

Jersey Blues

The Newsletter of The New Jersey Bluebird Society,
an Affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society

~ Volume 1, Issue 1 - Fall, 2016



“Bubba Speaks”

~ a Message from Allen Jackson, President, NJBBS

New Jersey Bluebird Society

www.njbluebirdsociety.org

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Welcome to the inaugural issue of Jersey Blues! This newsletter offers a way to better communicate with members, providing information on the various aspects of bluebird management in New Jersey. As the newsletter evolves, be reminded this is not the responsibility of a few members, but we welcome ALL members to submit articles about their activities. More diversity helps provide guidance to others not as familiar with bluebird management.

First and foremost, I would like to thank Lori Jo Jamieson for volunteering to be our editor. When I identified a need for a newsletter to better communicate within the NJBBS, Lori Jo instantly replied. We hope to produce two newsletters each year, one after the nesting season and one before the nesting season is underway. We are a small but growing organization and our success depends on everyone's involvement. Please do not hesitate to get involved!



Who is Bubba? A few years ago, I bid on and won an oversized, clay bluebird at the Pennsylvania Bluebird Society's annual conference. Not knowing what to do with it, I decided to nickname it “Bubba” and take him to most of the talks I give about bluebirds. *(continued on page 2)*

("Bubba Speaks" - continued from front cover)

Growing the Program We have made significant progress the past couple of years. We identified 3 new County Coordinators: Gail Fisher in Cape May County, Dave Gilcrest in Gloucester County and Dr. Laura Stone in Ocean County. Their efforts pay big dividends, not only for bluebirds, but ultimately the NJBBS. County Coordinators benefit our program because they know the area better, and know more people, enabling them to have a bigger impact benefiting bluebirds. They are doing so much to grow our program! Consider getting more involved in your County, whether as a County Coordinator or assisting an existing Coordinator. The goal is to become an advocate for bluebirds!

NJBBS Meeting Thanks to Rick Dutko, Facility Manager at the Forest Resources Education Center (FREC), we have a centrally located meeting place at FREC, 495 Don Connor Boulevard, Jackson, New Jersey. (GPS coordinates 40.092364, 74.319736). Office phone: (732) 928-0987. We are planning a **November 12th, 2016 meeting from 10 am to 2 pm**. This is the second Saturday in November. Lunch will be provided at a nominal cost. We

will have a brief meeting in the morning and open things up in the afternoon to discuss relevant topics.

~ Allen Jackson, NJBBS President

NJBBS SECRETARY'S REPORT

We certainly have come a long way since our beginnings back in 2011! As of July 2016, we have 53 active members in the NJBBS. Of those 53, 9 are charter members which are our "Founding Fathers" so to speak and one is our honorary member, attorney Joseph Wenzel, who volunteered so much time and effort for us.

Thirteen NJ counties are represented in our society: Atlantic, Bergen, Burlington, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Salem, Union, and Warren. The North American Bluebird Society also generously supports us every year so we must include Monroe County, Indiana in our count! NABS has 42 members from our little state....kudos to us! Thank you to all our members for everything you are doing for the bluebirds of New Jersey. And keep spreading the word!

~ Shelly Cucugliello, NJBBS Secretary



MIRROR BLUEBIRDS ~ Nels Anderson , June 2016

Monitoring and maintenance of my many nest boxes brings me to a wide variety of locations, from farm, to back yards, abandoned fields, drainage areas, church grounds, forest clearings and even an office building. Bluebirds frequently choose the site and seeing them often in a certain area prompts me to place a nest box there. I am reminded of setting up a 60 box trail in Franklin Parker Preserve and would install boxes in batches of about ten. One spring morning I was doing just that when I realized that I had left my hammer at the previous box. Driving back to this newly installed box I saw two Bluebirds from a distance going in and out inspecting it. That was a quick sale!

Often people ask me to place a nest box on their property as Lisa Daley did on her and Mike's Farmette. They have a horse, goat, donkeys, four dogs: perfect for Bluebirds. That nest box was quickly filled with a Bluebird nest plus eggs and

has been successful over the years. Chickadees like the area as well so a second box was installed.

On a recent trip there a male Bluebird was inspecting my truck and though unusual didn't think much about it. A week later as I got back in my truck and made my notes I saw him checking out my mirror. Not paying any attention to me he was concerned with a brilliant competitor looking out of the mirror, challenging him tit for tat. I was fortunate to get my cell phone shot before he took off. (*Nels Anderson lives in Indian Mills, Burlington County and monitors two nestbox trails there.*)



NABS NEWS

NJBBS is an affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society (NABS) and we play more of an active role nationally than you may think. Being an

affiliate provides an opportunity to get involved at numerous levels. Shelly Cucugliello, Frank Langgella, Frank Budney, John Layton, Ken Glaspey, and myself have written articles or provided pictures that were included in NABS quarterly journal *Bluebird*. I have been appointed to the NABS Board of Directors and serve on their nestbox, education and journal advisory committees. John Layton and I have attended NABS conferences in 2013 at Aiken, S.C., NABS 2015 in Magog, Quebec, Canada and I attended the conference in Lacombe, Alberta, Canada (see NABS 2016). Many of us are members of other affiliate chapters and attend their conferences. NJBBS is also a leader in the number of members that are also NABS numbers. If there is anyway I can represent you as a Board Member please let me know.

Membership Info

There are lots of advantages to being a member of both NJBBS and NABS. For a small membership fee (\$15 special price the first year, then \$20 per year), NABS produces a quality periodical that is of interest to anyone who appreciates bluebirds and other secondary cavity nesters. I can only encourage everyone in NJBBS to also join NABS and get a better understanding of what our bluebird friends are doing in North America. You can go to our website, www.njbluebirdsociety.org and look for NABS's membership form that accompanies the NJBBS membership form.

NABS 2016 Report

I was fortunate to attend NABS 2016 in Lacombe, Alberta, Canada in July. For those who like to travel while learning more about bluebirds, the NABS conferences are something you would be interested in. This year's conference was hosted by the Ellis Bird Farm with a theme of *Unlocking the Mysteries of Bird Migration: Using Technology to Track Avian Journeys*. Myrna

Pearman and her dedicated staff, along with many other professionals and interested Canadians, organized one magnificent program for over 100 attendees from all over North America.

Many speakers gave presentations but 2 stood out in my mind - results of groundbreaking research conducted by Dr. Kevin Fraser on tracking 1) Mountain Bluebirds and 2) Purple Martins using geo-locator and GPS technology. Kevin's work documented reverse migration in Purple Martins for the first time ever. As the martins migrated north towards the Ellis Bird Farm, severe weather and lack of food (flying insects) caused the martins to reverse their migration south again until the weather improved for them to continue their northward migration. The research conducted on Mountain Bluebirds documented their wintering grounds, also a first. It is fascinating work like this that provides us information which allows us to better manage our wildlife species.

The conference is always accompanied with a banquet on Saturday evening. Along with great food, awards, entertainment, and speakers highlighted the evening. I also signed up for a field trip the following day to learn more about the natural resources in the area. Among many stops we visited the famous Dry Island Buffalo Jump Provincial Park along the Red Deer River. Native Americans would stampede buffalo over the cliffs to gather food for their tribe.

Before the conference started the NABS Board of Directors held their monthly meeting but it was face to face rather than the usual telephone conference call. We discussed what NABS can do for the affiliate chapters. If you have any thoughts on the matter, please contact me aljaxn@aol.com. There will not be a NABS 2017 but a special BOD meeting instead with a representative affiliate member invited to attend or call in. The next bluebird conference will be NABS 2018 in Michigan. It was discussed that we alternate years, one for the bluebird conference and the next for a BOD meeting. Another idea was to try and figure out if there can be a one price membership that includes membership in both NABS and the affiliate organization.

(continued on page 4)

(NABS NEWS, continued from page 3)

NABS 2020 in New Jersey?

I am also contemplating having NJBBS host NABS 2020 in Millville, NJ. We have an auditorium to meet in (Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center), the adjacent-Country Inn and Suites, a co-host (Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River and its Tributaries), a good list of speakers, a banquet location (Eastview Country Club) and plans that would include a Friday evening boat trip on the Maurice River to view the Purple Martins staging at their roosting site. This is an opportunity to showcase southern NJ and the unique environmental qualities it offers.

