



Bluebird Monitor

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

Spring 2022



2022 VIRTUAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE March 5, 2022

ohiobluebirdsociety.org

Presentations will be available on the OBS website by March 5, 2022. You can view as your time permits and as often as you want. We will continue to add more educational videos and articles throughout the year.

As we are once again losing our biggest fund raiser, The Silent Auction, your donations, or membership or renewal will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you to our sponsors!



Conference Presenters

Andy Jones, Ph.D.

William A. and Nancy R. Klammer Chair and Curator of Ornithology

Invertebrates and Technologies: Direct Connections to Bird Populations

North American bird populations are constantly fluctuating, but the overall trends are negative for many species. This is particularly true for birds whose livelihoods depend on invertebrates (a year-round diet for some species, and a breeding season dependence for a great many species). Recent research has focused on the impacts of habitat alterations as well as changing climates on invertebrate populations. These global issues feel difficult to respond to, but anyone can have input on parks and their own yards that will be a net positive for birds. Birds also depend on a string of habitats across the hemispheres, as many species cover thousands of miles during migration each year. Motus towers and other tracking technologies are revealing impressive migratory feats as well as providing insights into conservation actions that are needed.



Dr. Andy Jones is the William A. and Nancy R. Klammer Chair of Ornithology at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. He came to Cleveland in 2006 after finishing his Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota. A native of east Tennessee, he was inspired by the rich biodiversity

of the Southern Appalachians. His childhood reptile and amphibian obsessions eventually morphed into a career as an ornithologist as well as a birder, a fish keeper, a gardener, and a hiker. Andy submits at least one eBird checklist per day - after all, an ornithologist should spend a little time observing nature every day! His research includes work on genetic diversity and evolutionary history of North American birds, documentation of new hybrid combinations, and studies of migration through the Lights Out Cleveland project. His favorite bird was the Black-capped Chickadee when he was last asked, but the answer changes almost every day.

Continued on page 2

Conference Presenters

Genelle Uhrig, M.Sc

Director of Ecology – The Wilds

Extreme Home Makeover: Wilds' Edition— American Kestrels Get New Digs and Flourish

In the Fall of 2020, with a generous donation from the Ohio Bluebird Society coupled with a grant from the Ohio Ornithological Society, 9 new American kestrel nest boxes were installed on telescoping poles at The Wilds. Apprentices monitored the boxes weekly during the 2021 nesting season and found great success. Ms. Uhrig will provide a history of American kestrel monitoring at The Wilds and present the results of last year's monitoring efforts.



Genelle Uhrig, M.Sc. (Director of Ecology- The Wilds) – Ms. Uhrig is a Conservation Biologist with 6 years of experience in field ecology and conservation genetics, specializing in non-invasive genetic studies utilizing scat and environmental DNA (eDNA) for species and individual ID, and parentage analyses. She has

worked with a variety of aquatic and terrestrial wildlife species and currently works with native species reintroduction efforts at The Wilds, including Eastern hellbenders and the federally threatened, state endangered American burying beetle. In addition to working with native Ohio wildlife species, Ms. Uhrig also oversees restoration efforts at The Wilds.

Dan Best and Rachel McKinney

Going for the Gold: Three Decades of Prothonotary Warbler Husbandry

2021 was the 30th field season for the Upper Cuyahoga River Prothonotary Warbler Nesting Projects in Geauga County, Ohio. "PROW'lers" Dan Best and Rachel McKinney present the trials and triumphs of providing artificial nest cavities (plastic jars) to increase nesting success for a population of prothonotary warblers (PROW aka the golden swamp warbler). Included will be techniques for avoiding losses to flood waters, predation, and tree swallow competition. Findings will be shared on longevity, pair bonding and multi-year nest site faithfulness through the use of color bands for individual bird identification. Also addressed are the impacts of house wrens and the weather-related habitat change that has presented challenges in recent years.

Rachel McKinney of Huntsburg, Geauga County, Ohio, has over 20 years' experience as a science, mathematics, and environmental educator. She currently teaches math and



science at Andrews Osborne Academy in Willoughby, Ohio. Rachel is an avid gardener and enjoys birding, kayaking, cross-country skiing, and playing banjo in old time string bands. She has been a partner in the Upper Cuyahoga River Prothonotary Warbler Nesting Project for 12 years.



Dan Best of Chardon, Geauga County, Ohio, A lifelong student of local ecology, Dan is a retired nature educator with over 40 years' experience in interpreting Ohio natural history and related cultural history, including almost 33 years with Geauga Park District. Dan also enjoys canoeing, kayaking, fishing

and has played guitar in bands exploring various American music genres. Dan initiated the Upper Cuyahoga River Prothonotary Warbler Nesting Project in 1992.

Bethany Gray

Bringing Back the Bluebird: Best Practices

Learn about the plight of Eastern Bluebirds and other native cavity nesting birds, and what you can do to offset the damage done by the loss of nesting habitat, harsh weather, pesticides and fierce competition from non-native House Sparrows. Bethany will provide information about installing nest boxes, how to troubleshoot and protect against predators, and how to share data with scientists.



Bethany Gray has a B.A. in Education and M.A. in American History. She is also an Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist (OCVN) and a Certified Ambassador for the National Wildlife Federation. Presently, she consults and leads workshops & programs for regional organizations promoting

Citizen Science and wildlife habitat. Bethany is co-founder of "Operation Bluebird," a Project-Based Learning partnership engaging Yellow Springs middle school students as Citizen Scientists on local bluebird trails. This program is the subject of an article by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at www.NestWatch.org. In 2018, she was the recipient of the Blue Feather Award from the Ohio Bluebird Society and the Stewardship, Education and Citizen Science Award from The Ohio State College of Food, Agriculture & Environmental Sciences. She is the current President of the Glen Helen Association and a Board member of the Tecumseh Land Trust.

Conference Presenters

Megan Shave, Ph.D.

Orchard Nest Boxes Benefit Falcons and Farmers in Michigan



Dr. Megan Shave is interested in the ecological services that birds provide in human-managed landscapes. Her Ph.D. dissertation at Michigan State University investigated the conservation and agricultural uses of nest boxes for American Kestrels in Michigan cherry orchards.

