



Bluebird Monitor

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

Winter 2018-2019



Ohio Bluebird Society Makes an Amazing STEM Partner

By Carrie Hill, OBS Area Contact, bluebird buddy and educator, Bishop Flaget School

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.
Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."*

Margaret Mead, US anthropologist & popularizer of anthropology (1901 – 1978)

Bishop Flaget would like to thank the Ohio Bluebird Society for agreeing to be one of our STEM partners. We are the first school in the Diocese of Columbus to be STEM certified by the Ohio Department of Education. Flaget is the only STEM certified school in Ross County and there are only 55 STEM certified schools in the entire state. We are honored to serve as the area contact for OBS in this county. With an inspired heart, I must say that the outdoor classroom and many of the designations received this year are directly tied to our partnership with OBS.

The 2017-2018 school year was full of excitement thanks to OBS coaching and advice. In October 2017, OBS member Darlene Sillick took her time to journey to our school and lend her expertise. I was concerned that an area contact should always model best practices on their own trails. Many changes have occurred thanks to Darlene's visit and the advice she offered. I have also been an active OBS member and learned a great deal from several of the members. A hearty thank you to Paul Ziebarth for her coaching on HOSP control, box placement, etc. . .



Installing the bird feeder
donated by Darlene Sillick.
Implementing the advice
from OBS on how to
complete bird sanctuary.



Thank you, Paula Ziebarth, for the great suet recipe – made during mentorship program. (See page 3 for the recipe.)

In November, I discovered that the bluebirds were staying the winter with us. I was shocked because we've had bluebirds at the school for approximately ten years. This was the first year they wintered at the school. Each morning, my students and I were given the glorious sight of 9 bluebirds sitting on the sweet gum tree directly outside of my classroom window. Given the fact that my husband had fallen extremely ill right before Thanksgiving, I took the bluebirds' presence as a good omen. I decided that if they would walk this sad winter with me, then I would surely walk a country mile for them. Inspired by their presence, I began to write grants to complete the bird sanctuary during the predawn hours before heading off to the classroom.

Am I superstitious? Whatever the reasoning, the bluebirds stayed with me all winter long. It has been a very busy, fruitful frost! We threw together a mealworm program and started to feed the bluebirds throughout the snowy winter. I'm thankful to say that my husband's health is returning. The bluebirds' presence and the wisdom from OBS inspired me to write nearly \$4,000 of grants (AEP Teacher Vision, ODNR and AEP Environmental Education) in order to promote best practices in blue birding. The school is now certified as a bird sanctuary, Monarch way station (Monarch Watch),

Continued on page 16



Ask Madame WingNut

Pairing Nest Boxes

By Paula Ziebarth

I have been fortunate over the past 16 years to monitor many different trails in different habitats in Ohio. Habitat seems key to deciding whether nest boxes should be paired on a trail, and also how far those boxes should be installed from each other. The birds have taught me a lot over the years. When I first began siting nest boxes on trails in good Eastern Bluebird habitat, I automatically paired them, but now I prefer to start with individual nest boxes every 100 to 150 yards and see if pairing is warranted over time.

When to Pair: If over 50% of your nest boxes are used by Tree Swallows, pairing may be in order. Also, if Tree Swallows are mobbing your Eastern Bluebirds, you may want to set out another box. Eastern Bluebirds will usually prevail if only one pair of Tree Swallows is attempting to take their nest box. If they are mobbed by 4 or more, however, Tree Swallows often outcompete them for that nest box.

Why to Pair: If Tree Swallows are trying to nest, pairing nest boxes can allow them to have a site next to the Eastern Bluebirds. The close spacing of the boxes should prevent another Tree Swallow pair from trying to take the Bluebird box because the established Tree Swallow pair will chase them away (within their territory). If you get both species nesting simultaneously, they will defend each other's nest box from intruders to the best of their ability and act as additional sentries to warn each other if danger is near.

How to Pair: Here is the tricky part. How far apart should the paired nest boxes be? The recommendations in the literature vary from nest boxes installed back to back on the same pole to nest boxes spaced 24 feet apart. The closer the boxes are, the more defensive the birds get, with squabbles and harassment increasing as the box distance shortens. If nest boxes are too far apart, Tree Swallows might use both if their populations are high and the habitat is supportive. From my experience, I recommend pairing about 22 feet apart to start, but be prepared to move boxes closer if Tree Swallows take both nest boxes in the paired station. Since Eastern Bluebirds require a large territory, these paired stations need to be at least 100 yards apart.

Powell Ohio Trail History

Seven neighborhood parks in the City of Powell are in excellent Bluebird habitat. Established in 2006 as paired box trails, I found that Tree Swallows were not allowed to nest in boxes paired 12 feet apart in over 50% of the nest sites. Eastern Bluebirds built “dummy” nests in the paired box and would not allow them to nest. Oftentimes, House Sparrows would try to nest in these adjacent boxes. The Bluebirds seemed to view the Tree Swallows as unwanted competition (thus, the dummy nests to keep them out) and the House Sparrows were definitely dangerous competition so close to their active nest box. Van Ert Universal Sparrow traps were used to quickly remove the House Sparrows when they attempted to use a box, but I came to believe that the stress of having either species near their nest box was not the best way to manage these trails. After nine years of paired box stations, in the spring of 2015 I changed trails in these parks to individual nest boxes spaced at least 100 yards apart. Knowing I had to intercept House Sparrows to keep native birds safe, I installed “trap” boxes with 1 ¼” entry holes in areas I knew House Sparrows would love: near playgrounds, picnic areas, stiff needled evergreens, and human structures.

