



BLUEBIRD TRAILS & TALES

Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania

An Affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society

Volume 15, Issue 1

Spring 2012

Editor: Joan Watroba • sunshinebb@msn.com

~ www.thebsp.org ~

A Message from the President -

Dear BSP Members,

As we start another new year, I have much hope and many dreams for the Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania. My hope is to see this organization continue to be productive and beneficial to the protection and propagation of the Eastern bluebirds and the other native cavity-nesting species in Pennsylvania and elsewhere. My dream is to see more people becoming actively involved within our organization to meet these goals. Therefore, I personally encourage and invite you to share your interests and talents with our wonderful organization so this dream will become a reality. Let me know if you would like to serve on the Board of Directors or on the many committees that we have within our organization. One area of need is to obtain a Publication and Artwork Chairperson. If you have an interest in artwork and creating documents such as brochures and program flyers, we could really use your assistance. Another area of need is for volunteers to serve on our Conference Committee.

The following is a list of the many volunteers who chair the BSP committees and who play an integral role within this wonderful organization:

State County Coordinator: Ken Leister

BSP Store Manager: Doris Hoffman

Finance and Online Store Manager: Joyce Stuff

Fundraising & Amish Quilt Raffle Coordinator: Nancy Putt

PA Farm Show and PA Garden Expo

Coordinator: Nancy Putt

BSP Newsletter Editor & Conference

Auction: Joan Watroba

Woodworking: Bill Strauss & Dale Cook

State Monitoring/TBT Trails & BSP

Awards: Shirley Halk

BSP Membership & Conference

Registration: Joanne Slavinski

BSP Bylaws: Harry Schneider

BSP Board/ Nominations: Dan Thomas

BSP Webmaster: Kay Croll & Web

Assistance: Roberta Cox

Research Committee Chair:

Chuck Musser

Promotion & Ned Smith Day

Coordinator: Philip Durgin

Publicity Chairpersons:

Rob and Michelle Carson

I would like to thank the above Committee Chairpersons for all of their dedication, compassion and service that they put forward to making the Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania a productive and active society which benefits all cavity-nesting songbirds. There are many other volunteers behind the scenes who assist in us in so many ways. I thank all of you, and the bluebirds thank you, too.

If you have an interest in serving on any of these important committees, please contact me at (724) 285-1209 or email me at harryschneider@gmail.com and I will forward your information to the appropriate

chairpersons.

See you at our 14th Annual BSP Conference on April 13th & 14th, 2012 at the Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel at 215 Innovation Boulevard, State College, Pa. You can make your lodging reservations through the Penn Stater at 1-800-233-7505. Use the personal reservation ID # BLUD12A to obtain the BSP group lodging rate during this event. Happy Bluebirding!

Harry Schneider, BSP President



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From the Editor -

BSP Promotes Nesting of All Native Songbirds –Joan Watroba

As much as we love bluebirds, there are many other native songbirds that also benefit from using the nest boxes that we place and monitor. Chickadees, tree swallows, house wrens, prothonotary warblers, tufted titmouse and occasionally other native cavity-nesting species will be discovered nesting in our boxes. The Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania's Statement of Purpose reads: "To take all actions deemed by BSP to be beneficial to the protection, enjoyment, and propagation of the Eastern bluebird *and other native cavity nesting species in Pennsylvania and elsewhere.*"



Factors that determine which species will use the boxes include habitat features, nest box specifications, especially the size of the entrance hole, and nest box placement. Tree Swallows prefer open areas with water features, like ponds; house wrens prefer wooded or brushy habitats; and chickadees and tufted titmouse prefer a mixture of wooded and tree-lined habitats. Bluebirds prefer more open areas with some solitary trees or wires for perching. Sometimes trail monitors are surprised to find bluebirds nesting in wooded areas, but since bluebirds nest in natural cavities like old woodpecker holes, this should not be too surprising. Since house wrens will disturb the nesting of other native songbirds by pecking or removing their eggs and young, it is best not to place nest boxes in wooded areas or at the edge of woods because that will attract the house wrens to those boxes and then to other nest boxes on your trail.

