

The Tennessee Bluebird

*Welcome To The Tennessee Bluebird
Society Quarterly Newsletter*



Photo by David Kinneer

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Although our first brood came late in the spring, after a difficult winter, our Bluebirds and other native cavity nesting birds seem to be making up for lost time. On most of the trails we monitor we are into our second brood with

little loss to predators. Hopefully everyone that this newsletter reaches has had a successful spring.

In this newsletter we will learn the future of nest monitoring , we will explore bringing nature to

those less active and also the new Seven Islands State Wildlife Refuge

Happy Birding,

Chuck James, VP Communication

TWRA AUTHORIZED WILD LIFE

Occasionally we receive calls from people who have found an injured bird and are looking for a rehabber near them. We will be putting the following link on our website: www.tn.gov/twra/pdfs/rehabdirectory.pdf This will take you directly to a list of all the permitted Class II rehabbers in Tennessee.



REHABILITATORS

If you have an interested in becoming a permitted rehabber in Tennessee you can find information on the the following website: www.tn.gov/twra/wildliferehab.html

If you find an injured bird please contact your local state permitted wildlife rehabilitation center.

ON THE ROAD TO THE NABS ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN BOSIE, IDAHO

By Kathy Hartke



Kathy Hartke

We arrived in Boise, ID just in time to settle into our room at The Grove Hotel and get ready for the Friday night buffet at Boise Centre. The dinner was delicious and offered my 2 favor entrees, grilled steak and pan seared salmon.

It was nice to see our fellow bluebirders from NABS and meet members from Wild Lens, Inc. and the Golden Eagle Audubon Society who hosted the convention and prepared the upcoming video documentary on Bluebird Man, Alfred Larson.

After dinner we relocated to the auditorium at the conference centre for the premier. Bluebird Man is a heartwarming story of Al Larson's efforts to increase Mountain Bluebird populations in southeast Idaho. At age 92, he has been monitoring and banding bluebirds for 35 years.



Bluebird Man Alfred Larson

The next morning, Saturday, June 14, 2014 we met in front of our hotel for the school bus ride to Al's Prairie Trail.

The scenery was breathtaking and some of us were surprised at how well the bus traveled on steep,



winding gravel roads.

We all enjoyed seeing the stunning canyons and spotting wildlife along the way.



It was very interesting to see Al's trail and watch him band the birds.

After the thrilling ride beautiful scenery and fresh air, we stopped at a small landing strip to have a picnic lunch. Before leaving the airstrip, Mike (Kathy's Husband) and I were given the opportunity to check one of Al's nest boxes for him.



There were 5 beautiful Mountain bluebird eggs inside and as you can see, they are a little bigger and lighter in color then the Eastern Bluebird eggs we are accustomed to seeing. (Picture below)



The next morning, we boarded the bus to view the Owyhee Mountain Trail where Al's very first nest box is located on a hillside a little way off the road.

I took a picture of Al at this



special nest box.

We stopped for a lunch at a remote location surrounded by sagebrush and juniper trees. Even though we had a little rain, no one seemed to mind. As a trip leader, Al has an abundance of knowledge about the area and a wonderful sense of humor. Boise, known as the “City of Trees,” has a wonderful park, rose garden, museum state capital building and dinning areas all within a short walk from our hotel. We loved the city and our NABS 2014 experience.

Kathy Hartke



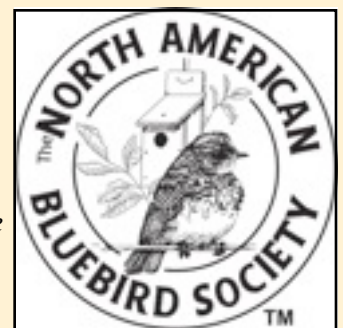
Mountain Bluebird:
Photo by Mike Hartke

If you are not already a member of the North American Bluebird Society what are you waiting for? As a **member** of the Tennessee Bluebird Society you receive a 50% discount off a one year membership. Instead of \$30 your membership will be \$15 dollars.

For your membership you receive 4 Bluebird magazine's the official Journal of the North American Bluebird Society. You also receive discounts with certain advertisers. You will also learn of up coming events including the Annual Meeting.

Go to the North American Bluebird website www.nabluebirdsociety.org . At the home page “click” on member in the section on the home page that says welcome. On the membership application check the box says “A+(Affiliate members only) and write in that you are a member of the Tennessee Bluebird Society.

You will meet many nice people that share the same passion for Bluebirds as you.



The increase in the bluebird population is a remarkable success story. It is the direct result of widespread action by sympathetic bird lovers who pledged their help and followed through.

-Arnette Heidcamp, *Bluebirds in My House*, 1997

Bluebirding In The 21st Century

By Duane Rice



When I was twelve years old, I was riding along a country road in rural Arkansas near my home, when suddenly my chain came off my bicycle. Forced to the side of the road to do a quick repair, I noticed a pair of Eastern Bluebirds making alarm calls and watching me intently.

I had never seen bluebirds before, but recognized them from the pictures I'd seen in our family encyclopedia. It was love at first sight. Judging from their behavior I knew there must be a nest nearby. Setting my bike aside, I walked along the fence line and discovered a nest in a wooden fencepost with five pale blue eggs in it.

I decided to return every few days to see what changes took place with the new bluebird treasure. I continued to do so until the nest was empty a few weeks later.

I didn't realize it then, but by "accident," became a bluebird monitor. I had no tools and kept

no records of my findings. After all, it was only one nest and one pair of birds.

