



Bluebird Monitor

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

Winter 2016-2017



In Contact With Our Area Contacts

By Tammy Seaman, OBS Area Contact for Lucas County



Twelve years ago we moved from a subdivision to a house that backs up to farm fields on two sides. I immediately put feeders out and waited, and waited and waited for the birds to come... any bird. I had no visitors for several months so I was thrilled to see my first bluebird perched on my split rail fence. I googled info on bluebirds

and bought two nestboxes. Tree Swallows took my first box but the second box became home to my first bluebird pair, with a white egg-laying female nonetheless that had three broods per season. After having her for two seasons I watched in agony as she tried to pick up mealworms for several days with no luck; she couldn't eat. A rehabber euthanized her after finding that her jaw was broken in two places. Later my original male died after being gouged by a hawk and unfortunately his mate ignored her new fledglings when she found a new love interest. So began my emotional rollercoaster ride with hosting bluebirds.



I now have 9 nestboxes scattered across my 5 acre property, along with 16 purple martin gourds. I also monitor 14 boxes on an old railroad line turned walking/biking trail near us where I often get the opportunity to interact with the community. I've fledged 186 bluebirds, 302 tree swallows, and 280 Purple Martins.

I've been a moderator at Bluebirdnut.com since 2008, a home for bluebird nuts like me and newbies that need help. I'm also one of the administrators on a Purple Martin Facebook group called Purple Martin Landlords and Wannabes that was started in 2009 and has 933 members.

My biggest challenge is House Sparrows. I've caught 1,461 in 8 years; 406 in one year alone. One year I watched as a House Sparrow reached in a nestbox, grabbed baby bluebirds that were begging for food and dropped them on the ground...three times. I skipped church that morning to monitor the box until my husband could get home from work to put his rarely used shotgun

Continued on back page

The Wide World of Thrushes

By Jim McCormac, Ohio Wildlife Division



The family Turdidae, the thrushes, includes incredible diversity. Bluebirds are just the tip of the turdidean iceberg. As it currently stands, about 170 species of thrushes are recognized worldwide. Representatives can be found on all continents but Antarctica. Close to home, about 18 species have been found in North America north of

Mexico, and some are among our most common breeding birds. In fact, it is a thrush that is – arguably – the most common North American bird. There is an estimated 300 million American Robins spread throughout the continent, and this big extroverted thrush is also among our most widely recognized bird by birders and nonbirders alike.

Some of the thrush family members rank high among our most beautiful birds, such as the Eastern Bluebird that is so beloved by members of this organization. However, the family may be even better known for sound than looks. Some of the world's most accomplished avian songsters are thrushes. For instance, the tropical solitaires, such as the Brown-backed Solitaire of Central America, are extraordinary virtuosos. The latter's song sounds like crystalline notes that shattered from a musical icicle and are tumbling down a tube. In our figurative backyard, the Hermit Thrush pictured with this article sings one of the most melodic songs of any North American bird. Its song is ethereal and haunting; a beautiful aural punctuation to the mysterious coniferous woods that it inhabits. Another stunning singer is the Wood Thrush, common in Ohio woodlands. This species, and other thrushes, have a split syrinx – the vocal organ that allows birds to sing. Thus, these birds can create different notes simultaneously, in effect harmonizing with themselves. The result is an incredibly complex song that is a delight to our ears, and presumably those of the female thrushes.

In Ohio, ten species of thrushes have been found. Only three of them, the American Robin, Eastern Bluebird, and Wood Thrush are common widespread breeders. Two of the speckle-bellied thrushes, the Hermit Thrush and



Veery, also breed but are much rarer and localized. The Hermit Thrush is listed as a Species of Special Interest by the Division of Wildlife due to its rare nesting status. Many more of the latter two species migrate through Ohio on their way to or from northerly breeding haunts. They are joined by large numbers of Gray-cheeked and Swainson's thrushes, both of which nest throughout northern boreal forests. Swainson's Thrush greatly outnumbers the Gray-cheeked Thrush in migration. The scope of passage is often best detected at night as the birds pass overhead. Swainson's Thrushes call frequently during their nocturnal migratory flights, and the note is loud and reminiscent of a spring peeper frog. Hundreds of birds might be heard within a few hours on favorable nights.

Finally, vagrant thrushes have appeared in Ohio, and these rarities generate great excitement among birders. There have been over a half-dozen occurrences of Townsend's Solitaire, a species of mountainous western habitats. Another westerner, the Varied Thrush, has turned up a few dozen times. Nearly all records are of birds visiting feeders in winter. Best of all, at least to our crowd, have been two appearances of Mountain Bluebird. This lovely sky-blue counterpart to our Eastern Bluebird inhabits the western half of North America, and very rarely strays far to the east.

