



# Bluebird Monitor

OBS encourages good stewardship  
by **Monitoring** our Trails

Fall 2013



## Mission Statement

The Ohio Bluebird Society was formed in 1987 to support the return and the perpetuation of the Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) and other native cavity nesting birds in Ohio. To this end, the Ohio Bluebird Society will strive for the best methods to use, conserve and create habitat for the protection of these species.

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## Deadline for Submitting Articles:

Spring Issue - February 1  
Summer Issue - May 1  
Fall Issue - August 1  
Winter Issue - November 1

## 2013 Nesting Season

By Marcella Hawkins



It's that time again! Our Nest Box Report is in this issue and we would appreciate getting your data to help compile the 2013 results. This year has been a lot like others – a cold start that caused problems for the early nesters.....losing some of our precious Bluebirds to hypothermia. I know that was the case for me – again. Fortunately, having mealworms on hand until the end of May helped me save some of those chicks during the early cold weather periods.

This is also one of the latest nestings I have seen – in the second week of August there were four eggs in a nest filled with feathers. Two eggs did not hatch and were discarded. With just two chicks in the nest, the parents kept them well-fed and they grew quickly. When I checked the box, they didn't even perk up and open their mouths – they were always content with full bellies. At this time of the year, there were lots of insects available and the parents were not as stressed. It was quite a joy to watch these two chicks before they left the nest.

We are working on our 2014 Annual Conference which will be held at the same location in Wooster but in a different part of the building. Last year we found that we have outgrown the Shisler Conference Center – it was just a little too crowded for all of the attendees. The new location can hold up to 1,000, so maybe it will take a while to reach its capacity. The 2014 Conference is titled: Finding Your Happiness Through Nature - the Domino Effect of Bluebirding.

Enjoy this change of season and our upcoming holidays!



# AWARDS

## Nominations for the Blue Feather and the Wildlife Conservation awards are now being taken.

Please e-mail or mail your nomination(s), along with the list of qualifications that makes the nominee deserving of the award.

### BLUE FEATHER AWARD

Preliminary efforts leading to the creation of The Ohio Bluebird Society took place in the mid-1980s. Not long after, the Society founders acted to create the prestigious Blue Feather Award. This award was intended to honor an OBS member and was given in recognition of that individual's extraordinary accomplishments in all areas of Bluebird conservation and management. This would be a person who over time had made the OBS mission statement their very own. The areas of contribution would include, but not be limited to, effective trail management; unique creativity; and innovation supporting the return and perpetuation of the Eastern Bluebird and other native cavity-nesting birds.

### WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AWARD

This award was created by OBS leaders and first presented in 1995. This differs from the Blue Feather Award in that membership in OBS is not a requirement. The award recognizes a strong conservation ethic throughout Ohio and in selected locations elsewhere. The recognition is given to honor individuals and organizations who are committed to this concept but manage the expression of those concepts in many different ways. Some examples of the concerns of the organizations and individuals recognized include: wildlife rehabilitation, ODNR/Wildlife management, the work/research of other bird conservation groups and individual wildlife conservation efforts.

Additionally, awards have been made for conservation efforts at Municipal Park Systems, Audubon Centers, Arboretums, County Parks, Metro-Park Districts and several ODNR divisions.

This broad base of concern permits The Ohio Bluebird Society to support and recognize outstanding wildlife conservation efforts wherever they may be undertaken.

### Blue Feather Award Recipients:

1991	Arlene Kunkel – Fredericktown
1992	Joe Huber – Heath
1993	Dick Tuttle – Delaware
1994	Dr. Wayne Davis – Lexington, KY
1995	Andrew Troyer – Conneautville, PA
1996	Bill and Joan Davis – Dayton
1997	Robert Orthwein – Columbus
1998	Mary Kowalchik – Mansfield & Darlene Sillick – Dublin
1999	Tom Kashmer – Fremont
2000	Lum and Meriam Bourne – Westerville
2001	Julie Zickefoose – Whipple
2002	Gil Trail – Mansfield
2003	Mel and Mary Ellen Bolt – Wooster
2004	Doug LeVasseur – Senecaville
2005	John Lapin – Poland
2006	Jean Rutan – Mechanicsburg
2007	D. Michael Worley – New Marshfield
2011	Earl Carlton – Carrollton
2012	Dean Sheldon – Greenwich
2013	Allen and Nina Bower – Britton, Michigan

