State Conference Center, State College, PA

Don't miss this wonderful annual event which includes a Friday night program and full day on Saturday of interesting speakers, displays, demonstrations, a live and silent auction, an Amish Quilt Raffle, and lots of opportunities to talk with and learn from other bluebirders. More information will be available in early January via a special mailing to all BSP members and will also be posted on the BSP web site www.thebsp.org.



Artist - Susan Renkel

-This Place is For the Birds

By Joan Watroba

I was thrilled with the installation of the beautiful window box outside of our kitchen window, and from inside, I could admire the colorful flowers that were selected with care and with the assistance of the owner of a local plant nursery, Noggles Sweetmeadow Greenhouses.

On the third morning after the window box was installed, I looked outside and was greeted by a pair of energetic Carolina wrens, which were inside the window box. They looked up at me with their tiny beaks full of nesting material--moss, plant fibers and leaves. I could see that they appreciated the new window box so much that they had chosen it to build a nest there and start a family.

We live on Bumblebee Hollow Road and the name matches the habitat--lush green foliage, large trees, with a small spring which runs the full length of the property. It is an oasis for birds and critters, and we are happy to share it with them. When we first viewed the house, an Indigo bunting was eating thistle from a finch feeder on the back hill of the property, and to this day, I feel that seeing that beautiful songbird in the yard was a main reason to decide to purchase this enchanting property.

Back to the subject of the window box, it was important to keep the flowers growing so that the Carolina Wrens had a nice nesting niche and shade for their young, and we wanted to enjoy the beauty of the flowers, so I figured out a way to selectively water the flowers without getting their nest wet. We wished them luck with their new family.

Follow-up-Nesting Success! I am so happy to report that we were able to observe the entire nesting cycle of the Carolina wrens from the kitchen window. The nest was very deep and the eggs and young developed deep inside the mossy cave. We saw the parents bring in an interesting variety of insects and observed them removing the fecal sacs to keep the nest clean. As it got close to fledge time, the young were very vocal each time that the parents came in with food. On July 9th, which just happened to be my birthday, six young Carolina wrens emerged from the domed nest. They were very cute with their buff-colored breasts and turned-up tails. It was fascinating to see the top part of the mossy nest start to move, and one by one, the young poked out their heads and jumped around inside the window box and then flew out to the ground and then into woods. The parents were very vocal in rounding them all up. I am leaving the nest in the window box at the slight chance that they will re-nest this season. If not, hope that they will return to nest here next year.

Surprise-Another Nesting! This time the Carolina wrens, supposedly the same pair, returned to nest in a potted geranium plant in a wicker stand on the front porch. This time there were three eggs, and three young successfully fledged on August 18th.



Artist - Susan Renkel

BSP ANNUAL NEST BOX REPORTS NEEDED

It's time to send in your **Annual Nest Box Report** of your nesting results for the 2011 nesting season to BSP. The **Annual Nest Box Report** is included in this mailing and is also available to print from the left side of the main page of the BSP web site: www.thebsp.org.



Each year BSP sponsors a Nest Box Report Submission Contest, a random drawing of nest box reports submitted by October 15th of each year. Prizes include binoculars and items from the BSP Store. This year the deadline date to submit nest box reports to qualify for the prize drawing is extended to **October 31, 2011**.

Please note that BSP will be accepting your Annual Nest Box Report Forms until 12/31/11, so make sure that your bluebirds are included in the count.

Note: After the nesting data has been compiled, BSP will be posting all of the Annual Nest Box Report results on the BSP web site: www.thebsp.org

Send in your Annual Nest Box Report Form to:
Shirley Halk, BSP Nest Box Reporter
42 Park Drive, Grantville, PA 17028

Note: If you would like to receive a printed copy of the compiled nest box results by regular mail, please indicate that preference on your report form or contact Shirley Halk at the above address.