Blooming Bluebirders

Youth and Conservation or What Does Passion and Conservation Have in Common?

By Darlene Sillick

I have a strong desire to combine my passion for bluebirds with my desire to engage youth in setting up bluebird trails or housing to help a variety of secondary cavity nesters. The definition of passion is “an intense emotion, a compelling enthusiasm or desire for something” The definition of conservation is “the action of conserving something”. It is preservation, protection, or restoration of the natural environment, natural ecosystems, vegetation, and wildlife or birds. My goal is to teach compassion as I get kids outside to learn about and care for something bigger than they are. What started for me as a nestbox in a backyard has grown into something much bigger.

I write grants to acquire funding but sometimes I need to find creative ways to help fund youth as they put up nestboxes for our cavity nesting birds. This past spring I was enjoying a wonderful May migration day at Magee Marsh when I ran into an old friend who talked about his worldly birding travels sitting in first class. He liked to be outside birding and was a graduate of OSU. I mentioned a conservation project that I wanted to launch- it involved redoing the trail of falling down and baffle-less nestboxes at Chadwick Arboretum. This project was perfect for a Boy Scout working on his Eagle Scout award but needed funding. A few days later my old friend sent a \$200 Lowes gift card in the mail and the project started to blossom in earnest!



PVC baffle assembly and painting



The early work crew of scouts, OSU students, family and friends

On Saturday October 15th about two dozen people came together to help Ryan Jenkins, a Boy Scout from Troop 117 of Dublin, fledge his Eagle Scout project. This is the story in Ryan's own words:

My Eagle Scout Project was to help support the expansion of the bluebird species in Ohio at Ohio State University's Chadwick Arboretum located on 1,600 acres on the OSU main campus. The location of my bluebird project was at Chadwick Lake North, which has approximately 19 acres. My project involved taking down 14 old bluebird boxes, some with nesting mice, and to replace them with 20 new bluebird boxes.

The population of these bluebirds has decreased, and their future depends on us humans to provide nesting sites (bluebird nesting boxes) or starting a bluebird trail. A bluebird trail is a series of bluebird boxes along a designated location, which is what I did at Chadwick. The habitat is an ideal location because it provides scattered trees, and a small lake in the center of everything.

My project involved many steps including taking down the old bluebird boxes that were poorly made and the locations of the boxes were not conducive to bluebird nesting. The new sites were marked with flags and I had to buy and prepare the material to make the new bluebird boxes, installing the boxes on EMT poles and use PVC baffles to keep out predators. I had to GPS the new box locations

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and I presented my project to the OSU Ornithology club. Data will be collected by the OSU students and submitted on Cornell Nestwatch.

By relocating the boxes to better sites, it will hopefully increase the number of bluebirds that can nest at Chadwick.

Ryan Jenkins

Boy Scout Troop 117

Dublin, Ohio

Don't be shy about your passion for bluebird conservation. It is such a win-win to see the youth leading adults to help wildlife. From that first box in your back yard to a trail in a nearby park, just do it and the birds and our future naturalists will thank you. Ryan is my 28th Boy Scout with his Eagle project. His brother Joey put up two 18 gourd martin rigs in April 2016 at Ottawa. His story will be in the next issue. Now what are you waiting for? Isn't it time for you to start a project? Especially one involving our youth.



Joey on the left and Ryan on the right. Brothers enjoy helping the birds for their Eagle Scout Projects.



One of the 14 top opening boxes removed.

Winter Blues

By Dean Sheldon,
OBS Advisor



With the approach of winter, many people ask if Eastern Bluebirds (EABL) migrate. Many of the summer resident bluebirds do, in fact, migrate to warmer areas... but not all of them do.

We do not usually see the summer abundance of bluebirds in open areas during the cold weather. The ones that stay here move into wooded areas where they can find shelter in the tree cavities which have been abandoned by House Sparrows and Starlings. Those smart birds have moved to barnyards and feedlots where there is warmth and an abundance of food... just look at any brick chimney top.

Many EABL's roost communally in those cavities during frigid winter nights. They share body/feather warmth and protection

from frosty, bitter winds. Sometimes, the birds will gather in summer's nestboxes for this purpose.

Their main food switches from insects to the fruits and berries of the woods. As the sun warms tree bark, insects move about and the bluebird search for spiders and bark-living insects is on-going.

Water is available from springs, seeps, furrows, ditches, thawing pond edges and small streams.