Two parks in Powell have excellent Tree Swallow habitat with a wet retention ponds and prairie plantings. At Meadowview Park, paired stations were removed in 2012 and boxes sited 25 yards apart around the pond edge and trail edge to accommodate large populations of Tree Swallows.

Summary data is below. Eastern Bluebirds have fledged more birds with the individual nest box sites. Interestingly, at one location, park personnel forgot to remove a paired box. Neither box has been used by Eastern Bluebirds in the last 4 years as they prefer single boxes where possible. I imagine spending less time and energy guarding an extra box (old paired stations) has allowed them to devote more time to guarding their nest box and caring for their eggs and young.

An unanticipated benefit was that more Tree Swallows fledged from these trails than in the past. Trap boxes attracted a lot of House Sparrows, but after they were trapped out each season, Tree Swallows often used these boxes to nest. At Murphy Park, Eastern Bluebirds had completely thwarted Tree Swallow nest attempts for nine

years when the trail had paired box stations. Once solitary boxes were installed, Tree Swallows have successfully nested in the “trap” boxes for the past four years. Carolina Chickadees also claimed some of these boxes located near evergreen trees so their fledging numbers rose as well.

POWELL TRAIL HISTORY – Birds Fledged

YEAR	Purple Martins	Eastern Bluebirds	Tree Swallows	Carolina Chickadees	House Wrens	Carolina Wrens	Tufted Titmice	House Sparrow Attempts*
2006		42	43		2			24
2007		57	31		7			23
2008		76	40		15	2		5
2009		100	37	7	19			43
2010		135	36	6	3		4	54
2011		116	43	15		4		81
2012		96	81	7	10		2	59
2013		135	93		1			78
2014		123	98	3	6	5		111
2015		139	87	25	6			148
2016		136	122	21		4		132
2017	3	207	114	34	8	2		138
2018	15	209	139	19		4		71
TOTAL	18	1571	964	137	77	21	6	967

*No non-native House Sparrows fledged from trail.

South Bass Island Trails History

I have been monitoring nest boxes on South Bass Island in Lake Erie since 2002. Eastern Bluebirds have never attempted to use nest boxes here and nest boxes for Tree Swallows can be spaced much closer than on the mainland due to the abundant supply of flying insects near the lake. Tree Swallows use almost every box, regardless of spacing. I have even installed a couple stations with nest boxes mounted back to back on a pole, and Tree Swallows sometimes use these simultaneously.

In summary, habitat is key. Good Eastern Bluebird habitat is comprised of short mowed grass and some solitary trees for perching. Short mowed grass will allow them to forage for ground dwelling insects close to their nest site. In good Eastern Bluebird habitat, Bluebirds will outcompete Tree Swallows. Solitary nest boxes every 100+ yards works well in such areas.

Good Tree Swallow habitat supports large flying insect populations. Tall or short grass habitat works well and areas near water are especially prized. They require open areas to hunt their flying insect prey. Tree Swallows will outcompete Eastern Bluebirds in this habitat and you can accommodate a lot of them by spacing nest boxes every 25 yards in a grid formation, around the perimeter of a pond, or along a footpath.

Don't be afraid to experiment with spacing to see what works best with your site. Keep in mind that more nest boxes is not necessarily better. When you place nest box(es) within an Eastern Bluebird's territory, especially when closer to their nest box, that Bluebird pair must exert valuable time and energy to patrol and defend their territory from other birds that are attracted to that housing.

Bluey yours, Madame WingNut



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.

Editors note: The following bluebird suet recipe was printed in Madame Wingnut's article on page 10 of the Spring 2018 issue of the Bluebird Monitor. It is republished for those of you who might want to try making your own suet this winter!

Bluebird Banquet (Linda Janilla Peterson)®

- MIX 1 cup peanut butter
- 4 cups yellow cornmeal
- 1 cup unbleached or whole-wheat flour
- ADD 1 cup fine sunflower seed chips
- 1 cup peanut hearts (or finely ground nuts)
- 1/2-1 cup Zante currants (or raisins cut in halves, or chopped dried cherries)
- DRIZZLE and STIR IN 1 cup rendered, melted suet
- Cool.

Resulting mix will be crumbly and should have bean/pea sized lumps from the drizzling of the melted suet. If too sticky after cooling, mix in a bit more flour. If too dry, drizzle in more melted suet. Refrigerate any mix you are not using to prevent suet from turning rancid.

Nutritional analysis: Protein 12.7%, Carbohydrates 45.9%, Fat 32.7%, Fiber 5.9%

Blooming Bluebirders

Chimney Swifts

By Joey Queen



Funding for this project was from a grant from Ohio Ornithology Society. We appreciate their support in these projects.

Over the past summer, I embarked on a journey to complete my eagle project, a conservation project of my own. While I had seen and participated in many before, leading a project myself was an eye opening experience. I planned to build a Chimney Swift nesting tower at the Safari golf course, and I needed a lot of help to do it. Between friends, family, and fellow scouts, and the staff at the golf course, many people played a hand in making this happen.

Chimney Swifts, unlike most other birds, are unable to perch. Instead, in days past, they used to cling to the walls of hollowed out trees. Unfortunately, as America industrialized, a lot of these trees were cleared out, forcing the birds to rely on artificial means of nesting such as the chimneys that led to their name. Nowadays, Chimney Swifts rely almost entirely on man made structures to nest, and need our help in order to continue to thrive in our modernized environment. Chimney Swifts have recently been listed as a common bird in steep decline, and so I decided to try and do my part to keep them around.

