



Bluebird Monitor

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

Winter 2011



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

Our Thanks to John Duecker

By Marcella Hawkins



*John Duecker hard at work at the February 2010
OBS Conference*

In 2002, our organization was lucky enough to have John Duecker accept the position of OBS Membership Director. Most members have no idea of the amount of time John has spent to get our membership records in a database that made it easier for him to manage. Even though the records

are well kept, John has spent a great deal of time in this role and we are very grateful to him.

Last month, John made it known that it was time for him to step down and he is currently working with other volunteers to make a smooth transition in the Membership Director position. Please join me in thanking him for job very well done. Thanks, John!

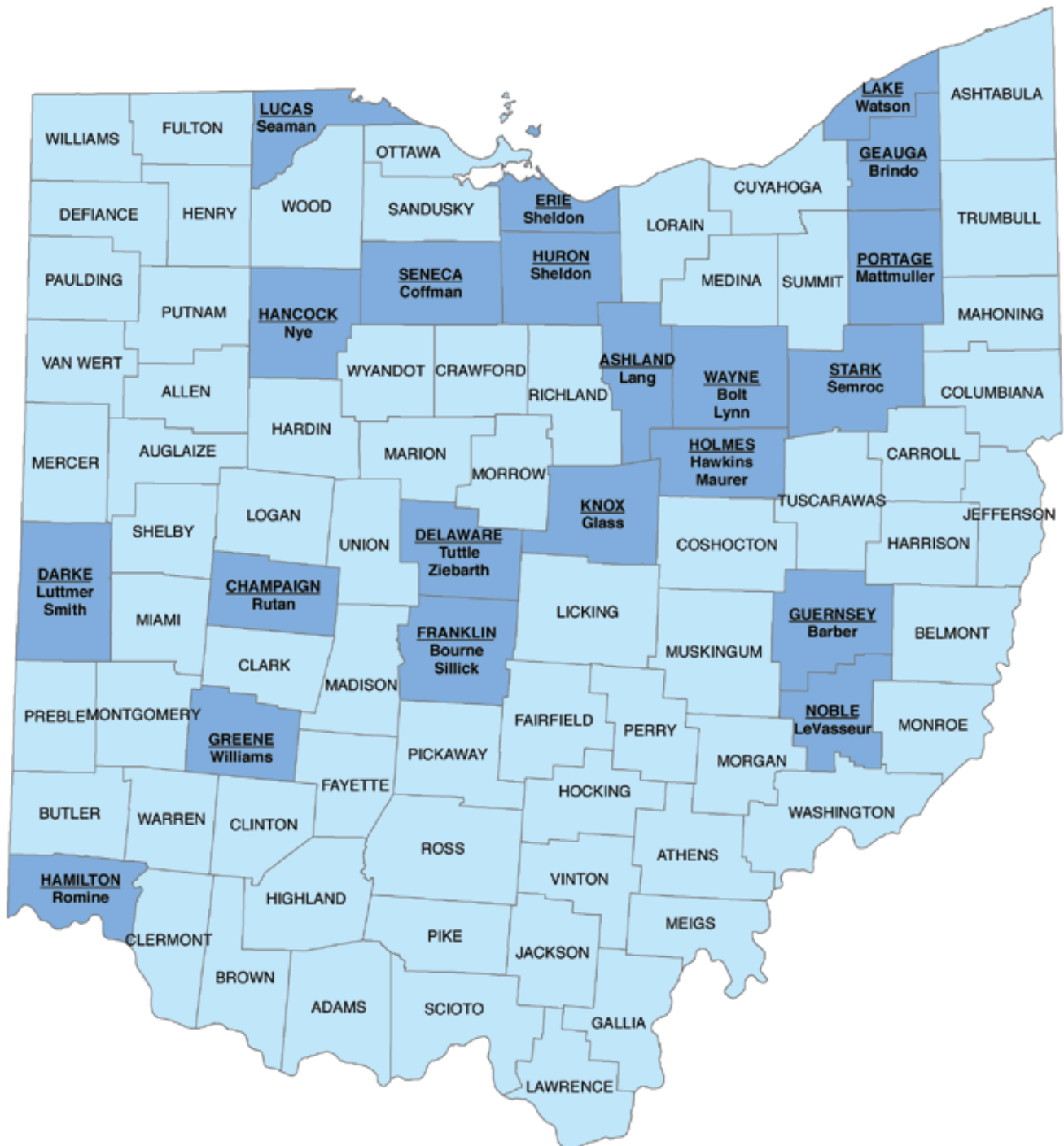
Be sure to take a look at the 2012 conference information and registration in this issue. Please pass this on to anyone who may be interested. If you are interested in having a display table at the conference, please send an e-mail to info@ohiobluebirdsociety.org with your request.



Also – if you have someone you would like to nominate for the 2012 Blue Feather or Wildlife Conservation award, please send the name and qualifications of that person or persons to our e-mail address or regular mail address (see Communications Block on Page 3.)

If you have any suggestions or comments please feel free to send them our way – we love to hear from our members.

Ohio Bluebird Society

Counties with Director, Advisor, or Area Contact



 Counties w/ Director, Advisor, or Area Contact
 Counties w/out

0 25 50 75 100 Miles

created by Mike Watson; The Holden Arboretum

OBS Area Contacts (as of November 1, 2011)