The main competition for nesting sites is the House Sparrow, which is a non-native bird that was introduced to this country back in the mid-1800's and has caused major problems to all native songbirds. House Sparrows are very aggressive and will destroy the eggs, young, and even adult birds of all native species, so it is very important to keep them from using nest boxes. Active methods include trapping, and passive methods include using monofilament line on the front of the nest box and also adding a Sparrow Spooker feature. If these methods are not successful, either relocate the nest box or place a hole reducer plate on the entrance hole which will allow only smaller native songbirds like chickadees or house wrens to nest there.

Note: It is important to remember that all native cavity-nesting species are protected by the Federal Migratory Bird Act. However, the House sparrow and European starling are not protected and should not be allowed to nest in the boxes that we put up. It is legal to remove and destroy these two bird species along with their nests and eggs.

European Starling



House Sparrows



Artist - Susan Renkel

• FINANCIAL REPORT 2011 •

BSP OFFICERS:

Harry Schmeider-President-Butler County

724.285.1209
harryschmeider@gmail.com

Phil Durgin-Vice President-Cumberland County

717.732.5325
pdurgin@comcast.net

Joyce Stuff-Treasurer-Franklin County

717.328.3411
bspcc@innernet.net

Nancy Putt-Secretary-York County

717.432.2647
bluebirds@pa.net

BSP BOARD MEMBERS:

Ken Leister-Chester County

610.696.5271
kenapeg@aol.com

Barbara Cox-Cumberland County

717.938.8611
dbnchess2@aol.com

Dan Thomas-Lancaster County

717.786.7893
adthomas10@comcast.net

Andrea Wyman-Erie County

814.734.1633
awyman@edinboro.edu

Shirley Halk-Lebanon County

717.865.2650
zebraswallowtail@juno.com

Revenue

Store	\$ 3605.20
Membership Fees	9105.00
Donations	820.82
Speaker Income	610.00
Fundraising	6123.00
Nest Boxes Sold	1243.92
Conference	<u>2355.00</u>
Total Revenue	\$23862.94

Expenses

Administration	\$ 2006.85
Store	3243.41
Membership	1319.20
Fundraising	1140.58
Nest Boxes	227.63
Conference	4941.09
Education	1398.80
Newsletter	3319.38
County Coordinator	287.67
Research	<u>176.09</u>
Total Expenses	\$18060.70

BSP Financial Statement for 2011

Checking Account Balance 12/31/10	\$16910.91
2011 Revenue	+23862.94
2011 Expenses	-18060.70
Checking Account Balance 12/31/11	\$22713.15
Certificate of Deposit Balance 12/31/11	+ 9110.60
Graystone Bank, Harrisburg, PA	
Cash On Hand	<u>+ 200.00</u>
TOTAL REVENUE 12/31/11	\$32023.75



Mail Call

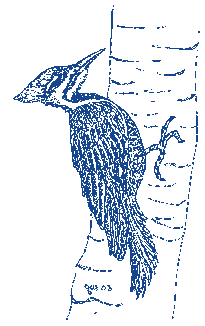
Hi Joan,

I wanted to share some exciting news with all our bluebird friends. This summer while monitoring my 21 box trail at Bon Air Country Club in Glen Rock, PA, I heard this loud ruckus high in the bordering pines of golf hole #11. I looked up and wow, parents and fledglings all about.

Now the rest of the story.... A crew from Sam's Tree Service, Shrewsbury, PA working at the course, cut down a large pine, and as soon as it fell, they noticed big baby birds running on

the ground. Al Taylor, the owner of Sam's knew what had happened. Someone's home had just been destroyed. Al asked the crew to cut a section from the tree, they sat it on the stump and gathered the babies and put them back in the hole of their nest. When Al came back the next morning, he checked on the site and found mom and dad tending to their young. He knew his work was not done. With some banding and a wooden platform, the crew climbed a nearby pine, and with block and tackle hoisted the section some 30 feet up the tree and secured the family's home. Yes, they were a family of Pileated Woodpeckers. The young successfully fledged a number of days later. If you want a guy with a big heart and who also does excellent tree work Al is your man. Sam's tree service, 717-235-2266.

