



Nest Box News



www.southcarolinabluebirds.org

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Summer 2018

An Affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society

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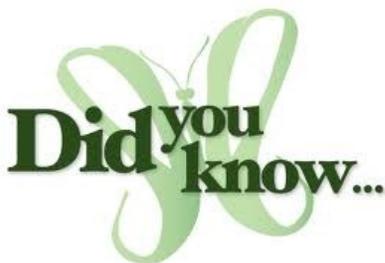
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Busy on the trails and behind the scenes...if you haven't had a chance, check out our new website! From the new format to the eye-catching photos, southcarolinabluebirds.org is our chapters' leap into the 21st century! Thanks to website designer **Laura Gibbons of Blue Salamander Solutions, we now have all the information we need to sign up new/existing members, provide a current Events/Calendar feature, trail statistics (thanks, **Glen**) and the entire Nest Box News, a fan favorite!! A PayPal feature has made joining, donating and possibly purchasing merchandise easier than ever. A Merchandise page will be explored, featuring hats, shirts, the Conservation Series and more. After you scan the new website, let me know how you like it and what, if any, changes you would like to see. On a side note, the new website has already received questions from interested birders! See more on page 11...**

Check out Robert Raynors' experiences on his trail, and thank you Robert, and Anna Sheets for her experiences with the Robins in the Spring issue. I love hearing from you all!!!

Terry McGrath



Check out the Top 10 list of the *cutest & smallest birds* in the world...see page 14 and be prepared to be "Awww...ed"!

"In every walk with Nature, one receives far more than he seeks"

John Muir

President's Perspective...

By Mike DeBruhl

JULY 2018 - - - PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

We have been experiencing a lingering “heat wave” and associated humidity over the last few weeks. Even with the storms and rains, it has seemed somewhat oppressive. With this I have been concerned, and others have noted, what appears to be a high number of UNHATCHED EGGS! So, with the help of our data Guru Glen Hendry, I looked into it.

Proper incubation of BB eggs requires temperatures of 95 – 106 degrees ... which is the brooding temperature range of Female BBs. Temps BELOW this range may slow / impair normal development ... and sustained temps ABOVE 107 degrees can be lethal to eggs and babies!! That said, we find that our SCBS-wide UNHATCHED percentage from 2013 – July 15, 2108 has remained fairly steady, **averaging 26.2%** (**6,289 of 23,974 eggs**). My trail is experiencing an **average of 30.8%**...so I will be taking a further look as to why the difference.

I bring this up just to emphasize why SCBS uses **Cedar** for nest boxes. Simply put, it has been shown (NABS data) to be the best protector (even better than insulation or reflective material) for our feathered friends in cold and warm weather. We also use ventilation holes or slots that further helps in the hot weather. Naturally, we do not recommend any painting of brown or dark colors on our nest boxes.

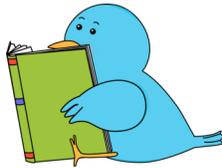
Shifting gears....I was honored to speak on July 14 to the Garden Clubs of South Carolina (GCSC) annual EXPO in Columbia. The event was attended by several hundred avid Garden Club representatives from across the state and followed the theme of “**Birds of a Feather Garden Together**”. This attentive audience had wonderful questions, and we are now receiving numerous requests for our SCBS educational presentation at Garden Club meetings!! We are an official affiliate of GCSC and it is a great partnership to further the love and care of our beautiful Bluebirds....and other cavity dwellers.

Our season is progressing well and we encourage all Trail Monitors to report your data. With only about 80% of trails reported as of July 15, we have fledged 1,859 BBs and a total of 2,612 cavity dwellers...compared to a 2017 totals of 3,499 BBs and 4,418

We resume our member meetings in September but at a **new location**. Our dear friends and longtime supporters, **Ron and Dori Brenneman** have begun a well-earned retirement and closed Birds & Butterflies. While retired, they remain active members of SCBS and a valued information resource. We will soon be sending out a separate notice of upcoming meeting dates and the new location. So, Stayed Tuned!!

See you on the Trails !!!

Insider News!



It's time to be thinking about the next bird and artist for our 2nd Annual Conservation Series and Stamps. We will be launching the series in January, 2019. The bird we have chosen is the:

CAROLINA CHICKADEE



Send your best photo for artistic reproduction, and if you are an artist, send a sample of your media if you would like to be considered.

