



# BLUEBIRD TRAILS & TALES

*Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania*

An Affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society

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[www.thebsp.org](http://www.thebsp.org)

## *A Message from the BSP President -*



Today is a cold snowy day in Lancaster, PA with 2 inches already decorating the landscape with

white powder and the thermometer seems to be peaking at 18 degrees. I have been busy all morning on my computer but now it is time to watch songbird action at our heated birdbath and various feeders. Spring seems to be light years away as today is January 6th but there are many hungry birds visiting and flashing their colors. Down on the river is a flotilla of Canada geese and I am expecting one of my favorite duck species, both genders of common mergansers, to arrive any day. There is a brown creeper on the oak tree but you have to look closely to see him. Dark-eyed juncos moved in just before Christmas and they are part of the ground cleanup crew. Finches, cardinals, titmice, Carolina wrens, blue jays, white-breasted nuthatches, black-capped chickadees, white-throated sparrows, white crowned sparrows, downy woodpeckers, red-bellied woodpeckers, hairy woodpeckers, mockingbirds, northern flickers, mourning doves and my favorite, four eastern bluebirds (they missed their connecting flight from Harrisburg to sunny SC) and are destined to spend their winter in Lancaster.

My job is to make sure they survive the next couple of months so they can build nests, lay eggs, incubate eggs, feed nestlings/fledglings and then do it all again. I get to watch, learn and be amazed year after year, again and again. Here are 4 easy steps for success: 1) keep plenty of dried mealworms on hand and peanut butter homemade suet – for bluebirds, raisins, currants, shelled sunflower seed, juniper berries, red mulberries, dogwood berries, holly berries, blueberries, cut-dried

cherries or pokeweed is a delicacy ---check your feeders every day and replenish as needed 2) invest in a heated birdbath; birds get thirsty in the winter because the air is dry; if you have an old birdbath, immerse a coil heater that plugs into AC current & hangs on the side (most hardware stores sell them) or buy a newer birdbath model that has a heating unit hidden in the base of the water basin; this just keeps the water from freezing (around 34 degrees); it's NOT a hot tub for birds! 3) keep your bluebird nest box up all winter and close off the air vents with tape or wood strips; if you want to get fancy, build a heated roosting box controlled with a **EH-38 thermostat** (Lowe's have them for about \$15) and 100 watt light bulb to keep your bluebirds quite cozy. Check link: @ [www.bluebirdconservation.com](http://www.bluebirdconservation.com) (click on Articles) "**How to construct a heated roosting box for Bluebirds**".

4) Plant trees and shrubs on your property that have berries; bluebirds love all kinds of berries. This will attract them to your yard and help them survive the winter months when there are no insects. My favorites: all viburnums, dogwood berries, holly berries, staghorn sumac, red mulberry, serviceberry, eastern red cedar, bittersweet, Virginia creeper, nannyberry, elderberry, black gum tree, mountain ash, hawthorn, American linden and chokecherry to name a few.

**By providing the food, water and shelter birds need, homeowners can enjoy some of their best backyard birding during the cold winter months.**

In 2014 BSP introduced a "**PA Golf Course Bluebird Trail Initiative**". We are the 1st state in the US to start such a program and it has not gone unnoticed. The North American Bluebird Society wants to learn how we did it. BSP now has a "steering committee" that will guide and direct this program going

forward. We have a new manual of criteria, guidelines and implementation for success. Ask us for a copy as you may wish to start a Bluebird Trail at a golf course near you. We currently have 16 golf courses in the program.

One of my vision points for 2014 was a goal to "double the attendance" of our yearly BSP Conferences. On average, attendance over the past few years has been about 75-90 attendees. I would like to see our March 2015 conference attendance reach 175. When you receive this newsletter, we will have a good idea what our numbers will be. I hope you have already made plans to attend this year because we have some very special guests presenting.

On a sad note I would like to inform you that over the last two years, there have been two state bluebird organizations dissolve. Both the Massachusetts Bluebird Association and the New Hampshire Bluebird Conspiracy disbanded due to insufficient interest in service on their Boards and lack of interest or participation by a declining membership. I want the Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania to be a shining example for other states and be steadfast with our dedication to service, our enthusiasm and our growth in membership as a citizen's conservation group.

Many thanks to our Board of Directors and our County Coordinators across the Commonwealth who work tirelessly to accomplish these goals.

**HAPPY BLUEBIRDING!**

**Dr. Dean C. Rust**  
**BSP President**  
**JULY7DS@aol.com**  
**717-669-0167**

*"Experience the joy that only a bluebird can bring"*

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Artist - Susan Renkel

## *From the Editor -*



### **Importance of Habitats**

A habitat is a natural area which provides food, water, nesting opportunities, and shelter from predators and extreme weather. These areas are vital to the survival of wildlife, including birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. During the month of January, I had an opportunity to spend time in a unique natural area and was able to observe a variety of birds and other animals that live and nest there.

A highlight of my trip to Florida was a visit to Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary in Southwestern Florida, which consists of 13,000 acres of a unique and sensitive wetland area. Old growth bald cypress trees tower over diverse flora, lichen and vines and is home to many threatened plants and animals, including the Wood stork, Florida panther, ghost orchid, American alligator, bromeliads, and several species of cavity-nesting birds, including owls and woodpeckers. In the past, the Ivory-billed woodpeckers inhabited this area, and the cavities in the large cypress trees served as nesting sites for them.