Pileated Woodpecker



Artist - Susan Renkel

Respectfully submitted,
Ken Smith, BSP Member
Stewartstown, PA.



- The Chickadee -

I grew up in the far north
With the Black-capped Chickadee,
Here we have the Carolina.
They look the same to me.

And an amazing discovery,
Now we know
That when winter comes
Their brains grow!

Then they have to remember
Where they hide seeds
So they can find them
In time of need.

I remember as a boy
In the winter forest white
How cheerily the woods resounded
With their songs so bright.

Always then a feeding flock,

Not in pairs like spring,
Flitting on from tree to tree,
How I loved to hear them sing!

I wondered as I wandered
Watching their flights so free,
So happily unconcerned,
What did they think of me?

Do they excavate a nest?
I really do not know.
Here they build them out of moss,
And they love my boxes so.

The eggs are hidden deep
In fluff and dog hair too,
Topping off that mossy nest
In that home so new.

I open boxes carefully
And what a joy to see
Six or more little ones
Looking up at me.

They keep the Titmice company
Flitting to and fro,
Wherever the seeds are
They are sure to go.
I think of Lizzie Borden
As that sunflower seed cracks,
Because to get it open
It takes them forty whacks!

Other birds may be more showy
And prettier to see,
But my world is richer
Because of the Chickadees.

By Bob Walshaw, NE OK.

Editor's Note: Bob has graciously given permission for BSP to include this delightful poem in our newsletter. He is an avid bluebirder and writes articles and poems inspired by his love of nature and songbirds. Thanks, Bob!

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:

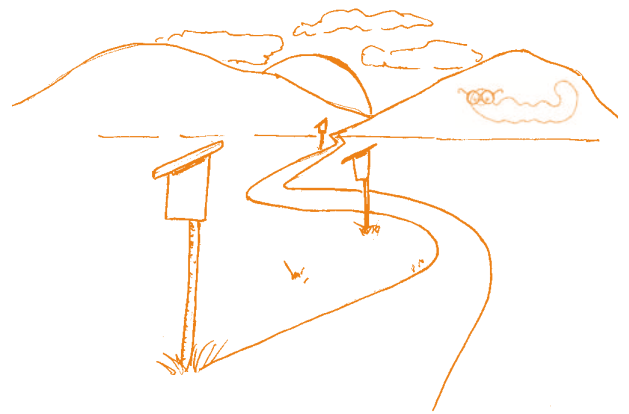
Name, Phone Number, E-mail Address, Number of nest boxes requested to monitor or need to be monitored – requested location - Town, County and State.

*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

Bluebird Trail Monitor Wanted

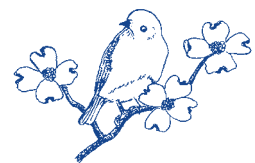
Dauphin County/Wayne Township
Joseph E. Ibberson Conservation Area
Contact: Ben Ranney branne@state.pa.us
or call: 717-567-9255



Artist - Susan Renkel



Find us on:
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Don't Forget - BSP has a Facebook Page!
Google: Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania / Facebook



PA Farm Show - Feedback from Event Volunteers

I think this is our best event to get the word out about bluebirds. Dave & I worked Sunday morning and were very busy - many memberships. I worked on Monday afternoon with two fellows that I had never met in person. They were great. We answered many questions. Not only is this an educational event, it is a way to try to get others involved. Barb

Yes, Joan it was fun working with the other 3 volunteers. We had a few prospects. It was fun!! I will help more. Rose