The Chimney Swift nesting tower stands 12 feet high above a cement foundation, yet most of its assembly happened away from its current site. With the help of my Uncle Mike, we used his truck to transport all of the wood to his house from Lowe's and began the process of cutting it. While he used his power tools for the most part, my dad and I spent our time doing a lot of measuring to make sure we had our construction as accurate as possible. The bulk of the tower was constructed by making three different segments that were supposed to slide together like a jigsaw puzzle before being screwed in place, so it was imperative that our measurements were precise.



After we got our wood and rebar cut, we began constructing the wooden boxes that assemble the tower, as well as a sun roof. Because the Chimney Swift nesting tower is so large, it is easier to construct as much as possible away from the location and then bring it to the site for assembly. After we constructed the separate components of the tower, we transported them to our garage for storage while I contacted Ted, the manager at Safari Golf Course, about scheduling a day that he could lend us some helping hands and equipment.

The following week my dad and I bought 20 eighty pound bags of concrete which we would soon use to cement the foundation of the tower and transported them over to the golf course. With the help of a couple of his employees and a couple of gators, we transported all of the bags over to the site and began mixing the concrete. We had built a wooden foundation form to set the concrete in, and made a web of rebar within it to offer extra support. As we finished cementing the foundation, we waited several days for it to dry while I started to reach out to Ted about coordinating the main event: the assembly of the tower.



To access the top of the tower, we opted to use some scaffolding that my uncle had laying around. Additionally, we tested which order the remaining boxes fit together best and started to chisel them so that they would slide into place easily. Finally, I reached out to many of my friends to ask for their assistance with the assembly of the tower, which was important to get done early in the day while the Safari staff was still on site. A few of my friends and I showed up early to get stuff moved out to the base of the tower and to set up the scaffolding, and then we had a bit more help show up and managed to finish constructing the tower in a manner of hours.



Above all, going through this process taught me the importance of well founded communication. With so many players and pieces, it was imperative for me to be planning ahead so that I could keep everyone notified which is definitely something I improved on over the course of the project. There were also times that I hadn't expected, where I needed to rely on others, such as needing my Uncle's truck to help transport the materials. Additionally, because the tower was constructed so near to my home, I'll get the opportunity to watch as the swifts begin flocking to it over the years, and am eager to see my work come to fruition.



“And He Looked Like A Peddler Just Opening His Pack.”

By Dean Sheldon, OBS Advisor



And wonder of wonders... they'd never seen anything quite like that before. Allen Bower's entrance to the first conference of the Indiana Bluebird Society in October 1997 was indeed a wonder to all who assembled for the occasion. The Bowers showed up early at that pristine and sparkling lake site at Quaker Haven Camp on Lake Dewart southwest of Syracuse...part of the wonderful lakes' region of Indiana.

Not only did they merely show up: Allen had loaded the pickup to the gunwales with his birding inventions and assorted claptrap for attracting and housing all manner of native songbirds...from wrens to bluebirds to tree swallows...flickers and wood ducks.

And... a full complement of devices designed to resist the nesting efforts of undesirable (and harmful) alien species. And there was more... devices for post mounting and poles and ropes and gizmos for crank-up/tilt-down aerial apartments to suit a wide variety of high nesters. And then, he set up shop between the lodge and the lake shore...and then he waited.

And pretty soon, down the driveway slope came a heavy rumbling of horse-drawn buggies and wagons with Amishmen and boys of all shapes and sizes toting loads of their inventions... and the fun began and ideas and inventions were shared all around.

And that's the way Allen lived his life. Searching and sharing imagination and birding experiences... freely giving his creations and modifications to everyone who would listen.

He and Nina did not miss meetings of the Ohio Bluebird Society...even with ice covered highways. When the Indiana meetings were held in the northern part of the state, the Bowers were there. He rarely missed the midsummer gatherings with Amishmen from Michigan, Indiana and Ohio. He was a correspondent in the mastheads of the bluebird journals supporting those organizations.

Allen Bower's Charter Membership in the Indiana Bluebird Society was registered in 1996 (a full year before the Quaker Haven Camp Meeting). He received the Blue Feather Award from the Ohio Bluebird Society in 2013.

No matter when or where he traveled on behalf of birds, this enthusiastic peddler was always opening his generous and imaginative pack to all who would listen... and believe.

Bluebirds Nesting Too Close

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



Fifty-one seasons ago I read that nestboxes should be spaced at least one hundred yards from other boxes in order for our Eastern Bluebirds to nest in peace. My first season in 1968 is a long time ago and you would expect that by now, I would have seen everything there is to see as I have religiously monitored my nestboxes every season.

Until 2018, the closest distance between two successful bluebird nests on my trails was recorded in 2006 when two pairs of bluebirds nested 70.7 yards apart within the Panhandle Road Grid in the Delaware Wildlife Area. The grid was set up for Tree Swallows and consisted of six rows of nestboxes spaced with 25 yards between boxes and rows of boxes. When four boxes are spaced at 25 yards to make a square, the diagonal is 35.36 yards. The bluebirds had nested in boxes two diagonals apart for a distance of two times 35.36, or 70.7 yards. I assumed that their hunting territories were separate and opposite.

June 18 and 22 were the first-egg-dates for the bluebird nests in 2006 and both nests became successful by fledging four and two, respectively. At the time, I was very impressed since both bluebird families had followed successful Tree Swallow families in the same boxes.

Other bluebirders have reported bluebird pairs nesting less than one hundred yards apart, but there were tall houses standing between their nestboxes. Our homes can effectively separate territories so bluebirds can comfortably nest in the front and backyards while being mostly unaware of their close neighbors.

