



Bluebird Monitor

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

Fall 2022



House Sparrow Management Techniques

By Paula Ziebarth, aka Madame Wingnut



I have been monitoring Bluebird trails for over 20 years in House Sparrow (HOSP) populated areas. HOSP are non-native, aggressive nest box competitors. When they claim a nest box, they often kill adults, eggs and/or young native birds such as Eastern Bluebirds. I have learned a lot over those years regarding HOSP management techniques and would love to share them with you.

Some people will tell you not to install nest boxes in areas where HOSP are found. I believe these areas are few and far between and much prefer to trap and dispatch HOSP whenever possible. This makes an area much safer for all of our native cavity nesting birds.

Some manage HOSP by removing nest boxes they try to use. I view HOSP interest in nest box as a great trapping opportunity. If given the choice between "use it or lose it", I will use that nest box by installing a 1-1/4" hole reducer on it. This allows HOSP access, but excludes Eastern Bluebirds.

Deterrents

- 1) **DON'T site nest box for native cavity birds near stiff needled evergreen trees or dense shrubs.** HOSP are drawn to these trees, nesting or roosting in them. Also keep nest boxes a distance away from human houses or outbuildings.
- 2) **DO remove potential HOSP nesting or roosting areas wherever possible:** install hardware cloth over fan/dryer vent exhausts; remove nests from gutters; block access behind signs;



Juvenile male house sparrow on the left has beginning of a black bib and juvenile yellow bill. Adult male on the right has pronounced black bib and black bill.

prune trees and shrubs that harbor groups of HOSP, etc.

- 3) **DON'T feed seeds or other food that HOSP eat during nest season.** Thistle seed, sugar water for hummingbirds and a few mealworms occasionally are fine during nest season. Feeding other foods during fall and winter months is fine.
- 4) **DO carefully consider other native cavity nesters' territory and habitat requirements** when siting multiple nest boxes in an area. The more boxes you have in a given area, the more attractive they are to HOSP so why load up an area if boxes will realistically not be used by native birds?
- 5) **DO provide a solitary tree or perch near the box for the Eastern Bluebird or other native bird to use as a sentry post.** A native male bird perched nearby may be able to chase HOSP as it approaches box.
- 6) **Removing HOSP nest and eggs is not much of a deterrent.** Removing the nest seldom drives the male HOSP away. Male HOSP can stay with "their" box for months before they give up. Emptying box of all nest material can set "ecological trap" for native cavity nester. They enter the HOSP's box, and he follows them in. Seed cracking beak is excellent head cracking beak. I find Tree Swallows (TRES) are especially susceptible to being killed by HOSP in this manner.
- 7) **DO NOT let HOSP reproduce in your boxes.** Because they are a non-native invasive species, they are not protected by law. Although native cavity nesters are protected under the federal migratory bird act, HOSP are not. Inbox trapping is the best practice to control HOSP, but if unwilling to do this, remove their eggs once or twice per week and leave the nest.



Mature male house sparrow. This seed cracking bill is an excellent weapon to kill native cavity nester adults/young or eggs.

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- 8) **Install monofilament line on front of nest box** as shown in downloadable PDF document on the ohiobluebirdsociety.org

The diagram also shows you how to install line on the roof to dissuade HOSP from perching up there and harassing Bluebirds.

- 9) **If HOSP are especially numerous in your area, install a sparrow spooker on active native nester's box.** After first egg of native cavity nester is laid, sparrow spookers can be used to help deter HOSP from killing eggs/young/adults.



House sparrow nest - Hallmarks include upswept sides into a eventual domed nest. Heterogeneous mixture material usually with grass seed heads.

Best Practice = Trap and Dispatch

- 1) **Learn to identify both female and male HOSP.** Get to know the male's "song". A good place to learn both is: https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/House_Sparrow/id
- 2) **DO NOT install only one nest box.** It works well to have an empty nest box for the HOSP to "try" to use where you can trap it. Otherwise, he/she is more likely to evict your nesting Eastern Bluebird (EABL): killing eggs, young and adult(s) in the box. Consider dedicating a box specifically for trapping HOSP. Install a 1- 1/4" hole reducer on a standard nest box and site it near a stiff needled evergreen tree (ex: Austrian pine, blue spruce), bird feeder, human structure, shrubby or brushy area where they roost, etc.
- 3) **DO use inbox trap to capture HOSP as soon as there is evidence they have been in a box.** Evidence of HOSP activity will include one or more of the following: HOSP seen in or on the box; male HOSP chirping enthusiastically beside the box; HOSP nesting material in the box; HOSP roost evidence (white dry feces, about 1/4" long white chow mein noodles). It is not necessary to wait for nest material to be added to capture them.
- 4) **My favorite inbox trap is the Van Ert Universal Sparrow Trap** which can be purchased through this website: vanerttraps.com. DON'T allow male HOSP to declare territory and wait for him to attract female and lay eggs. His singing attracts not only a female, but plenty of new males who are interested in his "find".
- 5) **DO check every hour or two when trap is set in a nest box during daylight hours.** Birds should be dealt with quickly and humanely. Native birds may become trapped and must be released as soon as possible.