County	Name	Phone #	Alt. Phone #	E-mail
Ashland	Lang, Linda	419.945.3005		nrws_lang@tccsa.net
Champaign	Rutan, Jean	937.834.3336		cpjrutan@ctcn.net
Darke	Luttmer, Bob	937.526.5477		bonnie561@embarqmail.com
Darke	Smith, Tom	937.996.1629		bluebirdman@embarqmail.com
Delaware	Tuttle, Dick	740.363.6433		ohtres@cs.com
Delaware	Ziebarth, Paula	614.848.3784		paulaz@columbus.rr.com
Erie	Sheldon, Dean	419.752.1451		seedbed@accnorwalk.com
Franklin	Bourne, Lum & Meriam	614.882.1188		meriam.lum@worldnet.att.net
Franklin	Sillick, Darlene	614.761.3696		azuretrails@columbus.rr.com
Geauga	Brindo, Jay	440.343.9275		jbrindo@aol.com
Greene	Williams, Pete & Alice	937-848-2595	937-266-1857	S10Pete@aol.com
Guernsey	Barber, Tom	740.439.4284		klbarber62@roadrunner.com
Hamilton	Romine, Jim	513.236.5598		jdromine@cincinnati.com
Hancock	Nye, Fred	419.387.7465		evaferdy@tds.net
Holmes	Hawkins, Marcella	330.465.6987	330.276.0909	gofish710@embarqmail.com
Holmes	Maurer, Kyle	330.317.4995		kylemaurer63@yahoo.com
Huron	Sheldon, Dean	419.752.1451		seedbed@accnorwalk.com
Knox	Glass, Dale	740.397.5573		dglassohio@yahoo.com
Lake	Watson, Mike	440.946.4400, Ext. 132	419.813.2628	mwatson@holdenarb.org
Lucas	Seaman, Tammy	419.868.5111	419.349.5162	erictammy@sbcglobal.net
Noble	LeVasseur, Doug	740.685.5220		emdlev@clover.net
Portage	Mattmuller, Ric/Donna	330.562.6641		mattmuller2@juno.com
Stark	Judy Semroc	330-877-3551		rainefox@neo.rr.com
Seneca	Coffman, Jim	419.448.4753		jrusscoff@gmail.com
Wayne	Bolt, Mel	330.262.0448		mellen@sssnet.com
Wayne	Lynn, Sharon	330.263.2437		slynn@wooster.edu

OBS Board of Directors and Advisors

DIRECTORS

Jay K. Brindo: 440.343.9275
JBrindo@aol.com

Sharon Lynn: 330.263.2437
slynn@wooster.edu

Kyle Maurer: 330.317.4995
kylemaurer63@yahoo.com

Mike Watson: 440.946.4400 ext. 132
mwatson@holdenarb.org

ADVISORS

Mel Bolt: 330.262.0448
mellen@sssnet.com

Linda Lang: 419.651.4196
NRWS_Lang@tccsa.net

Dean Sheldon: 419.752.1451
seedbed@accnorwalk.com

Dick Tuttle: 740.363.6433

TREASURER, CHAIR OF SPECIAL EVENTS

Marcella Hawkins: 330.465.6987
gofish710@embarqmail.com

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

Pending

OBS Communications Block

E-mail:

info@ohiobluebirdsociety.org

Phone:

330.466.6926

Website:

www.ohiobluebirdsociety.org

Address:

PMB 111, 343 West Milltown Rd.
Wooster, Ohio 44691-7241

Join Online!

You can now sign up online and pay your member dues via Paypal with your credit card or bank account. Go to www.ohiobluebirdsociety.org/membership/become-a-member/ to sign up today!

Member News



Welcome - To Our New Members

Cheek, Abbe
Kolehmainen, Rich

Facebook

facebook

Ohio Bluebird is now on Facebook!
Search for Ohio Bluebird Society
to join our group.

Gift Memberships to OBS

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



Winter Feeding

Be ready for winter feeding –
whether it's currants or mealworms.
If you order mealworms from The
Natures Way, be sure to mention
that you are an OBS member to
receive your discount.
www.thenaturesway.com



Bluebird Winter Treat (Meriam Bourne)

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

Mix together by hand.

Pack into yogurt cups to mold, then pop out to use.

Start saving your change now!

We will have a piggy bank at our
2012 conference to collect your
donations. Help us keep our
annual conference FREE. Any
other donations will also be gladly
appreciated. Thank you!



Member Photos



From Stark County area contact, Judy Semroc.



Ask Madame Wingnut

The (Not So) Amazing Migration of the Woolly Bear Caterpillar

by Paula Ziebarth

I drove from Powell to Delaware as I always do on Monday afternoons, but today was an especially gorgeous autumn afternoon in central Ohio. The tree foliage was near peak fall color; bright blue sky; crisp air; nice breeze. I rolled down the window to take it all in – the sights, sounds and smells of a beautiful autumn afternoon. I was careful during the trip, however, because this seems to be the time of year of the (not so) amazing migration of the Woolly Bear Caterpillar.

I spotted 6 of them on the pavement during my journey, small furry bits of punctuation on the pavement. Some were heading west and others east on their long trek across the roadway. The challenge for me, of course, was to make sure my car tires did not transform these intriguing little furry commas into flattened exclamation points! Last month, I was dodging monarch butterflies. This month, it is the Woolly Bear. So where were they headed and why?

I did a little research and discovered that these caterpillars had recently hatched from their eggs which is why we see so many of them in October. The Woolly Bear will over-winter in their caterpillar form, becoming dormant. In early spring, they will become active once more, spin themselves into a cocoon, and emerge as Isabella Tiger Moths. So as Dorothy would say while skipping down the yellow brick road, "...Tigers and bears, Oh My!!"

Most of us are familiar with the superstition that the amount of black in the caterpillar's bristly coat forecasts the severity of the upcoming winter. Actually, the prevalence of black in its coloration indicates how near the caterpillar is to full growth before autumn weather stimulates it to seek winter shelter. Newly hatched Woolly Bears have more black coloration. Their rusty orange middles will become more prevalent as they mature and near their readiness for winter. The caterpillars survive harsh winter freezes by burrowing under leaf litter and producing a cryoprotectant in their tissues.

Vermilion, Ohio celebrates its Woollybear Festival early in October. This event is the largest one-day festival in Ohio including a parade complete with floats, Woollybear races (actual caterpillars and people dressed as caterpillars), costume competition (people and pets), etc. This year,

over 100,000 people attended the event. So Ohio's largest festival celebrates these furry little critters.

Unlike many other species of caterpillars which require specific host plants, the Woolly Bear is a generalist feeder. I read that you can over-winter one yourself by feeding it fresh grass daily in a suitable container (with air holes) until it goes into its dormant winter stage. During winter, discontinue feeding, place crumbled dry leaves in there for shelter, and keep the container outside in a cold protected area such as a covered porch until early spring when grass begins to grow once more. When caterpillar awakens from its slumber, feed it again and it will pupate, spinning a cocoon, and eventually hatch into its adult form, the Isabella Tiger Moth. This seems like a fun activity/science experiment to do with children and you could measure the caterpillar's rusty middle section to see if it really does grow over time. Woolly Bears curl up and "play dead" when handled so the measuring may take some patience.

So the question remains in my mind and I have not found a definitive answer. "Why does the Woolly Bear cross the road?" What instigates this (not so) amazing migration across the pavement? As a generalist feeder, the Woolly Bear has plenty to eat on its original side of the road, but perhaps it believes the grass to be greener on the other side? Does the warm pavement feel nice against its body on a crisp autumn day? Is it looking for leaf litter to crawl into to begin its long dormant stretch through winter? Is it an amazing colorful daredevil dodging speeding car tires for fun? You be the judge and please let me know if you figure out the answer. In the meantime, I hope the local traffic police will believe my story if I am pulled over for my slightly erratic driving during the (not so) amazing migration of the Woolly Bear caterpillars.



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 or by mail to
PMB 111, 343 W. Milltown Road, Wooster, OH 44691.*

ATTENTION MEMBERS

Please take a look at the map on Page 2 and see if you are in a County that needs an OBS Area Contact. See the following job description – if you are interested, please contact us for an application.

TITLE: Ohio Bluebird Society Area Contact (AC)

PURPOSE/GOAL:

- Provide timely response to requests of help from Ohio Bluebird Society (OBS) members and anyone else interested in bluebirds and cavity nesting birds.
- Provide accurate and reliable information.
- Provide hands-on, personal response to questions, requests, needs.
- Act as a representative of OBS at the local/regional level.
- Develop new memberships.
- Develop new connections/partnerships/opportunities for outreach.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

- Respond to phone call and/or email requests.
- Meet for onsite visit or hands-on support.
- Prepare presentations for local schools, garden clubs, scout groups, etc.
- Set up information booth at local fairs, festivals, etc.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Experience with bluebird (and other cavity nester) monitoring and nestbox maintenance.
- Knowledge of basic biology of bluebirds (and other cavity nesters) (e.g. habitat requirements, nesting cycle, migration, diet, etc).
- Professional demeanor.
- Willingness to act as an enthusiastic ambassador for bluebirds and other cavity nesters.

REQUIREMENTS:

- Attendance at one OBS conference per year is strongly recommended.

- Public presentations are a valuable means of communicating our message to the public. The AC should pursue opportunities to give such presentations. One presentation per year is encouraged.
- The AC will submit a short annual report indicating activities during the previous year. This report should indicate incoming calls/requests and outcomes, presentations given, relevant meetings attended, and other activities pertinent to the position of Area Contact.
- Cell phone and email can help the AC provide timely assistance, but having a cell phone or access to email is not required.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS:

- Positive feedback from members and others the AC has worked with.
- Evaluation of AC annual report for evidence of having fulfilled goals and requirements listed above.

EXPECTED TIME COMMITMENT:

- Time commitment will vary depending on the needs of individuals in your area. As a baseline, we would expect no more than 10 hours per month on average. Should the time commitment become larger than what you are comfortable with, we would expect that you would communicate this to the OBS directors so that we may supplement that area with another Area Contact.

INTERACTION with OHIO BLUEBIRD SOCIETY:

- When OBS receives a call/email request that is appropriate for the AC, OBS will contact the AC and provide details of question/request and contact information for the person making the request.
- AC will tell OBS if they can or cannot assist.
- AC will contact the person making the request.
- AC will ask OBS for further help as needed.
- AC will report back to OBS on outcome.



Out of the Box

Where Are They Now? -The Tree Swallow-

By Chuck Jakubchak

Winter is upon us and the thoughts of hot summer days are well behind us. However, we can still warm our souls with memories of watching beautiful birds in the field as they hurried about during the breeding season. One of our most lasting images are the iridescent tree swallows that perched on nesting boxes in the bright sunlight and performed acrobatic maneuvers above quiet ponds as they pursued their daily allotment of insects. As you sit in your comfortable chair reading the Bluebird Monitor, do you think about the tree swallows and wonder where they are at this very instant? When did they go and how did they get there? More importantly, when will they return?



Photo by lbm4381

The migration process began when the summer nesting season concluded in mid-summer as tree swallows became less territorial, formed social flocks and fed heavily in wetland areas. During late July and possibly as late as October, the birds physically initiated their journey to their wintering

grounds. Unlike most small birds that migrated during the night, tree swallows traveled in daylight hours and in loose flocks, feeding as they flew along. They roosted at night in a much larger flock and settled down in dense, woody vegetation or in marshes where the local supply of insects supported the transient population of birds.

The end of summer triggered an increase in the bird's demand for food because the days and nights became cooler while the available daylight hours needed for foraging decreased. Although tree swallows did not have an immediate problem finding sufficient food at the end of summer, an internal urge told them that they must move on to prevent a future food shortage. Thus,

the southward trek began and it was driven almost entirely by the need to eat.

Migration progressed at a leisurely pace down traditional routes and most of Ohio's tree swallows flew east and southward along the Atlantic coast while a few others opted to fly down through the Mississippi River Valley. Birds traveling via the coast likely wintered in Florida, Cuba and Honduras while the tree swallows that utilized the Mississippi Valley route probably ended up in Louisiana and Central America.

Throughout the winter, swallows will remain at those sites, feeding heavily on insects and supplementing their diet with bayberries and wax myrtle berries when the supply of insects is suddenly impacted by cold weather. They are one of the few bird species capable of digesting the wax in bayberries as their digestive systems contain special enzymes for that purpose. Tree swallows are not dependent on a diet of flying insects and this distinguishes them from other swallows that rely almost entirely on insects for sustenance.