In the late 1800's, hunters came to Corkscrew to hunt wading birds, including egrets, to obtain feathers for the fashion trade. Entire breeding colonies were destroyed. Fortunately, many colonies recovered due to the successful campaign to stop their slaughter. Due to the efforts of Audubon and other conservation groups, the clearcut logging practices of the bald cypress trees was stopped just one half mile from the sanctuary location. There are several types of habitats within the sanctuary, including marshes, an old-growth bald cypress forest, lettuce lakes, a wet prairie, and pine flatwoods. Each area provides the habitat needs of specific species, and a raised platform trail which winds through many areas of this Important Bird Area allows visitors to view these species in their natural habitat. During certain times of the year, some walkways are closed off to visitors to insure privacy to certain sensitive species, like Wood storks, during their nesting season. A brief shower occurred during our visit, and it brought out a variety of birds who feasted on insects washed down from the tall canopy of trees and vines.

If you get an opportunity to visit this unique habitat, you will be amazed at the diversity of birds and other wetland species. Although I did not see a bluebird the day I visited, they also nest in the tree cavities within the sanctuary. I did, however, see many songbirds, including catbirds, Carolina wrens, red-bellied woodpeckers, Piliated woodpeckers, and a Painted bunting. Also saw many species of herons, egrets, storks, a Roseate spoonbill, and raptors.

To learn more about this wonderful sanctuary, check out: <http://corkscrew.audubon.org/>

To learn how you can create and maintain a healthy habitat at home, check out: <http://athome.audubon.org/>

*Joan Watroba*

BSP Editor

[sunshinebb@msn.com](mailto:sunshinebb@msn.com)

## Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania

### Financial Report 2014

Submitted by: Joyce Stuff, BSP Treasurer

#### Revenue

Store	\$1,841.08
Membership Fees	10,497.00
Donations	839.06
Speaker Income	1,935.00
Fundraising	5,681.00
Woodworking	1,947.92
Conference	<u>2,625.00</u>
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$25,366.06</b>

#### Expenses

Administration	\$2,466.12
Store	4,544.28
Membership	1,255.26
Fundraising	1,312.73
Woodworking	4,395.43
Conference	5,241.49
Education	1,674.29
Newsletter	2,241.84
County Coordinator	422.47
Research	<u>76.94</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$23,630.85</b>

#### BSP Financial Statement for 2014

<b>Checking Acct Balance 12/31/13</b>	\$35,260.20
2014 Revenue	+25,366.06
2014 Expenses	<u>-23,630.85</u>

**Checking Acct Balance 12/31/14**  
**\$36,995.41**

CD Balance 12/31/14  
+10,090.42

Susquehanna Bank Harrisburg PA  
Cash On Hand (store cash box) + 200.00

**TOTAL ASSETS 12/31/14**  
**\$47,285.83**

## BSP OFFICERS

#### President

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July7ds@aol.com

#### Vice President

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**Nancy Putt**

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#### Treasurer

**Joyce Stuff**

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*Don't Forget - BSP has a Facebook Page!*

*Google:*

*Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania / Facebook*

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**BSP COUNTY COORDINATORS  
2015 OF PENNSYLVANIA COUNTY COORDINATORS**

ADAMS	John Gabreski	717-337-2851
ALLEGHENY	Edward Monroe	412-486-0766
ARMSTRONG	Cathy Beer	724-763-8637
BEAVER	Scott Parry	412-841-5071
BEDFORD	John/Cathy Everhart	814-623-8852
BERKS	Terry Gerhart	610-775-9474
BLAIR	Kelly Baronner	814-696-3945
BRADFORD	Lura Trossello	570-363-2081
BUCKS	Ron Freed	215-536-7293
BUCKS	Bill Moyer	215-536-7032
BUTLER	Darrell Daubenspeck	724-735-2363
BUTLER	Harry Schneider	724-285-1209
CAMBRIA	Phil Andraychak	814-886-7279
CAMERON	Robert Kerner	814-486-3484
CARBON	Sandy/Don Bonett	610-681-8807
CENTRE	Bonnie and Bill Ford	814-355-1811
CHESTER	Ken Leister	610-696-5271
CLARION	Amy Wolbert	814-764-5321
CLEARFIELD	Norman Bloom	ngbloom@toast.net
CLINTON	Linda Frye	570-769-7375
COLUMBIA	Margret Pickin	570-784-2633
CRAWFORD	Bill Wenger	412-279-8732
CUMBERLAND	Joan Watroba	717-766-2102
DAUPHIN	Bill Strauss	717-541-9168
DELAWARE	Alice Sevareid	610-544-9057
ELK	Wayne Bryndel	814-772-4604
ERIE	Bernie Connelly	814-734-5446
ERIE	Andrea Wyman	814-398-8384
FAYETTE	Jane Shuck	724-277-8526
FOREST	<b>Vacant</b>	
FRANKLIN	Joyce Stuff	717-328-3411
FULTON	Florence & Robert Pyle	610-322-7031
GREENE	Lisa Wheeler	724-222-1311
HUNTINGDON	Alice Saunders	814-667-4437
INDIANA	Michael Schmaus	814-938-0928
JEFFERSON	Marsha Harris	814-265-1231
JUNIATA	Gail Getz	717-463-4041
LACKAWANNA	Marcia Yacilla	570-451-5077
LANCASTER	Dan Thomas	717-786-7893
LANCASTER	Dean Rust	717-669-0167
LAWRENCE	Bob Allnock	724-584-0601
LEBANON	Shirley Halk	717-865-2650
LEHIGH	Denise & Peter Reinhart	610-965-5389
LUZERNE	<b>Vacant</b>	