### Wildlife Conservation Award Recipients:

1995	Donald L. Burton, DVM – Worthington
1996	Edward L. Smith – Caldwell
1997	Dublin City Parks
1998	Aullwood Audubon Center – Dayton
1999	Toledo Metroparks – Lucas County
2000	Mark Shieldcastle ODNR/Wildlife - Oak Harbor
2001	American Bird Conservation Association
2002	Darke Countians for Wildlife - Greenville
2003	Raptor, Inc. – Cincinnati
2004	Dick Tuttle/Dick Phillips – Delaware
2005	Tim Brugeman/Hancock County Parks – Findlay
2006	Edith Conzett – Holden Arboretum
2007	Kendra Wecker – Wildlife Diversity Coordinator – ODNR/Wildlife
2011	Jay Reno Reda – Chardon
2012	Ken Cochran – Secrest Arboretum – Wooster
2013	Charlie Zepp – Dublin

**The deadline for receiving nominations is December 31.**

[illegible]

E-mail Address

Wooster, OH 44691

# Ohio Bluebird Society Nest Box Report

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Cavity Nesting Species	Nesting Attempts	Number of Eggs	Number of Nestlings	Number of Fledglings
Eastern Bluebird				
American Kestrel				
Black-Capped Chickadee				
Carolina Chickadee				
Carolina Wren				
Eastern Tufted Titmouse				
House Wren				
Prothonotary Warbler				
Purple Martin				
Tree Swallow				
House Sparrow Eggs Removed				
Other:				

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

## OPTIONAL

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

How many boxes do you manage?: \_\_\_\_\_ How many trails do you manage?: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you actively control House Sparrows and European Starlings? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

What are your most serious predator/competitor/other problems on your trail?

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you believe Tree Swallows are becoming more numerous on your trails? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Are you an OBS member? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Any comments will be welcomed - thank you for taking time to complete this form.

**Mail to: Ohio Bluebird Society, PMB 111, 343 W. Milltown Road, Wooster, OH 44691**  
**or e-mail completed report to: [info@ohiobluebirdsociety.org](mailto:info@ohiobluebirdsociety.org)**

**[www.ohiobluebirdsociety.org](http://www.ohiobluebirdsociety.org)**



# OHIO BLUEBIRD SOCIETY

## Fiscal Year End (9/30/2013) Treasurer's Report

*Kara Scott, Treasurer*

**Grand Total as of 9/30/12**

**\$16,307.30**

Activity for 10/1/2012 through 9/30/2013:

**Apple Creek Bank CD**

Balance Fwd. 9/30/12	10,276.70	
~ Interest	<u>34.71</u>	
Balance 9/30/13		\$10,311.41

**First Merit Checking Account**

Balance Fwd. 9/30/12		3,855.20
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Income

~ Annual Conference Receipts	3,003.00	
~ Conference Meals	1,620.00	
~ Donations	1,215.00	
~ Grant	800.00	
~ Membership Dues	<u>4,823.00</u>	
<b>Total Income</b>		11,461.00

Expenses

~ Annual Conference	6,925.00	
~ Business Office	999.00	
~ Dues	80.00	
~ Education	572.00	
~ Membership Expense	12.00	
~ Newsletter, Website & Maintenance	2,930.00	
~ Registration	640.00	
~ PayPal Fees	13.00	
~ Postage	<u>46.00</u>	
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<u>12,217.00</u>

Balance 9/30/13		3,099.20
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**First Merit Savings Account**

Balance Fwd. 9/30/12	2,175.52	
~ Interest	<u>1.00</u>	
Balance 9/30/13		<u>2,176.52</u>

**TOTAL AS OF 9/30/13**

**\$15,587.13**

**NET LOSS BETWEEN 10/1/12 AND 9/30/13**

**-720.17**



# *Out of the Box*

## The Great Crested Flycatcher

By Chuck Jakubchak, Photo courtesy of LGooch



The mission statement of the Ohio Bluebird Society encompasses all of Ohio's native cavity nesting birds and one of the lesser known species covered under this pronouncement is the great crested flycatcher.

Nesting throughout Ohio, the great crested is the only eastern flycatcher

that utilizes cavities, most of which were created by woodpeckers or flickers. On occasion they will use a naturally occurring cavity in a live tree, perhaps where a branch had broken off.

