



2023 BSP Conference Speakers

Ken Leister is a former educator and principal. He has been a BSP member since 2005, BSP Board Member, State County Coordinator, Nest Box builder and is a Bluebirder extraordinaire. Ken will present a short talk about the best way to *Monitor a Nest Box*.

Holly Merker is a professional birding guide, writer, and educator who has a background in art therapy. She uses birds and nature to deliver nature-based wellness programs for people of all ages.

Holly is lead author of the award-winning book *Ornithotherapy: For Your Mind, Body, and Soul* (Crossley Books, 2021) which guides readers into explorations that optimize the wellness benefits birding can provide us, especially bluebirds. In her free time, Holly practices Ornithotherapy herself, which she credits in helping her defeat breast cancer, restoring her health both mentally and physically.

Blake Goll graduated from Penn State in 2008 with a BA in Wildlife and Fisheries Science. She trained for a year as an environmental educator at Penn State's Shaver's Creek Environmental Center, following which she completed a MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) internship. She also banded songbirds in Washington State for the Institute for Bird Populations. Blake has been with the Willistown Conservation Trust since 2010 as the Education Programs Manager. She is also a Federally licensed bird bander and certified under the North American Banding Council. She is one of the Trust's primary bird banders and assists with operating the bird banding station and associated outreach. She has developed the Trust's Rushton Nature Keepers program and curriculum for children as well as various other nature education programs for all ages. Blake will introduce us to Motus, the newest migratory bird tracking device.

Ian Stewart spent a happy childhood exploring the woods and seashore of his native North East England where he developed a lifelong interest in nature, especially birds. He completed a Ph.D. on the breeding biology of birds at the University of Leicester, UK, followed by research positions at the Universities of Kentucky and Delaware. He currently works as an ornithologist at the Delaware Nature Society, where he conducts research into how the society's land management practices are affecting biodiversity, with a particular focus on birds. Ian also leads bird walks and nature outreach programs including public bird banding sessions. Now a naturalized US citizen, Ian lives with his wife and two young sons in Kennett Square. Ian will show us the best ways to attract Bluebirds to our properties.

Dawn White has worked as a naturalist and environmental educator for 26 years. She graduated from Penn State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Recreation and Park Management, with a concentration in Environmental Interpretation.

Dawn started her career at Great Valley Nature Center, where her fondness for birds of prey and teaching about wildlife developed. She has designed and implemented various environmental education programs for children and adults alike during her work at the Nature Center, Elmwood Park Zoo, and Green Valleys Watershed Association.

In 2015, Dawn formed the Indian Run Environmental Education Center, LLC (IREEC), located at her home in Glenmoore. IREEC conducts a variety of outreach programs and speaking engagements to audiences of all ages, utilizing its non-releasable birds of prey and unwanted pet reptile ambassadors. Dawn will present *Raptors Up Close*, using live animals.