*Don't Forget -
BSP has a Facebook Page!
Google Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania / Facebook*

THE BSP IS NOW UPDATING THE SPEAKER'S BUREAU LIST

If you enjoy speaking about bluebirds or if you feel you would like to get started as a speaker to educate others concerning bluebirds, the Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania can assist you by providing a CD program with beautiful photos related to bluebird education and educational handouts.

**To be added to the BSP Speaker's Bureau List, please reply with the following information:
Name, Address, County, Telephone Number and E-mail Address**

Please e-mail your information to Harry Schmeider at harryschmeider@gmail.com or call him at (724) 285-1209.

Welcome -NEW BSP Members!

NAME	COUNTY	NAME	COUNTY
STANLEY SNIEZEK	MERCER	ALEXANDRA DIPAOLO	CHESTER
JEAN DIXON	CHESTER	DIANA BRUBAKER	CUMBERLAND
GINA HENCH	BUTLER	SUSAN SMITH	PERRY
CAITLIN CROSTON	BEAVER	KATHI YEAGLEY	DAUPHIN
ASHLEY NOTE	CHESTER	MICHAEL BUCKLEY	ADAMS
DANIELLE PRAUL	CHESTER	KAREN TULLI	DAUPHIN
KATIE HOERMAN	CHESTER	JAN SCHAEFER	LANCASTER
WILLIAM MCGOWAN	CHESTER	ROSLYN HURLEY	LANCASTER
MARY JANE SURRENA	MERCER	DAREENE TITUS	DAUPHIN
MARY WELTE	CUMBERLAND	ANNIE SHAND	LANCASTER
ALAN GOODMAN	DELAWARE	SOPHIE SHAND	LANCASTER
JOHN TOWER	CHESTER	BARRY HUNTSINGER	SCHUYLKILL
RICHARD HESS	MONTOUR		

“No winter lasts forever, no spring skips its turn”

Hal Borland



Photo - Susan Renkel

Welcome - New BSP Publicity Co-Chairs!!

Rob and Michelle Carson

Rob and Michelle reside in Butler County and have expressed an interest in serving as BSP Publicity Co-Chairs.

Rob specializes in Voice Acting and he will bring his talents to enhance the BSP Web Site with a creative, audio welcome feature. Rob and Michelle will promote the goals of BSP to media outlets, including newspaper, TV, radio and magazine and will promote BSP Educational Events such as Annual Conferences and other events which educate the public about the nesting and habitat needs of bluebirds and other native cavity-nesting songbirds.

THANKS to Rob and Michelle for joining the BSP Committee Team!

Editor's Note: If you would like Live Voice links on your Website, contact Mr. Carson at matadorx@zoominternet.net

BSP COUNTY COORDINATOR NEWS

Ken Leister, State County Coordinator reports these changes in the BSP County Coordinator Listing:

New County Coordinators:

Tioga County: Emily Rizzo (570) 549-2286 rizzo@npacc.net

Co- County Coordinator added for Lancaster County:

Dean Rust (717) 291-8913 july7DS@aol.com

Note: Dean is joining Dan Thomas to serve the many active bluebirders in Lancaster County.

Welcome, Dean and Emily!

County Coordinators Needed: Montgomery County Dauphin County Snyder County

A HUGE THANKS to those BSP County Coordinators who have served bluebirders in their counties so well for many years and who are now stepping down to offer others the opportunity to spread the word about bluebird conservation.



Hatch Day!



Feed Me, Please!



Growing Fast!

Photos - Susan Renkel

Bluebird Trail at Lancaster Country Club

BSP Member Dean Rust lives near the Lancaster Country Club in the northern part of Lancaster City and has volunteered to monitor a 24 nest box bluebird trail there. He monitors the boxes on a weekly basis and in 2010, 40 bluebirds fledged from the nest boxes and this season already 40 bluebirds have successfully fledged in the first brood of the season. A wonderful article about the bluebird trail was written by Todd Bidlespacher, Golf Course Superintendent and appears in the July 2011 edition of the *Golf Course News* publication.

Thanks Dean for all that you do to promote bluebird nestings!