As EABL's work into tangles and berry patches for fruit, they have super protection from raptors winging on their daily hunting rounds. However, on bitter cold/full moon nights, many a bluebird has felt the cold talons of resident owls as the silent visitors search the EABL communal roosts in woodpecker holes looking for a hot, midnight meal.

2016 Tree Swallows

By Dick Tuttle, OBS Advisor and Past OBS Blue Feather Award Recipient



Every year, on one of my nestbox trails, I usually give a nickname to an individual parent bird that shows unique behavioral characteristics. All of these nicknames have had affectionate intentions, but not all names have been worthy of publication. I have written about some, such as “My Little

Chickadee” that used to cuss me out at each monitoring visit after I had banded her one night, and “Macho Man,” a very aggressive male bluebird that always dove at me as I monitored his families over the years.

Nonetheless, during the 2016 nesting season, I have gone the extra mile to assign a nickname to an entire species. I now call Tree Swallows “Zika Busters.” The Zika virus has been in the news before and after it was found in mosquitoes in southern Florida. Transferred to humans in mosquito bites, this virus causes microcephaly in newborns and has become a nightmare in infected countries. The media reports on Zika’s presence, insecticide use, the release of sterile mosquitoes designed to diminish mosquito populations, medical treatments, consequences of being infected, the quest for vaccines, and everything else being done to stop Zika’s progress. Of course, the ultimate objective of all health departments is to wipe out the Zika virus altogether. According to the Center for Disease Control website, Zika is found in all countries in Central and South America.

So far, the media has not mentioned birds as a partial solution to stop Zika, and of course, birds can’t stop the entire threat, so why am I calling my Tree Swallows Zika Busters? Individual Tree Swallows can snatch infectious mosquitoes from the air and therefore protect individual human beings from being infected. Tree Swallows can slow the rate of Zika infection when they dine on mosquitoes.

While I monitored my nestboxes in Delaware County Ohio that raised 900 Tree Swallows in 2016, I never had to apply insect repellant because my swallows took care of

the mosquitoes and deer flies for me. The only time I had mosquitoes attack me is when I returned to my own yard in Delaware where I have no Tree Swallows.

Citizens in Central Ohio don’t have Zika to worry about, but we do have our own mosquito-borne diseases. The Delaware General Health District has a free brochure, Mosquito-borne Disease; West Nile Virus; La Crosse Encephalitis; St. Louis Encephalitis. The pamphlet describes each disease, its transmission, symptoms, along with prevention techniques. After reading about these local threats, I will have a more liberal attitude toward applying insect repellant in the future.

Tree Swallows in Central Ohio fledged most of their young by the last days of July, then they staged to form flocks that may have drifted north a bit, but then they got serious about heading south and their historic migrations through Ohio usually end by mid-October. Any good bird book will show that Tree Swallows winter near the Atlantic coast in South Carolina, Georgia and most of Florida, while others winter



The parents of these six Zika Busters feed them an average of 6,000 insects a day for 16 to 24 days before they fledge.

along the Gulf Coast and into Mexico and Central America. Swallows also spend winters in the lower third of California's Pacific coast, and some cross the Atlantic Ocean to winter in Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

My projects' contribution to prevent mosquito borne diseases in 2016 not only includes 900 swallow fledglings from 301 nests, but more than 288 pairs of parents. Tree swallow adults can consume up to 2,000 insects a day because 99% of their prey is less than 10 millimeters long, and that's half the width of a nickel. And, most important, ninety-percent of the time, Tree Swallows hunt below 39 feet where we are. One study found that 95% of insects in the Tree Swallow diet are from the orders Diptera and Homoptera. Mosquitoes are in the Order Diptera along with flies, gnats and midges.

To sum things up, I have no doubt that my hobby of raising Tree Swallows is helping to keep fellow humans healthy, here in Ohio, and our neighbors to the south and across many borders. I do what I do for the birds, but when my hobby also benefits people, that is icing on the cake.

Other swallow species also dine on mosquitoes. Each swallow species has its own menu of prey species and specific altitudes where they hunt, along with when and where they migrate. So if you raise Purple Martins, protect Cliff Swallow nests, leave barns open for Barn Swallows, or just watch Bank Swallows and other flying-insect-eaters, smile because these birds are keeping members of our species healthy.

Conserve on for a healthier world!

Reflections – Looking Through my Kitchen Window

By Penny Brandau

As I sat at my kitchen table recently looking through the nearby window I felt a sense of excited relief as I saw "our" bluebirds again! They had finally returned to sample our bluebird feeder offerings and were checking out their nestbox again! They hadn't been commonly visible around our yard during the past several weeks and I really missed them! It was like suddenly meeting a dear old friend again! After the first rush of joy at seeing them I wondered what was new with them, how their young ones were doing, and how long they were planning to stay.