In her home state of Massachusetts, she has worked on bird population studies at the Manomet Bird Observatory and Woods Hole Research Center. She is currently the Conservation Agent & Planner for the City of Brockton, where she enjoys keeping an eye on the Peregrine Falcons that nest on a downtown cell tower.

people of all ages get involved. She is a co-advisor for Ohio Young Birder Club, on the Ohio Ornithology Society Conservation committee and works with Boy Scouts as their Eagle Scout advisor. She is working with # 33 currently. She is also involved at Columbus Audubon and Council of Ohio Audubon Chapters (COAC). She works at Cardinal Health as a Senior Executive Administrative Assistant.

Paula Ziebarth

European Starlings and House Sparrows – How Bad Can They Be?



Paula Ziebarth (Madame Wingnut) will discuss dangers surrounding the non-native European Starling. The efficacy of both passive and active management strategies will be reviewed.

Like the Eastern Bluebird, Paula is native to Ohio. She grew up on the west side of Cleveland and settled

Darlene Sillick

Creative and Meaningful Conservation Projects



Darlene will show some of her projects of 30 years and discuss how to organize, how to get volunteers and how to be a project manager and orchestrate valued conservation projects both locally and around the state.

She is presently Ohio Bluebird Society president and loves organizing the annual conference for OBS. She loves to bring people together for the good of helping nature and

in central Ohio after graduating from Ohio State University with a degree in Civil Engineering. She began monitoring Bluebird Trails in 2002. Paula is a Delaware County and Ottawa County Area Contact for the Ohio Bluebird Society. She also serves as Coordinator of the Delaware County Chapter of Cornell Lab of Ornithology's NestWatch and is a board member for Lake Erie Islands Conservancy. Last year Paula monitored over 400 nest sites in Delaware and Ottawa Counties. Birds she has worked with include Eastern Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, Tufted Titmice, Carolina Chickadees, Carolina Wrens, House Wrens and Purple Martins. She is also the author of OBS Newsletter, "Ask Madame WingNut".

How this revolutionary club got its start...

It all began in May of 2006 when six young birders met with staff and volunteers from Black Swamp Bird Observatory to discuss forming a club for young people with an interest in birds and nature. What they helped create that day was the Ohio Young Birders Club: a program for youth ages 12-18.

www.ohioyoungbirders.org



A Tiny House Wren Attacks Its Landlord

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



After I finished my eighth grade academic year at school, I built my first bird houses that I nailed to a hand full of trees in my neighborhood. I enjoyed watching House Sparrows and House Wrens going in and out of my creations, but I had mounted my boxes too high on the trees for monitoring to be practical.

During my first year of teaching ninth-grade physical science, a neighbor lent me an article that promoted bluebird conservation and I launched my life-long hobby of bluebird trail conservation that resulted with me seeing my first bluebirds fly from their boxes when I was 23 years old. Some of my first boxes in 1968 also raised House Wrens.

At the conclusion of the 2021 season, and during the last 54 seasons, my boxes have raised 12,103 bluebirds and 12,506 House Wrens. At the beginning of the 1968 season, I started to design four paper form sheets that make it simple to record trail data and summarize and analyze nest histories. The first was the trail data pad that recorded data from boxes in the field. Data was then transferred to the trail data sheet that had 25 rows, one row for each box. Data was then transferred from the data pad to the box data sheets, one sheet for each trail box. At the end of the season, all data was copied onto Master Data sheets that had columns for data for each nestbox including the box number, species of a nest, initial egg date, number of eggs, number hatched, number fledged, and reasons and comments.

Well, after fifty-four nesting seasons, something new happened for the first time: I was attacked and hit twice by a tiny House Wren. The little guy or gal landed on my hat-covered head, flew off, circled and returned for a second landing. I don't know if it pecked my head since my hat may have been a shield.

My arm went up and my hand intercepted several additional swoops before the attacker retreated. Then, I disengaged the box's screw and counted the wren nestlings and checked the paired Tree Swallow box nearby before leaving. On my way from the site, I thought of wrens spearing the eggs of others with their sharp bills and I couldn't avoid thinking of my eyes. Could a wren manage to thrust its bill under my glasses to spear my eye? Ridiculous, maybe, but my primate instincts came to life. If the wren attacked again, it was going to deal with a more primitive creature.



...a repetition of the wren attack without the wren.

Nine days later, the tiny aggressor attacked again, but no contact occurred since the small aggressor was met by a loud, chest beating, chimp-chanting, animated primate, with his right arm stretched out to intercept the aggressive wren with five fanned-out fingers. Yes, I successfully defended myself while avoiding any harm to the wren.

So, what was with the tiny aggressor? There is no way to come up with an absolute explanation, but I have been thinking of the incident and I would like to offer some ideas.

First, the wren's box is B-119 that is paired five yards away from B-20. The area had not been brush hogged during the previous fall due to other maintenance needs throughout the state's parks, etc. Delaware Park's crew had kept paths mowed to all boxes during the nesting season which I greatly appreciated.

For the House Wrens, the sprouting of alien woody plants was greatly appreciated since it enabled them to seek cover to avoid direct dives by Tree Swallows. B-119 had one wren egg on May 10, and the wrens successfully fledged seven young by June 13. At no time during this first clutch did I feel victimized by hostile wren behavior.

B-119 had a new wren egg on July 3, and five siblings fledged around August 3 making a triumphant nesting season that produced two new families.



Six House Wren nestlings are close to fledging.

As for B-20, Swallows started a nest by April 12 and I counted three eggs on May 10. The clutch grew to seven eggs and three were hatching on May 30. Then, no young or eggs were in the nest on June 6, a possible result of the neighboring wrens doing their thing.

A new swallow clutch began on June 14, and after growing to five eggs, all failed to hatch. Only three eggs remained on July 30, and all were gone by August 2.

I believe that the paired boxes were in an avian war zone, and I know that Tree Swallows are usually dominant when it comes to competition from wrens, but swallows are also dealing with a shortage of flying insects. So, I suspect that my attacker had been attacked daily by the neighboring swallows which would have raised the hormone levels in the wrens, contributing to the aggressive behavior of my attacker. After all, my adrenalin count was raised once I became a targeted victim.

Going back to the wren's first attack on July 21, the wren's nest held five three-day-old nestlings that would have contributed to the wren's determination to protect its nest. On July 30, the wren family was super healthy and had the same dedicated parent that enjoyed swooping at its landlord.

Something really strange happened on the day after the Thanksgiving holiday. I had lots on my mind, but the word "imprinting" popped into my conscience mind. I immediately thought of the aggressive wren. Imprinting was researched and described by Konrad Lorenz in 1937. Precocial birds

leave their nests after hatching since they can climb, walk, and swim, and birds such as ducks and geese learn at an early age to follow moving objects, and with adequate knowledge, you can convince young ducks and geese to follow you.

Wrens are not precocial. Their young are altricial and they hatch at a very early stage of development. After hatching, the bare wrens stay in their nest for up to 16 days as they grow feathers and fledge once they can fly. Can wrens imprint or bond with anything beyond their parents?

Numerous times, over many years, I have fostered orphaned House Wrens for the Ohio Wildlife Center (OWC), the very busy wildlife rehabilitation hospital and facility in Columbus and Powell. Most of my fostering has taken place in nestboxes in Delaware State Park. Usually, I tried to foster only two wren orphans per host nest.

The most important fact that might involve imprinting is that the orphans are usually hand fed and cared for by OWC volunteers over a period of days. Sometimes, it was days before I could check for possible host families in park boxes before I could answer requests from the OWC. So, had the aggressive wren that attacked me bonded with our species as it was cared for at the rehab center? Perhaps, the aggressive wren was only trying to greet me. Yes, I think that would be really weird. On the other hand, birds attack members of their own species when they approach an active nest that is not theirs. So, imprinting could have occurred and still contributed to the aggressive behavior aimed at me.

Whatever the real story is, I look forward to next year's nesting season and I hope to encounter the tiny aggressive wren. Such events and personalities are what makes bluebirding a fantastic and rewarding hobby.

Looking forward, Delaware Park's maintenance crew has completed brush hogging for next year and there will be more habitats for bluebirds and Tree Swallows. No brush hogging will take place during the summer which will give prairie plants, butterflies, and other grassland species a good chance to complete their life cycles while entertaining park visitors.

During the 2021 nesting season, the park's 166 nestboxes produced 127 Eastern Bluebirds, 309 Tree Swallows, 656 House Wrens, five Carolina Wrens, and 13 Carolina Chickadees. Let's hope that the expanded brush hogging will allow our avian friends to surpass 2021's totals.

Conserve on!



Ask Madame WingNut

New Beginnings

By Paula Ziebarth



As I think about easing into spring, I think about new beginnings. Early spring is a wonderful time to start new trails or rehabilitate old ones. And what better place to start new avian life than in a cemetery?

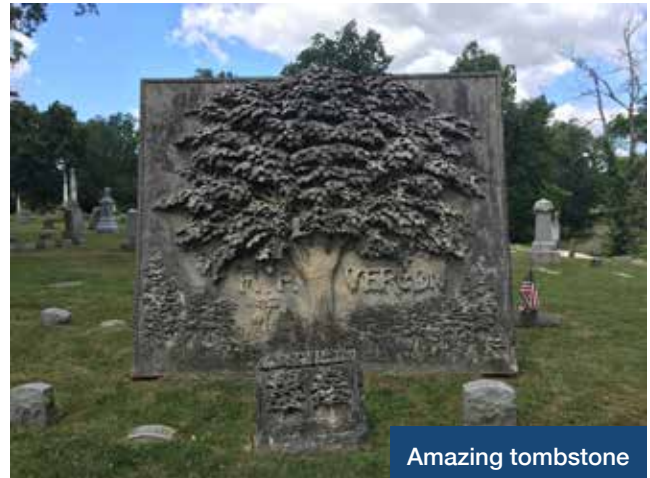
Cemeteries are wonderful locations for bluebird trails. They have wide expanses of short mowed grass: perfect habitat for hunting ground dwelling insects.

Cemeteries are quiet and not overcrowded. Competition from house sparrows is reduced due to the lack of bird feeding stations and large human houses, buildings, or activity which attract them. Gravestones make wonderful hunting perches and sentry posts. Most cemeteries do not maintain turf with pesticides. If you are lucky enough to find one, the landscape may even include beautiful mature trees.



Oak Grove Cemetery in Delaware, Ohio is my favorite trail to monitor. Both cemetery and arboretum, it is an enjoyable experience to monitor this trail. Roads through the cemetery make most of the nest boxes accessible by car.

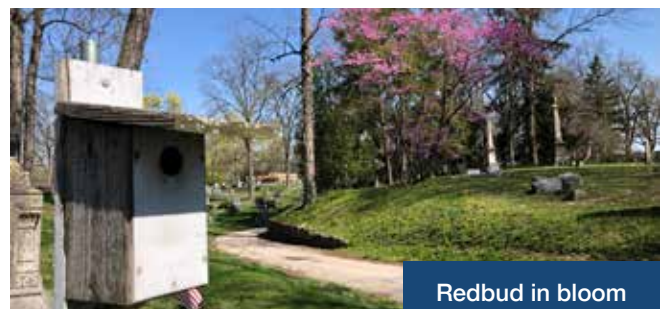
In 2013, an Eagle Scout installed 23 nest boxes on the cemetery grounds. In 2014 Eastern Bluebirds were prevalent, but during 2015, boxes were overrun with House Sparrows and House Wrens. In spring of 2016, the original trail was replaced with 21 nest boxes through a generous donation by Darlene Sillick and her Zeppick Conservation Project. Volunteers from Delaware Kiwanis and Aktion Club helped to install the trail. A few small changes to the trail have occurred over the years, removing boxes that were in bad locations and installing a couple of new nest boxes for Carolina Chickadees in 2021. There are 19 nest boxes on site today.



Amazing tombstone

My good friend Connie Dolder has monitored this trail with me since 2016 and we love to brainstorm to recognize and solve problems, if we can. Boxes are spaced to maximize Eastern Bluebird nesting pairs and intercept non-native House Sparrows. We also installed monofilament House Sparrow deterrent on Bluebird nest boxes that have had a history of House Sparrow attempts. It definitely deters them, but some will venture through the barrier and then the Van Ert inbox trap is used immediately. Check out OBS website for Carl Gleditsch's diagram for proper monofilament installation.