Editor's Note: Dean has recently volunteered to serve as BSP Co-County Coordinator for Lancaster County and he is available to assist you with your bluebird trails.

Nominate your favorite Bluebirder for a BSP Award

Each year at the annual conference, the Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania is proud to recognize those who have made a significant contribution related to bluebird conservation, propagation, or educational outreach by presenting them with a BSP award.

There are three award categories:

Bluebirder of the Year
Blue Feather Award
Letter of Commendation

We really need your assistance to identify the person(s) who you would like to nominate for one of these awards. To nominate someone who you feel has made a significant contribution to bluebird conservation or has inspired you or others to get involved in bluebirding, please submit the following information:

1. Name of person to be nominated
2. Contact information for you and them- addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses
3. A brief write-up of their activities related to bluebird conservation that would make them a good candidate for the award

Please send this information by March 10th, 2012 to:

Shirley Halk, BSP Awards Chairperson
42 Park Drive, Grantville, PA 17028



BSP Newsletter Submission/Wiggly Worm Contest

Congratulations to the Contest Winner Dan Thomas

**Please select a book from the BSP Store at
www.thebsp.org and call BSP Store Manager, Doris
at (717) 766-3877 regarding your book choice
and to arrange delivery.**

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. 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.

Contest Rules:

1. Locate the illustration of the **Wiggly Worm** which will appear in the content of the newsletter.
2. With your newsletter submission, indicate the page number of the newsletter that the Wiggly Worm appears.
3. Submit your entry.

We are now accepting e-mail submissions of your newsletter items as well as regular mail entries. For e-mail submissions, enter **BSP Wiggly Worm Contest** in the subject heading of your email, indicate the page number that the Wiggly Worm appears in the newsletter and e-mail to BSP Editor at: editor@thebsp.org.

Or by regular mail, write **Wiggly Worm Contest** on the front of the envelope, write the page number of the newsletter that you found the Wiggly Worm on the top of your entry and send your newsletter item to: BSP, P.O. Box 756, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-0756.

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 book 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 Committee 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, and e-mail address (optional) with your entry.

BSP Membership Form
P.O. Box 756, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-0756

2008 - 2011 Membership Rates

	1 Year	2 Years* *Renewals only	3 Years* *Renewals only
Student (17 and younger)	\$5.00	\$10.00	\$15.00
Senior (65 and older)	\$8.00	\$15.00	\$21.00
Individual	\$10.00	\$19.00	\$27.00
Family	\$15.00	\$29.00	\$42.00
Corporate Memberships	\$100.00		

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: \$ _____

Member Interest Survey:

I/We would like to learn about assisting BSP with:

___ Create/monitor BSP trail ___ 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 ___

2012 BSP MEMBERSHIP RATE INFORMATION

***Advance notice: Please note that starting on January 1, 2012, there will be uniform rates and renewal period options for both new and renewal memberships. Since the operating costs for the organization have greatly increased since its inception in 1996, there will be a slight increase in the rates for both new and renewing members. Please check the label of your most recent newsletter, as it displays your renewal date.

***If you would like to renew under the 2008-2011 membership levels listed above, your current membership will then be extended to the renewal period of your choice.

Renew for 3 years at the rates listed above to capture the discounted renewal rates in effect until 1/1/2012!

2012 BSP Membership Rates:

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



PO Box 756
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-0756

- Recipe for Yummy Suet for the Birds -Chuck Musser -

1 pound of lard (available in a tub)
18 ounces of crunchy peanut butter

Heat the above ingredients in a large pan on the stove on low heat until they are mixed together. Remove from heat.

Mix in: one- 2 lb. bag of yellow corn meal

Optional add-ins: raisins, shelled sunflower seeds
Refrigerate until using

Serve in a log feeder or on a flat tray from October through April



Photo - Chuck Musser

Attracts several songbird species, especially bluebirds-good source of nutrition in the fall, winter and early spring when the natural food supplies are low



BSP is a North American Bluebird Society Affiliate

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