Many of you back yard bluebird landlords have also enjoyed seeing "your" bluebirds again recently at your feeders or nestboxes. Perhaps you have wondered why bluebirds seem to disappear at the end of summer only to reappear several weeks later. One reason for this strange behavior is that they have been going through a period of molting when their feathers are being replaced by new ones. They look scruffy when they are molting. Perhaps they aren't comfortable with their flight abilities during this time or maybe they just don't want to be seen when they aren't looking their normal beautiful selves!

Wikipedia describes bird molting: "In birds, molting is the periodic replacement of feathers by shedding old feathers while producing new ones. Feathers are dead structures at maturity which are gradually abraded and need to be replaced. Adult birds molt at least once a year, although many molt twice and a few three times each year. It is generally a slow process as birds rarely shed all their feathers at any one time: the bird must retain sufficient feathers to regulate its body temperature and repel moisture. The number and

area of feathers that are shed varies. In some molting periods, a bird may renew only the feathers of the head and body, shedding the wing and tail feathers during a later molting period. Some species of bird become flightless during an annual "wing molt" and must seek a protected habitat with a reliable food supply during that time. While the plumage may appear thin or uneven during the molt, the bird's general shape is maintained despite the loss of apparently many feathers."



The bluebirds did indeed have something new to show after their weeks of absence. Molting gave them new sleek feathers! My musings about their young was soon answered too. Suddenly other bluebirds had joined the first pair and were trying to figure out how to enter the bluebird feeder. They closely watched the first pair and soon were entering the feeder. These must be the grown up young from the summer! Then they flew to the nestbox as if they wanted to make sure it was still

unoccupied and available for nesting or roosting. This behavior is often puzzling but is common at this time of year. I still don't have the answer to my last question about how long they will stay but am enjoying my morning coffee as I watch these familiar dear friends and hope they will be here for a long, long time!

For many, many years others have also observed and reflected on the behavior of bluebirds in the fall. In 1842 Henry David Thoreau wrote, "Today....The bluebirds, old and young, have revisited their box, as if they would fain repeat the summer without the intervention of winter, if Nature would let them." I wonder if Thoreau sometimes watched bluebirds through a kitchen window too.

Ohio Bluebird Society Annual Conference

March 4, 2017
registration 8:30, conference 9:00-4:00



John C. Myers Convocation Center ~ Ashland University ~ Ashland, Ohio

30 YEARS OF BLUEBIRD HAPPINESS 1987 - 2017

History of bluebird conservation and the OBS
Recovery success stories of Ohio birds
Current conservation efforts

Lunchtime breakout sessions:
Bluebirding 101
Bluebirding 201
Everything Bluebirds
Youth Conservation Efforts



~This project is supported by the Ohio Division of Wildlife, Wildlife Diversity Fund.~

Open to the public. Cost: \$25 OBS member / \$30 non-OBS member / \$15 student

Registration Deadline: Feb. 18th

Conference Location: 401 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805 ~ www.ashland.edu

Registration form, hotel information and more info available at ohiobluebirdsociety.org

Ohio Bluebird Society Annual Conference

Saturday, March 4, 2017

ohiobluebirdsociety.org



Registration Deadline: Feb. 18th

You must pre-register - there is **NO** walk-in registration this year.

Price (includes conference and lunch): \$25 OBS member, \$30 non-OBS member,
\$15 student (12 and under)

Name: _____ OBS Member? YES / NO

Organization: _____

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

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Lunch Option: ☐Veggie Wrap ☐Ham Club ☐Turkey Club ☐Gluten-free ☐Kids (PB&J)

Additional participants: (if different address, please use separate form)

Name _____ OBS Member? Yes (\$25) / No (\$30)

Organization _____

Lunch Choice: ☐Veggie Wrap ☐Ham Club ☐Turkey Club ☐Gluten-free ☐Kids (PB&J)

Name _____ OBS Member? Yes (\$25) / No (\$30)

Organization _____

Lunch Choice: ☐Veggie Wrap ☐Ham Club ☐Turkey Club ☐Gluten-free ☐Kids (PB&J)

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Make checks payable to "OBS"

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

Additional information and registration forms available at OBS website: ohiobluebirdsociety.org



Member News

"Sometimes you belong so you can give, not just receive. The membership dues to OBS allow us to do so much to help birds, our communities and ultimately ourselves."

~ Chuck Jakubchak

Welcome to New Members

James Lochary Sr.
Sandy Miles
Michael & Martha Tomasko

Thank You to Our Donors

Donations were received from Wilbur and Jean Krafft for \$5. Thank you!