House Wrens are discouraged from nesting by blocking boxes they try to use and moving nest boxes into most open locations. Although House Wrens are native birds, they depredate other birds' eggs and young nestlings. House Wren guards were used on active Carolina Chickadee nests this year and they were fairly effective. Connie also built a couple nest boxes for chickadees this season, installing them in areas where we have had Carolina Chickadees nest before or seen them perching, and that were away from brushy areas where House Wrens had attempted to nest in the past. We had a record number of chickadee fledglings this season as a result.



Redbud in bloom

Late winter of 2020 - 2021 exhibited some harsh weather and I discovered 5 dead adult Eastern Bluebirds in a nest box during my first nest check in early in March. These "winter kill" birds succumbed to starvation during late winter when natural berry stores were depleted, insects were unavailable and unfrozen water sources were difficult to find. As nest season continued, Connie and I realized that breeding numbers were substantially lower than last year and the trail fledged less than a third of the numbers we had in 2020. House Sparrow attempts were way up this year also due to many nest boxes unoccupied and unguarded by Eastern Bluebirds.

The OBS Legacy Fund works perfectly for cemetery sites. For a donation of \$125, OBS will provide a small plaque memorializing a loved one and monitor can install it on one of the nest boxes on the trail. Learn more about the OBS Legacy Fund on our website.

Consider rehabbing or beginning a trail at a cemetery near you. You will need permission from cemetery owners of course, as well as boxes, poles, baffles and qualified monitor(s) lined up. It is important to keep good data and provide annual reports to cemetery owner. Cornell's NestWatch database is a wonderful way to compile data for your own use and to provide citizen science data to qualified scientists for research projects.

2021 data and Oak Grove Cemetery Trail history are outlined below.

2021 (19 nest boxes)						
SPECIES	#Attempts	1st Egg Date	#Eggs	#Hatched	#Fledged	Success Rate %
Carolina Chickadee	4	4-9	25	25	18	100
Eastern Bluebird	13	4-9	61	38	30	61
Tree Swallow	2	5-16	7	5	3	50
House Wrens	7		0	0	0	0
House Sparrow* (HOSP)	29		7	0	0	0

Native Birds Fledged Annually					
YEAR	Eastern Bluebirds	Tree Swallows	House Wrens	Carolina Chickadees	House Sparrow Attempts*
2015	6		?		?
2016	54	5	0	0	14
2017	97	5	3	11	6
2018	88	3	0	0	11
2019	83	0	0	9	15
2020	99	0	0	8	11
2021	30	3	0	18	29
TOTAL	457	16	3	46	86

*No non-native HOSP fledged from nest boxes.

If you have any questions, contact Paula Ziebarth at: paulazbird@gmail.com or 614-323-7566. 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.

OBS Legacy Fund plaque



Carolina Chickadee on her nest



Monitor Connie Dolder



Beautiful Bluebird Artist Joe Hautman

By Molly Wilsbacher, OBS Treasurer



Not many artists enjoy national success during their lifetime. There is a reason “starving artist” is known around the globe. Gauging by how many different mediums include the beautiful artwork of Joe Hautman, he hopefully does not fall into this category.

I first discovered Joe Hautman’s art in 2015 leafing through a Parade magazine found in many Sunday newspapers. Inside was a full page color advertisement from the Bradford Exchange depicting Songbird Serenade on a porcelain music box. In addition to the music box, this same artwork is currently available in a shoulder tote and, thanks to the COVID pandemic, adult face masks. His work can also be found on puzzles, plaques, plates, and checkbook covers, to name only a few.



“Bluebird and Butterfly”

Around the same time as Songbird Serenade was made into a music box, Joe painted the beautiful “Bluebird and Butterfly,” depicted above. What caught my attention to this piece is the realism and attention to detail. Like a photograph where the background is blurred, the bluebird subject has a natural “glow” from the morning sun. I hope you agree that it is simply breathtaking!

“From an early age Joe loved to draw and paint,” according to the artist’s website, “but he soon became fascinated by the sciences as well. His artistic talents took a back seat during his academic career. He studied physics and astronomy at the University of Minnesota, and eventually earned a Ph.D. in Theoretical Physics from the University of Michigan.”

The website goes on to explain that Joe’s “first experience as a professional artist came after he won the Federal Duck Stamp contest in 1991. Although he had never sold a painting, he suddenly found himself visiting President George H. Bush in the Oval office, and receiving honors for his artistic achievements.” In addition to 1991, Joe also won the Federal Duck Stamp contest in 2002, 2008, 2012, and became a five-time winner with his rendition of Trumpeter Swans on the 2016 stamp. He also designed state conservation stamps for New Jersey, South Carolina, Connecticut, Texas, Arkansas, and Minnesota.



“Summer Morning-Bluebirds”

Joe Hautman now paints full-time and finds his art career as challenging and fulfilling as his science research. His work features a variety of North American natural landscapes, including the flora and fauna found within. As noted in his biography on his website, “The well-researched detail and accurate naturalistic settings in his paintings are a reflection of his scientific background, as well as his reverence for the wildlife and their habitat.”

His naturalistic settings for his bluebird pieces might be because he keeps bluebird nest boxes on his property. Like many others, Joe reports that he did not see many bluebirds in his neck of the woods in 2021 due to the severe storms that plagued Texas this past Spring.



“Garden Bluebirds”

Another interesting note about Joe is that he is one of three artistic brothers who have all won many national accolades. Through donations of prints and artwork to conservation programs such as Ducks Unlimited and Delta Waterfowl the brothers have helped to raise millions of dollars for wildlife and their habitat. For example, the digital prints of the artwork depicted in this article were donated for use by Joe Hautman and are reprinted with permission.

I encourage every reader of this article to peruse Joe’s website and the artwork that is depicted there at <http://www.hautman.com/joehome.html>. I believe most, if not all of them, are available for purchase in Giclée prints. If you do decide to purchase something, please thank Joe for letting the Ohio Bluebird Society use three of his prints in our Spring newsletter!

Bluebird of Happiness By Keith Kridler



To many people these birds are just like raising a human infant. A young, inexperienced teenage mother with no other humans to help will need to keep a closer eye on her first-born new baby than will an older mother who has run a daycare center for many years that was responsible for keeping hundreds of infants.

You learn by “hands on” doing, and reading a book

on changing a cloth diaper won’t make the first stay on! An experienced mother knows what small objects to pick up and remove from the child’s area to keep it from getting hurt. An experienced Bluebirder can see that a Bluebird entering an active Chickadee nest is about to cause the loss of the Chickadees. Seeing Starlings or House Sparrows entering your nestboxes is going to be a problem you need to address.

When a baby Bluebird hatches out, every single day in its first few weeks’ growth is equal to one year in a human infant to a teenager’s life! Just like a human at 18 years old, the 18-day-old Bluebird is ready to spread its wings and leave the nest! EVERY day a miracle is happening to convert high protein insects into flesh, blood and feathers right before our eyes. If you only spend a day with your son or daughter once a month, will you EVER learn anything important about them?

You learn from other Bluebirders that high-pitched sharp whistles or squeaks will trick these tiny newborn babies into opening their mouths and begging for food from YOU! Their

mouths are so tiny you cannot begin to try to catch insects small enough to feed them! Every single day the weather changes and affects food and shelter needs of these birds. Every day humans in search of greener lawns are using “weapons of mass destruction” right next door or across the block from you and nuking the insects and weeds.

Bluebirding should bring you Peace and Joy and not a guilt trip because you opened a nestbox and witnessed a miracle in your own yard. Bluebirds are not endangered in any state. By watching the numbers of Bluebirds lost in solidly built nestboxes, protected with all sorts of grease, guards, poles, traps, etc., learning all of this - does it make us wonder how the lowly Song Sparrow can possibly ever raise its young in an unprotected nest without our help?

By all means the miracle of the Bluebird eggs hatching to educate those two boys who probably NEVER knew that a baby bird grows inside of those blue eggs or that in 18 days they can fly out to live with their mother and father. Just like 18 year old humans who will depend on their parents for the next 1-8 years for schooling and money, the just-fledged Bluebirds will rely on their parents for food and safety for several more weeks (normally until next breeding season.)

Some bluebirds will die whether we put up a nestbox, or not. Some Bluebirds will die if we monitor monthly, weekly, daily or hourly and we need to accept that too. I HOPE you understand that to truly find the “Bluebird of Happiness” will take a little bit of your time (the more time you spend, the quicker you will find “it”) and people have experienced this joy before paper and pen were ever invented and the only guilt we should ever feel is NOT sharing the “miracle” of Bluebirds with others.

Reprinted from Bluebird-L

Treasurer’s Report by Molly Wilsbacher

- 1. A big thank you goes out to those who paid their membership dues, made donations, and used Amazon Smile over the last quarter through December 31, 2021.** We received \$1,035 in memberships, \$300 in donations, as well as \$21 from Amazon Smile.
- 2. Our major expenses in the 4th Quarter of the year included \$515 for our newsletter, \$420 for webpage maintenance, and \$200 for conference expenses** (yes, even virtual conferences cost money). Our bank accounts are healthy and our checking account reflected \$7,384.75 as of December 31, 2021.
- 3. The Ohio Bluebird Society gladly accepts donations for a loved one who passes away throughout the year.** Most of our donations this past quarter were memorial donations in memory of Ford D. Smith (Penny Brandau’s father).
- 4. Even though our conference will be held remotely this year, please reach out to me if you are downsizing and have any items that might be useful in our silent auction at the next in person conference.** Items that usually garner the highest silent auction prices are framed artwork, bird boxes, books, and mugs/glasses. Please email me at OBSTreasurer@gmail.com and I will make arrangements for pick up 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!

A Tribute to Ford Smith

Nov 10, 1926 – October 26, 2021

By Penny Brandau

Each of us have been born into unique families and environments which shape us and influence us throughout our lives. My love of bluebirds and nature was nurtured by several people but probably the primary influence was my dad, Ford Smith. He was the person who started me on my personal bluebird journey and who gave my husband and me our first bluebird house many years ago. It was made from a hollowed-out piece of cherry log and the roof and floor were simple pieces of cedar wood. With good intentions he surprised us with this housewarming gift and nailed it to a fence in our back yard. We soon discovered the error of that particular location.



Although we had never seen bluebirds in our small town we were amazed when a pair of bluebirds did nest in this box within weeks! We all learned a lot from that first box, including valuable lessons about climbing predators like raccoons! My dad's home nest boxes and our nest box were

soon remounted on 1-inch EMT pipe with a predator guard after we lost that first clutch of eggs. Life's hard lessons aren't easily forgotten, but the joys of the following years of successful nestings were sweet. It has been an adventure of learning!

My dad was born in 1926 in West Virginia into a large family with 12 siblings. His life was filled from birth to death with the richness of family, mountains and nature. He learned the value of dependability, hard work, loyalty, honesty and humor and strived to pass those qualities on to everyone he met. He was easy to love, a person who genuinely cared about others before himself.

His love of nature was a close second to his love of family. He built many bird houses and feeders throughout his life (and the birdshot holes in some of his bluebird nest boxes were testament to his determination that house sparrows would NOT nest in his boxes). He was always interested in learning new things and even in his eighties and nineties contributed nest box data to Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Nestwatch and Feederwatch citizen science programs. He delighted in animals as well as people.

My summer and fall of 2021 were full of caring for my 94-year-old father before his death on October 26th. It was both an honor and a deep agony. We had shared so much in life and he was always someone I had counted on. Shared bluebird stories through the years, help with house



sparrow control when he couldn't do it any longer, keeping his many bird feeders filled so he could continue to enjoy "his" birds were small ways to show how much he meant to me as he aged.

My dad loved the distinction of having the first bluebird eggs in Lorain County several times and always had binoculars nearby - even by his lift chair to watch the many birds he fed in his back yard in the last months of his life. He was caring, generous, funny, smart, creative and sometimes exasperatingly independent! He taught me so many life lessons and I am forever grateful for his love which was shown in so many ways. Pictured above are my dad's first eggs of 2021 (taken on 3/31/21) and below is a photo of my dad and me taken June 2020. This world is much richer today because of his life and selfless giving.



The Ohio Bluebird Society Legacy Fund By Darlene Sillick

The Ohio Bluebird Society is pleased to offer you a way to extend your appreciation for bluebirds for many years to come. 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. With a donation of \$125.00, you can designate the donation be used to honor a specific individual or in memory of someone dear. OBS volunteers will build, erect, maintain and monitor a cedar bluebird box on the closest trail that is monitored for bluebirds and tree swallows.

The cedar box will receive a brass plaque with the honoree's name. All Legacy boxes will be in place for the upcoming breeding season. The OBS monitors will do their best to update the donor with a picture or two during nesting season and the total of birds who fledged from the box when nesting season ends. Read more on our website: [Legacy Program - Ohio Bluebird Society](#)

Something special happened as we were trying to reach other OBS monitors in different suburbs to ask them to take part in our Legacy program. Between emails and texts and unanswered voice mails, I got an idea. Paula Ziebarth and I have close to 50 nestboxes at Safari Golf Course (SGC) across from the Columbus Zoo. I have been working with SGC over 30 years. A light bulb went off. I emailed Ty Day, VP at the golf course and Michael Kreger, VP Conservation at the Columbus Zoo. I mentioned that we would like permission to place the plaque on the boxes. We would promote an OBS memorial trail on their 18 hole golf course. They were very receptive to the idea and in December 2020, on a chilly day in a golf cart, my good friend Tim Bischoff, placed 10 brass legacy plates on the boxes as I drove him to the paired boxes. I have photos and I will update the donors shortly. When nesting season is underway, we would like to take the donors on a golf cart ride to take a peek.

If there was a couple, as in Bill and Joan Davis, we put them side by side. The same is for Vic and Lois Harder and Doug LeVasseur, past OBS president was the donor. A Dublin resident, Stephen Habash, has donated 6 times to our Legacy program. One of his family members is by my mom, Vera Leach, who loved helping me with bluebirds. After the first box of \$125.00, subsequent boxes are \$100.00.

We will exchange the box at the golf course for a new cedar box later on in 2021 after the birds nest. They are used to these mossy boxes which have so much character. SGC is a secure location and golfers stop us and ask what we are doing. It is fun to talk to guests who are impressed with the conservation work being done at a golf course.

[Safari Golf Club](#) has been awarded "Best Public Golf Course" two years running by "Columbus CEO Magazine." Managers at the club work closely with partners such as Delaware Preservation Parks and Nest Watch Ambassador Darlene Sillick, who has monitored birds on the course for 25 years. Sharing the Columbus Zoo mission to lead and inspire by connecting people with wildlife, the Safari Golf Club is well on its way to becoming conservation leader among golf clubs. By the way, each hole has an animal name, Hole 11 is the Eastern Bluebird.

If you are looking for an idea for a birthday recognition or in memory of, please consider the OBS Legacy Fund donation. It will support educational OBS and create a scholarship fund for high school students with an interest in conservation and ornithology. You will hear more shortly as we awarded 3 grants at our board meeting last weekend. We certainly need to interest our next generation and OBS is working in that direction.



Ohio Bluebird Society Legacy Fund Honoree Designation Form

Name: _____
Street: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____ E-mail: _____
Name of person you wish to honor: _____
Name as it should appear on nest box plaque: _____

Legacy Fund Donation, check where appropriate:
_____ 1 nest box @ \$125
_____ Number of additional nest boxes @\$100 each
_____ Total number of nest boxes requested

Preferred location of Legacy Box. Please specify city in Ohio. If no preference, please indicate: _____
OBS Honoree Grant Amount: _____
(We will contact you to discuss further).
Enclosed is my check for \$ _____

Make checks payable to:
Ohio Bluebird Society
Mail to:
Ohio Bluebird Society
The Holden Arboretum
9500 Sperry Road, Kirtland, OH 44094

Member News

Welcome New Members!

Liz Ball
John Barrord
Judy Bruce
James Ganson
Stephen Habash
Veronica Oblak
Shannon Slabaugh
Margaret Sproul
Mary Strahota

Thank You to Our Donors!

Dan Best
Eileen Cernea
Stephen Habash
Bob & Kathy Hinklin
Ron Swart
Deb Williams

Donations made in memory of Ford D. Smith:

Penny & Fritz Brandau
Dave & Pat Dutton
Sharyn M. Kitzmiller
Michael & Helen Stoneking

Don't forget to send your fledgling reports in for the 2021 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/>

The Presidents Notes - by Darlene Sillick

As I write this, the temperature is 16 and on its way down to 2 degrees in Delaware County. There is a Severe Weather Alert for wind chills as low as -15 tonight till mid-morning Saturday Jan 29. While it is very dangerous for people, imagine the birds and critters out there trying to survive the elements and find food. It is so important to provide food and cover and a heated bird bath for water. This is a hard time for birds going into a nestbox or cavity trying to stay warm. Remember when you go out in a month or so to check your boxes to take some ziplock bags with you. And try not to be too sad. Most birds live to be 1-6 years but 50% don't make it to their first birthday.



On March 5, our Virtual OBS annual conference will start the videos for this year's conference, thank you to Anna Rose for another amazing logo with her original art work. Last year's videos can still be viewed on our website or our Youtube channel.

Are you planting a variety of plants, shrubs and trees to help native birds in your yard? On March 5, Ohio Bluebird Society "Virtual" Annual Conference welcomes Dr. Andy Jones who will discuss what you can do to help the decline of birds and some things you can do in your yard to help them survive.

Our own Bethany Gray from Greene County, who is one of two county organizers for OBS, will give her Eastern Bluebird talk. She has a wealth of experience and new and existing monitors will pick up great tips and suggestions from her.

Megan Shave, Ph.D., will give an interesting talk about her research in Michigan on orchards by putting up American Kestrel boxes.

Genelle Uhrig, Director of Ecology at The Wilds, will give an overview of the first-year American Kestrel project at The Wilds. We installed 9 new special design kestrel boxes in Nov. 2020. We were excited with our first-year progress.