Of course, twelve year boys become thirteen year old teenagers, who fall under the spell and influence of the British invasion and the sirens of rock-n-roll, so birds take a back seat... for a time. Fast forward twenty years.

After attending a seminar about bluebirds, an old flame was rekindled and I started my first trial of three nest boxes.

At that time there was no local bluebird club, to my knowledge, so being a bluebirder was a lonely life. But, the world would radically change with developments in digital technology.

Now, with the click of a mouse, I can communicate with hundreds of other bluebirders across North America. If I have a question regarding bluebirds or want to share something I have learned, I can do so in an instant, instead of having to wait until I happen to meet someone with the same interest.

Digital cameras, iPads, Smartphones make it possible to share photo's and videos with others on any number of forums and chatrooms. Instead of having to carry a cumbersome notebook / clipboard and pen, a digital recorder takes their place.

From a digital recorder, iPad or Smartphone I can send information directly to Cornell's Nestwatch database, making it possible for all nests to be included with thousands of other birders who wish to participate in

citizen science. To go a step further, I can also enter the GPS location of the nestbox from a satellite in space miles above earth. I never could have imagined such a thing, when I was a twelve year old kid in rural Arkansas.

Soon we will be able to capture a bluebird, implant it with a tracking device. Banding birds is nothing new, but this takes it to a whole new level. Imagine being able to keep track of "your" bluebirds year round.

Have we gone too far? Some will say "yes." But think about how many times you simply don't know what has happened when a pair of bluebirds disappear and abandon a nest. With this technology we would know why or even prevent it from happening. You would be able to tell one bird from another. Not only, that, but which birds are related, or if a bird is a newcomer to a trail. You would know how long a particular bird lived, how many offspring it produced and more. The possibilities are endless.

When it comes to keeping a close eye on your nest box, nestcams are affordable, easy to install, educational, and fun. In the future it will be possible to have cameras in each of your nest boxes linked to a program on your smartphone or laptop. No more guessing what happened to a clutch of eggs. You will know the instant something is wrong. The "smart" nest box will tell you there has been a change.

(Continued on page 3)

BLUEBIRDING IN THE 21ST CENTURY (CONT. FROM PAGE 2)

That's right you heard it here first folks, the nest boxes of the future will have "smart" chip technology built in the nest box. A solar powered heater/cooler will eliminate the monitor's worry when the weather is severe. What about predator control? Your smart box could immediately recognize any predator or non-native species and close the opening. Can you imagine?

Some may ask, with this technology, why go out in the field to monitor when we can simply look on the computer to see what is going on in real time? Will this technology do away with the need for field monitoring altogether?

Some say yes, but I don't think so. It will certainly change the way in which we monitor nest boxes. But hasn't already changed? Of course it has. If you don't believe me, ask that twelve year old from rural Arkansas.

Nature will adapt as it always has. The question is, will we do the same?

NEW NEST BOX TRAIL AT THE NEIGHBORHOOD

by Chuck James

It's always a joy to establish a nest box trail and watch those nest boxes become homes for Bluebird families. It is even more

joyful when you can share that experience with others.

Recently members from the Tellico Village Birders Club in Loudon, TN established a 7 nest



box trail at The Neighborhood At Tellico Village Assisted Living Community. Below is a photo from left to right Stan Colburn and Phil Olson installing the nest boxes built by the Tellico Village woodworkers club at the



Neighborhood.

After the installation I gave a presentation to the residents on Bluebirds and other birds that find a happy home in the nest boxes. One resident thanked me after the presentation and said she never thought about watching the birds but now she was going to pay more attention to the various birds.

The nest boxes were placed in three court yards where residents enjoy the outdoors. We also place several nest boxes in the area near the parking lot because we were told that many from the community enjoyed walking around the parking lot.

Of course, we would never put up a nest box without proper monitoring. These 7 nest boxes are monitored by Gail Hardy of the Tellico Village Birders Club. Below is a photo of Gail on her rounds.



In less than two months Gail is starting to see results from this new nest box trail. See the photo below



Thinking about putting up a nest box trail? Contact a local Assisted Living Community to partner with. This is a win-win for the birds and those that need some entertainment and joy.

SEVEN ISLANDS WILDLIFE REFUGE

The new Seven Islands Wildlife Refuge opens July 1, 2014. This 360 acre site along the French Broad River in Knox County located about 20 miles East of Knoxville is our newest State Park.

We are very blessed to have a Governor that is interested in conservation and took a leadership role in making this refuge happen.

There are more than 180 species of birds. With its miles of nature trails this is a great place to take the family for an outing or your bird group on an outing. There are several wooded islands and small inlets.

The refuge is managed for use as:

- A wild life sanctuary
- Area for hiking, observations & other low impact use
- Educational facility for schools, groups and organizations.
- Research site for schools, groups and universities

- Small boat launch for canoe's & kayaks

There are thirteen research projects currently taking place on SIWR in conjunction with



organizations such as the University of Tennessee.

For more information visit: www.sevenislands.org



As we conclude this issue of the Tennessee Bluebird Society Newsletter, remember. We should treat each day as a gift from God.

Take time in your busy schedule to enjoy our beautiful state and all those that went before us with the vision of conservation.

Let's keep that vision and pay forward to the next generation.

Thanks for taking part in our Society

Chuck James

VP Communication TBS



WE NEED VOLUNTEERS

If you are interested in helping. Please contact us at tnsialia@gmail.com. We need help with: Membership, education, accounting, data collection, TBS Board, newsletter.