LYCOMING	Fred Stiner	570-323-1313
McKEAN	John Barwin	814-929-5577
MERCER	<b>Vacant</b>	
MERCER	Ed Palmer	724-458-4456
MERCER	James Weaver	814-332-6187
MIFFLIN	Diane Ruth	717-994-5669
MONROE	Rose Schoch	570-992-7500
MONROE	Deron Erney	610-657-4653
MONTGOMERY	Patrick Murray	813-625-0277
MONTOUR	Donna Kreischer	570-437-3649
NORTHAMPTON	Doris Heil	610-262-5085
NORTHUMBERLAND	<b>Vacant</b>	
PERRY	Pat Kessler	717-589-3076
PHILADELPHIA	<b>Vacant</b>	
PIKE	Tom Peifer	570-470-9960
POTTER	David Hauber	814-274-8946
SCHUYLKILL	Charles Trusky	570-773-2737
SNYDER	Susan Renkel	570-809-4804
SOMERSET	Bill Cuppett	814-479-2230
SOMERSET	Simeon Yoder	814-267-9932
SULLIVAN	Kat Clark	570-928-8952
SUSQUEHANNA	Amber Zygmunt	570-869-2353
TIOGA	Leslie Clifford	570-662-4527
UNION	Cricket Klinger	570-966-9887
VENANGO	Carl Hohmann	814-676-2782
WARREN	<b>Vacant</b>	
WASHINGTON	Lisa Wheeler	724-222-1311
WASHINGTON	Gigi Gerben	412-973-9760
WAYNE	James Kilgore	609-874-1222
WESTMORELAND	Joanne McIlhattan	724-523-9203
WYOMING	Ray Massacesi	570-836-0173
YORK	Nancy Putt	717-432-2647
YORK	Karen Lippy	717-637-9347



Artist - Susan Renkel

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# Noel Cat & Raccoon Guard

by Joyce Stuff

In 1985, Jim Noel established a bluebird trail in Central Illinois. From his 80 nest boxes he fledged over 200 bluebirds each year, but for every bird fledged Jim lost that many nestlings or eggs to predators. Most of his trails were in farm country and he attributed his greatest loss of eggs and nestlings to cats and raccoons. Frustrated with the loss, he decided he needed to put more distance between the predator and the bluebird nest without changing the nest box. Eventually, he made a deep wire guard attaching it to the front outside panel of the nest box surrounding the entrance hole. This attachment made from hardware cloth (wire mesh) became known as the Noel Guard.

Although nest boxes are placed in our backyards, in farm country, golf courses, and parks, etc. for our enjoyment of having bluebirds, they do make easy targets for predators which include house cats, feral cats and raccoons. Raccoons and cats are abundant in both rural and suburban areas. They are both very intelligent animals, and once they learn that a food source is inside our nest boxes, they will return and eventually find another easy meal. Both are capable of leaping to the top of the box and reaching into the entrance hole to grab the eggs or nestlings inside.

The Noel Guard is a rectangular piece of hardware cloth attached to the front of the nest box around the entrance hole. The outer edge of the rectangular guard has sharp points that will jab any nosy creature including the monitor, but will allow bluebirds to go in and out of the nest box. The sharp ends can be cut off, if you prefer. The hardware cloth can be 1/4" or 1/2" inch squares cut to measure 5 1/2" X 18" and shaped to form a 3 1/2" wide X 5 1/2" high X 5" deep rectangle with the two ends soldered or wired together. The Noel Guard can be stapled permanently to the nest box or on a 3 1/2" X 8" X 3/4" board with the same-size entrance hole (standard or Petersen) drilled 1" down from the top of the board. With three screws, the device can be attached without the roof overhang interfering on most nest boxes.

If eggs or nestlings disappear from the nest box, and snakes are not common in your area, a cat or a raccoon probably raided the nest box. The nest is usually disturbed by the sharp claws, and nesting material may be hanging out of the entrance hole. To prevent this from happening again (hopefully), place the Noel Guard to the front panel of the nest box after one or more eggs are laid and monitor the box until a parent bluebird goes through the entrance hole. The Noel Guard may be removed after the nestlings have fledged or left permanently attached to the nest box. After raising a brood with the Noel Guard attached, the bluebirds should be accustomed to the new addition and use the nest box again.

Like Jim Noel, over the years I have lost many nestlings and eggs because of cats and maybe raccoons raiding nest boxes on my farm trails. With over thirty years of monitoring nest boxes around farm fields, I try to monitor the nest boxes without the bluebirds depending on me for their survival. However, when the raiding problem occurred at one of my most productive boxes, I decided to try to give the bluebirds some protection with a man-made device. I started to use the Noel Guard on several nest boxes in 2005 after Box #6 became a target to cat predation. From 1991-2003 this box fledged 15 broods with no failures. In 2004 the nestlings disappeared and in 2005 the eggs disappeared on the first nesting. After the second nest of 5 eggs were laid, the Noel Guard was mounted to the nest box and 5 nestlings fledged. In 2006, Box # 6 had two successful nestings and 9 other boxes had 10 successful nestings with the Noel Guard attached after the egg laying began. There was only one nesting with the Noel Guard attached that was not successful. I now attach Jim Noel's Cat and Coon Guard to all nest boxes with bluebird eggs found in them.

Back in the late 1980s Jim realized the guard wasn't the complete answer to predation but felt it eliminated nearly 100% of his cat problems. I tend to agree with Jim and urge you to try the Noel Guard if you have eggs and nestlings disappearing from your nest box which may be due to house or stray cats or raccoons wandering around the neighborhood raiding your nest boxes.