In March the tree swallows will return to Ohio to repeat the breeding cycle, risking hypothermia and starvation resulting from the cold temperatures and insufficient food as insects and berries will be in short supply. They will endure these tough conditions in order to secure the best possible nest sites and improve the likelihood of successfully reproducing. Their desire to pass along their valuable genes to another generation is an incredible, driving force!

The placement of OBS nest boxes helps tree swallows fulfill their need to reproduce and eases the pressure to find suitable nest cavities. Those boxes may also provide shelter and warmth for the birds on cold Ohio nights, saving the lives of countless birds that get caught in a typical cold snap. Thanks to the diligent OBS members we have more tree swallows to enjoy and pleasant memories to help us pass the long Ohio winters.

OBS Spotlight –

Linda Lang

By Chuck Jakubchak (Photo by Jeanne Jakubchak)

This month the OBS Spotlight is shining brightly on Linda Lang, a faithful OBS member for the past 10 years. Like so many OBS members, Linda credits Mel and the late Mary Ellen Bolt as well as Dean Sheldon for guiding her into the OBS and she values all of the mentoring they provided over the years. Recently Linda was appointed as an Advisor to the OBS and her personal goal is to pass along the same inspiration, encouragement and advice to prospective bluebirders that Mel, Mary Ellen and Dean passed to her. Mentoring and continuity are valuable elements of the OBS philosophy and we are pleased that Linda will continue to inspire and assist both current and future OBS members. People like Linda enable our organization to thrive and her efforts, along with a helpful attitude, make her worthy of the OBS Spotlight.

Birds have intrigued Linda since childhood and she credits her Great Aunt Esther, an avid birder, for influencing her at a young age. One of her early childhood bird memories involved red-headed woodpeckers that would regularly visit her grandma's special suet feeder. As an adult Linda's husband revitalized her interest in birds, leading Linda and their small children to a great blue heron rookery at the edge of a field near their home. During the past few years Linda has been fascinated by the nesting eagles at Pleasant Hill Lake and she always enjoys birding in the woods near her Ashland County home or in either Malabar or Mohican State Park.



Linda Lang pictured with students Kolton Kliner and Hannah Hudson at the Northwestern Elementary Bluebird Trail.

Like most OBS members, Linda was hooked on birding at a young age and maintained interest through adulthood. When she isn't birding, Linda can found at Northwestern Elementary School in West Salem, Ohio where she has been teaching science to 5th graders for 31 years. With an average class size of 50, Linda has had the opportunity to successfully influence more than 1550 students during her career and takes great pride in educating the children of former students. Her passion is environmental science and her classwork includes emphasis on birds, butterflies, pond study, trees and habitats. During late summer Linda's classroom includes a collection of butterflies and a converted aquarium which houses caterpillars, several chrysalides and a few emerging monarchs that are promptly tagged and released. Linda Lang's teachings are focused on instilling a deep appreciation for birds, our natural resources and thankfully, "Planet Earth."

With the support of Elaine Snively, accomplished birder and retired Northwestern school librarian, Linda decided to introduce the hobby of birdwatching to her students through Project Feeder Watch and also established a productive bluebird trail on school property (12 boxes, 36 fledglings in 2011). Now her students can combine their classroom work with field study to reinforce the lessons that Linda provides.

A native of Homerville, Ohio, Linda is the proud mother of three; two sons and a daughter. Coincidentally, her daughter Mary Ann is a professional naturalist and works in Alaska and Wyoming and Linda has been fortunate enough to visit her and experience the beautiful habitats of both states. Linda's other hobbies include gardening, hiking, traveling and collecting anything related to bluebirds. Aside from the OBS, Linda is a member of the Greater Mohican Audubon Society, The Wilderness Center and Delta Kappa Gamma, a professional honorary society for women educators.

Linda was scheduled to travel to Ecuador in late 2011 (after this article was written) along with members of The Wilderness Center, so when you see Linda at the OBS conference in February, please be sure to ask her about her adventures in Ecuador. If you haven't met Linda yet, please stop by the raffle table at the conference, introduce yourself and ask her about the hummingbirds in Ecuador. She will be happy to tell you!

OHIO BLUEBIRD SOCIETY

Fiscal Year End (9/30/2011) Treasurer's Report

Marcella Hawkins, Treasurer

Apple Creek Bank CD

Balance Fwd. 9/30/10	10,116.37	
~ Interest	<u>100.52</u>	
Balance 9/30/11		10,216.89

First Merit Checking Account

Balance Fwd. 9/30/10	5,217.91	
<u>Income</u>		
~ Annual Conference Receipts	1,548.50	
~ Donations	815.00	
~ Membership Dues	<u>3,845.00</u>	
Total Income	6,208.50	
<u>Expenses</u>		
~ Annual Conference	3,537.86	
~ Business Office	1,370.97	
~ Donations (delivered Mary Ellen Bolt donations to Secrest Arboretum)	1,165.00	
~ Education	42.72	
~ Membership Expense	398.24	
~ Newsletter	2,687.67	
~ PayPal Fees	28.57	
~ Website Expense	<u>550.00</u>	
Total Expenses	-9,781.03	
<u>Transfers</u>		
~ Transfer from Savings	<u>6,200.00</u>	
Balance 9/30/11		7,845.38

First Merit Savings Account

Balance Fwd. 9/30/10	8,372.09	
~ Interest	2.43	
~ Transfers to Checking	<u>-6,200.00</u>	
Balance 9/30/11		<u>2,174.52</u>

TOTAL AS OF 9/30/11		\$20,236.79
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Celebrating Things... With Wings!