Great crested flycatchers are usually heard before they are seen as they are very loud and quite vocal. They are easiest to spot in open woodlots or edge habitats rather than dense forests. Cemeteries and old orchards that are scattered with trees and clearings seem to ideal breeding habitat for this species.



Suitable nest cavities for great crested flycatchers may be located between 3 and 70 feet above the ground but most nesting sites are under 20 feet. Competition for quality nest cavities is intense with birds and squirrels aggressively vying for them and the shortage of quality dead trees complicates their situation because some woodpeckers will only create cavities in dead trees. Both males and females work together to line the cavity with leaves, feathers, pine needles, rootlets and the nest building process may consume two weeks. One

of the trademark features of a great crested flycatcher nest is the inclusion of an abandoned snake skin in the nest. Whether it serves as a decoy to deter predators or merely as adornment, snake skins and great crested flycatchers seem to go hand in hand.

The female lays 4 or 5 eggs which are incubated approximately 14 days with young birds fledging about 15 days after hatching. Unlike other cavity nesting birds, great crested flycatchers will only produce one brood per year and nest success is critical.



The eggs of a great crested flycatcher contain heavy dark markings; unlike the white eggs of woodpeckers and flickers (birds which utilize the same nest cavities.) Experts theorize that woodpeckers and flickers

produce white eggs because nest cavities are dark and egg visibility is critical to prevent accidental damage by the incubating adult. Furthermore, the need to camouflage woodpecker and flicker eggs is irrelevant because the eggs are well concealed within the cavity. The dark coloration of great crested flycatcher eggs challenges the theories applied to the eggs of woodpeckers and flickers and it is difficult to interpret nature's rationale for the dark markings on their eggs. (see egg photo courtesy of Tom Murray)

Once the breeding season has concluded and the shortened days of autumn are upon us, great crested flycatchers will return to their wintering grounds in Southern Florida, Cuba, Columbia or Venezuela where shrinking tropical forests are an ongoing concern. The birds will return to Ohio in spring, likely to areas where they were hatched or to a previously successful nesting site. So if you were fortunate enough to spot one this year, you might just see the same bird next year!

# OBS Spotlight

## Joe Cluts

By Chuck Jakubchak, Photo by Jeanne Jakubchak

Earlier this year Jay Brindo nominated Joe Cluts as a candidate for the OBS Spotlight article in the fall edition of the newsletter. Jay outlined some amazing facts about Joe and thought that readers would like to know more about this unique individual.

Based on Jay's hearty recommendation I agreed to move forward and set up a telephone interview with Joe. During our 30 minute phone discussion we covered a multitude of interesting topics, seemingly changing subjects with every breath.

Joe has volunteered at Holden Arboretum in Willoughby, Ohio for more than 20 years and has been monitoring at least 16 bluebird boxes for as long as he can remember. Unlike most trail monitors, Joe does not label himself as a "birder" and even says that he is not particularly fond of birding. However, Joe does like the scientific and statistical aspect of monitoring boxes and enjoys tracking egg color variation and nest site fidelity among the birds that visit his boxes. Joe's expertise as a bird-bander allows him to better understand the nesting pattern of bluebirds and deepens his appreciation of bluebird behavior. For someone that isn't a self-proclaimed "birder", he sure dedicates a lot of time to those creatures and we are certain the birds are grateful!

Gardening is another passion of Joe's and his modest garden contains more than 200 tomato plants comprised of 100 different varieties. The tomatoes are accompanied by 1,800 onion plants along with assorted peppers, peas, beans, cabbage etc. He and his wife Mary Kay cook, can, dry, sell, freeze and they will even use the harvested crop as barter to obtain vegetables that they do not grow, such as corn.

If you want to purchase some bees to help pollinate fruit trees or the plants in your garden, please check with Joe as he raises bees just for that purpose. His interest in bees began when he was 10 years old and honey production



was his initial motivation. During recent years when the shortage of bees became an issue, Joe changed his operation from honey production to bee production.

When he has the opportunity, Joe likes to hike the Appalachian Trail and he has conquered other scenic trails in Canada, Vermont and a few out west. During the last half of 2013 he plans on hiking Isle Royale in Northern Michigan and claims that the fresh country air invigorates his mind and soul.