6) TRAPPING TIPS:

- Have all nest boxes ready for trapping. Box(es) should be fitted with trap set screws if using Van Ert Universal Sparrow Traps. Manufacturer recommends using #10 Pan Head screws, 1/2" long. This makes it easy to slip in a trap when needed. Make sure side vents are not too wide or HOSP will escape through them when trap is sprung.
- If monitoring multiple boxes, start your trip by checking boxes most prone to HOSP usage. That way you can set traps and return at end of monitoring trip to retrieve trapped birds.
- When approaching nestbox, if you see nest material up near hole or vent, you have a House Sparrow (HOSP) nest. Quickly block hole with hand, plastic grocery bag, or small rag and you may get lucky by trapping HOSP inside.
- As you open box to set trap, ignore HOSP that is watching you – don't make eye contact – pretend you don't notice HOSP and hide trap from view.
- Reduce HOSP nest to top inch or so of material so trap can spring freely shut
- Replace any eggs they have laid or add plastic craft egg to back of box where they can see it.
- Scatter attractive HOSP nesting material on ground in front of box. HOSP love fluffy feathers, white or colored.
- Put single blade of grass in box hole
- Set trap and leave quickly – don't linger by box long.
- Time of day - setting trap early in the morning or at dusk will almost certainly capture male as he is energized in early morning to go into "his" box. Setting trap at dusk is very effective way to capture the HOSP. This is the one trapping protocol where you do not need to check box until an hour or two after dawn.
- When retrieving trapped birds, always put mesh laundry bag over box and cinch tight at pole before opening – insures no escapes (especially if you have trapped both of them).



Eastern bluebird eggs depredated by house sparrow, pecked open and discarded at base of box.

- 7) **When trapping, if you capture the female HOSP, DO reset your trap immediately** as the male will likely return shortly. After you capture the male HOSP, DO remove all nesting material and trap from the box.
- 8) **After capturing a HOSP, DO NOT release him/her elsewhere.** You will be transferring your problem to someone else and the HOSP may just beat you home.
- 9) **After capturing a HOSP, DO quickly and humanely dispatch the animal.** Methods are explained in this excellent website: sialis.org/hospdispatch.htm
- 10) **DO recycle the HOSP if possible.** Bag them and put in a freezer immediately after dispatch. Our local wildlife rehab center really appreciates this food source for injured Cooper's and Sharp-Shinned Hawks. These hawks eat birds in the wild, and are not very fond of the mice that are fed to the raptors at the center. It is very important that no chemicals (car exhaust, etc.) be used and no BB's or pellets for any HOSP you wish to recycle. Call your local wildlife rehabber first to see if they can use them.
- 11) **If you accidentally capture a native bird, you can easily tell through your mesh bag.** Simply release the bird

unharmd. Capturing a native bird in a nest box that has obviously been claimed by a HOSP can save their lives. IF the HOSP follows the bird into the box without a trap in there, the HOSP will kill it by pecking it in the head. Sprung trap provides safe barrier to keep HOSP away from the native bird until you can release him/her. The native bird is released immediately and after that trauma, hopefully will not be back for awhile (another good outcome because box is NOT safe until you catch HOSP).

- 12) **If HOSP are especially prevalent on your property, you may want to use a repeat bait trap** (baited with white bread or millet seed) to reduce their numbers. This is especially effective starting in late summer (after nest season is done) through late fall. A wonderful repeat bait trap can be found at www.sparrowtraps.net Another great bait trap is the wire sparrow trap available at <https://www.purplemartinproducts.com/> This trap is compact and easy to use. During nest season, I often capture problem House Sparrows by baiting with fluffy white feathers only, or with a single male House Sparrow. I trim primary flight feathers, and keep bird(s) fed, watered and covered at night when they are in a bait trap. The live bird attracts others.

Cutest Nest Hole User By Rob Thorn

The Audubon field trip was going great. We stopped by an old woodpecker hole, and I commented on how woodpeckers rarely got a chance to re-use their holes. "The competition for nest cavities is fierce", I said, "and some big bully of a bird probably has claimed the old hole". Just then a tufted titmouse peered out of the hole, before launching to a nearby branch. As the rest of the group laughed, I corrected myself: "also super-cute little birds can claim the holes."

Titmice might win the title of 'cutest nest hole users', or at least give chickadees a run for their money. The perky little birds with the small crest and beady eyes are secondary cavity users, so they're always on the prowl for small cavities in which to build their nest cup. Both members of the pair will give a cavity careful inspection before settling in to build the nest. The nest is surprisingly soft, being mostly moss, bark strips, and grass, and both adults help build it and defend it.

Usually the clutch is 3-6 eggs, and the female won't start incubating until the clutch is full, so a brood of titmice all develop to the same size. Cavities are fairly easy to defend against predators, but we rarely see big troops of titmice following their parents. This suggests that a lot of the fledglings meet an unfortunate fate after leaving the nest. If you've ever seen fledgling titmice, they're noisy, curious, and clumsy, so that's probably not a big surprise.

With their preference for cavities, most titmice are around areas that have lots of woodpeckers or lots of natural cavities. Here



Photo by Gina Swindell

in Ohio, that often means areas with snags or old dead ash trees, or areas with lots of sycamores. They're also not shy about taking over nest boxes, though the boxes need to be on the edge of woods. Titmice usually will not commute out into meadows. If you want to site your nest box to actually attract titmice, it needs to be in the woods, usually fairly high up on a tree trunk, and it needs a small 1 ¼ inch diameter hole. Then the titmice will need to fend off the chickadees and nuthatches to claim their prize. Cute, but fierce.

Rob Thorn lives in the Columbus area and is an avid birder, field trip leader and writer for Columbus Audubon. He is also a National Audubon CBC compiler and it is a real treat to go for a bird walk with Rob. He is a true walking avian encyclopedia and has a large following.

The Phenomenal Photographic Art of Jim McCormac

By Molly Wilsbacher, OBS Treasurer



I've always enjoyed reading the daily newspaper, especially on Sunday. One of my favorite parts of my local paper, the Columbus Dispatch, is the Home & Garden section, in particular articles by Jim McCormac. Jim writes the bi-weekly Nature column since 2005; and, if my calculations are correct, he has written 346 articles for the Dispatch as of July 31, 2022.



What impresses me the most about Jim's articles are the accompanying photographs. There is an artistry to his photos that is lacking in most nature books and articles.



Many Ohio Bluebird Society members may recognize Jim's name because he was our featured speaker at our Bluebird Conference in 2018. I distinctly recall him referring to the Piliated Woodpecker as "the one who sounds like a jackhammer." Ever since then, I've used that same phrase when visitors ask me, "what is that" when they hear a jackhammer up in one of the old trees behind my backyard.