*Editor's Note: I have also had success using the Noel Guards, and find that the other native cavity-nesting songbirds will successfully use the boxes with the guards installed. I even had the timid nesting songbird, the Tufted Titmouse successfully nest in a box that already had a Noel Guard installed. For some of my trails I keep the guards on all year round, but for my larger trails, I move the guards from one box to another when the boxes are active with eggs and young nestlings. For that reason,*

I prefer to use the guards which are already mounted to the wooden panel so that they can be easily moved to other boxes, as they are attached with just 3 screws. I submitted one observation related to tree swallows not adapting to the guard and reported it as follows to : [www.sialis.org](http://www.sialis.org)<<http://www.sialis.org>>

“Joan Watroba of PA installed a 4” wide Noel Guard on a box with Tree Swallow nestlings and then observed. The adult male Tree Swallow adapted to it right away, but the female tried to enter the nest box 4 times, and each time she did not fold her wings down soon enough and they bumped against the Noel guard and the female backed away. Watroba immediately removed it, and the female was able to get in and continue feeding the young. The fledge was successful. This experience emphasizes the importance of the following:

When adding any device/gadget to a nestbox, the landlord must observe that both parents will accept it and be able to enter and exit the box easily. Note that Noel Guards do not prevent snakes, mice, or house sparrows from entering the nest box, but is very effective in preventing cats and raccoons from reaching into the nests and removing eggs and young.”

**Note:** Noel Guards are available through the BSP Store: [www.thebsp.org](http://www.thebsp.org)

Scroll across to More..... and then scroll down to select the BSP Online Store

**Editor’s Note:** The Bluebird Society of PA is very fortunate to have Chuck Musser of Bainbridge, PA serve as BSP Research Chair. He is very experienced, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic about promoting successful nesting of bluebirds and other native songbirds. Chuck is very clever, creative, and resourceful, and he has constructed and tested a variety of gadgets, gizmos, and nest boxes to promote optimum nesting results.

His two main areas of interest are

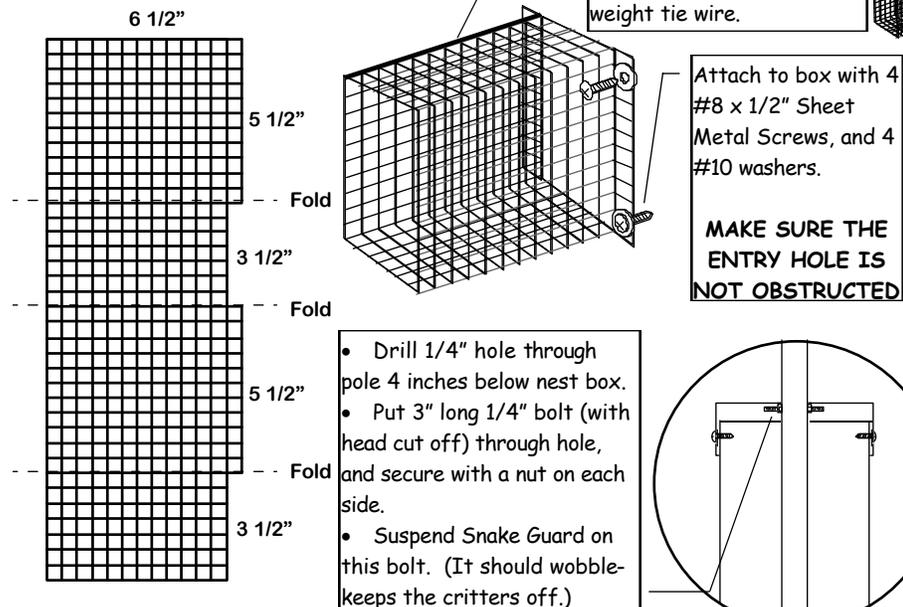
1.) Designing predator guards to deter cats and raccoons from accessing nest boxes and

2.) House sparrow control

For more information about his latest projects, contact him at: 717-367-3548.

## Nest Box Predator Guards

### Cat/Raccoon Guard



### Materials

#### Raccoon Guard:

- 1/2" Hardware Cloth (6 1/2" x 18")
- Tie Wire (10")
- 4 - #8 x 1/2" Sheet Metal Screws
- 4 - #10 Flat Washers

#### Snake Guard:

- 6" x 24" Round Duct
- 6" Round Duct Cap
- 2 - #8 x 1/2" Sheet Metal Screws

#### Mounting Pole:

- 1" EMT Metal Electric Conduit (7 1/2' Long) Bury in ground 1 1/2'.

### Snake Guard

- Cut 1 1/4" hole in center of Round Duct Cap. (The hole must only be slightly larger than mounting pole. A small snake can slip through a 1/2" gap.)
- Slide Duct Cap over top of the Round Duct section.
- Drill a pilot hole through each side of the Duct Cap and Round Duct, and secure the Cap to the Duct with two #8 x 1/2" Sheet Metal Screws.

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# "We are BSP"

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## *Denise and Peter Reinhart*

Denise and I have been involved in monitoring bluebirds for well over 20 years. We began in Carbon County, where we belonged to a hunting & fishing club with 5,000 acres located near Hickory Run State Park monitoring about 15 boxes for about 10 years. Guess that was the early 1990's. We took over responsibilities from my parents shortly thereafter who initially started hanging bluebird boxes many years prior to that. My dad taught me how to build boxes, and I still have the original plans which were from the PA Game Commission. They are simple and effective. Nothing fancy. I can build a bluebird box for about \$5 today. During those years, we kept track of the houses, but unfortunately, did not keep any formal records. We still had fun in the Spring when we went to clean out the houses. We found the previous year's bluebird nests, deer mice holed up during the Winter and even a few flying squirrels during our spring cleaning travels.