I had a lot of fun yesterday at the PA Farm Show. The BSP Booth was very busy and many new members were brought in and BSP Store items were sold. The visitors to the booth asked a lot of questions about bluebirds, shared their nesting experiences, and obtained educational handouts. They loved our displays, and the children especially enjoyed seeing the nest/egg displays. I enjoy the event because I usually learn new tips from visitors to the booth. The Food Court food was delicious! Hope that those who can volunteer for this event do so
Joan

I just returned from the Farm Show and what a good time I had today. I was there early, opened and the booth started to get busy before 9:00 A.M. We were busy most of the day. Sometimes the visitors were standing two and three deep. The people had some very good questions and good discussions followed. I am not surprised that the Bluebird has generated so much interest.
Ken

During the Friday box building, we assisted over 60 children making nest boxes from kits. Some children were more enthusiastic than others, but one boy from State College really warmed my heart when he finished his box, he looked up at me and said: "Mister, this was the best day of my life." To me, that made it all worth while. There were other comments such as: "I learned how to build something today and if I had gone to school, I probably wouldn't have learned anything." A few other comments throughout the 2 hour project were: "Man- this is cool" and "Man- this neat" and "Thanks, Mister".
Bill

We had a good time with the box building and the kids seemed to enjoy the activity of making them themselves. Most kids and the parents were impressed with the Black / Decker 3.6 volt drills. They held up well and only started to lose power after 50 houses were built. The recharge takes only takes 30 minutes and they will hold the charge for 18 months. Six drills are a good number to have-more would only be a waste of resources.

Here are some replies from participants:

4 year old girl - "This is the best thing I ever made in my WHOLE LIFE."

Twin Boys - 5 years old - "When my dad gets home from Afghanistan, will he be surprised!"

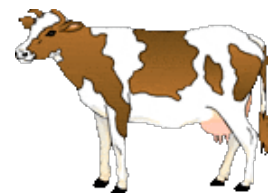
A four year old boy - "I never built anything before and can I keep the drill?"

A little girl - "This is way better than those smelly cows."

Another said- "My mom saw this on the Internet and we came down from Wellsboro. I never built a bird house. Will you help me sir?"

An 86 year old lady with her little granddaughter - "I would really like to have a bird house for myself. I said, "Lady, we have an age cut- off of 21... I looked at her and said ...I think you will make the cut". So the little girl and I put it together for her grandmother. Both went away with smiles on their faces.

Dale



A BIG THANKS to all of the following volunteers who made this educational event so productive:

Nancy Putt and Barb Cox, Event Co-Chairs

Volunteer List- Farm Show:

Joanne Slavinski	Ken Leister
John and Sandra Bovard	Debra Hershey
John Woodward	Debra Carmen
John and Kathy Everhart	Bill Frantz
Phil and Susan Durgin	Nancy Putt
Barb and Dave Cox	Bernadette Lucas
Al Delio	Jackie Millhimes
Joan Watroba	Bill Strauss
Lindsay Delp	Dan and Addie Farber
Kathy Clark	Brenda Dove
Terry and Mike Hoffman	Patricia Greenawald
Doris Hoffman	Jim Massey
Chuck and Bonnie Musser	Joyce and Carl Stuff
Phil Andraychack	Shelly Thomas
Rose Schoch	Donald and Fawn Ross
Gerry Baltz	Jim and Robin Trail
Bill and Mary Ann Bowers	Randy and Nancy Shriver
Dale Cook	

"Christmas in Loganville"

By Nancy Putt,
York County Coordinator

On Saturday, Nov. 19th BSP attended the "Christmas in Loganville" event in Southern York County. We set up the BSP educational display and BSP Store and 6 new members joined BSP and were provided with a nest box to get started in bluebirding.

Thanks to my friends and BSP members, Deborah Carman and Kay Bentzel, who volunteered for this event. . It was lots of fun sharing our love of bluebirds with many visitors at our booth.