Dan Best and Rachel McKinney will give a talk on Going for the Gold - their work and discoveries over time with nesting Prothonotary Warblers. Many trials and tribulations have followed them on their 30 years of floating on the Cuyahoga River and making a difference in the Golden Swamp Warbler in Geauga County.

Paula Ziebarth (Madame Wingnut) will discuss dangers surrounding the non-native European Starling and the non-native House Sparrow. The efficacy of both passive and active management strategies will be reviewed.

Darlene Sillick will show some of her projects of 30 years and discuss how to organize, how to get volunteers and how to be a project manager and orchestrate

valued conservation projects both locally and around the state. As she states, if you see something broken on a trail, fix it or maybe it is time to take it down, if possible.

OBS has the assistance of Josue Sanchez from Audio/Video (AV) at Cardinal Health providing lots of his expert touches to making these videos great. He works with Darlene and he and his wife have monitored trails in past years. We have our own Youtube channel. Josue and webmaster Nikki Locke are working together to have the talks uploaded by Saturday March 5. We can't wait. We miss the in-person all day meeting and meeting old and new friends. Hopefully next year we can be back at Ashland!!

Enjoy reviewing the full conference details in this newsletter. View the talks at your leisure and share the OBS website with your friends.

By the end of March, we hope to redo The Wilds 40 bluebird boxes. I got a grant from the Ohio Ornithology Website in late January and Genelle and I are organizing dates/times to get the work done. They raised lots of tree swallows last season and we will put up a couple grids and some paired boxes. Stay tuned and maybe you can come out and help us redo the old boxes for new ones.

Do you have suggestions for a speaker or conference talk next year? Please email Darlene or a board member with your ideas. On March 5, we will reveal the Blue Feather award winner and the conservation award winners. Always exciting to see who gets these awards!



As I said, we miss seeing dear friends from over the years with OBS. I went to a NABS conference many years ago and met Janice Petco. I bet we are at least 30 years of being buds - thanks to the bluebird. I love this picture and the lady to my left is Bernardine Akkerman. I met her through Janice and we have a great time. While the bluebird is amazing, he does touch our lives with the people he brings in and out of ours like a quilter.

This is a photo from our 2019 in person conference. We all wondered what was happening with Covid. It did not take long for it to take over our lives. We find comfort being outside and seeing our cavity nesters and knowing we are making a difference – by helping them and sharing experiences with our buds.

OBS Welcomes New Area Contact for Columbiana County, Jason Short

Hello Bluebirders,

My name is Jason Short and I will be the new Area Contact for Columbiana County, Ohio. I am relatively new to Bluebirding, but over the last 2 years It has become one of my passions in life. I started out with one nest box, which became 2 and now I have a whole trail going. In the past 2 years, my boxes have produced over 30 new fledglings. I am excited about my new role as AC and look forward to helping OBS and all Bluebirders across the state. Hope everyone is staying warm this winter and hoping for a successful nestbox season to all.



Jason W. Short,
Bird Nerd

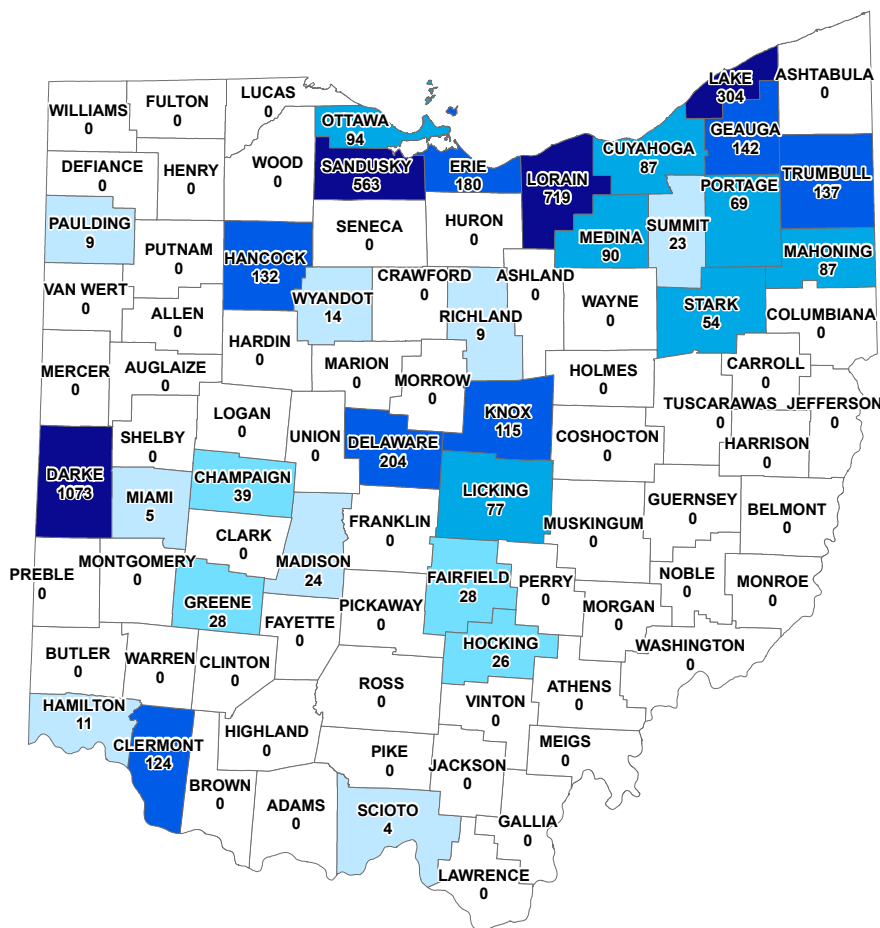
Bringing up Young Birders

Monica Klarer's 2-1/2 year old grandchild spent hours looking through new binoculars one day. With bird watching in the future, today's target was a little larger. The family dog made for great viewing practice!