Others may know Jim as the author of the *Ohio Birds and Biodiversity* blog, which averages between 30,000 and 40,000 visitors a month. As I write this article, there are over 5.5 million views of his blog. One of my favorite blog posts – besides the article on bluebirds – concerns poison ivy and the various

bird species who enjoy eating its berries. As Jim says on his website, "The more of us who care, the more likely that our natural world will survive."

According to his website, Jim became fully engaged in photography in 2003 when he acquired his first digital camera. Since then, photography became a passion of his, if not an addiction. His success can be boiled down to three general principles: (1) subject matter expertise, (2) knowing your photography equipment, and (3) lighting is everything.

Jim acquired much of his subject expertise working for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources for 31 years. He started his career there as a field botanist and later specialized in wildlife diversity projects, especially those involving birds. Besides the *Columbus Dispatch* newspaper, Jim has written hundreds of articles for other publications and is a contributing editor for *Bird Watcher's Digest*, where he writes a regular photography column. He also authored or coauthored six books.

I'm sure you will agree with me that Jim is one of the best wildlife photographers in Ohio, if not in the entire United States. The expressions that are captured on his subjects are quite remarkable. Looking at the photographs that accompany this article, it is as if the bluebirds are looking right at you!



I encourage everyone who reads this article to subscribe to Jim's blog so you can receive an email delivered directly to your inbox: jimmccormac.blogspot.com. I also encourage you to view Jim's photo website at: www.jimmccormac.com where there are over 1,000 photographs. Finally, I

would like to thank Jim for letting the Ohio Bluebird Society use his photographs in our newsletter!

Millersburg Elementary Ring Cam Grant

By Lynda Park, SLP

OBS awarded a grant for the purchase of a Ring nestbox webcam for her school and the students had the adventure of watching the nesting cycle of a pair of bluebirds through this amazing technology. OBS trustee Pat Dutton helped Lynda Park with the set up and monitoring of this educational project.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which we can use to change the world.”

-Nelson Mandela

This past school year, we enjoyed another opportunity to watch firsthand our bluebirds’ life cycle in action using the Ring camera in a bluebird nesting box on our school grounds (we call it our “bird cam”). Our adventure began when we first saw the birds working hard to make their nest in the early spring. We celebrated the arrival of our first clutch of eggs in late spring—a cold snap in the weather seemed to delay the laying of their eggs this year. Then we cheered as each little egg hatched. We saw the parents bring the babies food and observed how the mother trained the babies to waken and chirp to get fed. We learned that the mother even cleans the nest after the babies eat (we decided that was a level of dedication to which we were sure we could not commit...). Then we watched the babies grow, stretch their wings, begin exploring the opening to the nesting box, and finally get brave enough to fly. One by one, we saw them leave the nest and not return. Then a second batch of eggs arrived, and the bluebirds’ lifecycle began again.

Thank you all again for blessing our students with the opportunity to experience the lives of animals around us in such an amazing way. We are so grateful for what we have been gifted—and you are making a difference in the lives of children who may never have had this opportunity without your help. You are making a change in the lives of children who will grow up with a newfound love of nature, able to impact the world around them in a positive way. Thank you for choosing to make a difference in our children, in our community, and in our world. Thank you for helping us to gain our wings to fly.



OBS trustee Pat Dutton and Millersburg educator Lynda Parks pictured by original nestbox with Ring camera installation.



The Vanishing Bird Habitat

By Loyd Marshall, OBS Advisor and Former Trustee



I never moved very far from where I was born and raised. For my first twenty years I lived in Farmdale, Ohio. Farmdale is a rural farming area with mostly dairy farmers, full or part time, as some farmers worked other places to make ends meet. As a kid in the 50's, we pretty much kept busy and entertained ourselves outside. Television was in its

infancy and most families in the country didn't have it yet. There was no such thing as cell phones or video games, and desktop computers were another 25 years away from even the simplest ones. In the summer we rode our bikes all over on the roads and walked through the fields, pastures, and woods. Crossing through private property was not a problem since most of the owners knew us and would often stop to talk. We were able to enjoy the outdoors and all of Mother Nature's world (mammals, birds, reptiles, plants, insects, and features of the land).

The modern term I use for fence rows is "strip habitat" because it includes more areas than just borders between fields and pastures. It includes the area between the road and the field, the riparian area next to the streams and all the perimeter area around the fields. In case you wondered what fence rows were, they were separations or divisions between farm fields. Fences were used to keep livestock confined or to just divide the fields for different crops, but they were all called fence rows. Many of these fence rows had grown up to weeds, brush, or even small trees. Farming equipment was much smaller, and farming was very different from today. It was mostly dairy cows or livestock of some type which had to be contained.

Fence rows had some additional benefits such as providing cover for wildlife and birds. Rabbits, squirrels, and ground hogs found homes in the fence rows. Rodents like mice, rats and moles made burrowing nest in these areas. They in turn were food for the larger wildlife. Many varieties of wildflowers grew up in the fence rows, which provided food for bees and birds. Fence rows also provided excellent habitat for nest building.

In my early twenties, mid 60's on the calendar, I moved to Gustavus, Ohio, about five miles from where I spent my early years. At that time Gustavus was mostly dairy farming, but on a larger scale because it was a more rural township and had

a much lower population than the neighboring township of Kinsman. Over the next fifty to sixty years Gustavus, along with a lot of northeast Ohio, changed from dairy farming to grain farming.

As grain farming replaced dairy farming there was a big change in land use; the fence rows were taken down and the pastures were turned into crop land. Many of the wood lots were cut down and converted to crop land. The evolution of dairy farmland to crop land is no different than the increased use of land for homes, stores, and manufacturing.