Birds, Bats, Butterflies and Bees

OBS Annual Educational Conference Saturday, February 25, 2012

The Arden Shisler Center for Education & Economic Development – 1680 Madison Ave., Wooster, Ohio 44691
For map: <http://www.shislercenter.ohio-state.edu/secondary/Location.htm>
Wayne County Visitors Bureau: www.waynecountycvb.org

Agenda

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 8:00 - 9:00 | Registration |
| 9:00 - 9:15 | Welcome - Jay Brindo, OBS Director
- Marcella Hawkins, Special Events Chair |
| 9:15 - 10:00 | Mel Bolt - Changing Behavior of Bluebirds |
| 10:00 - 10:15 | Break |
| 10:15 - 11:00 | Don Plant - Bats... A Better Understanding |
| 11:00 - 11:15 | Break |
| 11:15 - 12:00 | Chuck Jakubchak - Beautiful Birds |
| 12:00 - 12:30 | Medina Raptor Center |
| 12:30 - 1:30 | Lunch - Raffle - Vendors
Youth Nest Box Construction (limited to 20 participants). Age 8 and under must be accompanied by an adult. |
| 1:30 - 1:45 | Presentation of Blue Feather Award and Wildlife Conservation Award |
| 1:45 - 2:30 | Lynda Price - Butterflies as Beautiful as Bluebirds |
| 2:30 - 2:45 | Break - Last Chance for Raffle |
| 2:45 - 3:30 | Dr. James Tew - Bees and Bluebirds – Friends, Foes, or Both |
| 3:30 | Door Prizes - Announce Raffle Winners |

Pictures will be taken at 1:15 for:

- All Life Members in attendance
- All Blue Feather Award recipients in attendance
- All Wildlife Conservation Award recipients in attendance

Accommodations

Be sure to mention “OBS” – Rooms for Friday (24th) and Saturday (25th) night are being held at each location

Hotels

Hilton Garden Inn

(across the road from Shisler Center)

959 Dover Road, Wooster, OH 44691

Phone - 330.202.7701; Fax 330.202.7781

\$99/night plus tax

Best Western Wooster Plaza Hotel (downtown)

243 E. Liberty Street, Wooster, OH 44691

Phone - 330.264.7750; bestwesternwooster@gmail.com

www.bestwestern.com

\$69/night plus tax

Econo Lodge

2137 E. Lincoln Way, Wooster, OH 44691

Phone: 330.264.8883;

econolodgewooster@yahoo.com

www.choicehotels.com -

search for Wooster area Econo Lodge

Bed and Breakfasts:

Market Street Inn

Phone: 330.262.4085

www.marketstreetinnwooster.com

\$90-\$110/night (full breakfast included)

Book by 1/15/12 and get 10% discount

Mirabelle Bed & Breakfast

Phone: 330.264.6006

www.bbonline.com/oh/mirabelle

\$75/night (full breakfast included)

Start saving your change now. We will have a piggy bank at the conference to collect your donations. Help keep this event FREE!

OHIO BLUEBIRD SOCIETY ANNUAL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Name(s) for name tags: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Number of People Attending: _____ E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Boxed lunch(es)? Enter number for each. All lunches are \$10.00 and come with macaroni salad, apple and a cookie. Prepared by Honeybaked Ham.

_____ Turkey Classic

_____ Chicken Salad

_____ Veggie Delight

_____ Ham

Walk-ins welcome!

Make checks payable to OBS

Mail to:

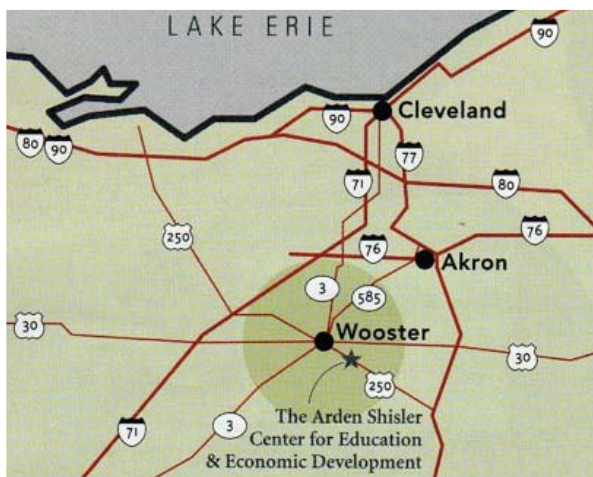
Ohio Bluebird Society, PMB 111, 343 W. Milltown Rd.
Wooster, OH 44691-7214

To use PayPal, please send request to info@ohiobluebirdsociety.org

Questions?

Please call Marcella Hawkins at 330.465.6987 or send e-mail to info@ohiobluebirdsociety.org

*This Is A Free Educational Event Provided By
The Ohio Bluebird Society*



If you would like to have a vendor table at the conference, please send an e-mail request to info@ohiobluebirdsociety.org or call 330.465.6987.

*Don't forget to bring a raffle item. The money we raise helps us with our conference costs and allows us to keep this a "free" educational event.

Page left blank for mailing of conference registration form.

OHIO BLUEBIRD SOCIETY ANNUAL CONFERENCE SPEAKER BIOS

Mel Bolt – Mel has over 35 years of experience in helping Bluebirds survive and reproduce. Most of his experience has been in the backyard Bluebird habitat, however he also does have trail experience. Mel currently maintains a small trail on the Wooster campus of OARDC. He is best known for his sparrow trap referred to as the “Bolt Sparrow Trap” and his design nest box referred to as the “Bolt Box.”

Chuck Jakubchak - Chuck is an Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist and has conducted numerous bird programs throughout Ohio for several years. He has been an avid birder for 16 years and has had numerous nature articles published in a various publications. Chuck and his wife Jeanne reside in Strongsville.

Don Plant – Don enjoys hobbies of gardening and the study of wildlife, including Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, Purple Martins, and Bats. He is also very active in the study of other song birds and has participated in the National Audubon Society's annual Christmas Bird Count surveys for over 45 years, in Ashland, Wayne, and Richland Counties. He and his wife Diana maintain a large Bluebird and Tree Swallow trail and Purple Martin colonies at their residence. They also have established and maintain Purple Martin colonies at Pleasant Hill Lake and Malabar Farm.

Lynda Price - Lynda has over 20 years experience teaching children and adults about the natural history of Ohio. She works as a naturalist at The Wilderness Center in Wilmot and has been there for 17 years. She was employed by Mohican Outdoor School, a resident outdoor education program, for over seven years. She holds a Master of Science degree in Outdoor Education and Recreation. She lives in Shreve with her husband John and son Jacob.