2017 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. Deadline for receiving nomination(s) is December 31, 2016. See the OBS website for more details and to download the nomination form PDF.

Fledgling Reports

OBS is still accepting information about fledglings of bluebirds and other native cavity nesters in Ohio. The fledgling report can be downloaded from the OBS website and sent to info@ohiobluebirdsociety.org

OBS Holiday Gift Ideas

Amazon Smile

With the holiday shopping focus in the weeks ahead please remember that you can help OBS whenever you purchase on Amazon. Simply sign up to purchase through Amazon Smile instead and designate the Ohio Bluebird Society as your charitable choice. A portion of your purchase will be given to OBS and won't cost you anything – what a deal!

OBS Memberships

If you are looking for a gift for a bluebird lover in your family remember that OBS memberships would make a great gift!

OBS Legacy Program

By participating in the Ohio Bluebird Society Legacy Fund you can preserve the memory of dedicated bluebirders and bird enthusiasts, while providing nest boxes for the cavity nesting birds you love and enjoy." For more information see the OBS website <http://www.ohiobluebirdsociety.org/obs-legacy-program/memberships> would make a great gift!

Change in OBS Bylaws

Carrie Elvey moved to amend the bylaws by adding as Section 5.09-"Vacancies among elected trustees shall be by appointment of the board of trustees, by a 2/3 majority vote. The appointees shall finish the term of the trustees they are replacing." Motion was seconded by Penny Brandau. Motion passed.

New OBS Trustees

At the October 1, 2016 OBS Annual Meeting Pat Dutton and Mel Bird were voted in as new OBS trustees. We welcome both of these new additions to the trustee board and appreciate the experience and complimenting skills they bring to the OBS organization.

Feeding Backyard Birds in the Winter

By Cathy Priebe, Photo by Dave Priebe

Everyone has a favorite season and I have to admit that I prefer warmer weather. However, colder temperatures tend to bring birds scurrying to backyard feeders for a quick and easy meal often allowing us great views of special birds that we otherwise would not see if food was not provided especially for them.

The trick to seeing these birds is selecting the types of food that they prefer to eat and also using the proper feeder that gives them the best access to the food. Here are just a few suggestions on what I do to attract birds to my backyard during the winter months.

Types of feeders and feeder locations are important. Cold weather brings all kinds of precipitation; snow, ice, wind etc., so buy a feeder that has some sort of roof to cover your seed to keep it dry and your birds sheltered. A covered fly-through platform feeder is ideal for easy access, while a hopper feeder that holds a substantial amount of seed is nice so you do not have to feed as often to avoid going out in bad weather. Try to locate your feeders in an area that provides shelter from the elements, close to the house or perhaps near hedges or brush piles to give your guests a place to hide from predators. It is recommended to place feeders at least five feet away from structures to avoid collisions.

Tube, suet and other hanging feeders are great for attracting finches, woodpeckers and smaller birds and can be placed on hooks for easy viewing. Thistle (niger) seed will attract visiting pine siskins, purple finches, and American tree sparrows. Providing suet feeders will not only attract woodpeckers, but you will find out that many birds, including blue birds, will eat suet to help them stay warm. Deluxe seed mixes that include sunflower, safflower, millet, nuts and fruit will satisfy the most discriminating bird palate. I highly recommend buying the more expensive mixes for winter feeding as they include more protein and fat which are a very essential dietary need when the temperatures plummet. You can always formulate your own mix based on your budget by combining a cheaper seed mix and adding the deluxe as needed.

Some people believe that by feeding our backyard birds, we are spoiling them and keeping them from eating foods provided by nature. You can argue this point either way, but in the end, birds will eat and survive without our backyard buffets. But when the weather is horrific and natural food sources are depleted or blanketed with snow, it is important



that we help out our feathered friends. Case in point, from my backyard observations, is the Carolina Wren. This wonderful and feisty critter has migrated slowly but surely northward and now winters in Ohio. Because our winters have recently been warmer and with less long term snow cover, they are able to survive. However, frigid temps and extended deep snow cover can ultimately kill this otherwise sturdy bird. I make sure that my Carolina wrens have adequate food and shelter to help them during extreme winter weather.

Here are some other basic tips I found are helpful for maintaining and enjoying your winter bird feeding:

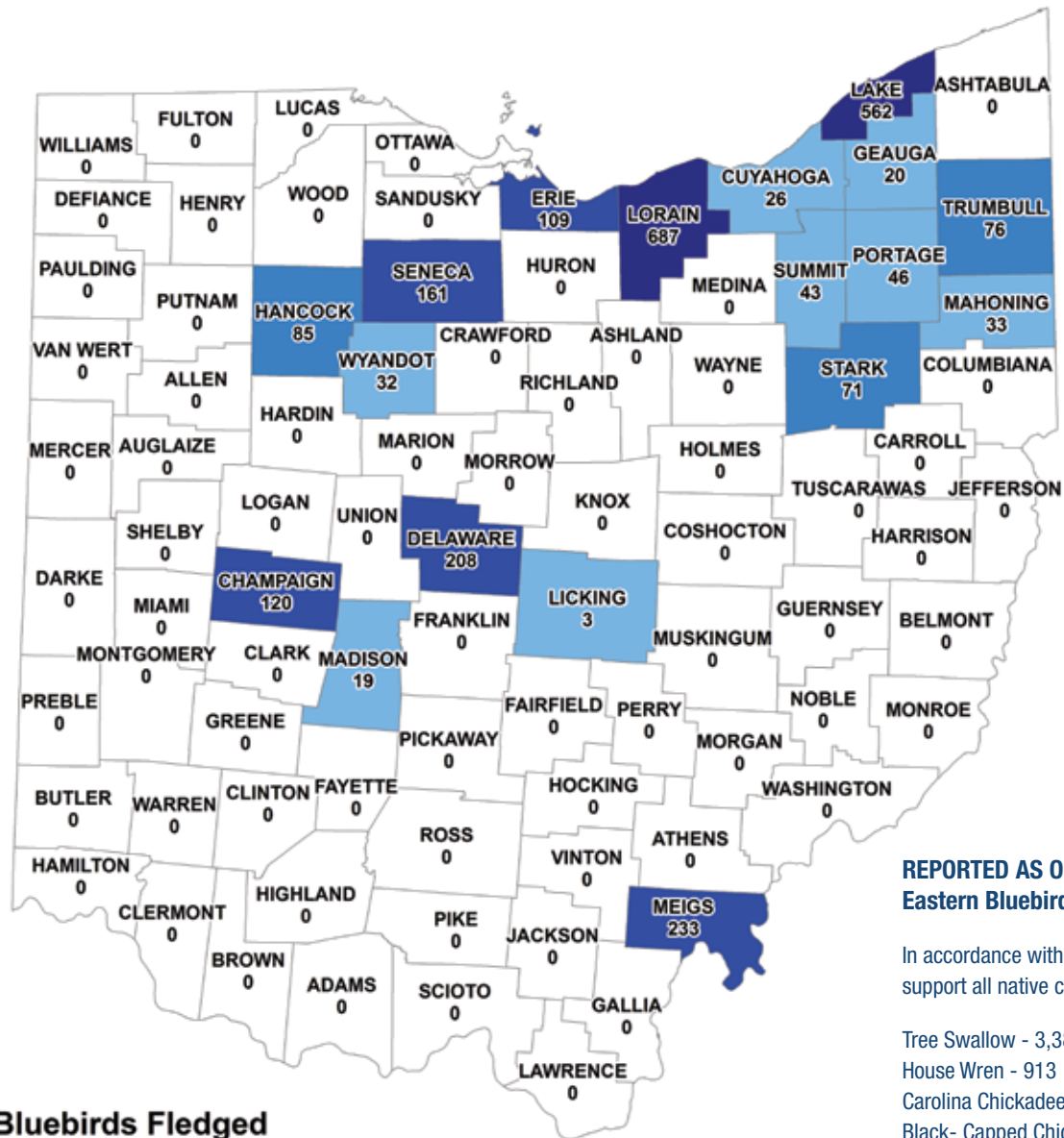
- Clean off feeders, platforms and perches after each snow storm so seed is easily accessible.
- Leave fruit and berries on trees, hedges and bushes to provide a natural source of food throughout the winter.
- Add a heated birdbath to your backyard or place a safe heating element in a regular birdbath to provide birds with water for bathing and drinking. Adding a heated bird bath to my yard greatly increased my bird population. I was the only water source around!!! I highly recommend getting one for your backyard.
- Flatten or shovel snow around feeders to provide easier access to spilled seed for ground feeding birds, like juncos and mourning doves.
- Leave nesting boxes and birdhouses up year round to provide roosting, shelter and protection from predators.

Enjoy your backyard birds this winter and happy birding!

Ohio Bluebird Society

Number of Bluebirds fledged in 2016 by county

(Reported by OBS members as of 23 Oct 2016)



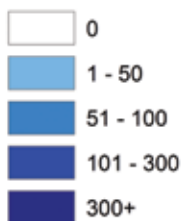
**REPORTED AS OF 10/24/16:
Eastern Bluebird - 2,534**

In accordance with our Mission Statement, we support all native cavity nesting birds in Ohio.