ANNUAL BSP NEST BOX REPORT/ WINNERS

BSP 2011- Annual Nest Box Report Summary

A BIG THANKS to Shirley Halk, BSP's Annual Nest Box Reporter, for compiling the 2011 BSP Annual Nest Box Report Data. Here is a Summary of the reports that were sent in to BSP:

Total # of Nest Boxes Reported-	2876
Bluebird Eggs- (blue)	6307
Bluebird Eggs- (white)	85
Total Bluebird Eggs-	6392
Total # Bluebirds Fledged-	5045

Other native songbird species Fledged:

Tree Swallows-	3154
Black-Capped Chickadees -	244
Tufted Titmice-	16
House Wrens-	1235



Photo courtesy of Susan Renkel

If you would like to receive a paper copy and if you had not previously indicated that preference on your Nest Box Report form, please contact: Shirley Halk, BSP Nest Box Reporter, 42 Park Drive, Grantville, PA 17028

The winners for 2011 Nest Box Report Drawing:

1st place – Florence & Bob Pyle, Chester County, PA-Binoculars

2nd place – Galen Kaylor, Lebanon County, PA –BSP Store Item

3rd place – Scott Parry & Ida Parry,-Clinton County, PA-BSP Store Item

Many BSP members also monitor bluebird trails within the PA State Parks. Sarah E. Hopkins, Chief for Outdoor Programming Services, Bureau of State Parks, has posted the 2011 Cavity-nesting Trails Summary Report. During the nesting season of 2011, PA State Parks fledged 2,026 Eastern bluebirds and 3,125 other cavity-nesting species. The report also states: “a cold, damp spring, a severe heat wave in mid-summer and flooding took their toll by delaying nesting and increasing egg and fledgling failure, but most parks still experienced some success. Since the program’s beginning in 1980, volunteers have fledged over 54,000 Eastern bluebirds and 37,000 other cavity-nesting species.”

For more information about monitoring nest boxes within the PA State Parks , contact Amy Hill ahill@pa.gov or 717-783-4361.

Editor’s Note: Thanks to everyone who monitors nest boxes and reports their nesting data. It is very important to be able to measure the results of our efforts to promote nesting success by submitting your annual nesting report.

BSP CALENDAR OF EVENTS

BSP Board Meeting Dates:

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

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

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

Location: Giant Foods Community Room, Camp Hill, PA

Please 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 call (724) 285-1209 to make arrangements to join the meeting.

Upcoming Bluebird Programs

by Harry Schmeider,

BSP Butler County County Coordinator

Contact: 724.285.1209 or e-mail:

harryschmeider@gmail.com for more information

March 7, 2012 - Bluebirds Program at the YMCA Outdoors Club- Butler, PA

March 8, 2012 - Bluebird Program at the Bayer Corporation- Pittsburgh, PA

March 14, 2012 - Bluebirds Program - St Luke's Church

April 28, 2012 - Bluebird Program at Windhaven Gardens, NC

June 16, 2012 - Bluebird Program - Moraine State Park

September 22 & 23, 2012 - Bluebird Program at McConnells Mill State Park

March 1-March 31, 2012

**Bluebird Display, Dillsburg Public Library
17 S. Baltimore Street, Dillsburg, PA**

Nancy Putt, BSP County Coordinator for York County will showcase a Bluebird Display, featuring an educational display about bluebirds and other cavity-nesting songbirds. Check it out!

March 12, 2012-7:00 p.m.

**Bluebird Program- "Enjoying Bluebirds More"
Luther Memorial Evangelical Church
1907 Hollywood Drive, York, PA**

Julie Zickefoose, a widely published natural history writer, artist, keynote speaker, who lives in Ohio with husband, Bill Thompson III, editor of *Bird Watcher's Digest*, presents a wonderful program, "Enjoying Bluebirds More". Free and open to the public.