On July 7, 2018, I was monitoring nestboxes at the Olentangy Environmental Control Center located on the Delaware County border with Franklin County in Central Ohio. The OECC is a sewage treatment facility for Delaware County and its eastern border is the Olentangy River. The nestboxes were installed to attract bluebirds and swallows in 1983 before I used measuring tape to layout locations. Most of the boxes had been “stepped off” and spaced to attract Tree Swallows.

On July 7, I opened Box-9 to count three bluebird eggs. The next box, Box-8, held a bluebird nest made of pine needles

that told me that the nest had been built during rainy weather. Wet pine needles keep their shape to make nest building possible, while wet grass loses its shape and collapses like shoe strings.

The second nest did not concern me at the time since “sister nests” do occur. Nine days later, I had a different reaction when I found four eggs in each of the two nests. I had never found bluebirds nesting so close together. I began to think like a scientist and ultimately planned to watch both nests to count the adults involved, etc.

On July 26, I found four nestlings in Box-8 and three nestlings and one unhatched egg in Box-9. On August 1, I returned to gather data. I selected a location about 50 yards away where I setup my spotting scope and a canvas director’s chair. I lined up my scope with both boxes and set its magnification at 15x so both boxes would be in focus so I could tell the sex of any bluebirds that landed on either box. I numbered each line in my composition book to represent minutes and started my observations at 9:33 a.m.. I recorded data until 10:25 when rain forced me to abort the project and retreat to my car.

Once the rain subsided, I returned with my 100-ft. measuring tape and measured the distance between the two nestboxes. The boxes are 94 feet apart, or 31.3 yards.

So, what did I observe at the site during 51 minutes? At Box-8, adult bluebirds landed and entered the nest cavity to feed young thirteen times. The male attended to his family eight times while the female fed her nestlings five times. Most food items were large enough to be visible with bare, green caterpillars being the most common.

Box-9 was another story. After no bluebirds landed on the box for 42 minutes, I had a strong feeling of doom. When a female bluebird finally landed on the front of the box with a large green caterpillar in her bill, I started to think positively, but not for long. The female leaned her head into the entrance, leaned back, and swallowed her intended food item. Her behavior told me that her nestlings were dead.

After I had loaded my equipment in my car, it was time for the last observation of my investigation. I opened both boxes to count four live nestlings in Box-8, and I found three dead nestlings in Box-9. The deceased had been dead for a day or more since I could smell a weak odor of death. Since I have

salvage permits from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Ohio Division of Wildlife, I secured the unlucky nestlings in a sealed plastic bag and transferred them to my home freezer. They will be presented to the Ohio Wesleyan University Zoology Museum. At the least, their salvaged wings and tails can be used to teach feather emergence, etc.

The salvaged nestlings showed no evidence of violence so the reason for their deaths will remain a mystery. Nonetheless, as I checked Box-8, the parents were extremely vocal as they circled above me. They were a very active couple. Did they keep the other pair from feeding their young? I will encourage museum curators to weigh the remains.

Well, I guess that spacing nestboxes one hundred yards apart for nesting bluebirds remains a good management standard.

Conserve on through all the good and bad news!



For hunting, bluebirds flew to the tree line in the background. The unlucky family lived in the nearest box, Box-9.

The Abnormal or Not ??? By Mel Bird, OBS Board Member



In the twenty plus years of monitoring a bluebird trail of 50 plus boxes we have never experienced what we found in two of our boxes this year, in our residential area with one acre lots.

The first abnormal happening is that on inspection of this particular

box we found a bluebird nest with 3 eggs in it. On our visit the following week we found a wren’s nest built over the bluebird nest with one egg, so needless to say, we had to leave it. On our following visit, we found a bluebird nest built over the wren’s nest but no eggs were ever produced, so the 3 nests were removed. I have never seen a bluebird nest built over a wren’s nest before.

The other abnormal box started out June 1st with a bluebird nest with 4 eggs, June 9th there were 2 eggs, and on June 16th , 26th, and July 2nd, there were 3 eggs, then on July 7th there were 4 eggs. On July 31st we removed the

abandoned nest with 4 egg. To our surprise, we found that the nest actually contained three layers of nests with 2 eggs in the first, 3 eggs in the second, and 4 eggs in the third. All three nests combined were not much taller than a good solid bluebird nest. I guess these things are what makes us want to go back year after year never knowing what we might find. To better see the progress, I have summarized the dates below for this last box:

6/1	4 eggs
6/9	2 eggs
6/16	3 eggs
6/26	3 eggs
7/2	3 eggs
7/7	4 eggs
7/16	4 eggs
7/26	4 eggs
7/31	4 eggs, removed abandoned nest

A Look at An Ohio Bluebird Program

By Penny Brandau,
Area Contact for Lorain County, Ohio



September! The word evokes memories of cooler nights, shorter days, going back to school, falling leaves and empty bluebird nestboxes! For the Black River Audubon Society Bluebird Program in Lorain County in northern Ohio, September is also a busy time for both reflection about the past year and planning for the next nesting season. We have had a few meetings since August for those very purposes.



At the end of the summer the group of bluebird landlords from Pioneer Ridge in North Ridgeville met together to talk about their personal nestbox challenges and successes and to learn methods and techniques to hopefully improve their successful nestings next year. We are happy to be a small part of the bluebird conservation work which is happening in many backyards of this community and throughout Lorain County.

In September the annual fall meeting for the Black River Audubon Society's volunteer bluebird trail monitors was held as usual at the coordinators Fritz and Penny Brandau's home. The weather outside that day had turned rainy and chilly but the planned potluck dinner and meeting just moved inside where

it was warm and cozy. Potlucks have something for everyone and this one was no exception! After sharing a delicious meal, we celebrated the work done on the 31 bluebird trails which are managed by our 48 trail monitors and discussed desired changes for 2019. New ideas for trail challenges with house sparrows and house wrens were discussed and results of changing trail layout patterns were among the many topics of conversation. We learn much from each other.

We have an amazing group of bluebird trail monitors! They have walked innumerable miles of trails this year, braved heat, cold, rain, ticks, wasps, and lots of other challenges. They keep detailed notes every 4-7 days on every bluebird trail box we manage (all 450 nestboxes). Their notes are turned in at the September meeting and the information becomes data on a multi-page report. Every nesting attempt from our trails is entered into the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's website Nestwatch. The summary information is also shared with the Ohio Bluebird Society for their state-wide fledgling report. It was exciting to see a wonderful increase again in the successful fledging of native birds in our area. Here is a brief synopsis of the summary of our trail nestboxes plus the reports from private homes with bluebirds in our area of Lorain County. In 2018 there were 153 House Wren fledglings, 1423 Tree Swallow fledglings, 24 Black Capped Chickadees, and 834 Eastern Bluebirds.

At the fall meeting special thanks and recognition were given to two monitors who have been volunteering for over 13 years with our bluebird program, Dick Lee and Arlene Ryan. Diligently checking dozens of nestboxes week after week, and month after month takes dedication and a passion for the work of bluebird conservation but to do it year after year shows a special love and commitment. Pictured below are some of the other trail monitors at the fall potluck and meeting.



Some volunteers do a different kind of work in the bluebird program. After the nestings are over and the trail monitors notes are turned in at the September meeting a smaller but dedicated group of volunteers meet to review guidelines and then help enter the data into the Cornell Lab of Ornithology Nestwatch program. These keyboard whizzes work for several weeks at home on their own computers until each nesting attempt has been recorded into the Nestwatch website. What a huge contribution to citizen science, right?

Another way to help the bluebird program in the fall and spring is by volunteering to help with trail improvements and new trail installations. It takes a lot of maintenance to keep hundreds of nestboxes in good shape so the volunteers in this area are very appreciated! Building nestboxes, repairing and relocating, and installing new nestboxes are part of the work done to help in this area.



It truly takes a village to “bring back the bluebird” and we are grateful for all the “villagers” in our area of Ohio who are working to help bluebirds and other native cavity nesters. We hope you also are working with a bluebird program in your own area of Ohio and making a difference in your corner of the world, one bluebird box at a time.

“Who’s Been Sleeping in my Bed?”

By Judy Semroc, OBS Trustee and Area Contact for Stark County

Photo by Penny Brandau

For most of us, when the bluebird nesting season has come to an end, we diligently clean our boxes, sanitize them and have them ready to go for the next year. This article will give you a different outlook at our nesting boxes during the times when the bluebirds have finished using them.

I too will clean my boxes after the bluebird nesting season has finished, but I leave them up through the fall and winter, then clean them again in early spring before the bluebirds return to nest. By doing that, I have noticed a variety of other bird species are using the boxes for roosting, especially during the night and on days of inclement weather. It’s hard to know whether providing a dry and protected roosting box helps them to remain in my yard, but I am continually delighted by their presence!

Species I have observed entering the nest boxes at dusk or leaving them at dawn include Carolina Wren, Downy Woodpecker, Tufted Titmouse, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch and just the other day, a Red-breasted Nuthatch was checking out the opening in one of my Gilbertson boxes! My resident bluebird families will also use the boxes in winter if they remain in the area.

So maybe this is the year to try something different and attract some other species to use your nest boxes -leave them up during the fall and winter and see what avian treasures may find their way to a temporary home in the cold.





OHIO BLUEBIRD SOCIETY

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

MARCH 9, 2019

SPEAKERS

Julie Zickefoose	Keynote Speaker, Naturalist, Author and Artist
Robyn Bailey	Cornell Nestwatch, Project Leader
Douglas McClain	ODNR Waterfowl Biologist
Kris Davis	Ecosystem Manager, The Dawes Arboretum
Anna Rose	Ohio Young Birders Club
Katelyn Shelton	Ohio Young Birders Club
Madeline Sudrick	Sophomore, Ohio University

LUNCH HOUR BREAK

Area Contacts session
Book signing by Julie
Nestwatch demo by Robyn
Demonstrations and Posters
OBS display table – traps and boxes for sale
Silent Auction

CONFERENCE LOCATION & TIME

Check-In: 8:00am
OBS Annual Members Meeting: 8:30 - 9:00am.
Conference: 9:00am – 4:30pm
Non-members plan to arrive by 9:00am main conference start time
Ashland University
John C Myers Convocation Center
638 Jefferson Street, Ashland, Ohio, 44805

COST

\$25 OBS member, \$35 non-OBS member, \$15 student (21 and younger)
Includes Conference and Lunch (please pre-register using attached registration form)

- *Registration Deadline: March 1, 2019 Register Online at <https://ohiobluebirdsociety.org/conference/>*
- *Or mail completed registration form to: Pat Dutton, OBS Membership Chair, 7747 Township Road 103, Millersburg, OH 44654*



Artwork designed by Anna Rose
OYBC high school Senior

Awards, displays, silent auction and much more!
Visit our website for more information and to see program updates!
<https://www.ohiobluebirdsociety.org/>

THANK YOU SPONSORS!