James Tew - Dr. James E. Tew is a Consulting Professor for the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service, Auburn University. In this capacity, he serves as the State Beekeeping Specialist, conducts extension and outreach programs, and addresses honey bee issues through on-site visits and social media outlets www.onetew.com. Dr. Tew served as the State Extension Beekeeping Specialist in the Department of Entomology at The Ohio State University for 33 years. Since 1976, Dr. Tew has taught classes, provided extension services, and conducted applied research on honey bees and honey bee behavior - specifically pollination behavior. Additionally, he continues to contribute monthly articles for national beekeeping publications and has written two books: *Beekeeping Principles* and *Backyard Beekeeping*. Dr. Tew is a frequent speaker at state and national meetings and has traveled nationally and internationally to observe beekeeping techniques and offer suggestions.

Number of Bluebirds fledged in 2011 by county
(As reported by OBS members)



0
1 - 50
51 - 100
>100

created by Mike Watson; The Holden Arboretum

2011 American Kestrel Season Was One of the Best

by Dick Tuttle



Nineteen American Kestrel nests monitored by Dick Phillips and Dick Tuttle produced 75 fledglings from 17 of 18 nestboxes making up the Delaware County American Kestrel Nestbox Project in 2011. This year's production ranks second only to 2010's total of 76 falcons raised. Even though all of 2011's kestrel hatchlings grew to fledge, the average number of fledglings per nest in 2011 was 3.95 fledglings for 19 nests, which is smaller than 2010's average of 4.47 fledglings for 17 nests. Frequent, cold rains are blamed for smaller egg clutches in 2011 with 4.42 eggs being the average among 19 nests compared with an average of 4.82 eggs for 19 nests in 2010.

All of 2011's 19 nest attempts were successful. Out of 84 eggs, 75 (89.3%) hatched, and all hatchlings grew to fledge. North America's smallest falcon, *Falco sparverius*, has become a very common nester in Delaware County. Since the first successful nest in 1995, 712 fledglings have taken to the air. Today, 16 of the project's 18 boxes are located in farmland north of the city of Delaware, while two boxes are found across the county's border in Marion and Morrow Counties.

During four of the project's seasons, five nestboxes had started a second brood during the same season, but only three second broods became successful. In 2011, two succeeding broods in box K-2 produced three and two fledglings, and K-18 raised five and three offspring. The historic windows for first-egg-dates (FED) for double broods have been March 20 - April 2 for first broods, and June 2 - June 25 for second broods. One second brood in 2011 established a new project record for the latest FED, June 24. The project's earliest FED is 14 March 1998. For 2011, the kestrel nestbox season lasted 161 days from its first egg on March 19 until the last youngster fledged on August 26.

The Project's History

Twenty years ago, the Delaware County General Health Department won a grant from the Ohio Department of Resources, Division of Recycling and Litter Control, to introduce recycling to school students by motivating them to recycle aluminum cans and other materials to raise money for nestboxes for sparrow hawks. During the 1992-1993 school year, members of the Delaware County Bird Club and the health department traveled to schools

throughout the city and county to promote recycling in order to raise funds for nestboxes for kestrels. After students' efforts raised more than \$135, the bird club met on the Ohio Wesleyan University campus to assemble and paint the project's first ten nestboxes. The Ohio Department of Highways became the project's fifth partner when it joined the students, the bird club, Ohio DNR, and the health department to grant permission to the project to attach nestboxes to ten of its traffic signs along two of the county's main arteries, Routes 23-North and 36/37 East from Delaware, busy highways that pass through all of

the county's school districts. Bird Club founder Jed Burt wrote press releases to keep the project in the public's eye and the Delaware Gazette acted as a sixth partner when its reporters chronicled the project's progress from its first motivational school meetings, through can-recycling, to hanging the first nestbox. The Gazette helped put icing on the cake in a 17-June 1995 article by Jane Hawes, "Club uses Children's donations to build sparrow hawks' nests," that featured a photo of monitor Bob Hanawalt holding one of the falcon nestlings. Yes, sometimes, it takes a community to launch a successful conservation project.

After two vehicles collided with signs and wiped out two nestboxes in 1999, decisions were made to move the project's boxes from vulnerable traffic signs to safer and



The light-colored egg in this female's clutch of five was the last egg she laid, all within a nine-day period. Both parents incubate eggs for approximately 30 days. The female assumes egg duty 80% of the time while the male is responsible for delivering food to her on the nest.

more rural settings. Consolidated Electric Co-op rescued the conservation effort by granting permission to hang nestboxes from their poles. In 2006, the electric company started adding bands of aluminum flashing around some of their poles to keep climbing raccoons and squirrels from shorting out wires and transformers, so we asked and gained permission to do likewise. By the 2007 season, we made our kestrels safe from all climbers and the electric company had 17 more poles free from expensive mishaps with furry conductors.

Also, after the Delaware project was featured in the Summer 1999 issue of the Ohio Bluebird Society's Bluebird Monitor, Ann Sander, Fairfield County's Coordinator for the OBS at the time, donated salvaged white pine lumber that allowed our project to expand to its present size of 18 nestboxes along a fifty-mile route. Even though six bird club members made up the original monitoring team, Dick Phillips and Dick Tuttle have checked and maintained the project's boxes since the project's shift from traffic signs to electric poles.

Effective Management Tactics for American Kestrels

1) We place our kestrel boxes no closer than one-half mile apart in rural settings where kestrels can see their nestbox from hundreds of yards away, and from anywhere 360 degrees around it. By the time kestrels fledge, crop fields will hide fledglings from larger hawks. (Stay clear of woodlots to avoid accipiters.)

2) Boxes need not be 20 - 30 feet above the ground as recommended by some publications. Presently, most of our project's boxes hang at 12 feet, and during the traffic sign stage during the project's early history, kestrels routinely nested in boxes eight feet above the grassy berm.

3) A band of aluminum flashing below the box defeats climbing raccoons. (Raccoons are everywhere, so

unprotected nestboxes, whether for bluebirds or kestrels, will ultimately become raccoon-feeders.)