March 28, Wednesday evening, 7:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

**Bluebird Program, "How to Attract Bluebirds"
Allen Middle School
4225 Gettysburg Rd. Camp Hill, PA**

Presented by Joan Watroba, BSP County Coordinator-offered through the West Shore Recreation Commission-Resident \$15.00/ Non-Resident \$18.00 Just in time for the start of the nesting season, this is a great parent/child activity. Individual adults or teams of an adult and child (ages 8 & up) will build a nest box using an easy to assemble kit. You will also learn about how to attract bluebirds and other native cavity-nesting songbirds to your yard by providing proper nesting and habitat features. Learn why people refer to bluebirds as "Bluebirds of Happiness". Parent may register with a child at no additional charge. Register on line at www.westshorerec.org or call 717-920-9515.

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BSP CALENDAR OF EVENTS con't.

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 a 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 via a special mailing to all BSP members and will also be posted on the BSP web site: www.thebsp.org.

April 28th, Saturday, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Wetland's Festival, Wildwood Park, Olewine Nature Center, 100 Wildwood Way, Harrisburg. (717) 221-0292

A wonderful day of workshops, programs and exhibits about nature and the outdoors. Free and fun for the entire family. <http://www.wildwoodlake.org/contact/>
Volunteers needed –Contact Nancy 717-432-2647 or e-mail: bluebirds@pa.net

June 3, Sunday-Spring Arts and Grape Blossom Festival-11a.m.-7 p.m. Naylor Winery, Stewartstown, PA (York County)

The Bluebird Society of PA will attend this event with its educational booth for the first time. Enjoy wine tastings, art and music ...and a variety of vendors will be there. Come and visit or call to help out at our booth. Nancy Putt- Event Chair- 717-432-2647. For information about this event or directions- www.naylorwine.com (717)993-2431. ❁

The Bluebird Doctor

by Ken Leister

It is fall, and within the last month, I have had a hip operation to repair an artificial hip, which was installed fourteen years ago. After a successful operation, I was placed in the SCU, Surgical Care Unit, of the hospital. This unit is fairly quiet because most of the patients have had operations which limit their getting around.

I had just finished my lunch when I heard a commotion in the hall. Suddenly, a person appeared at the doorway of my room and asked, "Would you want me to cheer you up?" I told her to come in and we would talk about it.

My next surprise was that this person was dressed as Dr. Bluebird. She had a bluebird on her shoulder, a bluebird hat, a bluebird shirt-every article of her clothing spoke bluebird. I was ecstatic, as I am very involved in the comeback of the actual bluebirds.

She explained to me that one day each week she dresses up as Dr. Bluebird and spreads the cheer of the bluebird of happiness to hospital patients. My conversation with her was delightful as she described her role in the care of patients, and I described my role in the care of bluebirds. We had a most enjoyable visit.

Her cheery mannerisms, soothing voice, and sparkling outfit filled me with the same delight as I might have viewing bluebirds in my own back yard.

I felt enthused and renewed.

Truly she epitomizes the Bluebird of Happiness!

By Ken Leister

BSP Member and BSP State County Coordinator

Editor's Note: BSP also has a bluebird mascot, named Bluebelle. Look for Bluebelle at BSP events.

Birdwatching Experiences

by John Bigham Jr.

In the summer, you can see and hear birds all the time. But, do you know what species you hear? Can you identify them? If you are like I used to be, the answer is NO. I used to feed birds and watch them through the window, but I never explored the grasslands and forests. I started to really “get into” birds during the February 2011 Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). From then on, I was “hooked.” In that short time, between February of 2011 and now, I have seen 100 new species like warblers, tanagers, grosbeaks, vireos, ducks, and cuckoos.

I like to go out in the woods watching for warblers and other birds like thrushes, tanagers, and grosbeaks. I like to monitor bird nests and send the data to NestWatch.

I like to collect data for the Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s Citizen Science projects like e-Bird, Project FeederWatch, and NestWatch. Most of all, I like to be outdoors enjoying and marveling at God’s wonderful creation.

Hummingbirds are a bird to marvel at. They are so small and delicate. They seem like they should be an insect instead of a bird. Last year we had only had 3 or 4 hummers at our feeders, but we usually have 10 to 15 come to our feeders. Hummingbirds are a bird everyone knows about and can identify. We have 5 hummingbird feeders out all summer and fill them with homemade sugar water. We have hummers all summer and on into fall. I would like to find a hummingbird nest someday.