We have also been partnering with Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center to improve natural resources at the site: creating a nature walk, educational opportunities of the environment (purple martins, bluebirds, a snake hibernacula, vernal pools, planting native vegetation, etc.). **What I need from NJBBS members is your comments on the subject and a commitment to help organize the event.** We receive financial support from NABS but will still need NJBBS members to volunteer to make the conference a success. NJBBS will receive lots of credit but without your support, it cannot be pulled off.

~ Allen Jackson

NJBBS TREASURER'S REPORT

NJBBS, as of 9/20/2016

LAST MEETING: NOVEMBER 10th, 2015

BALANCE - ON 11/10/16	\$1,520.31
CREDITS	\$ 990.00
DEBITS	-\$ 339.45
BALANCE - ON 9/20/16	\$2,170.86

NEXT MEETING: NOVEMBER 12TH, 2016

~ John Layton, Treasurer, NJBBS

NJBBS OFFICERS

President: Allen Jackson

Vice President: Jim Newquist

Treasurer: John Layton

Secretary: Shelly Cucugliello

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Past President: Frank Budney

At Large: Nels Anderson, Gary Pilling,

Glenn Roth, Jim Watson, Ed Zboyan

New Jersey Bluebird Society: Our Mission Statement, Goals & Methods

Our mission is to educate, conserve and promote Bluebirds and other cavity nesting birds in New Jersey. Our primary goal is to produce a healthy and productive bluebird population in New Jersey by establishing trails that are located in suitable habitat while utilizing and promoting recommended bluebird management practices (proper housing, protection from predators, and nest monitoring).

We also recognize the importance and necessity to promote management of bluebirds in backyards. We provide expertise and guidance to trail monitors and backyard bluebird enthusiasts, monitor yearly population trends by surveying the number of young fledged from nest boxes, and provide public education about bluebirds to interested people in the state of New Jersey.



PURE SERENITY!

Congressman LoBiondo tours the Serenity Trail, built in December, 2015 at the Cumberland County Guidance Center, in Millville. The trail honors **Jane and Peter Galletto** for their outstanding support in Cumberland County. Besides the trail, two bird feeders and three Bluebird boxes were installed. Joyfully, two of the three boxes had Bluebirds nesting. The second clutch at the second box has six eggs, which brings the number of young fledged to twenty, for an average of six young fledged per box for the three boxes. This was a cooperative project between the Guidance Center, Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River and its Tributaries, and Allen Jackson, representing Citizens United and NJBBS.

Gloucester County Coordinator's Report

Received banding permit. Partnered with the Gloucester County Nature Club to establish and monitor bluebird trails in two municipal parks (Alcyon, Pitman and Chestnut Branch, Mantua). Bluebirds successfully nested in three of five boxes. All young bluebirds were banded.

Did on-site consultations at twelve local residences offering information. Moved, replaced or installed bluebird boxes as needed. Six boxes produced nesting bluebirds in the first year. These bluebirds were banded. The boxes were placed in residential neighborhoods or on single home lots.

Was invited to observe existing trails on two local golf courses. Was asked to observe monitoring and make suggestions on how to improve the trails. The bluebirds on these trails were banded.

Placed a bluebird box at a local church which resulted in banded bluebirds. Conducted an on-site on a local Mum farm. Two of three boxes installed had multiple successful broods in their first year. All young bluebirds were banded. Also provided advice and assistance on installing a T14 purple martin house on the farm.

Was invited to observe an established bluebird trail at the Gloucester County 4-H Fairgrounds and to offer advice to improve the existing trail. Young from three of these boxes were banded.

In our first year in Gloucester County, nearly 100 bluebirds have been banded.

Allen Jackson was also involved in the following activities:

- Partnered with the Gloucester County Nature Club to remove invasive species in one municipal park (Alcyon Park, Pitman) and replace with native berry-producing species beneficial to bluebirds.
- Pursued the creation of a bluebird trail in Tall Pines State Park, a newly established state park in Gloucester County which was formerly a golf course.
- Made some adjustments to an existing bluebird trail at a local farm in South Harrison Twp. Banded the young from several boxes and installed a purple martin gourde rack.

~ submitted by David Gilcrest, Gloucester County Coordinator



That *Isn't* Just Ducky!

We often come across abnormalities in nature that pique our curiosity. Frank Langella was enjoying a morning walk at Cloverdale Farm County Park in Barnegat, Ocean County, New Jersey when he noticed a small group of 6 to 8 bluebirds laying claim to a wood duck box near the back reservoir. Frank took these pictures on February 17, 2016 at 8:00 a.m. on a cold 20-degree morning. Since bluebirds routinely overwinter in southern New Jersey, his photos suggest these bluebirds used the wood duck box to roost in during the night. One would think the remaining wood duck down and saw dust from last year's nest provided sufficient warmth to justify selecting the box for a roost.

Cloverdale Farm County Park is partnering with the New Jersey Bluebird Society to improve their bluebird trail and has an excellent educational program that includes proper management of bluebirds.



Meet Gail Fisher, Our Cape May County Coordinator!

Gail Fisher has recently been appointed as the Cape May County Coordinator for the New Jersey Bluebird Society and is available to assist private homeowners, municipalities, businesses, church and

civic groups in the county who are interested in establishing and monitoring one or several bluebird nest boxes on a bluebird "trail". More from Gail:

"A life long CMC resident, I'm a retired Dennis Township teacher. In 2010 I was trained as a Rutgers Master Gardener of Atlantic County and volunteered there through 2015. One of my areas of interest is native plants and how they support local wildlife. I have taken many local workshops on the subject, and my home gardens have been included on tours of private wildlife gardens in recent years. They are certified as Backyard Wildlife Habitat and Pollinator Habitat. I also volunteer time at Clemenson Farms Native Nursery in Estell Manor, NJ., learning much from owners Chris and Arnold Clemenson. I maintain membership in the Southeast Chapter of the Native

Plant Society of NJ, The Nature Conservancy, Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River and Its Tributaries, and the Xerces Society.

Since 2012 I have been mentored on responsible bluebird (and purple martin) management by Allen Jackson, a wildlife biologist, who co-founded and is the current president of the New Jersey Bluebird Society. Allen also serves on the board of the North American Bluebird Society. He specializes in proper nest box construction and location that incorporates many research-based "home security" features to increase the success rates of our beautiful bluebirds. Before we humans arrived on the scene, bluebirds and many other birds raised their young in the cavities of trees. Today that real estate is scarce and the competition high. These timid members of the thrush family usually lose out, are declining in numbers, and are in need of well-informed assistance. Most of the year they feed on insects on the ground in the short grass of open spaces with trees nearby. Farms, drainage basins, cemeteries, open yards and lawns are some of their favorite spots. In winter months they rely on the berries of native plants.

If you'd like to know if your habitat can support bluebirds, and think you'd really enjoy actively managing one or more nest boxes, I'd love to hear from you. Nest boxes, mounting poles and predator guards that meet safety standards are available for purchase through the NJBBS. Approved DIY plans are also available. If I can help you in any way, please let me know!" ~Gail Fisher



Never Too Early...

Meet Elle, a first grader from Dennis Township Primary School, and her little brother, Jack. They are the newest and youngest trail monitors in Cape May County. Their mom is also a third grade teacher there. After hearing my presentation about bluebirds, Elle and all the first graders watched Allen Jackson and me band chicks in a nest box just outside the school building. Elle's mom emailed me that she talked about the event all night, and wanted to know if they could have bluebirds.

A few days later the whole family met me in their driveway, and we took a look around. Elle carried the New Monitor's Packet, Jack carried the nest box (which was easily half his height!), and we headed to their spacious back yard. It had lots of grassy open spaces surrounded by tall trees. We selected a site away from the play area and near a nice perching tree. While I assembled the unit, I asked Elle if she remembered why I was slipping the long tube onto the pole. She proudly replied that it kept the predators away, and the predators were raccoons, cats and...snakes. Wow! She had really listened carefully! Elle and Jack are now on duty, watching every day to see what might happen next! ~ Gail Fisher, CM Co Coordinator

Cape May County Coordinator's Report

Appointed to coordinator's position in November 2015, began active role mid-February 2016 and maintain a ten box trail of my own (fourth year) at a local cemetery and adjacent beach plum/aronia berry farm.