Email me at: mcgrathjtl@atlanticbb.net for more info!



Lifetime Memberships are available. If you're interested in finding out more, contact Mary Shultz at: shultzim@att.net. And speaking of the holidays, a Lifetime membership would be the perfect gift for that guy or gal in your life that has everything!



For information on joining NABS, see <http://nabluebirdsociety.org>

For information on bluebirds and other cavity nesting birds in SC, go to <http://southcarolinabluebirds.org>

DON'T MISS
THE DEADLINE!

Deadlines for contributions to the Nest Box News are: Jan 15, April 15, July 15 and Oct 15 send your pictures, comments or articles to:



Use **AmazonSmile** for your online shopping!! When you shop, designate SCBS as your non-profit charity of choice and they will donate 0.5% of your purchase total to SCBS That's one penny for every \$2.00 spent! Hey, it all adds up!



Many thanks to **Glen & Gail Hendry** for setting up our tent on Earth Day at Wingard's in Lexington

More Than A Bluebird Trail

As I stepped out of my truck in the parking lot of USC Aiken, I looked up and noticed the clear blue sky with a few patches of off-white clouds and the swaying of the longleaf pines as they gently rocked back and forth. I gathered my notebook and supplies to begin the short walk of the ten birdhouse trail. I started up the hill and noticed the college had added palm trees and landscaping near the crossover bridge. I began to wonder what else I may have overlooked rushing around the trails before the sun grew too hot to enjoy the walk. As I approached the first birdhouse I noticed not only what was in each birdhouse but what my surroundings had to offer. I noticed a Carolina wren fussing on the trunk of a tree nearby. I wondered was he fussing at me or a bug that had burrowed into the pine bark. I continued my walk and heard the cawing of crows that were chasing a red tailed hawk, who were also being chased by a couple of mockingbirds. They all seemed intent on making sure that each trespassing "nemesis" moved on out of their sight. I had just removed the nest of a Carolina chickadee from the second birdhouse where her brood of six had fledged, and began a slow climb up a hill and noticed a corn snake had stretched out across my path but did not seem concerned as I stepped over it. Its red and black rings reflected the sunlight making it stand out in the green grass. I approached my third birdhouse and saw two bluebird eggs neatly centered in the nest. A bluebird began to circle, swooping down and telling me it was time to continue on my journey as she still had at least two more eggs to lay. Birdhouses four and five were uneventful with the exception that the wild blackberry bushes were beginning to flower. I knew it wouldn't be long before I would walk my trail and enjoy the "fruits" of my labor. As I approached birdhouse number six, I crossed the trail and noticed tracks in the sand. I stopped and knelt down to study the tracks and concluded they were from an "automotive" species known as Firestone. I noticed just to the left of the tire tracks were those of a whitetail deer and those of a lizard that had scurried across the sandy path to hide in the brush. I heard a jet fly overhead and I looked up to see the vapor trail it was making and to see a black buzzard circling below it. I walked on and finished my remaining birdhouses and thought how wonderful it was to have this time to enjoy the outdoors. I knew my doctor would be happy I was getting exercise. I didn't even notice the morning was getting warmer but thought what a great time I had just enjoyed.

I appreciate all those involved giving us a place to walk and to install our birdhouses which ensures not only a bluebird habitat but a safe haven for all cavity nesting birds. I will continue to be part of our Bluebird Society. I know that throughout Canada, Bermuda and the United States, we contribute our time to ensure our feathered friends are protected and always have a place to call home.

...Robert Raynor

Editors Note: Robert writes eloquently about his trail...I feel the breeze and the sunshine as if I were there. This is the magic of being a Trail Monitor. Join us!



Carolina Wildlife Center

Currently the center is admitting an average of over 20 animals a day. We are running to the store daily to restock and could use a little help. Right now we desperately need unflavored pedialyte, zoomed reptile basking bulbs, live insects and mini ramekins. We are also going through several pounds of strawberries, blueberries, grapes and apples each day. We use a lot of broccoli, squash, sweet potato's, kale, paper towels and tissues as well.

Any help would be sincerely appreciated not only by us but also by the hundreds of animals currently in care at the center. Thank you so much for supporting us in helping give wildlife a second chance!

https://www.amazon.com/.../w.../1EJH9UMUTW35F/ref=cm_wl_huc_view

Just like the need to help the homeless folks to keep cool; the dogs and cats looking for their furever homes, our friends at Carolina Wildlife Center need help for the hundreds of animals they are currently taking care of!