OHIO BLUEBIRD SOCIETY

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

MARCH 9, 2019

REGISTRATION FORM

Registration Deadline: March 1, 2019

Register Online at <https://ohiobluebirdsociety.org/conference/>

(please pre-register, space is limited)

Name: _____ OBS Member? YES / NO
Organization: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

I AM REGISTERING AS

_____ OBS Member (\$25) _____ Non-OBS Member (\$35) _____ Student – 21 and younger (\$15)

MAIL REGISTRATION

Pat Dutton, OBS Membership Chair
7747 Township Road 103
Millersburg, OH 44654

OBSMembershipchair@gmail.com

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO

OBS

LUNCH SELECTION

Name on Name Tag: _____

Check Lunch Choice:

- ___ Smoked Turkey and Gouda
- ___ Roast Beef and Boursin
- ___ Ham and Swiss
- ___ Gluten-Free sandwich
- ___ Vegetarian Wrap

Please bring your own reusable coffee/tea or water container to help the planet and our goal of a zero waste conference!!



Photos by Katelyn Shelton
OYBC Sophomore



THANK YOU SPONSORS!



Member News

Welcome to New Members

Donna Bennett
Aaron Bratka
Marie Dauer
Ronald Duecker
Christine Frick
Don & Fran Tretera
Paul Tursic
Donna & Dennis Vroom

In 2019 OBS will be filling one seat on the Board of Trustees. If you are interested or know of someone who would be a good fit, please contact us at ohiobluebirdsociety@gmail.com or 440.462.9084.

Thinking Outside the Box

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology Nestwatch eNewsletter for October 2018 has some great free resources for educators of middle school students (grades 5-8) called Thinking Outside the Nestbox. This includes a series of five activities leading youth through the steps of making a nestbox, putting it in appropriate habitat and monitoring it. Students get experience as citizen scientists. The booklet can be downloaded or free copies can be requested by mail. Check out the link below.

<https://mailchi.mp/cornell/nestwatch-eneews-help-us-learn-about-great-crested-flycatchers-1313385?e=4875454b71>

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Mike Watson

Thank you to everyone who has submitted a 2018 fledgling report. To date, we have received 25 reports, totaling 2401 Bluebirds, 3557 Tree Swallows, 1263 House Wrens, 906 Purple Martins, as well as smaller numbers of 8 other native species. I expect the reports to arrive faster as we move into the fall and people find time to compile their totals, especially those larger programs that involve groups of volunteers. Here at Holden we rely on roughly 60 volunteers to monitor >200 nestboxes. Some of those volunteers assist with data entry to NestWatch (which I encourage all of you to do!). Our data entry is nearly finished and will add 300-400 to both the Bluebird and Tree Swallow counts as well as ~60 Purple Martins.

As we move into the fall I also encourage all of you to think about individuals or groups who you feel are worthy of special recognition for their work with bluebirds or wildlife conservation. We will accept nominations for this year's Blue Feather and Wildlife Conservation awards until the end of the year. Nomination information can be found on the OBS website.

Speaking of the website, in mid-September the Board chose web designer Nicki Lock to create OBS's new website. We have worked with Nicki to identify strong and weak points of the current website and goals for the new site. An early priority was to add online conference registration to the current website, and Nicki was able to accomplish this in early November. Please check the conference section of our website for more information and to register online. Meanwhile, work will begin on the new website, which will feature new aesthetics and user interface, as well as some new content and functionality. One very exciting part of this process is learning about ways in which the new website can improve the efficiency of OBS business.

And, of course I want to remind everyone to register soon for the 2019 Conference, which will be held March 9th in Ashland, Ohio. We have another exciting lineup of speakers on a wide range of topics – see the conference information on pages 10-11 of this newsletter. You may also register online at <https://ohiobluebirdsociety.org/conference>.

Treasurer's Report by Molly Wilsbacher

1. The Board of Directors are really excited about an upcoming redesign of our current website. The redesign should be a significant improvement over what we are currently suffering with. One example is we will now have the ability to accept Ohio Bluebird Conference registrations and payments via the website! This new functional website should be up and running in a few weeks.
2. Our bank accounts currently reflect that OBS has \$19,346.14 in our accounts, after making a \$2,214 deposit on the new website.
3. Please save the date for our next Bluebird Conference on March 9, 2019! We are very excited about this year's conference with nationally recognized speakers. Please check the conference section of our website for more information and to register online. We can't wait to see you there!

OBS Holiday Gift Ideas

Amazon Smile

The Holidays are rapidly approaching and buying gifts for loved ones is a common part of those days. Giving gifts and helping OBS at the same time is easy to do! Amazon Smile is a simple and automatic way for you to support the Ohio Bluebird Society every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to OBS. It's simple to do! For more info go to: <http://www.ohiobluebirdsociety.org/shop-amazon-smile/>

OBS Memberships

Memberships to the Ohio Bluebird Society make wonderful surprise gifts for those bluebird lovers in your life! Great stocking stuffers too! It's a gift that benefits not only the recipient but also helps promote bluebird conservation!

Blowfly Parasitism

Darrell Gammon, Portage County Area Contact, would like to share an article about blowfly parasitism on nestlings. Darrell does not control blowfly infestations, as he believes they are a natural occurrence. Darrell says: "First, I feel its part of natural occurring and yes, it weakens and/or delays fledging of the birds of the nestlings but why would I want to alter just to get more birds out and possibly have weaker ones that would not fall into the "survival of the fittest" picture? Anyway, here's an article that really interested me that you can share to others. Will people disagree of me NOT helping to increase fledging rates? Possibly but like I said earlier, I do not want to alter what would occur in nature without human interference. (Article: <https://sora.unm.edu/sites/default/files/journals/wilson/v104n04/p0630-p0643.pdf>)

OBS Facebook

facebook

OBS area contact, Marcella Hawkins, keeps the OBS Facebook page fresh and she's always looking for photos and interesting notes for our page. Marcella notes we have over 900 "followers" of our page. Check out our Facebook site at <https://www.facebook.com/Ohio-Bluebird-Society-147503035273304/>



OBS member Janice Petko won popular award and first place in her category at the Art Show at the Algonquin Mill Festival in October for her artwork.