For the past 35 years Joe has steadily improved his bonsai skills, growing miniature trees in small containers. If you have a question about getting started in bonsai, please contact Joe as he will be happy to provide guidance! (Who else would you ask?)

To document his travels, garden successes and love of nature, Joe has successfully undertaken photography to capture the sights he doesn't want to forget. He has many wonderful photos that would impress a professional photographer.

The best place to view Joe's work is the Geauga County Fair. Each year for the past 15, Joe has entered his prize vegetables, photos, bonsai trees and assorted culinary successes in the Fair and his collection of blue ribbons and Best of Class awards say tons about the skills mentioned above. Joe is proud of his skills, but even prouder when other people take notice of his accomplishments.

Joe's expertise is not limited to the out of doors as he has been married to Mary Kay since 1971 and they have successfully raised their daughter Daphne and Joe Jr. Mary Kay enjoys both flower and vegetable gardening and is especially fond of holding young bluebirds while Joe is banding. Joe's love of nature has also rubbed off on his offspring as Daphne enjoys plants and feeding birds while Joe Jr. focuses on hiking and photography.

What makes Joe deserving of the OBS Spotlight is not only what he does for bluebirds, but his passion for life. We are only on the earth for a limited time and Joe clearly has decided to maximize his time by learning, adventuring and getting the maximum out of his years. We hope all of our readers share his same zest for life.

# Outdoor Cats Leading Cause of Canadian Bird Mortality

Washington, DC - A new study from the government of Canada that looked at more than 25 human-caused sources of bird mortality has found that domestic cats, both feral and owned, are the leading lethal threat to birds in the country.

The study found that the median estimate of cat-caused mortality-almost 200 million bird deaths per year-was about six times greater than the next leading mortality estimate of about 32 million attributed to car collisions. The third-leading cause was collisions with buildings or homes, with a rate of about 22 million bird deaths per year.

“We synthesized estimates of the magnitude of human-related mortality in Canada from major industrial sectors and non-industrial or public activities that we believe kill substantial numbers of birds,” the report says. Some of the bird-mortality sources in addition to the top three included: transmission line collisions, wind energy, mining, forestry, and pesticides used in agriculture.

“A wealth of scientific studies in the United States have sounded the alarm about bird and other wildlife mortality from cats. Those studies have also voiced strong concerns about potential human health impacts. This Canadian national study continues a warning trend about this growing invasive species disaster that is at our doorstep in the form of outdoor cats,” said Grant Sizemore, Cats Indoors Program Manager for American Bird Conservancy, a leading bird conservation group in the United States.

The Canadian study says that several billion birds from over 400 species breed each year in Canada in a wide variety of habitats, but shorebirds, grassland birds, and aerial insectivores in particular have experienced rapid declines. Some of those declines are attributed to human-driven habitat change and mortality across North America over the past 40 years.

The study highlights the susceptibility of particular bird groups to certain mortality sources, such as the



vulnerability of long-distance or nocturnal migrating birds to collisions with towers and buildings or of auks to be killed as bycatch in fisheries' gillnets.

Sizemore said that domestic cats are a non-native species in North America and are efficient, instinctive predators. Research by scientists from the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently estimated that 114-164 million feral and owned outdoor cats in the U.S. are responsible for the deaths of 1.4-3.7 billion birds and 6.9-20.7 billion mammals every year. Even the mere presence of cats in the environment has been shown to reduce bird reproductive output and survivorship.

“Cats on the streets lead harsh and traumatic lives,” said Sizemore. The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) has estimated that feral cats have an average lifespan of only two years, whereas owned cats average 10 years. Reasons for this reduced life



expectancy include attacks by dogs and other feral cats, predation, being hit by cars, ingestion of poison, disease, and more.

Although some “humane” organizations seek to maintain cats outdoors, numerous state agencies, professional societies, and nonprofit organizations understand that doing so is detrimental to cats, wildlife, and people. For example, the AVMA’s Committee on Environmental Issues has stated that “managed cat colonies do not solve the problems of cat overpopulation and suffering, wildlife predation, or zoonotic disease transmission.”

Consequently, the committee “strongly supports and encourages humane elimination of feral cat colonies” and “opposes passage of local or state ordinances that legalize the maintenance of managed [commonly called Trap, Neuter, Release, or TNR] cat colonies.”

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) also vigorously opposes TNR, taking the position that it is inhumane for the cats as well as the wildlife they hunt, injure, and/or kill.

According to scientists from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, cats are consistently the number-one carrier of rabies among domestic animals and pose a “disproportionate risk for potential human exposure.” Domestic cats are also the necessary host for the parasite that causes toxoplasmosis to complete its life cycle; each infected cat may shed hundreds of millions of the infectious parasite in its feces. In people, toxoplasmosis has been linked to schizophrenia, Alzheimer’s disease, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and other neurodegenerative diseases. It can also cause sudden abortion and fetal abnormalities in pregnant mothers.

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<http://www.abcbirds.org/>

*American Bird Conservancy (ABC) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit membership organization whose mission is to conserve native birds and their habitats throughout the Americas. ABC acts by safeguarding the rarest species, conserving and restoring habitats, and reducing threats, while building capacity in the bird conservation movement. - See more at: <http://www.birdingwire.com/releases/300489/#sthash.feeTweCK.dpuf>*

## Photo Gallery



Photo by Ruth Davis



Photo from Mary Taylor, Spring Valley Township, Ohio



Male that has bald spot on back of head, Photo by Marcella Hawkins



# Ask Madame WingNut

## Purple Martins – What a Trip!

by Paula Ziebarth

Most people involved in Eastern Bluebird conservation house and help other native cavity nesters throughout the years. I view the Eastern Bluebird as an “entry bird” for those of us involved in the rather addictive bird conservation culture. My good friend, Darlene Sillick, has branched out to work with raptors at our local rehabilitation center. Dick Tuttle provides nest sites for American Kestrels, Prothonotary Warblers, and Ospreys.

Madame WingNut has spread her wings to manage a number of Purple Martin colonies in central and northern Ohio. I have a passion for Purple Martins. In 2013, I provided weekly monitoring of 154 Purple Martin nest compartments at 5 different sites, fledging 439 Purple Martins. Here are Madame WingNut’s tips for attracting and managing Purple Martins:

### ATTRACTION

#### Habitat

The most important consideration in attracting Purple Martins is habitat. They require a relatively open area, preferably adjacent to a pond or lake. Purple Martins are aerial insectivores. Their diet is comprised solely of flying insects which they catch in flight. Consider all the mouths they will have to feed when rearing their young. Open habitat is needed for good insect hunting. Areas near water produce a lot of flying insects. There should be no trees taller than their housing for at least 40 feet.

#### Social Attraction

A few years back, I had the privilege of working the OBS booth at the Ohio State Fair with Michael Worley. Many of you remember Michael. He was a renowned Bluebirder, winning the OBS Blue Feather Award in 2007. This man knew his birds. He told me he had finally attracted Purple Martins after 30 years of trying. He had successfully employed the social attraction techniques of playing recorded dawn song and setting out Purple Martin decoys on the housing.

I was surprised as I had never used these techniques, but had no problem attracting them in areas with proper habitat. I theorize that I may have unwittingly employed another form of social attraction. Four of the sites that I monitor are located within Tree Swallow colonies. Tree Swallow colonies are established by installing boxes 25

yards apart in a grid formation or around the perimeter of a pond. I believe that the activity of their smaller swallow cousins has helped attract Purple Martins to these areas. Both species are aerial insectivores, but the Tree Swallow hunts smaller insects closer to the ground whereas the Purple Martin gleans larger ones in the higher realms.

### EQUIPMENT



#### Housing

**Design** – Housing or gourds should be white. Providing a larger floor area of 7” X 12” is preferred for standard metal house compartments.

Although I have Purple Martins using both metal houses and gourds, plastic Troyer gourds are my personal preference. The newer vertical gourd has a tunnel entrance that provides additional protection from avian predators. I place soft white pine needles in all compartments at the beginning of nesting season.

**Inbox trapping** – I am proactive when it comes to native cavity nest compartments, only installing boxes or gourds that have inbox traps available and at the ready. Nonnative House Sparrows cannot be allowed to nest in a Purple Martin colony.



#### Starling Resistant

**Entry Holes** – Nonnative European Starlings can readily enter housing with standard round 2 1/8” diameter holes. You can spend a lot of time using inbox traps

to capture them or you can exclude them with Conley II entrances. I much prefer the latter. Purple Martins readily take to these entrances. The biology of their shorter legs and streamlined body allows them to enter while the European Starlings cannot (fun to watch them try though).