One of the things I had never even thought about until some 30 to 40 years after moving to Gustavus was what I later called "strip habitat." I define strip habitat as all the narrow plots of vegetation that grow almost anywhere that is not cultivated or manicured (mown lawn). This strip habitat was very crucial to mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and insects to provide shelter, food, and a place to raise their family. It was everywhere and was the greatest place to explore without destroying crops or bothering the farm animals in the pasture. It also kept me off the road, except for the time to bicycle or walk to another destination.

With the change of land use and the vast improvement in agricultural equipment it is much easier to keep things neat. The farmers wanted to eliminate the strip habitat since it is where the small animals live and can get to the crops for food. The fences around the pastures were taken down since they didn't have livestock to hold. The 6- or 8-foot vegetative strips around the crop fields were eliminated. Along with improved agriculture equipment is the new and improved lawn care equipment that most homeowners and farmers have. With this equipment they can trim much closer to the crops and mow directly to the edge of the field to their yard or ditch line. This eliminated the strip habitat and gave it a more manicured look. Either way it eliminated the natural areas for all god's creatures that called it home or was a source for food supply.

Along with new and improved farming equipment, came new and improved equipment for mowing roadside and park areas. Road ditches in the old days that were mown straight across with a 7-foot sickle bar mower are now profile mowed to the contour of the ditch and 15 to 25 feet back.



Riparian areas are another form of strip habitat that are beneficial but are often removed of vegetation to eliminate the habitat use. There should be a natural buffer of trees, shrubs, and other vegetation along waterways, not only for habitat, but for erosion control and keep field runoff out of the streams.

With all this loss of strip habitat, I feel it has a very negative effect on the bird populations of the past, such as: bobwhites, pheasants, grouse, meadow larks. I remember sitting on my back patio and hearing the very distinct calls of these birds and maybe a faint sound of a ruffed grouse in the distance.

Now when you look around the area, all the fence rows are gone. I thought to myself "Where have all the fence rows gone, from a long time ago"? It brings to mind a song by Peter, Paul and Mary from a long time ago:

*Where have all the fence rows gone, long time passing?
Modern times have taken them from everywhere.
Modern equipment has helped them go.
Oh, when will they ever learn?*

They have gone the way of the many small dairy farms we once had and have been replaced with large grain farms. Strip habitats were removed, and the fields were combined to make larger fields. Larger fields make it more economical to use larger equipment and increase the crop output.

The size and the way that fields are farmed has been a slow, but constant change over the years, leading to the vanishing bird habitat.

Lloyd Marshall Receives The Cardinal Award

In addition to the Hall of Fame inductions, ODNR also presented the Cardinal Award to four Ohioans. The Cardinal Award, created in 1971, honors individuals and organizations that demonstrate exceptional awareness and concern for ideas reflected in the department's mission statement: To ensure a balance between the wise use and protection of our natural resources for the benefit of all. Cardinal Award recipients have included outdoor writers, educators, farmers, biologists, naturalists, businesses, sporting organization, and volunteers across the state of Ohio.

Lloyd Marshall's enthusiasm for wildlife, especially birds, has long been an inspiration to others and the impetus behind the many volunteer hours he's generously given to the ODNR Division of Parks & Recreation. Marshall has been volunteering for more than a decade with Ohio State Parks and the Army Corps of Engineers to monitor bluebird boxes. He offers his time to train volunteers and educate the general public on why cavity nesters—like bluebirds, warblers, and owls—are an important resource for conservation in declining habitats. He also monitors man-made nests, keeping meticulous records about species' populations. Lloyd is active in the Ohio Bluebird Society, the Ohio Ornithological Society and North American Bluebird Society, and continues to educate the public on wild-bird conservation. Marshall is a resident of Farmdale, Ohio.

Treasurer's Report by Molly Wilsbacher

- 1. We truly appreciate those of you who paid their membership dues and made donations over the last quarter through March 31, 2022.** We received \$2,945 in memberships with three new Life Members, \$1,772 in donations, and a \$3,500 grant from the Cardinal Health Foundation, which is given due to our tireless leader's unwavering support and commitment to our organization (we truly appreciate you, Darlene and Cardinal Health!).
- 2. Most of our donations this past quarter were memorial donations in memory of Fred Nye (Area Contact who died unexpectedly).** Over the last two quarters we received \$1,765 in donations in memory of Fred. A big thank you goes to Fred's family, especially his dear wife, Juanita. If you would like to make a memorial donation to the Ohio Bluebird Society in honor of Fred or Dick Tuttle, you can do so via PayPal from our website (ohiobluebirdsociety.org/support-us/donate/) or you can mail a check to the Ohio Bluebird Society, Ohio Bluebird Society, 9500 Sperry Road, Kirtland, OH 44094 – please put in the memo who it is for. Thank you!
- 3. It is not too early to start thinking about our annual Bluebird Conference on Saturday, March 4, 2023, which will be held at the usual central location of Ashland University.** We need your help to make the silent auction the best one ever! Please reach out to me if you are downsizing and have any items that might be useful in our silent auction. Items that usually garner the highest silent auction prices are framed artwork, bird boxes, and mugs/glasses. Please email me at OBSTreasurer@gmail.com and I will make arrangements for pickup by me or another OBS Member. Please keep in mind that the value of all donations can be used as a tax deduction next year. Thank you!
- 4. Our major expenses in the 2nd Quarter of the year** included \$522 for our Newsletter, Membership Chair Expenses of \$272, and Website Expenses of \$124.02. Our bank accounts are healthy with our checking account reflecting \$14,755 as of March 31, 2022. Expected expenses next quarter include liability insurance and our quarterly newsletter.

Meet Our New Board Nominees

Heather Harris



I was born in Plano, Texas and spent the first 10 years of my life living in Richardson, Texas. At a young age, my Dad and I would take evening walks and he would always point out the different bird species to me, specifically the Purple Martins. I had no clue then how much song birds would impact me later on in my life.

In 1986, my Dad was transferred for his job to Ohio, so my Mom, Dad, older Brother and I moved

from a very warm and urban area, to what was then a pretty rural area in Bainbridge township, Geauga county. I'll never forget my first whiff of cow manure from the dairy farm across the street that first summer, I thought my parents were crazy!

In 1993, I graduated from Kenston High School. Not long after graduating high school I got married, and began my life as a mother. My love for birds started to really grow while being at home with my two sons. During that time, I purchased my first bird book for identification and started to learn more about the birds I would see at my feeders. I'll be honest here, I was once the person feeding chunks of bread to the cute little brown birds at McDonald's parking lots. Had only I known then, what I know now.

In 2002, I started a part time position as a customer service representative at a local Bainbridge insurance agency. I quickly became licensed to sell insurance in the state of Ohio, and have been working there ever since. My job can be very stressful, so my release from that over the years has been watching the birds. In April of 2014, my friend surprised me with my first Bluebird box for my birthday, because she knew how much I loved birds. I was delighted to have my first pair of bluebirds investigating it within a few weeks of putting the box up! They laid 5 beautiful blue eggs. A few days after she laid the eggs, I came home from work to my oldest son telling me he saw a little brown bird at the box, and they were fighting with the bluebirds. You guessed it, the English house sparrows arrived to destroy all 5 eggs, and kill the female bluebird defending her nest. I was devastated. I took the box down after that, and gave up. We were renting the house where we lived at the time, so I decided to wait until we bought a house before trying to put up a box again.

It wasn't long after that, that my husband and I bought a house out in Southington Township, Trumbull county with 5.5 acres. Within the first month of living there, I heard bluebirds

singing and thought I would try again to host bluebirds on our new property, but I knew I needed to do some research first. I started by joining a Facebook group called Bluebirds Anonymous.

At that time the group was still relatively small, and I quickly learned what I needed to know about being a successful bluebird landlord. While in that group, I was directed to go to Bet Zimmerman's Sialis website, where I spent days reading up on everything I needed to know about bluebirds. Later I joined other Facebook bluebird groups that were more private, and over time learned more and more from just talking to experienced bluebird landlords. Trapping house sparrows and starlings became second nature to me, and I haven't had an attack on a bluebird nest since 2014. After becoming more experienced, I thought it might be a great idea to create a group on Facebook that specifically targeted the Ohio population of people that want to learn about bluebirds, so I created a Facebook group called Bluebirds Across Ohio. It has grown to an incredible 1300+ members in just two years. I really enjoy helping people who want to help the birds, and what better way to do that than to use a social media platform! After the Facebook group went so well, I started a website for Bluebirds Across Ohio, and continue to try and promote the Ohio Bluebird Society as much as I can. I am currently selling Bluebirds Across Ohio coffee logo mugs, with \$1 of each mug purchase donated to OBS.

In the Spring and Summer of 2021, I had the ultimate pleasure of helping Loyd Marshall with his Prothonotary Warbler project at Mosquito Lake. This is now my second year helping Loyd and his team provide nesting opportunities for these little precious, swamp loving birds. I am actively seeking new swampy habitat to install nest jars for the Prothonotary's in local areas surrounding me to help further spread public awareness about their decline due to the loss of their wetland habitats. I currently have 2 PROW jars in a swamp out in Lordstown, and I will be looking into a possible new site on the Chagrin River in the near future. I also occasionally help Loyd with his Bluebird trail at Mosquito Lake when needed, and also have been hosting a few zoom meetings with our group to help them navigate through NestWatch and enter in our data.

At my Trumbull County home, I have gone from just one nest box, to 6 boxes that are all used by Bluebirds and Tree Swallows. Last year I installed a Purple Martin rig near our pond in the back yard. I had a few visit last summer, but none of them stayed. This year I haven't seen any yet, but I have patience!

Everything in my life now revolves around helping the native birds thrive, and I love it every second of it! If I could only quit my daytime job! Maybe someday!



Dan Best



Dan has resided in, worked in and explored Ohio's Western Reserve his entire life. Dan grew up in Avon Lake, (Lorain County), Ohio and has been a resident of Chardon (Geauga County), Ohio for 40 years. With his interests encouraged

and supported by family elders, teachers, scout leaders and naturalists, Dan has been a birdwatcher since childhood.

Dan's 40-year career as an interpretive naturalist, from his 1979 graduation from The Ohio State University's School of Natural Resources to retirement in 2019, included over 7 years with the Shaker Lakes Nature Center and almost 33 years with the Geauga Park District. Over the years, Dan has led numerous bird walks and presented bird programs for all ages.

During his tenure with Geauga Park District, Dan nominated two Geauga County sites: Big Creek Park in the Grand River watershed and The Upper Cuyahoga River watershed which were subsequently designated Important Bird Areas registered with the National Audubon Society.

Dan has participated in Audubon Christmas Bird Counts for many years: from 1975-78 with the Black River Audubon Society in Lorain County and from 1983-2021 with the Burton Area Christmas Bird Count in Geauga County.

Dan was the Cuyahoga County coordinator for Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas from 1984-1987 and a participant in the Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas II in Geauga County from 2006-2011.

Although his monitoring of bluebird and tree swallow nest boxes has been limited, he helped institute, in the early 1990's, Geauga Park District's Bluebird Box Doc program named for the house calls volunteers make on nesting bluebirds and tree swallows. Dan has been a member of the Ohio Bluebird Society and was mentored by venerable OBS member, the late Duane Ferris, Geauga Park District's first naturalist who established nest boxes in the parks.

Dan's main involvement with cavity nesters was his three-decade nesting project for prothonotary warblers on the Upper Cuyahoga River in Geauga County. From 1992 -2021, Dan and his associates' Metamucil jar bird houses fledged well over 700 young, most of them banded. As a licensed bird bander, Dan and cohorts have banded over 400 adult prothonotary warblers. Dan also assisted with the OwlNet-affiliated saw whet owl banding station in Lake County, Ohio from 2014-2021

The current board of OBS has recommended Heather Harris and Dan Best as new board member nominees. A ballot vote from current OBS members is requested to confirm these two candidates. Please complete the ballot below before September 15, 2022 and mail it to:
**OBS Election 2022, The Holden Arboretum,
9500 Sperry Road, Kirtland, Ohio 44094**

OBS ANNUAL ELECTION FOR THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES – 2022

I hereby cast this ballot for the candidates listed as nominees in this issue of the Bluebird Monitor as follows:

___ I vote for both candidates for the trustee positions

___ I vote for only the following candidate:

Candidate: _____

Signed: _____

Print: _____

Date: _____

Attention all Bluebird trail lovers!

The Ohio Bluebird society prides itself on providing "Best in Class" information concerning the monitoring and maintaining nest box trails in Ohio. To that end we offer area contacts (AC) that can help with all aspects of bluebird conservation, from nest box design and placement to nest monitoring and how to manage problems during the nesting process. ACs are available to answer questions and provide advice for those needing help with bluebirds or other cavity nesters. In addition, ACs are often available to give presentations to local clubs and other groups.

But we need your help. If you or someone you know would like to be an AC, please contact ohiobluebirdsociety@gmail.com.

We currently need contacts for the following counties:

Adams	Hancock	Marion	Putman
Ashtabula	Hardin	Meigs	Richland
Belmont	Harrison	Mercer	Scioto
Brown	Henry	Monroe	Seneca
Butler	Highland	Morgan	Shelby
Carroll	Hocking	Morrow	Summit
Clermont	Jackson	Muskingum	Tuscarawas
Clinton	Jefferson	Noble	Van Wert
Coshocton	Knox	Paulding	Vinton
Defiance	Lawrence	Perry	Washington
Fayette	Logan	Pike	Williams
Fulton	Madison	Preble	Wyandot
Gallia	Mahoning		



Member News

Welcome New Members!

Ally Baker
Denise Brown
Kathryn Bumbaugh
Jason Calodney
Kelly Coffman
Kelly Dye
Linda Geiser
Madisyn Glassford
Joyce Goodwin
Giselle Guevara
Teresa Lynn
Rod Moore
Lori Navarro
Rachel Newcomer
Kathy Oliver
Lynda Parks
Michael Ryan
Paige Young

Thank You to Our Donors!

Denise Blocker
Jason Calodney
Bethany & Jordan Gray
Giselle Guevara
Dixie Hoskins
Lori Navarro

Don't forget to send your fledgling reports in for the 2022 nesting season! Each report is very important and appreciated. You can find the form to download and fill out on the Ohio Bluebird Society website.

<https://ohiobluebirdsociety.org/about-bluebirds/fledgling-report-2/>

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.

<https://ohiobluebirdsociety.org/about/obs-legacy-program/>

Notes from the president – by Darlene Sillick

We are well into the “dog days of Summer.”

This is the period in the summer often thought to be the hottest, usually considered to be July 3 to August 11. In ancient times, people associated the heat during this period with the concurrent rising of Sirius, nicknamed “the dog star.” I just have this feeling that we will still see plenty of hot days before we enter the fall season on our calendars. The nesting season is winding down and many are working on their totals. Please send your nest totals for 2022 to OBS using our helpful form: ohiobluebirdsociety.org/about-bluebirds/fledgling-report-2/

The numbers show trends and hopefully progress for the nesting season. We had a period of too wet then too dry and way too hot. Mike Watson helps to analyze your numbers and will give us an update later in the year. As of August 1, I have friends with hatching bluebirds and a couple late nests of Tree Swallows. House wrens are quite happy to find their choice of many empty nestboxes to raise that second nest of young before migration. It is also a time to look at your trails and determine if boxes need to be replaced, relocated or pulled. The numbers tell a lot. We hope you are also using Cornell Nestwatch for your data compilation. We have two of the best Nestwatch ambassadors in Ohio. Carl Gleditsch, OBS trustee and Paula Ziebarth, who also mastered the Nestwatch Mobile App. Please reach out to them if you need help.

We wanted to remind you that you can still view the March 5, 2022 OBS annual Conference zoom videos. Please go to our Ohio Bluebird Society website and look for the conference page: ohiobluebirdsociety.org/conference/. You can still view our 2021 zoom videos too. They are so helpful and well done and we hope you will enjoy learning more about our nature conservation hobby.

We are planning for the March 4, 2023 OBS Annual Conference. The theme is “Nesting in Nature.” In keeping with our mission statement, we will have speakers about Bluebirds 101 and several other native species. We are looking for a speaker for Tree Swallows, Purple Martins and (are you ready?) TICKS! Most of you are out in fields of tall grass and we want to have an expert speak on ticks and how to be safe in the field. We do have one speaker, our keynote, lined up. Mark Dilley, is co-owner and chief scientist with Mad Scientist Associates. He has over 25 years of experience in wetland science, field biology, ecology and environmental studies. He will talk about turning your property into a native mecca for cavity nesting birds. Invasives must go! We want to find a speaker who will talk about the declining insects and their impact on our native avian species. A few other species to highlight local monitors are in discussion. Our board member and amazing artist Anna Rose is working on a new logo for the Nesting in Nature theme. We would love to hear from you if you have topics or speakers for the next conference. We will decide by our next board meeting October 1, if we will have an in person or virtual conference.

Please let us know if you have a nomination for the Blue Feather or the Wildlife Conservation Award. We are always looking for new OBS committee members and trustees. Consider giving a few hours to help our statewide non-profit. Myself or any board members will be happy to discuss. We have about 400 members and we are proud to try to bring fresh ideas to help you be successful in the field.

I hope you saw the 2 new candidates for the OBS board. We are excited and ask you to please vote for the 2 board vacancies. Heather Harris and Dan Best are very informed and work with cavity nesting species. Please remember you can vote for two positions.



We are saddened to have lost another bluebirder and cavity nesting 'super hero' in Ohio, Richard 'Dick' Michael 'Mike' Tuttle, 77 of Delaware, Ohio. Please read the tributes for Dick from many who knew Dick well, including Anna Rose who knew Dick since she was a 5th grader and who now is a college senior and current OBS board member. Their tributes to Dick are meaningful and heartfelt as they talk about one

of the Ohio Bluebird Society founders. Please view www.stofcheck-ballinger.com and leave your tribute, condolences or remembrances for Dick. His graveside service is Saturday, August 6th at 11:00am at the Prospect Cemetery. Memorial gifts may be made to Ohio Bluebird Society at www.ohiobluebirdsociety.org or mail to Ohio Bluebird Society, 9500 Sperry Road, Kirtland, OH 44094

My lifelong passion for bluebirds was due to my mentor Dick Tuttle. Back in the early 1980's I would go to his talks, sit in the front row and take page after page of notes. He got me involved with Ohio Bluebird Society which I never regretted. It is a way to share a passion that runs deep and honors those who came before us. He touched many, many lives and he was a face and force for helping our youth and so many adults get started in bluebirding. He has received countless awards which will be reviewed in our next issue. Rest in peace my friend. Onward with your migration to the heavens. You, Dean, Pete and Fred, among others, will be a mighty conservation force as we look to the heavens.

In Memory of Dick Tuttle

Richard Michael Tuttle



Richard "Dick" Michael "Mike" Tuttle, 77 of Delaware, died Wednesday, July 27, 2022 at Dublin Methodist Hospital.

He was born September 10, 1944 in Piqua to the late former Marionites, Richard Nelson and

Mary Jane (King) Tuttle and lived virtually all of his highly productive life in and near Prospect and Delaware where he taught and mentored many middle school students.

Dick Tuttle taught science at Big Walnut Middle School for 28 years. Before and after retiring from formal teaching, he worked tirelessly to return rare birds to northern Ohio and nearby states. His accomplishments contributed more than most doctoral students who focus on birds both in terms of scientific method and engaging others to view nature in a different light. His workshops to bring practical results with people of all ages, even including prisoners, as well as free persons of all ages, to build bird houses and other structures where birds can nest and raise their broods. For many generations to

come they, like the Eastern bluebirds, ospreys and many other species, will sing his praises.

R.M. Tuttle received a bachelor's degree from The Ohio State University and later a certificate from the Division of Continuing Education from OSU. He received a Master of Arts from Ohio Wesleyan University in 1973. In 2019 Dick Tuttle was honored with the Ohio Division of Wildlife Hall of Fame award.

He is survived by a brother, Professor Russell Howard Tuttle of Chicago; a sister-in law Marlene Benjamin Tuttle, a niece, Nicole Irene Tuttle, and a nephew, Matthew Richard Russell Tuttle, all teachers and mentors. He was preceded in death by a brother, Robert D. Tuttle, also a dedicated Ohio educator.

Dick (Mike, as he was known to his family) was a wonderful brother and uncle, cherished for his mind, intellect and company. He was truthful, dedicated, disciplined, caring and the most kind human being. He was an extremely moral and ethical person.

A graveside service will be held Saturday, August 6, 2022 at 11:00 AM at the Prospect Cemetery.

Memorial gifts may be made to Ohio Bluebird Society, 9500 Sperry Road, Kirtland, OH 44094 (www.ohiobluebirdsociety.org).

..... *Photos and Tribute to Dick Tuttle*

By Anna Rose, OBS Board Member

I know many of you had the gift of meeting or knowing Dick Tuttle. He was an incredibly kind-hearted human with a nearly beyond belief legacy in conservation and in inspiration of young people. His recent loss has affected me deeply and I will miss him dearly.

I met “Mr. Tuttle” when I was just eleven years old when I took a ‘Bluebird Management’ course for young students with him through Ohio Wesleyan. I already knew I loved birds and conservation then... and Mr. Tuttle picked right up on it! From then on, he has been one of the main cheerleaders in my life whether I’ve seen him nest box managing in Delaware, at local conferences, OBS events, and finally, last August banding kestrels. For the last decade, every time he saw me his eyes lit up and we’d proceed to have a conversation that would inspire me to keep at it. To keep at loving birds, science, learning, and caring for the world around me.

I am honored to have been a friend of his, and for him to have recognized a spark in me worth fostering. I think of you often, my friend, and I picture you in a beautiful place filled with all the love you shared with this world as well as all the gorgeous birds you helped raise.

.....

“So sorry to hear this sad news. My interest in Bluebirds was sparked after reading an article authored by Dick in a 1980 issue of the Columbus Audubon Society newsletter. I set out five bluebird nestboxes and was forever “hooked”. I remember having questions about my trail that first year and finally getting up the nerve to call Dick for some answers. I still remember that call. It was not the content of the questions and answers that has stuck with me all these years, but it was the kindness and patience with which he answered my questions. What a great ambassador for the the bluebird conservation movement and mentor to so many of us. Rest in peace dear friend. May the Bluebird of Happiness accompany you always.”

– Doug LeVasseur, past OBS President



Dick at one of his many bluebird nest boxes



Dick and some of his many young students



Dick teaching 11 year-old Anna Rose bird banding

In Memory of Dick Tuttle



Dick holding a young kestrel bird

"Everything I do with or for bluebirds going forward will be in Dick's memory. Dick was irreplaceable innovator, scientist, genius, and scholar. If he said it you could take it to the bank. I am so very sad this morning. I'm going to suit up and go peek in on some growing bluebird babies and wish him a thrilling journey to the astral plane."

– Julie Zickefoose, Artist/Author

"A youtube briefing by Dick – must-see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08GmPYTsTew>

– Ron Kingston, creator of Kingston predator guards

"Yes, all I do for bluebirds and all cavity nesting birds is due to Dick Tuttle. I am sure there are many, many people who can say the same thing about Dick. Can you imagine being in a middle school class and learning science from him? You would never forget. When he was right, there was no doubting his research and science approach to so many conservation topics. I would hear he was giving a talk and I was in the front row with a notebook learning and learning how I could help those stunning bluebirds.

It is great sadness that he has left terra firma but he is soaring upward. Won't take him long to get that first but not last bluebird box set up."

– Darlene Sillick, OBS President

"I am so very sorry to hear of Dicks passing but not surprised that he faced that last decision with such courage and dignity.

He has been a mentor and friend for many years and I will sorely miss his vast knowledge and encouragement.

Our Ohio Bluebird Society will surely miss him as teacher, speaker and advisor. He was a faithful contributing author for every OBS newsletter since I have been editor and the hole he leaves will be very difficult to fill!

So much conservation experience and wisdom in one man!! Bluebirds, tree swallows, kestrels, and many, many other species were known and studied intimately by Dick. He was always willing to help and teach others.

One of Dicks favorite ways to end an email was to sign it "Conserve on". This briefly summed up his attitude toward life- encouraging and challenging others to do as he lived! Let's continue to carry that torch as we remember Dick's vast work for the benefit of birds and people."

– Penny Brandau, OBS newsletter editor

"Oh gosh – how sad! Just saw this string. So sorry to hear about Dick's passing – and so weird as I was thinking about calling him yesterday evening to ask if he could write an article for Bluebird! This news is a complete shock to me as I don't think I had heard he was ill.

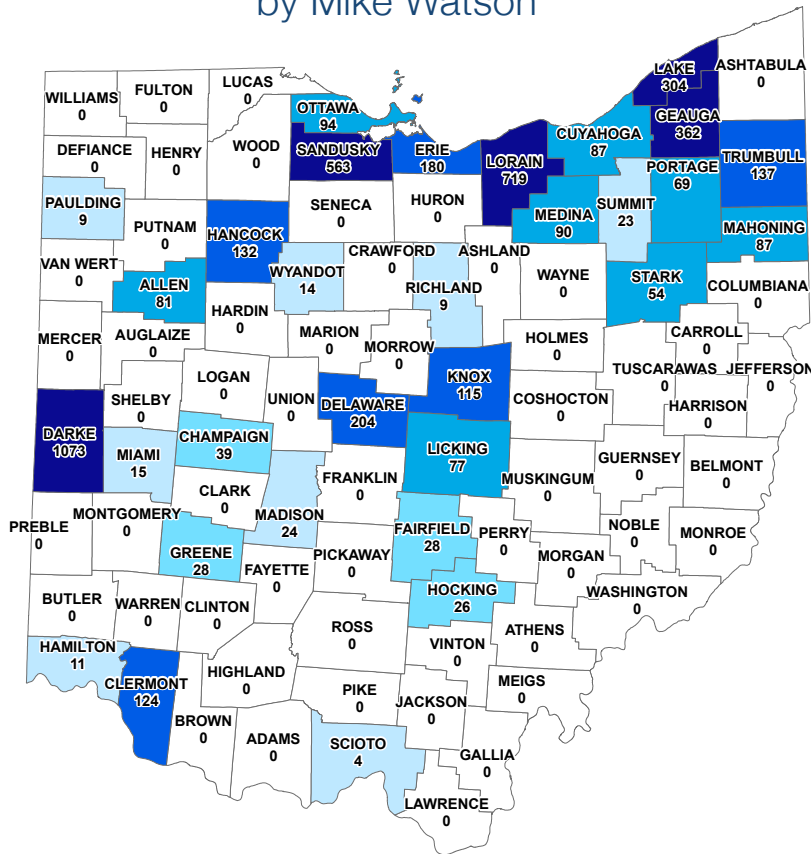
So good to hear all the nice comments too. His passing marks the loss of a huge friend for all kinds of flying creatures and of a great role model for other humans. I will remember him as a true modern renaissance man of conservation and a totally out of the box thinker. Remembering Dick Tuttle and his "beaver hypothesis" will always make me smile. <https://sustainability.owu.edu/?p=2044>

– Bernie Daniels, NABS President

Please download and send your 2022 fledgling reports to OBS.
ohiobluebirdsociety.org/about-bluebirds/fledgling-report-2

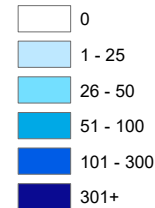
OBS 2021 FLEDGLING REPORT

by Mike Watson



Species	#Fledged
# of Reports submitted	54
# of Nest boxes	3026
Purple Martin nest cavities	78
Kestrel boxes	38
# Prothonotary Warbler nest jars	20
Eastern Bluebird	4782
Tree Swallow	7241
House Wren	2600
Purple Martin	4385
Black-capped Chickadee	53
Carolina Chickadee	101
Carolina Wren	37
American Kestrel	209
Barn Swallow	176
Prothonotary Warbler	141
Wood Duck	10
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	6
House Sparrows Dispatched	214
House Sparrow Eggs Destroyed	931
European Starlings Dispatched	5
European Starling Eggs Destroyed	26

#Fledged per County



created by Mike Watson; The Holden Arboretum



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

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

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

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.

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Ohio Bluebird Society to join our group.

Ohio Bluebird Society would like to thank outgoing Trustees Joann Kale and Monica Klarer for the incredible work they have done as board members. We appreciate Monica's acceptance of the OBS secretary position and wish both of them bluebirds in their futures!

OBS Area Contacts (as of February 2022)

County	Name	E-mail	County	Name	E-mail
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			WOOD	Hamlin, Terry	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

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Affiliated with the North American Bluebird Society

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Deadline for Submitting Articles:

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

Photos from Mike Smith, Black River Audubon Society Bluebird



Tree swallow nest with a feathery flair.



Black Capped Chickadee eggs, chicks and older nestlings