OBS License Plate

Join OBS in showing your support for both the bluebirds and the organization we love so much by participating in our Bluebird Ohio license plate project. We would like to have a formal OBS bluebird license plate created which would show OBS, and a design of a bluebird as a new organizational Ohio license plate.

In order to get the process moving along, the following conditions need to be met:

1. 150 original signatures from people who intend to purchase the new plate (it does not mean you have to purchase one)
2. Complete the Petition to Establish Organizational License Plate Form BMV 4820
3. Requires the passage of a bill by a state legislator
4. Once all the conditions have been met and the designs are submitted, organizations must maintain a minimum of sales of 25 license plates per year.

What could this mean for OBS?

- A great visual method of promoting OBS and bluebirds
- For each plate sold, \$15 would come to OBS
- OBS does not need to pay any money to have this plate created and sold

The form for signatures can be found at <http://publicsafety.ohio.gov/links/bmv4820.pdf>

Once we get the 150 signatures, we will move forward in contacting a state legislator to pass the bill allowing this new plate design.

How you can help:

Print off the form for signatures from the link above and contact friends, relatives and others to ask them to consider signing the form.

If you are an OBS County contact, consider getting signatures from the OBS members in your specific county.

Consider bringing the form to areas where the public may gather - fairs, conferences and many more.

Thanks for your help in moving this project along. If you have any questions, please contact Mike Watson (obsresident@gmail.com), Pat Dutton (OBS membershipchair@gmail.com) or Judy Semroc (rainefox51@gmail.com)

Thanks,
Judy Semroc
OBS trustee and OBS Area Contact for Stark County



OBS FLEDGLING REPORT

Reported As Of 11/12/2018: Eastern Bluebird - 2,401

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

Tree Swallow – 3,557	Osprey – 11
House Wren – 1,263	Barn Swallow – 82
Purple Martin – 906	Prothonotary Warbler – 74
Black-capped Chickadee – 31	Tufted Titmouse – 4
Carolina Chickadee – 28	House Sparrow Dispatched – 447
Carolina Wren – 19	House Sparrow Eggs discarded – 556
American Kestrel – 67	Number of Reports – 25

Send info to: info@ohiobluebirdsociety.org

Download fillable form - see FLEDGLING REPORT tab

OBS Officers, Board of Trustees, and Advisors

We wish to thank the many people working with and for the Ohio Bluebird Society. Without their help, we could never accomplish our mission.

TRUSTEES

John Barber (Vice President) -
jbarber27@gmail.com
216-233-2271

Mel Bird -
mrbird90@aol.com • 419-577-9545

Pat Dutton -
obsmembershipchair@gmail.com
330-763-0474

JoAnn Kale -
joann.kale@gmail.com • 479.769.0574

Loyd Marshall - llmarsh@aol.com

Judy Semroc -
rainefox51@gmail.com
330.877.3551

Darlene Sillick -
azuretrails@columbus.rr.com
614-288-3696 (text preferred)

Mike Watson (President) -
mwatson@holdenarb.org
440.946.4400 ext. 132

Molly Wilsbacher (Treasurer) -
OBSTreasurer@gmail.com
614-886-0372

ADVISORS

Mel Bolt -
mellen@sssnet.com • 330.262.0448

Linda Lang -
lindaflang@gmail.com • 419.651.4196

Dean Sheldon -
ohtreefarm370@gmail.com •
419.752.1451

Dick Tuttle - 740.363.6433

MEMBERSHIP CHAIRS

Dave Dutton: 330-674-7585
Pat Dutton: 330-763-0474
obsmembershipchair@gmail.com

E-mail:

info@ohiobluebirdsociety.org

Phone:

440.462.9084

Website:

www.ohiobluebirdsociety.org

Address:

The Holden Arboretum
9500 Sperry Road, Kirtland, Ohio 44094

facebook

Like us on Facebook! Search for Ohio Bluebird Society to join our group.



Ohio Bluebird Society Membership Application

Membership Class

Annual

3-years

<input type="checkbox"/> Student (under 21)	\$10	\$25
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior/Sr. Family (over 60)	\$15	\$40
<input type="checkbox"/> Regular/Family	\$20	\$50
<input type="checkbox"/> Organizational	\$50	\$140
<input type="checkbox"/> Life	\$300	

☐ Tax deductible gift to OBS \$ _____

☐ Membership renewal ☐ New membership

☐ I am interested in participating in OBS activities

☐ Email Newsletter OR ☐ Print Newsletter

Ohio Bluebird Society is a 501(c)(3) Organization

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____

State: Zip: _____

Phone: _____

County: _____

E-mail: _____

Make checks payable to:
Ohio Bluebird Society

Mail to:

Pat Dutton, OBS Membership Chair
7747 TR 103
Millersburg, OH 44654

OBS Area Contacts (as of May 2018)

