



Bluebird Monitor

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

Fall 2023



The Dawes Arboretum

By Darlene Sillick, OBS President



The Dawes Arboretum is a nonprofit arboretum located in Newark, Ohio. It includes nearly 2,000 acres (8 km²) of plant collections, gardens and natural areas. The site includes approximately 12 miles (19 km) of hiking trails and roadways for a four-mile (6 km) driving tour.

Dawes is a favorite place that I

love to visit all seasons. Being a long time member, it was special to take my mom there. Something is almost always blooming. I enjoy birdwatching and taking classes at Dawes. Of course, the trees are so amazing. I got my life, Black-throated Gray Warbler at Dawes one spring day. I hurried out there to some fruiting trees and I was the last person to see it before dark. He was not seen the next day and birders call it the one day wonder.



The Gentleman at the Dawes entrance.
Photo by Karren Martin-huth, April 2023



Photo by Bill Brown, Dawes Monitor

My central Ohio Young Birders have done a number of conservation projects on the grounds. They put up a large Tree Swallow grid, donated screech and kestrel boxes and donated a Purple Martin Rig and an Osprey platform. One of my Boy Scouts redid all the 100 bluebird nestboxes. They now have sturdy poles and baffles and the birds are much safer thanks to a new Eagle Scout. Dawes has a very strong monitoring program and they raise many native birds each season.

Last fall, I learned that 6 very large Avian Avatars were coming to Dawes. I enjoyed seeing each one and learning why that

Continued on page 2

avatar was important to Dawes and Ohio. These new additions known as the Avian Avatars were designed by The Myth Makers, Donna Dodson and Andy Moerlein, and constructed using bamboo and other recycled materials to allow them to dissolve back into nature over time. These magnificent sculptures – some reaching 20 feet tall – represent a different native bird, and each have a unique story to tell about the history of Ohio and The Arboretum: dawesarb.org/avian-avatars-meet-the-birds.

Be sure to visit the website above to see the peacock, owl and sandhill crane. The last 2 I saw were the cardinal pair. I could not walk to see them before the ankle fusion. I was excited to walk there early April and they were very interesting.

The two pictures below were taken by Gus the Eagle Scout. He did an amazing job leading other scouts and parents to replace 100 set ups in 2 cold days in February. Dawes wanted to keep the Peterson style boxes. That was maintained and as Gus said, “Twenty-five new people learned about and appreciate The Dawes Arboretum.”



Photo by Karren Martin-Huth



Before



After

Licking Parks Grant Update By Anne Balogh

The Licking Park District received funds from the Ohio Bluebird Society in the spring of 2023 to outfit two Eastern Bluebird nestboxes with Ring Camera systems. The two eastward facing nestboxes are located close to the Infirmary Mound Park office on 5ft conduit poles with anti-predator baffles. Ring cameras powered by solar panels were installed and allow a “close-up” view of the activity within the nestbox. The photos and videos generated are being used in social media posts and during educational programming.

These two bluebird boxes are part of a larger trail of paired boxes throughout the park. Bluebird nestboxes are monitored every 3-4 days when possible, with a minimum of 1 time a week. NestWatch data sheets are used. Boxes are monitored April through August. The majority of boxes are located in newly created prairie.

Upon installation of the nestcams, we had bluebirds check one out immediately. The other was occupied with invasive House Sparrows, despite the monofilament deterrent. We removed the house sparrow nest material repeatedly. The bluebirds laid 4 eggs, three of which hatched and fledged successfully. We utilized video captures on our park Facebook and Instagram posts to educate about Eastern Bluebird nesting behaviors. We have included some video captures, which unfortunately are not as clear as the video themselves. The bluebirds have been investigating the box recently, but have not started another nesting attempt.

Grant update written by:
Anne Balogh, Program Coordinator
Licking Park District
PO Box 590, 4309 Lancaster Road
Granville, OH 43023



Photo of invasive male HOSP inside the nest box



Male Bluebird removing fecal sac



Hungry bluebird chicks being fed



Male Bluebird inside nest box

The Art of Jigsaw Puzzles

By Molly Wilsbacher, OBS Treasurer

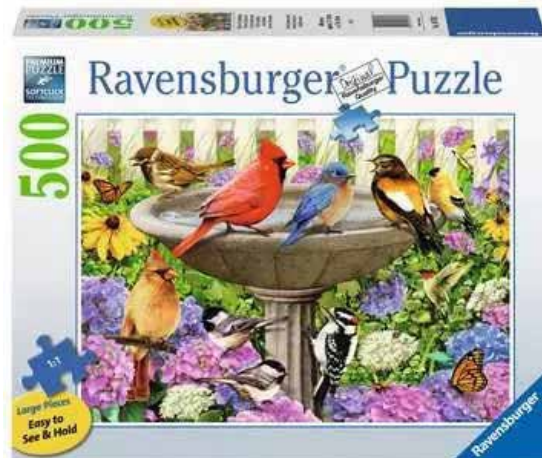


"Life is like a jigsaw puzzle. You have to see the whole picture, then put it together piece by piece!" ~ Terry McMillan

If you are like most families, you probably own at least one jigsaw puzzle. When the weather gets colder and it is time to move indoors for the winter, my family usually has at least one jigsaw puzzle on the table that is being worked on. To help strengthen logical thinking, when my daughters were very young, we started with big chunky pieces of about 8 or 12 pieces. Now that they are grown, we usually build 500 to 1,000 piece puzzles.