In 2006 we joined Mink Pond Club in Pike County. Our new club had zero bluebird trails or nesting boxes. Denise and I embarked on a program of trying to establish a trail, or areas, to attract bluebirds to the area. Keep in mind the area was nothing but forest and swamp areas. The club had done some land clearing for habitat improvement and we immediately began to utilize those areas for bluebirds. Denise and I initially began with 25 boxes, posting them in any clearing we could find. We have actively been involved in habitat improvement at Mink Pond since 2006. We applied for and were accepted for in two Federal grants for wildlife habitat improvement projects, WHIP (Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program) and CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program). Both WHIP and CSP grants are funded through NRCS from the U.S. Farm Bill program. These grants allowed Mink Pond to enhance our acreage and property for wildlife habitat improvement. Though forest stand improvement activities, which led to creating natural areas for birding, Mink Pond was able to increase our clear-cut acreage from a few acres to over 25 acres today. As a result of the forest stand improvement activities, Denise and I were able to increase our initial monitoring of 25 bluebird boxes to 48 today. This is not without its challenges. Though we have a success rate of about 10 – 12 Bluebird inhabitants per year in the 48 boxes, we have wrens and swallows which also like to nest. Plus the local bear population are curious and have a tendency to rip off the boxes. We still keep at it. Because of the distance and time, it is a challenge to commit to a weekly bluebird box nesting activity count during the nesting season. However, that does not lesson our desire to maintain and monitor the boxes. What we do is nothing scientific, we simply do this for the propagation of bluebirds. Seeing bluebirds circling around the various houses during the spring and summer provides us the greatest satisfaction. I guess one can measure one's involvement in bluebird nesting activity in the number of trails, the number of boxes and the weekly count and monitoring activities, but in our minds, nothing compares to going to the extra effort in turning forest land into prime wildlife improvement areas for nesting activities.

In addition to bluebirds, Denise and I actively monitor 20+ Wood Duck boxes on 2,000+ acres. Recently, I have been instrumental in applying for having Mink Pond being accepted in a 30 acre program for the Golden Winged Warbler Project administered by the NRCS in Pike County. Bluebirds are obviously the focus, but being good stewards of any land, public or private, is the key element for birding propagation. It is that message we would want to convey.

Editor's Message: BSP is thrilled that Denise and Peter have volunteered to serve as BSP County Coordinators for Lehigh County. They also volunteered at the BSP booth during the PA Farm Show in Harrisburg in mid-January and were very enthusiastic about sharing their knowledge about bluebirds and other cavity-nesters with visitors to our educational booth.



**Denise and Peter Reinhart**

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# "We are BSP"

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## *Ken Leister*

As a young boy in a family of nine, I was always involved in something around the house or on the farm. There was plenty of wildlife in the area when I was growing up in Hanover, PA.

Therefore, when I entered college, the natural course of study for me was Biology. I was graduated from West Chester State Teachers College with a double major, and in later years continued my education by obtaining a Master's Degree. My working years were spent in the school system and in industry.

I became interested in bluebirds about eighteen years ago when I spotted some new birds in my backyard. I did some quick research and discovered that they were bluebirds. Although I placed birdhouses in my yard, the bluebirds ignored them for three years. When I heard that BSP was having a conference in Morgantown, PA, I attended the event and received good advice on attracting bluebirds. The birds now nest in, not only my yard, but in the thirty-two other yards in my neighborhood.

When I retired, I became passionately involved in bluebirding activities. Currently, I build birdhouses, give talks about bluebirds to school children, women and men's groups, and at Widener University's senior program for continued learning. I write informational paragraphs for local newsletters, work with the Park and Recreation Commission of West Whiteland Township, volunteer at the Farm Show, and help to plan and attend the annual BSP conferences.

As you can see, the bluebirds have taken over my life, and they have, indeed, brought me much happiness.

Editor's Note: Ken currently serves BSP as a Board Member, State County Coordinator, and also BSP County Coordinator for Chester County.



**Ken Leister**

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# 2014 Annual Bluebird Report

by Frank Hocker



**Bob Kochert and Frank Hocker check a Bluebird box on the Conococheague Bluebird Trail.  
Photo by Dale Gearhart**

Fourteen volunteers check the boxes on a rotating schedule and submit reports to the Bluebird Trail Coordinator. These reports are compiled to obtain the number of bluebirds fledged which is reported to the Bluebird Society of PA. The volunteers visit in pairs and make a visit every eight weeks. One volunteer is responsible for the 27 houses on Penn National and deserves special recognition. The Penn National boxes is in particular need for additional volunteers. One volunteer is responsible for Eco Park and one volunteer is responsible for Norlo Park.

The Bluebird Trail coordinator, in addition to compiling the weekly reports, closes the boxes at the beginning of the breeding season, opens the boxes at the end of breeding season, and ensures boxes are repaired or replaced as required. In 2014 all 26 boxes were upgraded, repaired or replaced.

Based on the Bluebird–Tree Swallow war during 2013, the placement of a box in close proximity to an existing box tested and disproved the theory that one species will not nest close to another of the same species. The tree swallows, during 2014, nested in the vast majority of the boxes. If anyone has a suggestion for a remedy, please call Frank Hocker: 717-352-8713.

***Editor's Note: The Conococheague Bluebird Trails is a project of the Conococheague Audubon Society, Chambersburg PA (Franklin County).***

## *BSP County Coordinators Needed*

Included in this edition of the newsletter is a list of BSP County Coordinators who are willing to assist BSP with **educational outreach in their counties by volunteering to help answer questions and help solve problems that bluebirders encounter during the nesting season.**

If you live in or near the following counties and would like to serve as BSP County Coordinator, please contact Ken Leister, BSP State County Coordinator at 610-696-5271 or email him at: [kenapeg@aol.com](mailto:kenapeg@aol.com)

### **County Coordinators Needed:**

**Cumberland** -Seeking a Co-County Coordinator

**Forest**

**Luzerne**

**Northumberland**

**Philadelphia**

**Warren**

*Note:* To obtain assistance with bluebirding activities and to contact a BSP County Coordinator near you, go to the BSP web site, [www.thebsp.org](http://www.thebsp.org) and select BSP County Coordinators. Please contact a BSP County Coordinator near you for assistance with your bluebird questions or for assistance in presenting bluebird programs in your community.