## Pole and Mount

**Height** – Housing should be raised 10 to 20 feet from the ground.

**Vegetation** – Keep bushes and vines away from housing to discourage climbing predators.

**Baffle** – The most common reason Purple Martins abandon colonies is depredation by predators. A climbing raccoon or snake will devastate a colony in no time and these predators can easily climb any wooden or metal pole. A good predator baffle is a must.

**Pole design** – Poles with a 2” or 3” square cross section are much preferred. Round cross section poles can cause parents to become disoriented if housing is not raised to proper compass point. If their compartment was originally facing west and housing is raised so it faces north, they may become confused as to whose young are which. You will not have this problem with a square pole.

**Winch or pulley system** – Colonies should be monitored every 5 to 7 days. This can ONLY be accomplished with a good winch or pulley system. The cheaper telescoping poles are simply awful. I don’t know why they even sell these things.

## MANAGEMENT

### Timing

Housing should not be opened up until the first Purple Martins return. In Ohio, as a general rule, Purple Martins arrive the first week in April. This serves to reduce competition by other cavity nesting birds.

### Competition by Native Cavity Nesters

In Ohio, Eastern Bluebirds and Tree Swallows establish nest sites before Purple Martins return. Keeping in mind the territory requirements of these birds, placing a nestbox or two within 15 feet of the Martin housing works well. Eastern Bluebirds and Tree Swallows start nesting in these boxes and then work to chase away any others of their species that show interest in the Martin housing when it is opened up. If native birds do show interest in Martin compartments, block these for a time and drive them to appropriate housing you have set out for them.

*Regarding Tree Swallow colonies, another theory of mine is that the intraspecies competition between Tree Swallows helps diminish the interspecies competition between Tree Swallows and Purple Martins. When you set out multiple nest boxes for Tree Swallows, they seem much more concerned with defending their box (and their mate) from other Tree Swallows than attempting to investigate the Martin housing.*

## Competition by Nonnative Cavity Nesters

Starling resistant entry holes and inbox traps work well to eliminate competition. Repeated bait traps for House Sparrows can also be effective if needed.



### Monitoring

Monitor compartments every 5 to 7 days. Keep good data and careful track of the age of the oldest young in the colony. Prefledging

is concern if housing is lowered after young are 22 days old. Purple Martins generally fledge after 28 days.

### Nest Changes

Parasite loads are heavy in Purple Martin nests. I generally perform one nest change when young are 7 to 22 days old.

### Supplemental Feeding

Setting out egg shells or mealworms is often done. I have not tried this, but training birds to come to a platform feeder sounds intriguing. People use slingshots or sturdy plastic spoons to flip mealworms or crickets to the birds, and then graduate to platform feeders. It is a bit like teaching an Eastern Bluebird to use a mealworm feeder, but with a different twist, or flip...

### Clean Out

Unlike Eastern Bluebirds, Purple Martin fledglings will return to their housing to roost for a week or two. I leave housing raised and old nests in housing until Labor Day, waiting for migration. Housing should be closed up or stored for the winter.

September rolls around every year. I miss the friendly chortle and plaintive dawn song that regaled me for the past five months. The Purple Martins have left once again, migrating to their wintering grounds in South America. I just googled the air distance from my most northern colony in Put-in-Bay, Ohio to Brazil. That is 4339.76 miles folks! What a trip!



*An experienced monitor of over a dozen Bluebird Trails in central and northern Ohio, Madame WingNut enjoys all creatures that fly, regardless of their stage of development.*

Send your questions to Madame WingNut at: [info@ohiobluebirdsociety.org](mailto:info@ohiobluebirdsociety.org) or by mail to PMB 111, 343 W. Milltown Road, Wooster, OH 44691.





# Blooming Bluebirders

## Birders in Action

Intro by Darlene Sillick

Article By Sarah Rice

This past winter Lori Totman, conservation director at The Dawes Arboretum in Newark Ohio met with Darlene Sillick co-advisor central Ohio, Ohio Young Birders Club discussed the students coming out in the spring to put up a 16 box Tree Swallow grid. The OYBC students really enjoy working on conservation projects. Together we planned to build the 16 nestboxes and prepare the baffles and poles over the winter then go for a birding field trip to the Dawes Arboretum to meet the Birding FAN Club members and work on the project together. Early April 2013 we did just that. The article is written by staff person Sarah Rice as she read reports written from the OYBC members. It actually took two trips to complete the project.