Tree Swallow - 3,384
House Wren - 913
Carolina Chickadee - 41
Black-Capped Chickadee - 37
Carolina Wren - 4
Prothonotary Warbler - 61
Purple Martins - 454
Eastern Tufted Titmouse - 16
American Kestrel - 59
Barn Swallow - 110
Wood Duck - 0
Osprey - 4
White-breasted Nuthatch - 7
House Sparrow Eggs Discarded - 678
House Sparrows Dispatched - 198

Send info to: info@ohiobluebirdsociety.org
Download fillable form -
see FLEDGLING REPORT tab

#Bluebirds Fledged



TOTAL #Fledged = 2534
Reports Submitted = 25

0 25 50 75 100 Miles

Map created by Mike Watson; The Holden Arboretum



Ask Madame WingNut

Bluebirds Over Delaware County

By Paula Ziebarth

I have been involved monitoring public Bluebird Trails and training monitors for 14 years. In public park systems, I am seeing more land use plans that promote succession. As this trend continues in Delaware County, many of our park trail nest sites for Eastern Bluebirds are lost due to competition from House Wrens as trail habitat changes to brush and woodland.

Having trails in the City of Powell parks for the past 11 years, I have also noticed another trend. Even with well monitored nest boxes on trails, Eastern Bluebirds very often choose to nest in adjacent homeowners' yards instead. I believe they view human proximity as a safe haven... or perhaps these curious, intelligent animals find us amusing. The short mowed grass and solitary trees in most suburban yards presents perfect habitat for Eastern Bluebirds. I love working with homeowners to establish breeding pairs of Eastern Bluebirds in nest boxes on their property.

Spring of 2016 found me spearheading a conservation initiative which I call "Bluebirds Over Delaware (BODE)", encouraging interested homeowners to set out an abode for BODE. In most parts of the county, non-native aggressive House Sparrows are a big problem so training people how to deal with this challenge is vital to the success of native cavity nesters in my area.

I put together a short handout, giving homeowners the basics of what is required and offering my help to train them how to manage House Sparrows, protect and monitor Eastern Bluebird nest box, and enter data on Cornell Lab of Ornithology's NestWatch database. Most appreciate a site visit to get them started. Connie Dolder, BODE Advisor, or I visit and recommend placement for their Eastern Bluebird nest box and House Sparrow management box.

House Sparrow management is a touchy subject for some, but necessary if homeowner wants to safely house native cavity nesting birds. Without it, installing a nest box in my area is simply luring native nesters to be killed by these non-native birds. BODE participants must install a House Sparrow "management" box in their yard, placed in area they are drawn to. House Sparrows love to roost and nest in stiff needled pine trees so placement near one of these is good. Placement near human structures or other brushy areas they congregate in is good as well. The box has a 1 1/4" entry hole which excludes Eastern Bluebirds.

I promote House Sparrow inbox trapping as best practice, but realize many cannot do this initially so teach them how to attempt to keep House Sparrows busy in their management box. Homeowner can remove eggs or render eggs nonviable. I do not recommend nest removal unless male House Sparrow has been removed or pair has abandoned nest site. I believe they are more likely to depredate nearby nesters if their own nests are removed. If allowing House Sparrows to remain on site, homeowners should install a Sparrow Spooker on their Eastern Bluebird nest box as soon as first egg is laid.

No project is complete without partners. OBS awarded BODE a \$200 Small Grant to get started, providing nest boxes and Van Ert inbox traps to a few lucky BODE members this spring.

Darlene Sillick, OBS Franklin County Area Contact, has been gracious to offer homeowners affordable quality nest boxes, poles and baffles through her Zeppick Conservation Project. Money donated to Zeppick allows new public trails to be established throughout our area. Darlene donates nest boxes free of charge to public trails that install them with proper pole and baffle systems and provide qualified monitor throughout nest season.

Local Wild Birds Unlimited stores offered a special coupon discount for pole and baffle systems for BODE members.

BODE signed up sixteen members in 2016. It has been a pleasure to meet new people who are passionate about helping native cavity nesting birds. Connie Dolder and I offer ourselves as a resource as needed. Some of our new BODE members have been bitten hard by the Bluebird Bug and we find them some nest boxes to monitor on public trails also. You needn't start a countywide initiative to further Bluebird conservation in your own neighborhood. Take a hundred big steps from the nest box in your own yard and knock on your neighbor's door.



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.



Paula Ziebarth, BODE Coordinator
Delaware County Area Contact,
Ohio Bluebird Society
614-323-7566
paulaz@columbus.rr.com

In 2016, I started a project called "Bluebirds Over Delaware" (BODE), asking interested homeowners in Delaware County to set out nest boxes for native cavity nesting birds on their property. Would you like to set out an abode for BODE? To participate, you must be willing to:

1. Install nest box with 1 ½" entry hole in most open area of yard away from brushy or heavily wooded areas. Installation on free standing pole with predator baffle is required.
2. Install House Sparrow (HOSP) management box in your yard. This will be a nest box with a 1 ¼" entry hole and should be placed near a stiff needled evergreen tree, near your house, or near shrubs or trees where HOSP have been seen roosting or congregating. No predator baffle is needed for this box mount. If willing to actively control HOSP with inbox trapping, you will need a Van Ert Universal Sparrow trap: <http://www.vanerttraps.com/products.htm> If you prefer to remove HOSP eggs as management scheme, install Sparrow Spooker on Eastern Bluebird nest box after they have laid their first egg. It is very important that you do NOT allow HOSP to fledge from this box.
3. Monitor both nest boxes every 3 to 7 days and keep data. Data can either be manually entered on Bluebird Trail sheet and mailed to me at end of nesting season or entered in online database that I can set up for you (preferred).
4. Contact Paula Ziebarth, BODE Coordinator or Connie Dolder, BODE Advisor to help with general bird conservation questions, HOSP trap training, and data entry. One of us would be happy to make a home visit to advise you in proper nest box siting.

Paula Ziebarth: paulaz@columbus.rr.com ; cell phone (614) 323-7566

Connie Dolder: connie.dolder@gmail.com ; cell phone (740) 815-2507



OBS Area Contacts (as of January 2016)

Up-to-date list is available online at www.ohiobluebirdsociety.org

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Cuyahoga	Jakubchak, Chuck	440-238-1720		jakubchak@yahoo.com
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Operation Bluebird to launch in 2017 with Yellow Springs School District

By Bethany Gray, Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist (OCVN) and an Ohio Bluebird Society Area Contact for Clark & Greene counties.

The Tecumseh Land Trust is partnering with the Ohio Bluebird Society and the Yellow Springs School District (Greene County) in a new project that connects local students and teachers to land, birds and conservation. Earlier this year, Kate Anderson, TLT Board Member and owner of Xarifa Farm in Yellow Springs, and Bethany Gray, Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist and regional contact for Ohio Bluebird Society, brainstormed the program's development with TLT and McKinney Middle School staff. Both Kate and Bethany are also members of TLT's Education Committee. With the help of Bethany's husband Jordan, they established a nest box trail on Kate's property in March to try to attract Eastern Bluebirds and other native cavity-nesting birds. Kate attended a workshop at Glen Helen led by Bethany on best conservation practices, and she and her family have been weekly monitoring the boxes and collecting data to share with scientists from Ohio and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. One family of bluebirds did nest successfully as well as Tree Swallows and House Wrens. In May, McKinney teacher Rebecca Eastman visited Xarifa Farm to help monitor the nest boxes and learn more about the

process. Planning is in progress to include 7th and 8th grade students in nest box monitoring, data collection and conservation education in the Spring of 2017. In addition to introducing students to "citizen science," aspects of this project will correlate with curriculum requirements and the district's Project-Based Learning (PBL) requirements.



Ohio Bluebird Society Membership Application

Membership Class	Annual	3-years
<input type="checkbox"/> Student (under 21)	\$10	\$25
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior/Sr. Family	\$12	\$30
<input type="checkbox"/> Regular/Family	\$15	\$40
<input type="checkbox"/> Organizational	\$40	\$110
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting	\$100	\$275
<input type="checkbox"/> Life	\$300	

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☐ Membership renewal ☐ New membership

☐ I am interested in participating in OBS activities

☐ Email Newsletter OR ☐ Print Newsletter

Name: _____

Street: _____

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State: _____ Zip: _____

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Ohio Bluebird Society

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

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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

to good use. My all-time favorite trap is the Deluxe Repeating Sparrow Trap by Uncle Blaine and of course I wouldn't be without my Van Ert inbox traps.

My love for hosting songbirds has rubbed off on my husband. He bought into this hobby instantly and one morning while coming out of the shower in our upstairs bathroom he saw a House Sparrow going in and out of a gourd with newly hatched martins. He quickly wrapped himself in a towel and tore down the stairs yelling to me the situation. He had no plan in mind except to scare that house sparrow out of the gourd and the only thing that was handy was a banana peel that one of the kids left on the counter. Clad with a towel and with banana peel in hand he tore off toward the gourds and threw the banana peel at the house sparrow instantly scaring him away. Me... well, I was on the ground struggling to breath, laughing so hard. He's my hero!