## *Bluebird Trail Monitors Needed*

### ***Cumberland County, PA***

*Southampton Township Park • Shippensburg, PA*

*200 Airport Road (located across from the Township Building)*

***10 boxes, easy to monitor, mowed habitat***

Contact: Richard Hammaker at 717-532-6861 or e-mail: [rhammaker@embarqmail.com](mailto:rhammaker@embarqmail.com) for more information.

### *~ Monitors Needed for Bluebird Trails on Golf Courses ~*

BSP has launched a ***Golf Course Initiative Program*** with the purpose of partnering with golf course owners to promote successful nestings of bluebirds and other native-cavity nesting songbirds on golf courses, which provide many habitat features which bluebirds require. The current list of courses needing monitors is posted on the BSP Web site: [www.thebsp.org](http://www.thebsp.org) Scroll to ***More...*** then scroll down to the tab- ***Attn. Golf Course Owners and BSP Monitors Needed.***

Members of the BSP Golf Course Initiative Committee are finalizing a Golf Course Guide for Bluebird Monitors handbook to assist you with this important conservation activity. For more information about the guidebook, please contact Marilyn Michalski, who drafted this informative guidebook, at [emeralddmm@verizon.net](mailto:emeralddmm@verizon.net) or 610-933-0497.

# BSP CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**17TH ANNUAL BSP CONFERENCE  
MARCH 27 AND 28, 2015**

**EDEN RESORT & SUITES, LANCASTER, PA  
3/27-FRIDAY EVENING:  
PROGRAMS AND SOCIAL  
3/28-SATURDAY: ALL-DAY  
CONFERENCE/LUNCHEON**

**REGISTRATION CLOSED -  
FULL ATTENDANCE/CAPACITY REACHED**

**APRIL 23, JULY 23, AND OCT 22  
BSP BOARD MEETINGS  
6:00 P.M.(THURSDAY EVENINGS)  
GIANT FOODS COMMUNITY ROOM  
CAMP HILL, PA**

Please plan to attend BSP 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 in the comfort of your home.

**APRIL 25TH- SATURDAY, 10:00 A.M.-4:00 P.M.  
WETLANDS FESTIVAL  
WILDWOOD PARK  
100 WILDWOOD WAY, HARRISBURG, PA**

This is a wonderful event in a beautiful location celebrating the diversity of plants and animals which thrive in wetlands. Programs, speakers, entertainment, vendors, trail walks, and children's activities will be make it an enjoyable day for all. Free Admission. BSP will host the educational booth.

\* Please call Bill Strauss at 717-541-9168 or e-mail him at: [mbstrauss@verizon.net](mailto:mbstrauss@verizon.net) to volunteer. For more information on this event, visit their website: <http://www.wildwoodlake.org/>

**MARCH 21, 2015 - SATURDAY  
PENNAPIC BEE WORKSHOP - DOVER, PA  
9-3 P.M.**

**BSP Table & Exhibit  
(last year's event had 325 attendees)**

**MARCH 24, 2015 -  
AKRON LIONS CLUB,  
BLUEBIRD PRESENTATION  
LODGE IN AKRON PARK  
6:30-8PM**

Contact -Marvin Nolt, 575-1026



# BSP CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**APRIL 20, 2015**

**BOND & BUILD WORKSHOP  
MANHEIM TOWNSHIP PARKS & RECREATION  
6:30-8:30 P.M.**

Contact : Harry Norton, Manheim Township  
717-569-6408

**APRIL 25, 2015**

**LANCASTER  
NATIVE PLANT & WILDLIFE FESTIVAL  
OVERLOOK PARK, LANCASTER, PA  
9:00 A.M.-4 P.M.**

Dean Rust, BSP President will speak  
at 11 AM in the new  
Manheim Township Library at  
Overlook Park on Fruitville Pike

**MAY 16TH-SATURDAY**

**PENN STATE MASTER GARDENERS  
PLANT FAIR  
CENTRE COUNTY, PA**

Ken Leister will be presenting a program talk  
“All About Bluebirds”

**MAY 16, 2015**

**(RAIN DATE MAY 30) 9 AM - 3 PM  
SECOND ANNUAL OUTDOORS FIELD DAY  
TUSCARORA WILDLIFE EDUCATION  
PROJECT (TWEP)  
4881 FT. LOUDON RD, MERCERSBURG, PA 17236**

Bluebird program and family boxbuilding

Contact: Joyce Stuff, Franklin County Coordinator  
717-328-3411

**APRIL 29, 2015**

**OLLI SPRING CLASS  
11-12:30  
PENN STATE YORK CAMPUS**

**MAY 6, 2015**

**OLLI SPRING CLASS  
11-12:30  
PENN STATE YORK CAMPUS**

**MAY 13, 2015**

**OLLI SPRING CLASS  
11-12:30  
PENN STATE YORK CAMPUS**

Contact person for OLLI Programs  
Dean Rust, [july7ds@aol.com](mailto:july7ds@aol.com) 717-669-0167

OLLI = Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

**SEPTEMBER 17-19, 2015**

**NORTH AMERICAN BLUEBIRD SOCIETY  
38TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

1200 Principale West, Magog  
Quebec, Canada, J1X 2B8

For more information regarding programs and  
registration, please check out the NABS website:  
<http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org/>