- Created contact list of all county monitors and their trails. Created and distributed a welcome letter that was emailed to all active county monitors and to each group prior to my speaking date. Created New Monitor's Packets, a blue, two pocket folder given to each new individual or group when a new trail is established. It includes: a set of NABS fact sheets, a NJBBS brochure, my county coordinator's business card, copies of two different Monitor's data sheets, a copy of a back issue of *Bluebird, A Journal of the North American Bluebird Society*, a list of educational websites very helpful for learning more about bluebirds and the native plants that support them, and a welcome cover letter explaining all.
- Established a partnership with a local student to build nest box/pole/ predator guard units using NABS-approved plans. Student's father owns a local sawmill. Ten boxes supplied so far.
- Gave two presentations to local environmental commissions which resulted in 6 new monitors and the establishment of one new backyard nest box, one at a local museum and a four-box trail at the local primary school.
- Completed training and received sub-permit for banding bluebirds.
- Presented two Powerpoint talks to students at the local primary school, followed by a banding presentation (along with Allen Jackson) at one of the newly established nest boxes right outside the building. These school talks led to a new monitor (she's 7 years old!) and another backyard nest box. Her mom is a teacher at the school. (see *story and photo on page 4*)
- Provided a NJBBS table at two native plant sale events at Clemenson Farms Native Nursery in Estell Manor, Atlantic Co., NJ.
- As of this date, I have banded 34 bluebirds. 30 in Cape May Co., and 4 in Atlantic Co. at Clemenson Farms. Allen Jackson has banded 15 birds in Cape May Co. and 4 in Atlantic Co. at Clemenson Farms. This totals 49 banded bluebirds for Cape May Co. , and 8 at Clemenson's Farm in Atlantic Co. so far for this 2016 season.

Current Cape May County Nest Box data:

- There are 12 active monitors and 7 inactive monitors. There are 19 active trails and 6 inactive trails. There are 99 actively monitored boxes and 9 inactively monitored boxes.
- 8 of the actively monitored boxes are "backyard" residential. Three are one-box trails, one is a two-box trail and there are three residential boxes that are part of a larger 10-box trail. 91 boxes are on public land or private commercial farm land, residences with large horse pasture area or with multiple acres of mowed/low grass area (which I will hereafter refer to simply as "farmland"). The smallest trail here has two boxes, with the rest being 4-or-more-box trails, with the largest having 18 boxes.
- Four of the inactively monitored boxes are on one trail, and five are one box trails.
- Of the 45 CMC birds that I banded so far this season, none are from residential nest boxes. All 45 birds are from CMC public and/or farmland nest boxes. All 15 of Allen's CMC birds are from public and/or farmland nest boxes, for a total of 60.
- All 45 of the birds I banded and the 15 birds Allen banded (60 total) are from the northern half of the county. No reports of fledged, young or eggs from south of Lat/Long 39.06-74.52 (Cape May Co. Mosquito Commission).
- There are 63 actively monitored nest boxes at or above Lat/Long 39.06-74.52, and 36 actively monitored nest boxes south of 39.06-74.52.

submitted by ~Gail Fisher,
Cape May County Coordinator

Were you there at just the right moment?

If you've captured great images of bluebirds with your digital camera or phone, send them to me attached to an email (in jpeg form) to lorijo.jamieson@gmail.com.

Please include who took them, where they were taken and when. I will try and include them in upcoming issues of "Jersey Blues." Thank you!

New Jersey Bluebird Society
end of season: **Summary Form** v.6/16

Use this form to report your seasonal (year) nest box results. **Submit by October 1**

_____ No. of boxes _____ Boxes used by Bluebirds _____ Bluebird eggs laid	_____ Bluebird eggs hatched _____ Bluebirds fledged [] Check here for help with House Sparrow control
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Name: _____ Year: _____ County: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Our main purpose is to produce a healthy and productive bluebird population in New Jersey. Your personal data is critical to this goal. Your comments are also important (what went well, unusual or persistent problems, new ideas, need help or advise).

Other species – production numbers or problems: _____

General comments _____

Use one form per county - mail or email forms to:

Mail: Dave Gilcrest, 113 Brookside Way, Mullica Hill, NJ 08062

Email: dgilcrest@aol.com