A female American Kestrel displays the eyespots on the nape of her neck in an attempt to scare off the intruder in her ceiling.

4) Throw out starling eggs, but never throw out a starling nest. Once kestrels eat or evict starlings, they will reshape the starling's round nest cup into an oval kestrel cup. If you replace a recently usurped starling nest with white pine bedding, a kestrel might freak-out when it returns to its box to find new furnishings. (Usually, starlings will not lay eggs beyond the first week of June.)

5) Beginning in mid-March, check boxes at least every two weeks so you can accurately extrapolate data; and you'll never have to deal with starling nestlings.

6) While most of a kestrel's diet is made up of small rodents, large insects, frogs and snakes, small birds are also on their menu, so keep your project and its sparrow hawks out of trouble by not installing nestboxes within sight of homes with bluebird nestboxes, Purple Martin hotels, or bird feeders.



Five kestrel nestlings appear to be close to fledging. Nestlings grow 28-31 days before they leave the nest, then the parents hunt for them for several more weeks while they use crop fields and wooded fence lines for temporary cover.

7) Try to think like kestrels when selecting nestbox sites. Kestrels hunt from utility wires, and when compared to wires strung along a straight stretch of road, a T-intersection has 50% more wires, and a crossroads intersection has twice as many grassy berms as a lone road.

8) You will want to park in farm field access lanes during monitoring trips, but do not install nestboxes near "parking zones."

Kestrels are easily spooked by new objects near their nests. Therefore, locate boxes at least one pole beyond the nearest pole so when farmers park their machinery, kestrels won't become afraid to approach their nestboxes. Cold temperatures can ruin an unattended clutch of eggs.

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9) After the nesting season, use a spackling knife to dig out each used nest before adding new white pine bedding. Stomp and pulverize the cemented nest patty to check for remains of prey or kestrel nestlings that might have perished. Also, since many landowners take pride in maintaining neat berms, don't leave a mess; use your foot to spread the used nest debris into the grass.



A calm male nestling shows off his gray wings after receiving his aluminum leg band.

also called cherry-pickers, have replaced the need for linemen to climb poles, policies are gradually changing. On the other hand, many projects across North America make their own free standing poles. Our project has one such pole that stands in Gallant Woods Preserve, and by next season, it will sport a winch to raise and lower the box for easier monitoring. Two other parks in the county, Deer Haven Preserve and Blues Creek Preserve, sport free standing kestrel boxes recently installed by an Eagle Scout candidate.

10) When a nestbox needs to be removed for repairs, always replace it with another box so a kestrel does not find a bare pole upon its return. Kestrels hold on to their territories before and after the nesting season. Our project has three extra boxes that we momentarily trade for boxes needing attention in the workshop.



K-12 hangs from ten-gauge wire looped over a roofing nail above a band of aluminum flashing that protects the nest from climbing raccoons. The box is 15 inches high with a three-inch entrance hole centered at 12 inches above an eight-inch square floor. "Decoy entrance holes" are painted on the box's sides to attract new birds to the nest site.

11) Since our project's kestrels are not research subjects, we never grab adults off their nests. We are convinced that most of the veteran nesters "know who we are" when we peer in on them during our King Kong routine. They know we will soon be gone as they tolerate us while experiencing the least amount of fear. Our visits are always as short as possible, just long enough to gather data so leg banding events can be accurately planned. (There are successful kestrel projects that band adult birds, but usually nets or traps are employed outside nests.)

12) Most utility companies will say "No" when you ask to hang nestboxes from their poles. It is a traditional policy, but since bucket trucks,



A "bolt-snap" at the end of the box's wire loop just needs to be disengaged so the box can be safely lowered to the ground for cleaning and new bedding. The box's lid is hinged to the front panel and secured with a screen door hook. Barely seen in the photo are two one-inch-long dowel rods that spur into the pole from the lower edge of the back panel to stabilize the hanging box. (The electric company requires that we use fiberglass ladders to avoid shocks.)

13) If anyone shows interest as they pass by when you're monitoring your boxes, engage them, and explain your project. Neighbors, young people, families on bicycles, motorcyclists, and fishermen in their hobby vehicles, will become allies of your project if you call them over to the nestbox during leg banding, etc. Kestrel nestlings with their large, dark eyes, and ominous, sharp talons, are powerful ambassadors for all birds of prey. They aren't Bald Eagles, but explain that more than forty

years ago, captive-bred kestrels were used to prove the connection between DDT poisoning and its threat to the reproductive health among birds - and people. We owe *Falco sparverius* for helping us to expose our chemical threat to ourselves.

Make an effort to see some of Delaware County's successful kestrel boxes, and plan to replicate the effort. Try to "raptor on" for our smallest falcon.

Blooming Bluebirders

While Waiting the Return of Spring

By John Bigham Jr. 13, New Paris, OH



It seems when summer ends, we go through some sort of depression, longing for spring. But there are still birding projects we can work on in the winter months. Plus we can replace and fix some of our bluebird houses that we could not fix in the nesting season.

One of the things I do in the winter is Project Feederwatch. It only costs \$15.00 and you receive a kit containing a poster, calendar, information booklet, and more.

This is my first year doing it, so I am not experienced with it yet. You can join at this website: www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/index.html



You can also participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count. (www.birdsource.org/gbbc/). It runs February 17th through the 20th. I really enjoy doing this. I also do eBird the year round bird count. It makes entering your bird checklists easy and fun. It also keeps track of a life list and bar charts of the birds you see and when you see them. You can join at this web site: ebird.org

If you do not already participate in the projects above, I encourage you to check them out!!

I have heard and seen a lot more bluebirds around our area than I used to. They are definitely on the comeback!!! The bluebird song is so sweet. Sounding like no other bird I have heard!! Their colors are so bright that just adds to their beauty !!



A couple of weeks ago, I saw four bluebirds that I fledged out of a box in a grassland. They were outside the house that they were fledged out of!!!

I am hoping come spring, they will nest in the same box! I have a downy woodpecker living in a box on the same trail next to a woods I'm hoping come spring they will nest there.