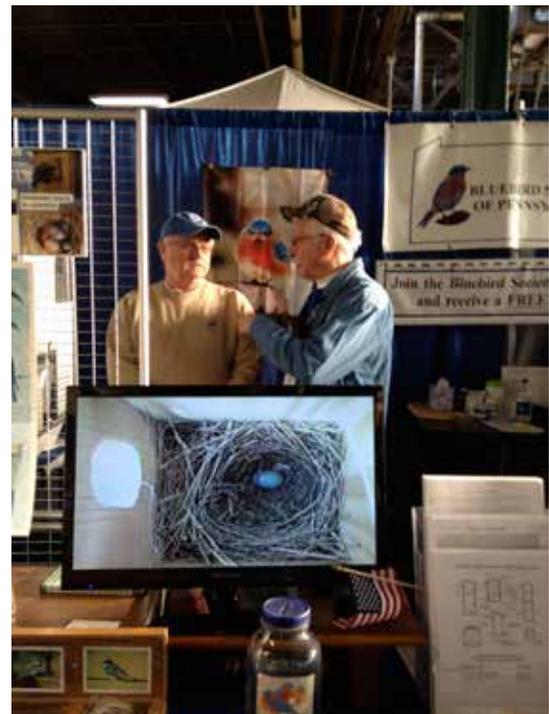
# BSP EVENT REPORTS

## Farm Show Event- January 9-17, 2015

This was such a good year for all of us at the Bluebird Society of PA Educational Booth. Snow was not a problem this year, and there was a huge turnout of visitors at our booth!!! I had noticed that people stayed to look and read the new posters and educational materials we had on display with our new set-up (of course they just love to watch the “Inside the Nest Box” video). We looked pretty “spiffy” and I think the representative from the National Audubon office was impressed with our display.....she walked away with every handout/ membership form and printed material we had, like many other visitors to our booth. We all had fun sharing our stories and helpful hints about bluebirds with every visitor. Also, we welcomed 100 new members who joined BSP with a nest box kit, along with our very informative booklet and newsletter subscription.

BSP Board member Bill Cuppett was filmed by the crew from PA Cable Network with a tour of the BSP booth and informative talk about bluebirds - HE WAS ON TV- Great job!!! Our box building crew of Dale Cook, Bill Strauss and Ken Leister- helped 60 “future birders” build their own bluebird boxes. Many thanks go to our set-up and dismantle crew of Doris Hoffman, Dale Cook and Bill Strauss, and myself. Many hours and hard work goes into this event before it even begins. Also, thank you to our 32 volunteers who came in to “share bluebird love” at our booth: Bill Strauss, Dale Cook, Doris Hoffman, Joanne Slavinski, Shirley Halk, Robin and James Trail, Phil and Susan Durgin, Dave and Barb Cox, Bill Cuppett, Dave Price, Chuck and Bonnie Musser, John and Cathy Blair, John Woodward, Shelvy Moorehead, Bill Frantz, Deborah Hershey, Debra Carman, Ken Leister, Brenda Dove, Henry and Pat Greenawald, Joyce and Carl Stuff, Terry and Sandy Gerhart, and Pete and Denise Reinhart. Best of “bluebirding” to our young “future birders” and newest members!!!

Nancy Putt- Event Chairlady



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## BSP is NOW 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: [btntnewsletter@thebsp.org](mailto:btntnewsletter@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



\*\*\*\*If you are already a Green Choice Member, and if you change your e-mail address, please send an e-mail to the above e-mail address and include E-MAIL CHANGE in the subject line-Thanks!



*Shirley Halk, BSP Annual Nest Box Reporter, is happy to announce the winners of the random drawing of the annual nest box reports received by BSP:*

**1st Place**-Donald Moore - Jefferson County, PA

**2nd Place**-Ms. Donna Demshock - Schuylkill County, PA

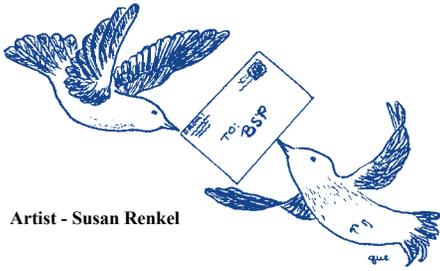
**3rd Place**-Alice Sevareid of the Delaware County Bluebird Trail, which has 40 bluebird monitors in Delaware County, PA

\*Winners have been contacted, and they can select their prize from the BSP Store: [www.thebsp.org](http://www.thebsp.org)

**Thanks** to all of you who sent in your Annual Nest Box Reports to BSP!

Please continue to do so, as this is an important way for us to measure the results of our collective efforts to promote successful nesting of bluebirds and other native cavity-nesting songbirds.





Artist - Susan Renkel

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## ■ September 22, 2014

McGuire Memorial is a very special place. We are a home for people with profound disabilities. We strive to give those we serve the richest and fullest life possible by meeting their physical, spiritual, and intellectual needs.

This year, as part of our program of nature therapy, we constructed and erected a bluebird nest box so that we could observe, document, and photograph the development of a bluebird family. Our box successfully

fledged four bluebirds. Monitoring this box will now be a permanent part of our program.