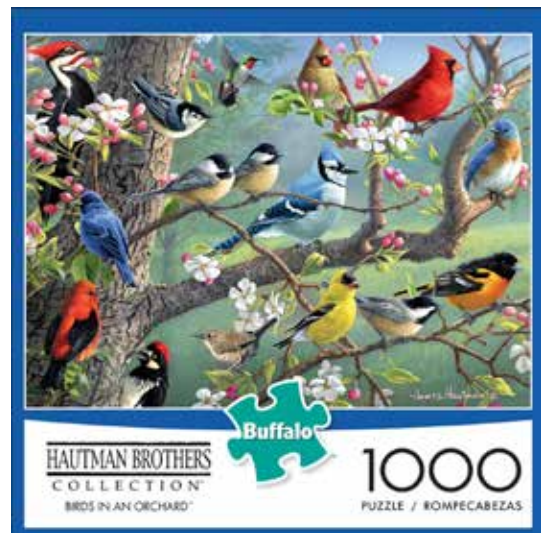


My favorite brand of puzzle is from the German company, Ravensburger. Their puzzles are made out of extra-thick cardboard combined with a linen-structured paper that creates a glare-free puzzle image for a quality you can see and feel. Plus, their steel cutting tools are designed and crafted by hand, which ensures no two pieces are alike and guarantees a perfect interlocking fit. Prices of a Ravensburger puzzle vary depending on how many pieces are in the puzzle. A 500 piece puzzle usually costs about \$16-20 (e.g., "Garden Birds" above costs \$18). A 1,000 piece puzzle costs about \$25, and a 2,000 piece puzzle is approximately \$40.



You can buy Ravensburger puzzles at many different locations including Barnes & Noble, Target, Walmart, and Puzzle Warehouse. For example, my daughter bought "At the Birdbath" puzzle at a Hallmark card and gift store. You can also buy them directly online at: www.ravensburger.us.

Another good option for jigsaw puzzles is Buffalo Games & Puzzles. They are the #1 jigsaw puzzle manufacturer in North America. Their puzzles use the thickest graphic board, premium paper, and sturdy set-up boxes. Every Buffalo Games jigsaw puzzle is manufactured using a precision cutting technique that guarantees every piece snaps into place. The price of a Buffalo Games Puzzle also vary depending on the number of pieces. A 300 count puzzle costs about \$10-12, whereas the 1,000 piece puzzle "Birds in an Orchard" costs \$17.



[You may recall back in January 2022, I wrote about the Bluebird Artist Joe Hautman who was one of three artistic brothers. "Birds in an Orchard" was painted by one of his brothers, James Hautman.]

If you really enjoy building new puzzles, Buffalo Games offers a Puzzle Subscription where you will receive a new puzzle every month. A 6-month subscription currently costs \$81 and 12-month subscription is \$153. If you are interested in this, or exploring many different puzzle themes and genres, please visit their website at: buffalogames.com.

In summary, building jigsaw puzzles is a fun way to pass the time. It not only strengthens your short-term memory and creates special social bonds with other puzzle builders, it also gives you an amazing sense of accomplishment when finished- especially if the subject of the puzzle is one of our blue feathered friends. Be well.

The Birds and the Bees

By Heather Harris, OBS Trustee

My husband started as a hobbyist beekeeper in the Spring of 2020, and we now have 4 honey bee hives on our small acreage homestead in northwest Trumbull county. Over that period of time, I have tried to naturalize our yard to feed both the birds and the bees, and make it more wildlife friendly. I planted some seed producing plants like purple coneflower and sunflowers, since they are a great source of nutrition for birds like goldfinches and cardinals. Every fall, our sunflower plants lose their seeds, and what the birds don't eat will come up in the spring, and the bees love them too when they bloom. I like to let the sunflowers that drop under my bird feeders grow. They are usually a shorter sunflower, but the birds and the bees love them none the less. I also planted some milkweed as a caterpillar host plant, and some elderberry bushes to bear fruit in the fall. Milkweed is a favorite of the monarch caterpillar, and it smells amazing when it blooms.

I have seen our bees gathering nectar on a variety of these plants in our yard, and also frequently visiting our garden to help pollinate our vegetables. In 2020 I planted Bee Balm, and it finally bloomed this year with multiple purple flowers that have kind of a spicy aroma. It has attracted hummingbirds, hummingbird moths, and a variety of bee species. The bees also love my bird baths, and come to get a fresh drink of water on the really hot days, as well as bluebirds and their best friends the house finches, and many other birds.



Bumblebee on a sunflower



Honeybee on milkweed blossom



Hummingbird moth on Bee Balm



Purple Cone Flowers

One of our bee frames



Our beehives



One of our concerns were the bluebirds and purple martins that we host here might conflict with our desire to produce more bees. I know I have seen pictures from other people of bluebirds with honey bees in their beaks, but bees are not the first choice for them when it comes to insects so my concern wasn't so much with them. I usually spot the Bluebirds here feeding small caterpillars, katydids and spiders from our large red oak and maple trees to their nestlings.

My biggest concern was with the purple martins. A queen bee will fly up usually only once in her lifespan to a "drone congregation area". This area is about a 1/2 to 1 mile up in the air, where bee drones from various neighboring colonies congregate and wait for a queen to mate. The entire flight and mating process takes anywhere from 10 to 30 minutes, though it is not without significant risk to the queens life. If the queen of a colony were to disappear, it could cause a major disruption in the hive. If the worker bees can't produce a new queen, the bees could swarm and the hive is lost. Unfortunately, the drone congregation area is where some Purple Martins fly to catch insects.

Luckily we didn't have any problems with the birds and the bees this year, and it was our first year having 3 pairs of purple martins successfully nest on our property. I also have several other nest boxes around here for the bluebirds, tree swallows, or any other native cavity nesting bird that wants to nest peacefully in my yard. What I didn't know, is that in peak production season, a single queen bee can lay up to 2,000 eggs a day. That's a lot of bees and more than the birds could ever consume, so I think my concern with the birds and the bees coexisting can finally be laid to rest!



Ask Madame WingNut

The Bluebird Brigade at the Pickleball Court

By Paula Ziebarth



It is the last week of July as I write this. I just returned from monitoring the 22-box trail at Smith Park in the City of Delaware, Ohio. For the second week in a row I was greeted by a pair of Eastern Bluebirds and the three fledglings from their previous brood. The Bluebird Brigade perched on the pickleball court fence and gave me the business: chattering, wing waving, calling, hopping about. All five of them were truly agitated that I was

approaching their box. I opened the nest box to discover a late nest with 3 eggs laid this past week.

The nest season is winding down quickly here. The last of the Tree Swallows fledged from boxes last week and have left the park. A few Eastern Bluebirds or tenacious House Sparrows are the only cavity nesters remaining.

Smith Park Trail was originally established by Dick Tuttle in 2016. When Dick passed away, I took over the trail last fall, changing the Tree Swallow grid layout to paired box stations throughout the park. I also implemented aggressive House Sparrow control and experimented with monofilament sparrow deterrent on half of the nest boxes. The House Sparrow population at this park is the worst I've ever seen.

During the fall and winter months I trapped 47 adult House Sparrows in nest boxes. During the first week of March, I installed 1-1/4" diameter hole reducers on half of the nest boxes and monofilament sparrow deterrent on the other half (one box of each type in a paired station). My hope was that House Sparrows would avoid the nest box with the monofilament on it and try to use the other one with the hole reducer. Eastern Bluebirds will not fit through a 1-1/4" hole so they would have to use the nest box with standard 1-9/16" hole and monofilament, keeping them safer.

During the nest season, House Sparrows attempted to nest 57 times in nest boxes WITHOUT the monofilament deterrent. 57 adult House Sparrows were dispatched from these boxes.

Nest boxes WITH monofilament deterrent had 13 House Sparrow attempts and 8 adults dispatched.

The monofilament deterrent at the Smith Park Trail was 87.7% effective in 2023. I'm not sure if I am surprised the monofilament sparrow deterrent did as well as it did, or whether I'm disappointed it didn't do a better job. Sparrow deterrents such as monofilament or sparrow spookers are deterrents only. House Sparrow management is still very important. If I had allowed House Sparrows to remain on site, I have little doubt they would have taken the boxes with monofilament on them also. For homeowners housing Eastern Bluebirds, I have always recommended having a bluebird box and at least one "trap" box with a 1-1/4" hole located in an area House Sparrows will be drawn to.

During nest season I removed 39 House Sparrow eggs from nest boxes after adults were trapped, and 11 chicks that were in the 4-inch diameter conduit that tops the playing fences at the park. Even with aggressive trapping, House Sparrows killed 2 adult Tree Swallows, a clutch of Tree Swallow eggs, and a clutch of Eastern Bluebird eggs.

Overall, the trail did well for nesting Tree Swallows and Eastern Bluebirds. Eastern Bluebirds are on track to fledge more young than ever before which is to be expected with new paired box stations. House Sparrows will continue to be a problem, and the large housing subdivision that is being constructed across the street will not help matters.