Cedar waxwings seem more abundant now than they used to be. I love Cedar waxwings. They look as though they are made of wax! During the fall, we have tons of waxwings eating the last insects of the year. I have not yet tempted a waxwing to a berry feeder. They come to our yard and eat our crabapple tree clean in early winter and then they disappear until summer. I think waxwings prefer to eat their berries in the safety of a shrub!

While birding, I saw about 6 bluebirds drinking and resting in the shelter of the creek bottoms. There were also mockingbirds, robins, sparrows, woodpeckers, and hundreds of Sandhill cranes flying overhead.

Bluebirds are on the comeback thanks to people like you and me. Happy Bluebirding!

Editor’s Note: John is a 13- year old BSP member from Ohio who lives on a farm. He has communicated with Joanne, BSP Membership Chair, on several occasions to ask her questions about songbirds. He likes to write about nature and has also submitted articles to the Ohio Bluebird Society newsletter. It is always very encouraging to hear about young people being so enthusiastic about birds and enjoying the wonders of the natural environment.



WELCOME -New BSP MEMBERS!!!!!!

ALLEGHENY

John Forbes
Luke Zelinko
William Pajer
Dan Fish

ADAMS

Kevin O'Rourke
Julia Hendon
Jackie Millhimes

BEAVER

Cynthia Golden
Rebecca Higby
Pauline & Tom Morgan

BEDFORD

Jeff Pyle

BERKS

Lawton Family
Lawrence Carpenter
Frank Law
Dan Leininger
Leif Christiansen
Scott Shuman
Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Stoltzfus

BUCKS

Bob Labs
Kate Tweedy

CENTRE

Orie Hanley

CHESTER

Liz Rach
Garth Allen
Linda Hall

COLUMBIA

Kayla Newhart

CUMBERLAND

Maribeth Wilt Seibert
Kathy Apgar
Karen Hudson
Heidi Delp
Jeff Van Boskirk
Marintha Bower
Janey Gunn
Amanda Parrish

Joe & Karen Brechbiel
Alison Goodwin
Susan Miller
Nancy Vreeland

DAUPHIN

Nancy Staub
Donald Kehler
Kathy Monahan
Mike Cruely
Leslie Addis
Kevin Helm
Carla Bowman
John Lesniak
Linda Stuart
Robert E Horting
Henry Lewis
Frank Mediate
Jeff Sanders
Sally Hitz
Edward Lankford

FRANKLIN

Donna Riley
Miriam Lehman
Niki Stevens
LuVan Gray
Earl Strimple
Curtis Callaway

HUNTINGDON

Fran Cooley

JEFFERSON

Debbie McAndrew

JUNIATA

Amanda Kerstetter
Mike Grove
Gary Varner

INDIANA

Capri Stiles

LANCASTER

Mike Lenker
Wilmer Musser
Dee Dee & Chris Readinger
Tammy & Andy Eldeen
Laura & Chad Mitchell
Raymond Horvath
Phil Scribani

Jack & Mary Ann Suco
Harry Byers
Ben Arellano
Ronald Auker
Ed Smith
Maureen T Burd
John Stoltzfus
R W Kolb
Jo Wiegand
Ilene Messingham
Connie Boyd

LEBANON

Janice Bicksler
Lynn Gassert

LEHIGH

Donald Snyder
Wayne Patari
Carl Kocher

LUZERNE

Kim Fritzges
Sara Gerpisz
Eleanor Harding
Dustin Grymko

LYCOMING

Elsie Emick
Anne Rich

MIFFLIN

William Buick
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A Bluebird Tale

by Debra Barate, BSP Member,
Indiana, PA

We bought a beautiful home on a five acre parcel, tucked away in the southeastern tip of Indiana County, Pennsylvania. Our home sits atop a hill with woods to the south, and west and farm fields to the east, and north.

One of the very first things on my list was to get some bluebird boxes properly situated to hopefully attract a breeding pair of Bluebirds.