We learned that bluebirds are symbols of hope and the international symbol of happiness. We also learned that their future is in the hands of those who care about them and help them. We realized that hope, happiness, and help not only describe the bluebird's story, but also what we're all about here at McGuire. With this in mind, we have made the bluebird the official bird of McGuire Memorial. We are very pleased to apply for membership in the Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,

Paul Skuta

Greenhouse Coordinator/Instructor

McGuire Memorial, New Brighton, PA

*Editor's Note: Thanks, Mr. Skuta for providing nesting opportunities for bluebirds at your facility, and for sharing your story about how bluebirds are such an inspiration to you and the residents of your facility.*

■ My favorite birds are many, but my favorite is the Eastern Bluebird which I feel is a poster bird for cavity nesting species. I greatly enjoy taking care of my trail now which is only 14 boxes but at one time was over 100, and I like to experiment with all kinds of boxes too. I enjoyed my hanging box trail with double holes. At the state park where I first started, we had a thing going on with white eggs every year in some area of the park. Bluebirds are beautiful and have a melodious call. It's great showing kids all the different birds in your boxes on the trail which include that "TUFF TITMOUSE" I say. One once was in a box of my friend at the park and it made a knocking sound and hissed. We thought there was a snake in there, but it was the "TTM".

I have love petting the Tree Swallows when they sit so tight on the nest (just a few seconds) and throwing feathers in the air for them to catch. The Chickadees who are really amicable to folks have so much personality and spunk scolding one from a branch while you check the box. (They don't tolerate overchecking so make the stay as short as possible). My least favorite nesting bird is the House Wren, and let's not even go there!

Of note, I've always had a fascination with Crows and they mob en masse to our state capitol in the evenings for years now. They approach Harrisburg on different sides finally ending up there. Crows are fascinating creatures who problem solve and are maybe even smarter than parrots. They love their families and stick together.

I live in a wooded area and love hearing the Wood Thrushes which sound like bells to me. I see many woodpeckers of all kinds around here who love my log home but they are just letting me know I need to get rid of the carpenter bees. Never build a log home in the woods folks!

Kathy Clark, New Cumberland, PA

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■ We have had 6-8 bluebirds in our back yard for over three weeks. We have 3 heated birdbaths and several suet (from the butcher shop) feeders. We have never had them before so this is thrilling. I have taken a few photos and I hope they will stay during the rest of the year!

Mary Janney, Barnstable, MA

*Hello Mary,*

*Thank you for your exciting backyard Bluebird news !!!! You are doing everything correctly to have success with winter months' birdwatching \*\*\*(read my President's Message for our Spring Newsletter). I would say that your Bluebirds are definitely going to stay the winter. Try mealworms (dried are OK) and peanut butter suet. I can send you a homemade recipe that many of us use here in PA. We are finding that more and more Bluebirds are NOT migrating to the Carolinas, Georgia, Florida but staying in Upper New York State, NH,VT, MI, OH and you have them in Massachusetts! If you have Bluebird nest boxes - you might "winterize them" so they can roost in them on those bitter cold nights.*

*All the Best,*

*Dean*

BSP President

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### Huber House Sparrow Trap

*Note: This item is only to be used to trap non-native House sparrows, which are not protected under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and is available for purchase from the BSP Store: [www.thebsp.org](http://www.thebsp.org)*



Installed on a wooden panel which is then installed in the nest box as shown. To set, the metal plate is swiveled up and held in place with the arming rod. As the bird enters the nest box, it trips the arming rod, releasing the metal plate to fall down over the entry hole.

**Important:** 1. Place the trap inside the box and screw it into place. 2. Set the trap only when House sparrows are in and around the nest box. 3. Only use the trap when you can check on it regularly throughout the day. 4. Check the trap every 20 minutes or so, to see if it is tripped. 5. When tripped, carefully open the nest box with a plastic bag covering the entire nest box to identify and catch the bird when it tries to flee. If it is a House sparrow, it is legal to dispose of it. However, if you catch a native species (bluebird, tree swallow, wren, chickadee) release it immediately. It is against the law to harm native songbird species.



## BSP Newsletter Submission/Wiggly Worm Contest

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. Locate the illustration of the **Wiggly Worm** which will appear in the content of the newsletter and write that **page #** on the top of your item for the newsletter.
2. 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.
3. Write **Attn: Wiggly Worm Contest** on the front of the envelope and send to: BSP, P.O. Box 756, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-0756. We are also now accepting newsletter submissions by e-mail. Please enter **Wiggly Worm Contest** in the subject line and e-mail to the BSP Editor at: [sunshinebb@msn.com](mailto:sunshinebb@msn.com).
4. 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](http://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.

## BSP NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION CONTEST WINNER:

**Paul Skuta**

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

Paul - Please contact the BSP Store Manager, Doris at (717) 766-3877 and provide her with your prize choice.

Items can be viewed at the BSP web site: <http://www.thebsp.org/>  
Select the link to: **BSP Online Store** to view the list of books available.



**BSP Membership Form**  
**Send to: P.O. Box 756, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-0756**

**2015 BSP MEMBERSHIP RATE INFORMATION**

<b>Student</b>	<b>Senior</b>	<b>Regular/Family</b>	<b>Organization/Corporate</b>
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

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: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Nest Box Surprise!

Has anyone ever found a **tree frog** inside of their nest box? This was a big surprise when my husband first looked into a nest box which was occupied by a nest of 4 bluebird chicks with the mother inside.

He opened up the side opening and saw a tree frog hanging out on the ledge of the air vent at the top the other side of the box. It was very interesting that the bluebirds were not bothered by the tree frog. The tree frog(s) has been found four times only in this one particular box on his trail at the new park- Chestnut Ridge Park in Dillsburg.

Once we both peeked in and scared the tree frog - he jumped into the nest with the soon to fledge bluebirds. Monitoring nest boxes is full of **Surprises** and this was the strangest thing we have ever found inside of a nest box!

Nancy Putt, York County



**Editor's Note: Please let us know of any surprises that you find in your nest boxes. Nature is full of surprises!**



***BSP is a North American Bluebird Society Affiliate***

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