Conservationist Shane McGuire demonstrates nest box set-up for birders.

A small core of OYBC met with a few members of the Birding FAN Club and Stephen Bischoff explains the technique to stake the position of the 16 boxes. We wish to thank the Birding FAN Club members for their preparation of the mounting poles and PVC baffles used in the 16 box tree swallow grid project. The students built the nestboxes over the winter and signed their names to each box.

Then the exciting part, one of the Birding FAN Club members Michelle Lundy monitored the first year and 10 of the 16 boxes were used, 2 by bluebirds and 8 by tree swallows fledging 10 bluebirds and 30 tree swallows. A lot of fun was had by everyone and next year they expect full occupancy. Data collected was entered in Cornell Nestwatch by Michelle. We thank you! Michelle is new to birding and bluebirding and now she knows a lot more about the nesting behavior of these two species thanks to the central Ohio OYBC and the Birding FAN Club of The Dawes Arboretum in Newark Ohio.

So what is next? Stay tuned to the rest of the story as a Boy Scout working on his Eagle Scout project is partnering to work with both groups from this year to redo all the 100 poles and add 100 baffles to make the birds safer for the 2014 nesting season at The Dawes Arboretum. The young man from Dublin Ohio will have the help of some passionate central Ohio Young Birders Club members and some eager and impressed Birding FAN Club members. Special thanks to Lori Totman for trusting Darlene Sillick to organize and implement one more conservation project. The rest is in the 2013 July/August Nutshell article. Enjoy and we hope you are inspired too!

Birding clubs have been gathering at The Dawes Arboretum to see, hear, and study birds. A project to create a nest box grid in the Red Barn Area of The Arboretum was completed in April by the groups as well. Those involved include the Ohio Young Birders Club (hosted by the Columbus Audubon) and the Licking County Birding FAN (Fun and Nature) Club, joined by The Dawes Arboretum Natural Resources department.

A Tree Swallow nest box grid was set up on April 5, 2013. The Red Barn Area location is ideal for the Tree Swallows as it is close to a body of water where the birds can easily find insects for food. Ohio Young Birders Club (OYBC) member Stephen Bischoff says, "The plan was a 4x4 grid with each nest box being 75 feet apart because even though they are community nesters, they are still territorial over their nest boxes."

For an accurate grid, Stephen notes that the group used Dick Tuttle's bluebird articles and Pythagorean Theorem. "We fixed a string to mark the first row of the grid," he says. "To square the rows, we marked 106 feet for the hypotenuse of the triangle." This process took the birders around two hours to mark the sites for 16 posts.

Stephen explains that Eastern Bluebird could also be seen nesting in the boxes in addition to the Tree Swallows. The grid is near a mound around 300 feet away on the left of





Assembling Tree Swallow nest box.

the trail where you can “watch the acrobatic flyers,” according to Stephen.

The OYBC also came out for a bird walk on April 6, 2013 at The Arboretum.

Joey Tomei, an OYBC member, explains that the Birding FAN Club led the walk and right away the group heard calls from nearby birds including: House Finch; Blue Jays;

Northern Cardinals; and Red-Winged Blackbirds. Joey notes that the group also spotted a Great Blue Heron overhead.

Later during the walk, other species were spotted: Red-bellied Woodpecker; Fox Sparrow; and Eastern Towhee. Joey especially enjoyed seeing Turkey Vultures. He explains, “At first, there were only three Vultures. Less than a minute later, though, there were at least ten Turkey Vultures. This

moment was fascinating to me, and it was definitely one of the highlights of the bird walk.”

Says Joey, “I believe this bird walk was an entertaining and educational experience. I also got the chance to practice my birding by ear.” He thanks the Birding FAN Club for leading the walk.



Tree Swallows perch on nest box (photo by Gerry Brevoort).

Students between ages 12 and 18, with an interest in the outdoors, wildlife, natural history and the environment, can join forces with the Ohio Young Birders Club and participate in more fun outdoor activities while learning about the natural world. Students interested should contact Darlene Sillick OYBC co-advisor at [azuretrails@columbus.rr.com](mailto:azuretrails@columbus.rr.com).