As a frequent transporter of injured raptors and the like to the Center, I can vouch for their tireless work firsthand! Any help you can give them would be greatly appreciated!

Thanks! Terry McGrath, Editor

Did you know that these insectivore rescues will need 5 mealworms every 20 minutes EACH for at least 12 hours a day!! That's 180 mealworms for ONE bird per day...

Won't your peeps help ours???



SAVE THE DATE

Member Meetings*

7:00 pm

April 23, 2018

May 21, 2018

June, July, August

Summer Break

September 24, 2018

October 22, 2018

November 19, 2018

No Meeting Merry

Christmas

Board Meetings*

5:00 pm

May 14, 2018

August 13, 2018

November 12, 2018

New meeting place will be announced before our September 24th meeting...watch your inboxes!

We can always use your help, ideas, photos and comments...



PRESENTATIONS

Mar 24 -- **WBU** ... Mt. Pleasant, SC

May through July- - **Aiken's Farmer's Market**...Aiken

Apr 21 -- **Earth Day** ... Aiken

Apr 21 -- **Earth Day** ... Wingards – Lexington, SC

May 8- - **Hillside**... Augusta, GA

May 23 -- **Johnston GC** ... Johnston, SC

October 9- - **Aiken Master Gardeners**...Aiken

TBD -- **Sun City Birders** ... Bluffton, SC

TBD -- **Cypress Gardens** ... Beaufort, SC

TBD -- **Palmetto Hall Bird Club** ... HHI, SC

TBD- - **Mount Vintage** ... No. Augusta, SC

TBD- - **Heathwood Hall**...Columbia, SC

TBD- - **Celadon Community**...Beaufort, SC



"C'mon in, the waters' fine"

welcome!

Welcome to our new members and trail monitors!

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SCBS Newsletter Editor

Terry McGrath/mcgrathjtl@atlanticbb.net





Photos by: **Bob Smith**
Nice home Papa Blue chose, & look who found the mealworms



Photo by: **Glen Hendry**
Look closely, center stage



Photo by: **Mike DeBruhl**
His neighbor grows flowers *and* doves



Photo by: **Terry McGrath**
Just waddling along



Photo by: **Jim Sproull**
Close to fledge

**YOUR PICTURE
HERE**

Members Share Their Trail Photos...

"Holy Brown Bat, Batman!" *Bob Smith* found this fellow in his nest box...



Pip in progress! *Terry McGrath* captured this on her trail...



Tom Brandner shares a little piece of Heaven in his private Prayer Park with a few friends!





On her SPCA trail, **Sara Wampole** has gone from a record 8 eggs in one box, to a "tiny egg" in the nest above!



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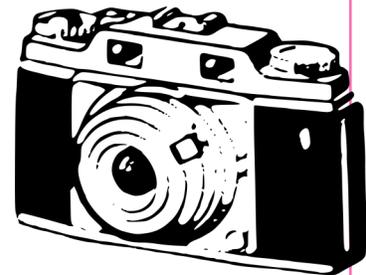
These little guys at **Mike DeBruhl's** house will need to be fed every 15 minutes for up to 12 hours a day! That's a whole lotta bugs!



Dinner & drinks at 7pm for this well-dressed visitor to **Mike DeBruhl's** yard!



This Brown Thrasher likes a drink after scratching up his meal at **Terry McGrath's** house



JotForm Questions

This is the cool part of our new website...visitors to our site can ask questions!!

Below is a sample so far...

??

We have a house wren that has destroyed 7 blue bird eggs:(. Any advice on how to stop him? I put up a wren guard (cardboard) about 3" in front of the hole. The wren figured it out and took another egg. Any help would be great! Thanks!
Chad

The **answer** directed Chad to www.sialas.org/wrens. They installed a wooden wren guard and the House Wrens are not a problem any longer, but the Bluebirds haven't returned yet.

??

I am a newbie. My bluebirds have 5 eggs and it appears that the box is too small to accommodate all. Also, the box is in direct sun with no shade. Are they ok?

The **answer** assured the writer that the nestlings would be occupying the nest box for only a short while at their larger size! Nest box locations were also discussed, along with the internal temp of bluebirds (average 105 F)

??