County	Name	Phone	Alt. Phone or Email	E-mail
ALLEN	Mohr, Mark	419.302.2707		mohrbluebirds@hotmail.com
ASHLAND	Lang, Linda	419.651.4196		lindaflang@gmail.com
ATHENS	Caldwell, Reid & Teresa	740.448.7445	freidc@yahoo.com	teresacaldwell@athensswcd.org
CHAMPAIGN	Rutan, Jean	937.834.3336		cpjrutan@gmail.com
CLARK	Gray, Bethany	937.767.1919		ohiobluebirder@gmail.com
COLUMBIANA	Nutter, Susan	330.692.2447		susannutter11@gmail.com
CRAWFORD	Minor, Mary Lee	419.562.6377		chickadee@columbus.rr.com
CUYAHOGA	Barber, John	216.233.2271		jcbarber27@gmail.com
DARKE	Luttmer, Bob	937.526.5477		bonnie561@roadrunner.com
DARKE	Smith, Tom	937.996.1629		bluebirdman@embarqmail.com
DELAWARE	Tuttle, Dick	740.363.6433		ohtres@cs.com
DELAWARE	Ziebarth, Paula	614.323.7566		paulasbirdz@yahoo.com
ERIE	Bird, Mel	419.577.9545		mrbird90@aol.com
FAIRFIELD	Kale, JoAnn	479.769.0574		joann.kale@gmail.com
FRANKLIN	Aldridge, Julie	218-820-3286		juliealdridge10@gmail.com
FRANKLIN	Sillick, Darlene	614.288.3696		azuretrails@columbus.rr.com
GEAUGA	Brindo, Jay	440.343.9275		jbrindo@aol.com
GREENE	Gray, Bethany	937.767.1919		ohiobluebirder@gmail.com
GUERNSEY	Barber, Tom	740.439.4284		klbarber62@roadrunner.com
HAMILTON	Romine, Jim	513.236.5598		jimdromine@gmail.com
HANCOCK	Nye, Fred	419.387.7465		evaferdy@tds.net
HURON	Bird, Mel	419.577.9545		mrbird90@aol.com
HOLMES	Hawkins, Marcella	330.465.6987	330.276.0909	gofish710@embarqmail.com
LAKE	Watson, Mike	440.497.4669	440.946.4400, ext 132	mwatson@holdenarb.org
LORAIN	Brandau, Penny	440.670.3684		pennybrandau@gmail.com
LUCAS	Seaman, Tammy	419.349.5162		erictammy@sbcglobal.net
MEDINA	Rabung, Dale	330.725.0895	216.973.1503	twodr@zoominternet.net
MIAMI	Peters, Teresa			tm_peters@yahoo.com
MONTGOMERY	Romeo, Sam	330-503-6730	office: 937-890-7360 ext 223	sromeo@audubon.org
NOBLE	LeVasseur, Doug	740.630.7945		doug.levasseur@gmail.com
OTTAWA	Ziebarth, Paula	614.323.7566		paulasbirdz@yahoo.com
OTTAWA	Rock, Lisa	419.708.3949		snowbunting123@gmail.com
PICKAWAY	Hill, Carrie	cell: 740.248.425	home: 740.474.2439	Hillteach@gmail.com
PORTAGE	Gammon, Darrell	330.575.5166		invisibleman53@yahoo.com
ROSS	Hill, Carrie (Bishop Flaget School)			chill@cdeeducation.org
SANDUSKY	Rock, Lisa	419.708.3949		snowbunting123@gmail.com
SENECA	Coffman, Jim	419.618.1835	419.448.4753	jrussoff@gmail.com
STARK	Gammon, Darrell	330.575.5166		invisibleman53@yahoo.com
STARK	Semroc, Judy	330.877.3551	cell 330.612.0391	rainefox51@gmail.com
SUMMIT	Grande, Marcy	330.807.6983		mgrandesign@yahoo.com
WARREN	Jeffries, Art	317.445.8559		gonebirding@hotmail.com
WAYNE	Bolt, Mel	330.262.0448		mellen@sssnet.com
WOOD	Hamlin, Terry	419-349-8596		tkhamlin@icloud.com



OHIO BLUEBIRD SOCIETY

The Holden Arboretum
9500 Sperry Road
Kirtland, Ohio 44094

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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.

ohiobluebirdsociety.org

facebook



Affiliated with the North American Bluebird Society

What's Inside...

OBS Makes a Great STEM Partner.....	1, 16
Ask Madame Wingnut	2-3
Chimney Swifts.....	4-5
And He Looked Like A Peddler Just Opening His Pack.....	5
Bluebirds Nesting Too Close.....	6-7
The Abnormal or Not???.....	7
A Look at an Ohio Bluebird Program.....	8-9
Who's Been Sleeping in My Bed?.....	9
2019 Conference Registration.....	10-11
Member News.....	12-13
Fledgling Report.....	14
OBS Contact Block.....	14
OBS Area Contacts.....	15

Deadline for Submitting Articles:

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

Continued from page 1

and school yard habitat (National Wildlife Federation). We are also a designated WILD school through the ODNR. All of this would not have been possible without the inspiration, wisdom and coaching of OBS.

The bluebird monitoring trail has never looked better! The neighborhood is twittering with such a rich variety of birds that it is staggering! A few simple changes gave songbirds a much safer place to raise their young.

As you can see by the pictures, our students are already enjoying their outdoor classroom. As we continue growing this program, Bishop Flaget will continue to lean upon the true ornithologists at OBS. I'm happy to say that our blue bird buddies are real experts and have made this teacher a much better birder. Nothing pleases me more than to watch the eyes of my students (and teachers) pop when they see a bluebird for the first time. We are currently in the month of May and have several active nests to monitor.



Taking off bird box to install baffle.



The new bird bath fountains.