It is so thrilling to see bluebirds that you have fledged out of a box that you carefully monitored for weeks!! It is a blessing to reap the rewards of your labors.

I hope you had a better year than I did, as I only fledged 6 bluebirds this year!! Looking forward to trying again next year!!

Happy Bluebirding!!

Blooming Bluebirders

By Jay K. Brindo

I'm not a teacher by profession, but on Friday, October 7th I was invited to give a presentation to two of my daughter-in-law's classes at Gates Mills Elementary School about 20 miles east of Cleveland. These students are nine and ten years old and I have to admit, I was a bit nervous going there not knowing what to expect. I did ask Marcella Hawkins and Mel Bolt for their words of wisdom and both suggested I just keep it simple. To say the least, these students were very interested in learning about Bluebirds, extremely attentive and full of many good questions. I've never seen so many hands go up and down in such a short period of time. I thought I was going there to teach them but they truly inspired me and taught me a thing or two. It's amazing how much kids know these days that I didn't know when I was their age. So justifies the importance of having good teachers, good schools, the Internet and proper guidance with love on the home front.

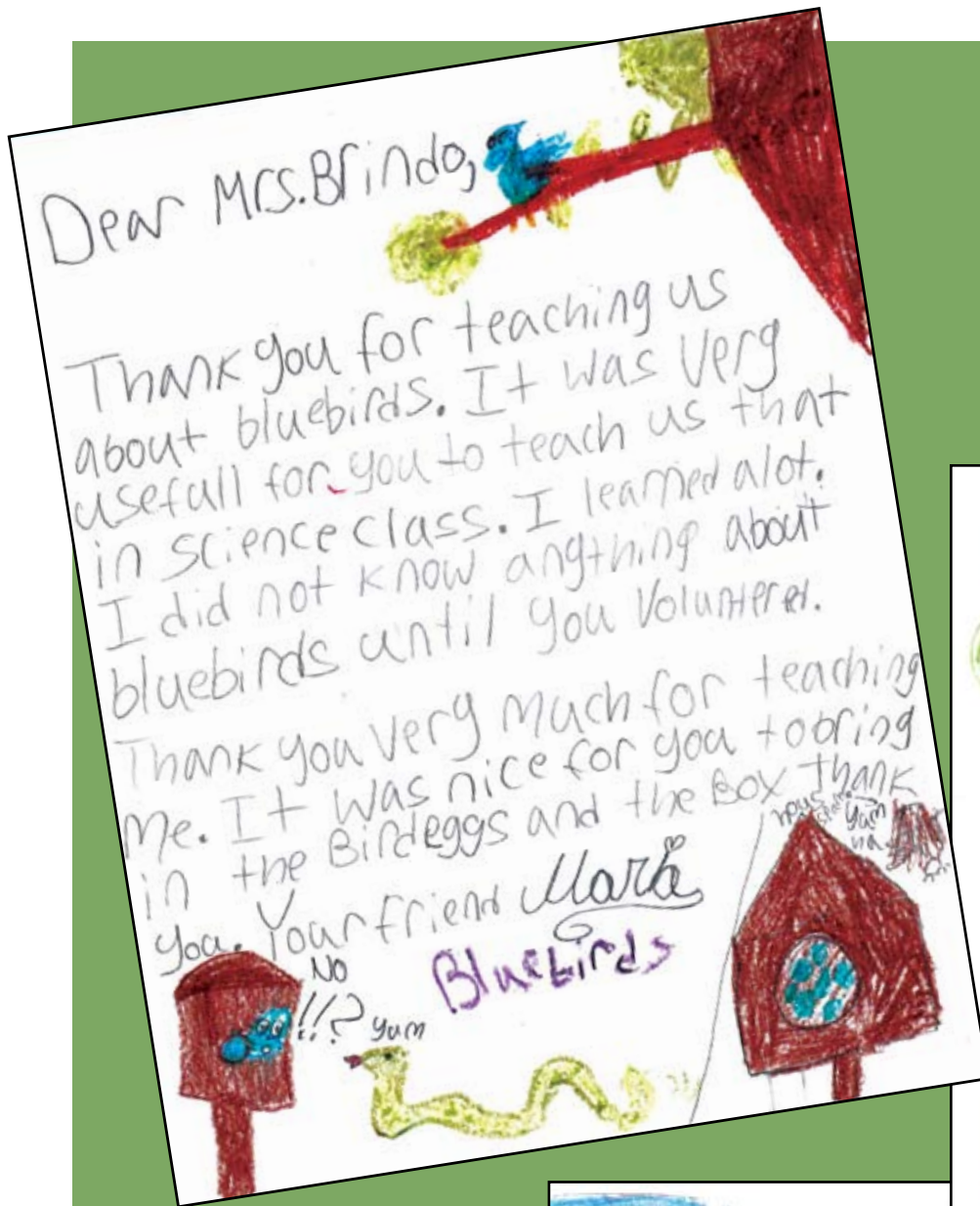
During my time in their classroom I talked about my experiences out on the trail and how I've learned that sometimes nature (like life) is wonderful and other times very cruel and hard to understand. I also showed them pictures from my PowerPoint presentation



and brought in a mounted Bluebird nest box, different types of bird nests and eggs that go in those different nests. One very persistent little boy kept raising his hand until I finally called on him. To my surprise he asked, "Sir, do you have any job openings?" I thought this was so precious I just had to share it with all of you. So I gave him and all the other students the job of learning as much as they could about ways to help preserve the natural world outside their classroom window. They all promised me they would be kind to animals like Bluebirds needing our help. What a blessing this opportunity turned out to be and how fortunate I feel that I didn't say no when

asked to speak. Their teacher (Jocelyn Brindo my daughter-in-law) was also going to follow up with a short quiz the next week which she asked me to help prepare. I hope all of you OBS Area Contacts and other OBS staff can have this same opportunity to interact with your local teachers, scouting groups, clubs, church youth groups, etc.,..... and go meet these future birders on their turf. It's great knowing that as the leaves turn color and we're no longer busy checking our trails, we can still be helping the Bluebirds.





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