Every year when nest season ends, I get a bit melancholy. I will miss the weekly monitoring trips, especially those that I share with my good friends Connie Dolder and Darlene Sillick. I also will miss working with new monitors and homeowners in Delaware and Ottawa Counties. So to close the season, I thought I would share some pictures of the true Bluebird Brigade, some of the special people who helped with the birds this season, some old friends and some new ones. These are just a handful of those that are so special to me, but the ones I caught on camera this year. I look forward to seeing everyone next season in mid-March when the Eastern Bluebird's wing waving and nest building begins anew.

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.

My son Greg installing an OBS Legacy box in remembrance of close friend in Powell City Parks



Friend and backyard bluebirder Jill Cunningham with our felted bluebirds from class at Franklin Park Conservatory, Columbus

Veronica Oblak, monitor for Powell City Parks



Jeff Blosser, monitor for Delaware State Park Trail and Gene Hughes, monitor for Alum Creek State Park Trail



Anna Burghardt monitoring Purple Martin colony at Scheff East Point Nature Preserve on South Bass Island



Lisa Rock and volunteers from Green Creek Marsh Conservancy banded and changed nests for 387 Purple Martins on South Bass Island in early July

Darlene Sillick, OBS President and good friend monitoring Safari Golf Club Trail



Good friend Connie Dolder and I get out weekly to monitor trails in Delaware together



Gwynne Dilbeck, Instructor, Art History and Ryan Homsher, Instructor, Biology at Columbus State Community College, Delaware Campus

Little Lazarus

By Dan Best, OBS Trustee



With over three decades of working with the same bird species, monitoring nesting in much the same way in the same location using the same bird house design, one would think that this activity would become pretty routine, predictable and even mundane. Well, maybe, but not if you are working

out of a boat on a river with changing conditions from day to day, week to week and year to year. The birds, in our case prothonotary warblers (PROWs), continue to surprise with their breeding season behaviors even after our 32 breeding seasons of interfacing with the golden swamp warbler along the Upper Cuyahoga River in Geauga County. Each year also brings memorable adventures and encounters with weather, wetland wildlife and people on the river. This year's PROW nesting season was no exception.

On June 12, my monitoring mission was to catch and band a female PROW in one of our bird houses, nest jars made from Metamucil containers mounted on PVC poles set in the river bottom mud. Nestlings are banded at 7 days old when leg tissues are firmed up but before disturbance triggers premature fledging.

In addition to banding young and adult PROWs with their USGS Bird Banding Laboratory metal bands, adults are fitted with a color band on each leg. The various combinations of colors provide identification of individual birds. Subsequent observations during the breeding season and subsequent years for those returning have yielded information on longevity, nest site faithfulness, and pair bonding.

To catch a male PROW for banding, a decoy bird and audio call are used to lure the male into a mist net. Females are caught during incubation by placing a mesh laundry bag over the entrance hole of the nest jar after a stealthy approach by boat. In this case, I had flubbed the first attempt at capturing the female PROW of the target nest jar. Inspecting the nest jar, I found one newly-hatched young bird and 3 eggs. I left the nest jar lowered

on the mounting pole for an easier second attempt later.

After a careful approach to the nest jar hoping that the female PROW had returned and settled back on the nest, I placed the mesh bag over the nest jar entrance. Usually, the Upper Cuyahoga River has next to no current. However, on this day, the river was up increasing the flow on this bend of the river. Combined with a tail wind my canoe was given a downstream drift. To hold the mesh bag in place, I reached out for the nest jar mounting pole with the other hand. The canoe capsized. I went all the way under. I surfaced with my head above water and my feet touching the bottom. Looking over at the nest jar, it was almost entirely submerged. I frantically raised the nest jar out of the water letting the drain hole do its job. The moss nest was soggy, the three eggs were still in the nest along with a limp and seemingly lifeless PROW nestling after being submerged for at least a minute.

I lost tools, but my tackle box with the bird bands and special banding tools was still floating in the water-filled canoe. I lost my hat, but not my glasses. My new iPhone was safe in a waterproof pouch and I was further relieved later that my electronic vehicle keys still worked. However, I felt absolutely terrible about the loss of the PROW babe.

I returned two days later to check the nest hoping that the eggs might have survived the brief dunking, but they hadn't hatched. They might not have any way as eggs failing to hatch are not unusual. To my surprise and great joy, there was the chick, alive with two day's growth put on. I dubbed the chick "Little Lazarus" for the New Testament account of Lazarus, the man that Jesus raised from the dead. Five days later, at a week old, Little Lazarus got his USGS band. Just before fledging, I checked on the kid, a spunky youngster about ready to fly the coop which it did soon after.

Is it the love of birds, the affinity for nature, the rewards of husbandry or the spirit of adventure that comes with each year of monitoring prothonotary warblers? All of us bird box monitors can answer that question for ourselves.



Banded adult Prothonotary Warbler



Little Lazarus



Ready to fledge

Bluebirding Terms

By Madame WingNut



The following terms are used by some of the monitors I work with, some you are familiar with and other fun ones you can adopt if you like.

Warble – common call of Eastern Bluebird

Chatter – distress or warning call that lets monitor know Bluebird is not happy you are near

Swoop/click – When monitor is at or near box, more aggressive Bluebirds will swoop toward your head (sometimes hitting you) and click their bill

Wing wave – courtship behavior

Locator Call – Calls emitted by adults and new fledglings when they leave the box. It helps adults find the scattered young to keep them safe and feed them

Parfait Nest – Bluebird nest built in layers with different materials (see picture above)

Mrs. Magoo or Mr. Magoo – monitor that has difficulty counting number of young or eggs in a box

Backyard Bluebirder – homeowner that is hosting Bluebirds in a nest box

Twofer – Van Ert trap sprung with two House Sparrows trapped in nest box

BOGO – same; buy one get one free

Schmutz – fecal material left on box walls after young fledge

Orca – tree swallow with head sticking out of nest box reminds us of a little orca whale

Empty Nest Syndrome – when all our Bluebirds and other native cavity nesters have fledged for the year

Treasurer's Report

by Molly Wilsbacher

- 1. I am happy to report that the Ohio Bluebird Society received a \$3,500 general purpose grant from the Cardinal Health Foundation in recognition of Board Member Lee Johnson's volunteer commitment to our organization.** Cardinal Health appreciates "the good work that Ohio Bluebird Society Incorporated is doing, and is pleased to support its efforts." Thank you very much Cardinal Health Foundation, and Lee Johnson!
- 2. It is hard to believe that we are only about 6 months away from the next Ohio Bluebird Conference.** It will be held on Saturday, March 2, 2024 at Ashland University. Due to a 35% increase in food cost experienced this year, the Board of Directors decided to raise the price of the conference by only \$5 for 2024. Hopefully you will agree that our conference is still a real bargain for the quality of speakers and content that is offered. Please keep the silent auction in mind when cleaning out rooms, downsizing, or bargain hunting at thrift shops.
- 3. As a reminder, the Ohio Bluebird Society offers a small grants program, which is intended to provide financial support to the creation and installation of new nesting habitat.** Because education is such an important component of wildlife conservation, we are particularly focused on projects that combine on the ground conservation with education. Please visit our website to learn more or to apply for a grant: <https://ohiobluebirdsociety.org/about/grant-information>.
- 4. In the 2nd Quarter of 2023, we received approximately \$1,195 in membership dues and renewals.** We also received \$132 in donations, plus the Cardinal Health grant mentioned above. Thank you to everyone who made a donation, as every little amount really helps! Anticipated expenses in the 3rd quarter include: (1) quarterly newsletter expenses, (2) website maintenance expenses, and (3) liability insurance premium payment.

Black Capped Chickadee and Tufted Titmouse: Co-specific Avian ‘Cousins’ That Flock Together

By Pam Route, OBS Trustee | Photos By Pam Route Unless Otherwise Noted



The Black Capped Chickadee and the Tufted Titmouse are woodland songbirds of the *Poecile* family. They can be found in mixed deciduous forests, open woods, and forest edges. If you are lucky to have mature shade trees and a bird feeder on your property, they may be frequent backyard visitors in your trees and at your feeders.

The Black Capped Chickadee (BCCH) and the Tufted Titmouse (TUTI) are considered co-specific, because they are both members of the same family. They are both small, resident (non-migratory) woodland songbirds that are often seen flocking together (along with others) primarily in the winter.



The Black Capped Chickadee is one of seven Chickadee species in North America. You will recognize the Black Capped Chickadee by their black cap, black bib, round head, white cheeks, gray body and wings, white underside, and buffy sides. The Chickadee is monomorphic, meaning it is not possible to outwardly tell the difference between males and females.

The BCCH's call is a notable and distinctive “Chick a Dee-Dee-Dee”. The more “Dees” at the end of the call, alerts a higher degree of threat. Males also make a “fee bee bee” sound. They have an intricate language that is used to keep in contact with their family group, defend their territory, announce food sources and to alert to predators.

They are a highly curious, acrobatic, and social bird full of investigative antics. They are seen flitting from branch to branch, often hanging upside down as they forage for insects on leaves and branches. They are polite at the feeder and usually just take 1 seed or nugget at a time.

The Black Capped Chickadee tucks insects, seeds, and nuts into bark crevices, to be consumed later in the season, when food is scarce. This is called caching. The BCCH has a great

memory and intricately maps out thousands of hiding spots for his cache. This process of using episodic memory to recall thousands of environmental caches, is a function of a region of the brain called the hippocampus. Interestingly, in food caching species like BCCH and TUTI, the hippocampus has been found to be 3 times larger than non-caching species and will change in size, seasonally.



The Chickadee is a cavity nester and often nests in existing cavities that were originally excavated by woodpeckers, although if the tree they are nesting in is dead, they do have the ability to excavate their own nesting cavity. They will also nest in nest boxes placed in your yard. The nest that the BCCH constructs is a magical work of art. Its main foundation is created by using moss and grasses and the nest cup is lined with bits of fur, fiber, fluff and all things soft. They only have 1 clutch per season consisting of 3-7 eggs. After leaving the nest, the fledglings will be cared for by the parents for as long as necessary and will disperse into other flocks come fall. The young will not stay in the original family group.



As a non-migrating winter resident, the Chickadee has become metabolically adaptive. Their plumage is dense and protective, but that is not enough to stay warm when it is less than 32 degrees (F). In winter, their diet changes from mostly carbohydrates to primarily fats, to fuel their higher metabolic needs. They are known to increase their body fat by 7% through daytime feeding, only to lose it at night, in an effort to stay warm. The spots chosen by BCCH for sleep are solitary and are super small. The chickadee tucks himself into this tiny crevice or cavity in a tree to be shielded from temperature and wind. Since most heat is lost through the bill and eyes, the BCCH tucks his head beneath his shoulders to mitigate this.

One of BCCH's metabolic adaptations is the ability to regulate their temperature and conserve fuel, when the temperature drops below 32 degrees (f). By dropping their body temperature as much as 20 degrees, they enter a state of regulated hypothermia, which is an energy saving adaptation that conserves the fat reserves that are necessary to stay warm through the night.

The Tufted Titmouse (TUTI) is a small (slightly larger than his cousin the Chickadee) songbird, gray in color, with a buffy underside and peach flanks. His most identifying feature is his black forehead and the jaunty gray crest on the top of his head, that can either be raised or lowered. Like his cousin, the Chickadee, the Tufted Titmouse is also monomorphic.

He has round, shiny black eyes that are forward facing and provide him with a wide field of hyper vision that allows him to see the small insects he is always searching for while gleaning. ("Gleaning is a feeding strategy used by birds in which they catch prey by plucking them from foliage or the ground, from crevices such as rock faces and under the eaves of houses, or even, as in the case of ticks and lice, from living animals.") When a TUTI snags a seed, he will carry it to a branch to remove the seed casing using his feet and stout beak, and then flit off to cache his treasure, for a later date.

The Tufted Titmouse's whistle call of "*peter, peter, peter*" and the nasal "*tsee-day-day-day*" are the two most common calls.

Like the BCCH, the Tufted Titmouse caches insects, seeds, and nuts into bark crevices, to be consumed later in the season, when food is scarce. Like most caching species, TUTI has a great memory and intricately maps out thousands of hiding spots for his cache. He is highly intelligent and has an incredible memory.

Both Tufted Titmouse and the Black Capped Chickadee have such extraordinary memories, they have been the subject of intense study by neuroscientists seeking applications to treat diseases like Alzheimer's.



Photos courtesy of Bet Zimmerman, sialis.org

The Tufted Titmouse is also a cavity nester and like the Black Capped Chickadee, often nests in existing cavities excavated by woodpeckers. They are not able to excavate their own nesting sites. The nest that the TUTI constructs is very similar to the Chickadee's nest in that it has a base of grass, moss, leaf skeletons, and bark pieces as part of the outer structure. The nest cup is filled with all things soft like fur, hair, feathers, fluff and sometimes, snakeskin. The Tufted Titmouse is known for snatching nest building hair from dogs, rabbits, horses and sometimes humans, to line their nests! They usually have 1 clutch per season consisting of 3-9 eggs, but occasionally will have a

second brood. They will also nest in small wren boxes placed at the wood's edge. After leaving the nest, the fledglings will be cared for by the parents and will stay with them and their flock until later in their second year. Some of this year's fledglings may care for next spring's nestlings!



Photos courtesy of Bet Zimmerman, sialis.org

As a resident, non-migrating bird, the Tufted Titmouse must endure some rough winter conditions. Unlike the BCCH, TUTI is not a solitary sleeper and will roost in small cavities and nooks, cozied up with others for warmth. Fluffing insulative feathers, shivering, and sharing body heat with others are their winter survival strategies. They do not enter a state of regulated hypothermia, like BCCH.

Have you ever noticed that often you will see both Black Capped Chickadees and Tufted Titmice in your yard and feeders at the same time? If it is wintertime, it is likely that they are members of the same mixed species flock. Some birds flock to roam the woodlands in search of food and lodging. Other birds that form these mixed flocks include Chickadees, Tufted Titmice, Brown Creepers, White Breasted Nuthatches, Carolina Wrens, and sometimes Golden Crowned Kinglets. Flocking protects the members with a 'strength in numbers' theory. There are more birds to be on high alert for predators since a lot of foraging happens without cover in the winter. It is also theorized that by hanging out in mixed group flocks, the birds can benefit by each species' skills and strengths for finding food and protecting each other from predators.

Enjoy the Black Capped Chickadees and Tufted Titmice in your yard by providing sunflower and safflower seeds, mixed nuts, and suet balls. Both live and dehydrated mealworms are always a fan favorite! And believe it or not, a birdbath will entice even more birds to your yard than you can imagine.

Happy Backyard Birding!



Member News

Welcome New Members!

Martin Bell
Justin Green
Noreen Ondrusko
Chalane Sheldon
Adele Straub

Thank You to Our Donors!

Denise Blocker
Dorsey & Linda Gilliam
Bethany & Jordan Gray
Lisa Horn
Dixie Hoskins
Noreen Ondrusko
Emily Sandman,
Cardinal Health Foundation

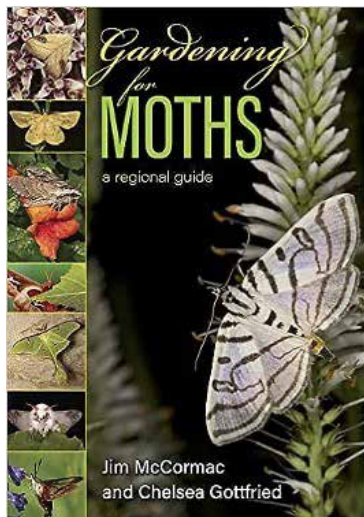
Did you find yourself longing for the activity and excitement of nestbox checks in August when the boxes were at last empty?

There are still many things to do! Fall is a time to evaluate the success or failures of the nesting's in our nest boxes and to take steps to try to improve the likelihood of success next year. Boxes should be inspected to make sure they are in good shape, not leaky or cracked. Old nests should have been discarded when the young fledged and the inside of boxes should be scraped clean of dry old feces or nesting debris. Roofs should be watertight; entrance holes should be no larger than 1 ½ inch in diameter, and any tall weeds or brush that has grown up around the nest box poles should be trimmed away. The pole should be firmly driven in the ground and stovepipe predator guards should be stable and secure. If the site has been attractive to house sparrows or house wrens then relocation of the box to a more open area should be considered. It is always easier to do major relocations and repairs in the balmy September or October days than in the cold, wet, windy days of early spring!

Notes from the president – by Darlene Sillick

This year's cavity nesting season is almost a wrap. In our Columbus area bluebird program we have a few bluebirds and a gourd or two of Purple Martins yet to fledge. As you work on your end of year nest box totals please download the fledgling report form at ohiobluebirdsociety.org/about-bluebirds/fledgling-report-2 and send it to Mike Watson at ohiobluebirdsociety@gmail.com. He will work on the statewide report for the Ohio Bluebird Society. Thank you, Mike!

It was an interesting season and in central Ohio it was either too wet, then too cool, or finally too hot! There were challenges for the birds with a lack of finding insects. It will be interesting to see how the numbers of fledged species plays out from last year to this year. We would love to hear your thoughts about this.



The next OBS conference will be held on Saturday, March 2, 2024 at Ashland University. Our keynote speaker will be Jim McCormac. He will talk about his new book *Gardening for Moths* and will be happy to sign any books purchased at the meeting or brought to the meeting. He knows what bluebirds like and will be sharing that too!

We are excited to also have Bet Zimmerman as a speaker. She does the website www.sialis.org and will be talking about Tree Swallows. She is very happy to return to our OBS annual conference.

Marne Titchenell is Wildlife Program Director, OSU Extension. Marne will talk about all the woodland cavity nesters. She has a wealth of knowledge and experience in this area..

Chrisula Stone is the Nestwatch Chapter coordinator at the Northern Kentucky Bluebird Trail at Kenton County Parks and Recreation. She is so excited to give our Bluebirds 101 talk.

Judy Semroc, came up with the theme of "Bring on the Bugs" or should it be insects? Our trustee Anna Rose will be developing the logo. It will be amazing!!!

Manon with Ohio Nature Education will bring back some education animals. Dan Best is organizing the rest of the education tables. There will be a lot more conference information showing up on FB, our website and future OBS newsletters. Remember to support the Silent Auction- Treasurer Molly Wilsbacher will have more details in the upcoming months.

I have been a bit under the weather due to a very aggressive 4-hour surgery June 26 but have several people I want to thank for helping me at home and on my trail. First, what would I do without Paula Ziebarth's trail help??? Not only is she a force as Madame Wingnut, she was my trail helper extraordinaire!! My good friends Connie Dolder and Sue Guarsi have been so kind and helpful!! This hobby is just the best, from the new friends we help and work with to those we have known for close to 20 some years. Tim Bischoff has been my driver a few times. My apologies for the short notes. I humbly thank the other trustees who make lighter work of keeping OBS going. We love hearing from you and your trail stories. Don't be shy, we welcome your ideas too!! Send to Dsillick118@gmail.com.



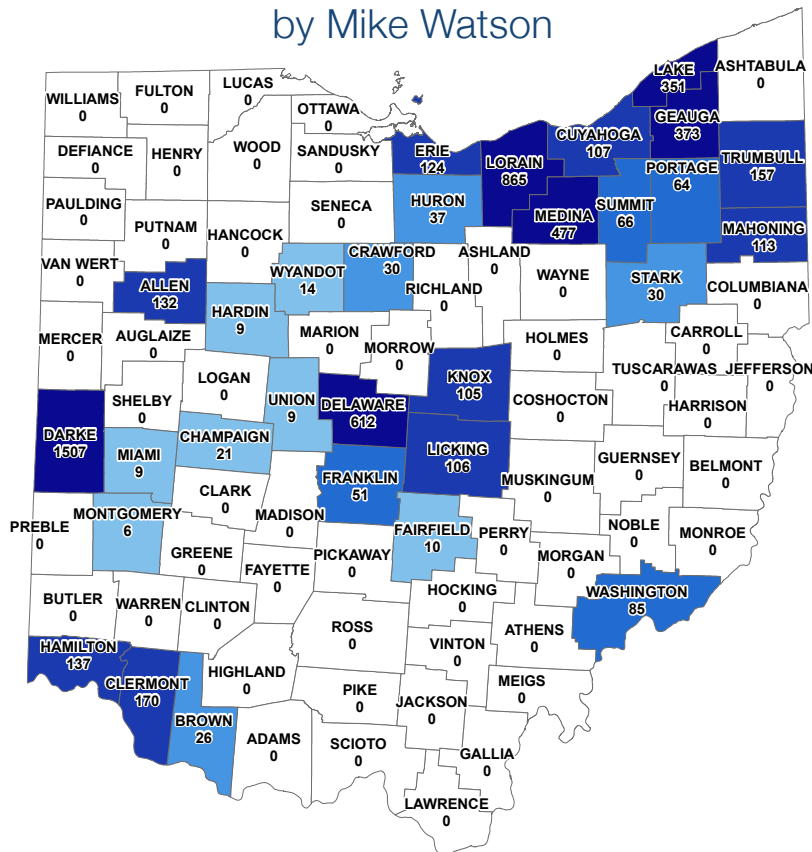
An Amazing Boy Scout Leader By Darlene Sillick

An amazing Boy Scout Leader, Craig Wyckoff, led some young scouts at Camp Lazarus to build 80 nestbox kits and donated them back to our Dublin Barn. They did a really great job. Charlie Zepp helped and worked with Craig. Below are pictures of the scouts working on the building of the nest boxes plus a pic of the 80 completed boxes. A huge thank you to Craig, Charlie Zepp and Sandra McBrearty, volunteer coordinator for Preservations and Parks, who directed Craig to me. Always takes an army.



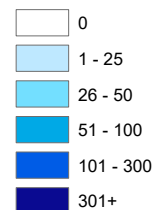
OBS 2022 FLEDGLING REPORT

by Mike Watson



Species	#Fledged
Eastern Bluebird	5803
Tree Swallow	5698
House Wren	1973
Purple Martin	2149
Black-capped Chickadee	75
Carolina Chickadee	99
Carolina Wren	74
American Kestrel	118
Barn Swallow	53
Prothonotary Warbler	65
Wood Duck	33
Great Crested Flycatcher	7
House Sparrows dispatched	595
House Sparrow eggs destroyed	1060
European Starlings dispatched	0
European Starling eggs destroyed	170

#Fledged per County



created by Mike Watson; The Holden Arboretum



Ohio Bluebird Society Membership Application

Membership Class	Annual	3-years
☐ Student (under 21)	\$10	\$25
☐ Senior/Sr. Family (over 60)	\$15	\$40
☐ Regular/Family	\$20	\$50
☐ Organizational	\$50	\$140
☐ 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

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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

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Mission Statement

The Ohio Bluebird Society was formed in 1987 to support the return and the perpetuation of the Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) and other native cavity nesting birds in Ohio. To this end, the Ohio Bluebird Society will strive for the best methods to use, conserve and create habitat for the protection of these species.

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What's Inside...

The Dawes Arboretum.....	1-2
Licking Parks Grant Update	3
The Art of Jigsaw Puzzles.....	4
The Birds and the Bees.....	5
Madame Wingnut	6-7
Little Lazarus.....	8
Bluebirding Terms.....	9
Treasurer's Report.....	9
Black Capped Chickadee and Tufted Titmouse: Co-specific Avian 'Cousins' That Flock Together.....	10-11
Member News.....	12-13
An Amazing Boy Scout Leader	13
OBS Fledgling Map.....	14

Deadline for Submitting Articles:

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

Bluebirds in the Fall By Penny Brandau

Each year our backyard bluebirds seem to disappear in late August for several weeks with their last clutch of young. Suddenly on a chilly September or October morning they reappear and can be seen visiting the bluebird feeder and checking out their nesting box! This common behavior among bluebirds has been observed by many bluebird watchers. More than 160 years ago Henry David Thoreau commented on this behavior and wrote about it in his journal on September 29, 1842. "Today... the bluebirds, old and young, have revisited their box, as if they would fain repeat the summer without intervention of winter, if Nature would let them."