## *The Life of a Bluebird – Part 4 (Final)*

By John Bigham Jr., Preble County



The leaves on the trees are turning into hundreds of different shades of orange, red, yellow, and brown. The air is cool, and the morning dew is still covering the ground, like a fine mist. The sun is not up yet. I can hear the crickets humming their mournful song. Most of the summertime birds

have left the area for the season, and those that do not leave, are very secluded. We are all preparing for the same thing; Winter. Within a month the ground will once again be covered in snow.

Now the sun is peeking up above the tops of the distant trees, sending its warmth into the valley below.

It is late morning, my mate and I have been eating rose hips, and now we must go down to the stream to get a drink of water. As always, down by the stream everything is bustling with life. There are deer, birds, raccoons, minks, muskrats and beavers everywhere. As I sit here watching everything going on around me, a hawk soars above me. I warn my mate, and we both fly away, along with all of the other birds. We hide in a rose bush until the hawk has moved out of the area, then we fly out and down to the creek to drink.

### *One week later*

It is a lot cooler now. The trees are naked. The leaves all dropped to the ground, covering it with a carpet of gold. It will only be a few more days before the snow flies.

It is going to be an early winter. I can feel it in the cold northeast winds. My mate and our babies are over in the rose bushes feasting on hips. I have had my fill of them for now. I can feel the Creator telling me to go south. There are many cold days ahead. And there would not be enough food for us to live through the winter.

### *10 days later*

My mate, our babies, and I are now resting in the mountains of Tennessee. The weather is much warmer here. The mountains are covered in shrubs that have lots of

berries on them. We will stay here all winter, and eat the berries on the bushes. In the spring my mate and I will go back to our home in the river valley, and raise another family.



# Member News



## Welcome - To Our New Members

Dreyer, Mary Sue  
Garrison, Bonnie  
Hocking College Energy Institute  
Holman, Chuck  
Kidwell, Ellie  
Pollock, Edward  
Preservation Parks of Delaware Co.

## Donations - \$195

GE Foundation - Matching  
Bob's Omaha Barbeque  
Meloy, Terry

### Reminder

Please remember to send  
any change of mailing or  
e-mail address to: [info@  
ohiobluebirdsociety.net](mailto:info@ohiobluebirdsociety.net).

## Gift Memberships to OBS

For the Bluebird lover in  
your life – think about a gift  
membership for Christmas.



## It's Not Too Early



It's not too early to  
start thinking about  
what you will do if  
we have another ice  
storm like we did in  
2004. Whether you  
feed mealworms or

currants or both, have your plan  
ready NOW for what you will need  
when the weather turns cold.

*Photo by Marcella Hawkins*

## Bluebird Winter Treat (Meriam Bourne)

1 c. Flour  
1 c. Lard  
4 c. Yellow Cornmeal  
1 c. Crunchy Peanut Butter  
1 c. Currants  
1 c. Sunflower Hearts

Mix together by hand.  
Pack into yogurt cups to mold,  
then pop out to use.

## The story of a Mourning Dove... named Giselle:

A neighbor (she's French,  
hence Giselle's name) found  
the Mourning Dove chick in  
her yard after a storm blew the  
nest out of a tree. She hand-fed  
Giselle until she could take care  
of herself. She's never left the  
neighborhood, spending her days  
in the back yard of her "mother".  
In the evenings, she comes across  
the street and will sit on one of  
our cars in the hope that we'll let  
her sleep in the garage.

She has no fear of people and will  
happily perch on your shoulder, or  
sometimes, your head. Everyone in

the neighborhood knows her, and  
has a story to tell about her.

Here, she is pictured resting  
comfortably on top of my wife  
Mary's head.

- Bill Schulz, Cleveland Area



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## Ohio Bluebird Society Membership Application

**Membership Class**

- ☐ Student (under 21)
- ☐ Senior/Sr. Family
- ☐ Regular/Family
- ☐ Organizational
- ☐ Supporting
- ☐ Life

**Annual**

\$10  
\$12  
\$15  
\$40  
\$100  
\$300

**3-years**

\$25  
\$30  
\$40  
\$100  
\$275

- ☐ Tax deductible gift to OBS \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Membership renewal
- ☐ New membership
- ☐ I am interested in participating in OBS activities

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Street:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_

**State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**County:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Make checks payable to:**  
Ohio Bluebird Society

**Mail to:**  
OBS  
PMB 111, 343 W. Milltown Rd.  
Wooster, OH 44691-7214

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