OBS 2021 FLEDGLING REPORT

by Mike Watson



Species	#Fledged
Eastern Bluebird	4471
Tree Swallow	6808
House Wren	2421
Purple Martin	4293
Black-capped Chickadee	53
Carolina Chickadee	92
Carolina Wren	37
American Kestrel	209
Barn Swallow	176
Prothonotary Warbler	141
Wood Duck	10
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	6
House Finch	5
House Sparrow dispatched	206
House Sparrow eggs removed	703
European Starlings dispatched	5
European Starling eggs removed	26

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	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tax deductible gift to OBS \$ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/> Membership renewal <input type="checkbox"/> New membership		
<input type="checkbox"/> I am interested in participating in OBS activities		
<input type="checkbox"/> Email Newsletter OR <input type="checkbox"/> 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.

TRUSTEES

Stephen Bischoff
trswmooh@gmail.com

Pat Dutton
obsmembershipchair@gmail.com
330.763.0474

Carl Gleditsch
daddy_g56@hotmail.com
614.798.8748

JoAnn Kale
joann.kale@gmail.com
479.769.0574

Monica Klarer (Secretary)
dmklarer@yahoo.com
419.499.442

Anna Rose
annarose7@att.net
614.263.7479

Judy Semroc
rainefox51@gmail.com
330.612.0391

Darlene Sillick (President)
dsillick118@gmail.com
614.288.3696 (text preferred)

Molly Wilsbacher (Treasurer)
OBS Treasurer@gmail.com

ADVISORS

Mel Bolt
mellen@sssnet.com
330.262.0448

Linda Lang
lindaflang@gmail.com 419.651.4196

Loyd Marshall
lmarsh@aol.com • 330.876.7895

Dick Tuttle
740.363.6433

MEMBERSHIP CHAIRS

Dave Dutton – 330.674.7585
Pat Dutton – 330.763.0474
obsmembershipchair@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor

Penny Brandau –
pennybrandau@gmail.com
440.670.3684

E-mail:

ohiobluebirdsociety@gmail.com

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.

OBS Area Contacts (as of February 2022)

County	Name	E-mail	County	Name	E-mail
ALLEN	Mohr, Mark	mohrbluebirds@hotmail.com	HOLMES	Hawkins, Marcella	gofish710@gmail.com
ASHLAND	Lang, Linda	lindaflang@gmail.com	LAKE	Watson, Mike	mwatson@holdenarb.org
ATHENS	Caldwell, Reid & Teresa	freidc@yahoo.com; teresacaldwell@athensswcd.org	LICKING	Joann Kale	joann.kale@gmail.com
AUGLAIZE	Mark Mohr	mohrbluebirds@hotmail.com	LORAIN	Brandau, Penny	pennybrandau@gmail.com
CHAMPAIGN	Rutan, Jean	cpjrutan@gmail.com	LUCAS	Seaman, Tammy	erictammy@sbcglobal.net
CLARK	Gray, Bethany	ohiobluebirder@gmail.com	MEDINA	Rabung, Dale	twodr@zoominternet.net
COLUMBIANA	Short, Jason	bigbirdnerd_j@yahoo.com	MIAMI	Peters, Teresa	tm_peters@yahoo.com
CRAWFORD	Minor, Mary Lee	chickadee@columbus.rr.com	MONTGOMERY	Romeo, Sam	sromeo@audubon.org
CUYAHOGA	Barber, John	jcbarker27@gmail.com	NOBLE	LeVasseur, Doug	doug.levasseur@gmail.com
DARKE	Luttmer, Bob	bonnie561@roadrunner.com	OTTAWA	Ziebarth, Paula	paulazbird@gmail.com
DARKE	Smith, Tom	bluebirdman@embarqmail.com	OTTAWA	Rock, Lisa	snowbunting123@gmail.com
DELAWARE	Tuttle, Dick	ohtres@cs.com	PICKAWAY	Hill, Carrie	hillteach@gmail.com
DELAWARE	Ziebarth, Paula	paulazbird@gmail.com	PORTAGE	Gammon, Darrell	invisibleman53@yahoo.com
ERIE	Bird, Mel	mrbird90@aol.com	ROSS	Hill, Carrie	hillteach@gmail.com
FAIRFIELD	Kale, JoAnn	joann.kale@gmail.com	SANDUSKY	Rock, Lisa	snowbunting123@gmail.com
FRANKLIN	Aldridge, Julie	juliealdridge10@gmail.com	STARK	Gammon, Darrell	invisibleman53@yahoo.com
FRANKLIN	Sillick, Darlene	dsillick118@gmail.com	STARK	Semroc, Judy	rainefox51@gmail.com
GEAUGA	Brindo, Jay	jbrindo@aol.com	SUMMIT	Grande, Marcy	mgrandesign@yahoo.com
GREENE	Gray, Bethany	ohiobluebirder@gmail.com	TRUMBULL	Loyd Marshall	lmarsh@aol.com
GUERNSEY	Barber, Tom	klbarber62@roadrunner.com	UNION	Darlene Sillick,	dsillick118@gmail.com
HAMILTON	Romine, Jim	jimdromine@gmail.com	WARREN	Jeffries, Art	gonebirding@hotmail.com
HANCOCK	Nye, Fred	evaferdy@tds.net	WAYNE	Bolt, Mel	mellen@sssnet.com
HURON	Bird, Mel	mrbird90@aol.com	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

facebook



Affiliated with the North American Bluebird Society

What's Inside...

2022 Virtual Annual Conference.....	1-3
A Tiny House Wren Attacks Its Landlord.....	4-5
Madame Wingnut	6-7
Beautiful Bluebird Artist Joe Huatman	8
Buebird of Happiness.....	9
Treasurer's Report.....	9
A Tribute to Ford Smith	10
OBS Legacy Fund.....	11
Member News.....	12-13
OBS Fledgling Map.....	14
OBS Area Contacts and Contact Info.....	15

Deadline for Submitting Articles:

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



SAVE THE DATE

22ND ANNUAL

THE BLUEBIRD SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA
Conference

MARCH 18 - 19, 2022
LEHIGH VALLEY BEST WESTERN
BETHLEHEM, PA - WWW.LEHIGHVALLEYHOTEL.COM

Join us for informative presentations, including:

- For the Love of Bluebirds
- All About Bluebirds and Tree Swallows
- The Bluebirds of North Park & Beyond
- Birds of Prey featuring live birds

Enjoy both a silent and live auction, as well as a vendor fair!

KEEP AN EYE ON YOUR MAILBOX FOR MORE INFO