The first season went by with no Bluebirds in sight. The second spring arrived and did not look promising either. But early summer I noticed some Bluebirds interested in one of the boxes in the front yard. They moved in and built a nest. I was thrilled. I immediately went out and bought meal worms to offer them. We established feeding times by me whistling. They would fly to our front porch to collect up the free offerings, and fly to their nest box to feed their growing family.

I named my pair, Blue, my female and Blu-er my male. Blue was not shy she would softly chirp and chatter to me as if to say thanks. Blu-er on the other hand was more cautious.

For the past 6 years I have been so privileged to have this pair return each year to breed. The first 2 years they tried out several different boxes on our property. By year 3 they settled for a decorative box on our pergola right on our patio! I found it a strange choice as our patio is the busiest place all summer long. The dogs go out at night and the light goes off and on and the door opens and shuts. But they have stuck to their choice, raising 2 to 3 broods there each season. I of course continue to buy meal worms by the thousands! And still feed them from the front porch.

This past spring (2011) started out the same. My pair arrived early spring. It was a wet, cold spring, so they started nesting later than usual. My beautiful pair had 5 babies they successfully fledged. I barely had time to clean out their box, and Blue was building again, and laid 5 more eggs. The babies were about 3 days old when I noticed she did not come in for the worms. Only Blu-er was coming. I was at once worried. I checked the box, no Blue. I walked all over our property and saw nothing. Blu-er fluttered nervously about seeming to lure me down the tree line and back up to the yard. He did this several times. I saw nothing. Not Blue, no feathers? Nothing. Sadly she never returned. Blu-er worked endlessly to feed those five babies. He did not sleep in the box with them, but close by in a tree. Thank goodness we had hot weather with warm nights during this time. Blu-er looked thin and tired but he successfully fledged all 5 babies! Blue would have been proud.

Summer turned to autumn, and Blu-er I saw no more. But, all 5 fledglings continued to come for worms once a day. Autumn turned to winter, and what a mild winter it has been. AND all 5, two females and 3 males, continue to come in each day for worms. I have never had Bluebirds all winter long. Between 10 AM and noon each day I whistle them in, for their worms. They fly in take turns and disappear, till the next morning.

I was so sad to lose Blue. How wonderful it has been to have her last brood stay here for the entire winter. I wonder what spring will bring this year. Will Blu-er return with a new mate? Will these babies stay? Or will they go to find mates somewhere else? It will be interesting to see what unfolds.

I feel so blessed to share my life with these Beautiful Bluebirds. My pair successfully raised 74 babies here over the past 6 years.

Debra Barate
Indiana County, PA

A question I have???? What is a Bluebird's life span?

From the Editor: Thanks, Debra, for sharing your beautiful bluebird story. Regarding your question about the life expectancy of Eastern bluebirds:

According to the USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, per banding records, the oldest Eastern bluebird ever documented was 10 years and 6 months. It was banded at birth in New York on 5/23/89 and was found dead in South Carolina on 11/30/99. (Their sex was not listed) Another was banded at birth on 8/30/66 in North Carolina and found dead on 6/5/74 in North Carolina- a life span of 8 years. Many factors determine longevity, but the main factor may be extremes in weather, which affect their food supplies, and they are also most vulnerable in the first 2 years of their lives. After that, the average lifespan in the wild may be 2-5 years.

For more information: USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center web site: <http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/birds/eastblue/>



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.
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

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:

John Bigham, Jr.

CONGRATULATIONS!



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

Books can be viewed at the BSP web site: www.thebsp.org
Select the link to: BSP Online Store to view the list of books available.



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

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3 years -\$25	3 yrs. -\$30	3 yrs. -\$40	3 yrs. -\$275
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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:

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Member Interest Survey:

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

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____ 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
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Please tell us how you learned about us: _____

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Coming Attractions ...



Photo courtesy of Susan Renkel

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 via regular mail delivery to its destination.
- Ability to view the 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.

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