Blue bird has built nest in area below mail box. No eggs yet. I have empty box in blue bird back yard. Should I move nest there ?



Bill's question was quite common, given the popularity of the newspaper tubes. As you can see, we discouraged him from moving the nest to the nest box in his back yard. The female did lay 4 eggs, but alas, she never returned to incubate; a consequence of being so close to predators.

Bill will be more proactive now and there's hope for his back yard box...

**Ask
Your
Friends**



***Is it really necessary to remove the old nests between broods?* Well, would you like to sleep in a hotel on someone else's sheets? The reason for removing and cleaning out the old nests is a matter of housekeeping. If we didn't do so, the second nest would be constructed on top of the first, the third nest on top of the second and soon you have a full house; making it much easier for predation with the eggs/ babies right at the entrance. Also, between the mites and the dampness from the weather it's not a very healthy start and we know it's hard being a baby bird! So keep track of your nest box and as soon as those babies fledge, remove the old nest and brush out the box...your birds will thank you!**



Off to a good start– first babies, fresh nest!

Some Interesting Statistics from Glen Hendry...

It seemed like we are seeing more nests with white eggs this year in Hitchcock Woods:

2015 - 2 nests

2016 - 5 nests

2017 - 7 nests

2018 - 7 nests so far

When is a brood a brood?

The bluebird nesting season is upon us now and we are walking our trails and collecting data. This is a reminder on how we label the brood numbers in our weekly monitoring books.

A brood officially starts when you get the 1st egg; however, we always start the season on brood #1. If you find a nest and it never get eggs, remove the nest to start over. You are still on brood #1 even though you may eventually be on your 2nd nest building. If you don't get the 1st nest in a box until July, it is still brood #1. Just remember the cardinal (bluebird) rule: A brood officially starts when you get the 1st egg.

If you have a bird other than a bluebird who lays eggs at first, and then a bluebird nests after the 1st birds leave, you are on brood #2. In other words, it doesn't matter which of our cavity nesters use the box. A brood is a brood.

A brood is completed when any of the following happens:

- 1. Babies fledge 😊**
- 2. Eggs &/or babies are lost to a predator 😞**
- 3. Nest with eggs or babies is abandoned 😞**

In each case, you will clean out the box to start the next brood.

Top 10 Cutest & Smallest Birds In The World...

10. **Crimson Chat**- endemic to Australia, their length is 10-13 cm and they weigh 13 gms
9. **Tropical Perula**- only 11 cm long, these birds call Southern Mexico and Texas home
8. **Bananaquit**- active birds, they cling from flower to flower searching for nectar
7. **American Goldfinch**- found in large flocks, this migratory bird is at home in the South
6. **Brown Gerygone**- one of the smallest birds at 8-10 cm long, live in treetops to catch insects
5. **Goldcrest**- smallest bird of Ireland at only 9 cm in length
4. **Gold Headed Cisticola**- this lightweight at 10 gms uses spider webs in nests
3. **Paradalote**- this Australian bird helps keep sap sucking insects under control in forests
2. **Weebill**- Australia's smallest bird at 8-9 cms, his name comes from his short, pale beak
1. **Bee Hummingbird**- smallest living bird, this Cuban cutie is only 5 cm long and 1.5-2 gms

FYI a centimeter = 0.39370 inches; 1 inch = 2.54 cm. A gram = 0.03527396195 oz.

10.		9.		8.		7.	
	W=.46 oz, L= 4.3 in		W=.10 oz, L= 4-4.5 in		W=0.3 oz, L=4.5 in		W=.49 oz, L=4.7 in
6.		5.		4.			
	W=.18 oz, L=9.4 in		W=.028 oz, L=3.3-3.7 in		W=.35 oz, L=3.9 in		
3.		2.		1.			
	W=.46 oz, L=4.4 in		W=.18 oz, L=3.5 in		W=.07 oz, L=1.9 in		

Courtesy of: <https://themysteriousworld.com/top-10-smallest-cutest-birds-in-the-world/>

Like us on Facebook! For answers to your questions and membership information to the **South Carolina Bluebird Society** and the **North American Bluebird Society** go to:

<http://www.southcarolinabluebirds.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/SouthCarolinaBluebirdSociety>



South Carolina Bluebird Society

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TO: