



Nest Box News

www.southcarolinabluebirds.org



Volume 7, Issue 4

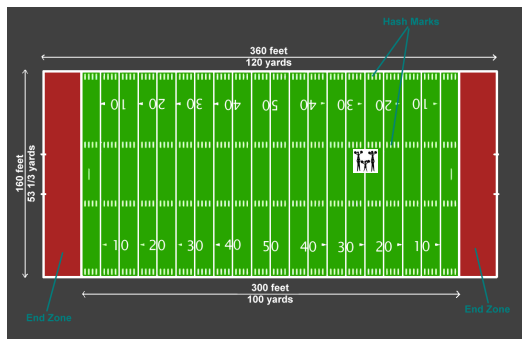
Fall 2018

An Affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society

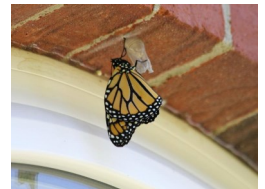
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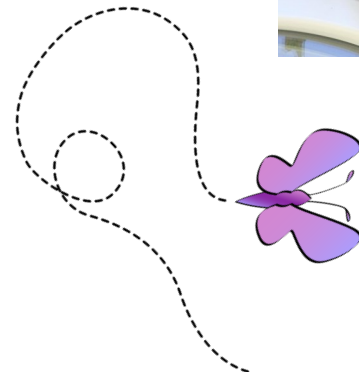
If every bluebird successfully fledged by our group since we started keeping records in 2002 were placed beak to tail, the chain would stretch from goal line to goal line in **35.8 football fields!** Pretty impressive! The stats of our successful 2018 season can be found on our new website, www.southcarolinabluebirds.org, along with info on our mission, how to join, donate and get involved.



Also, check out the story on **pg. 13** as **Linda Burgess** details her **Butterfly Project** this summer along with gorgeous photos by **Nancy Moseley**.



TOUCHDOWN



Check out the Top 10 list of these *Pretty Little Fliers* ~

Proving once again, the girls' rule!!! All the details on pg. 14

(# 7 will amaze you...)



Keep a green tree in your heart and perhaps a singing bird will come~

Chinese Proverb

Photo by: *Selina Spillman*



President's Perspective...

By Mike DeBruhl

Well—since our last Nest Box News, we have dodged the bullet on TWO hurricanes, congratulated Ron and Dori Brenneman on their retirement, reached 200 members, moved our meeting location to the Odell Weeks Center, opened new trails, and presented 10 educational programs with another 10 scheduled, and more. **WHEW!!**

And now can it really be?? Has Fall actually begun to arrive?? The cooler temps over the past few days seem to indicate so... and our feathered friends are frisky. I venture to say that you are seeing a “Flurry” of activity. We are receiving calls inquiring about the increased number of Bluebirds showing up at feeders. Folks are ecstatic about seeing our Blue Friends and watching their antics--but wonder where did they all come from lately?

Primarily, the fact that we had a successful 2018 nesting season (preliminary figures show that we fledged over 4,100 birds, of which over 3,500 are our Bluebirds) and add that this is the time of year when there are fewer insects around for the birds to feed on results in the increased activity at the feeders. We will have the final audited figures to you soon. Best advice - - keep feeders and bird baths filled and ENJOY!

Our Trail Committee is now focusing on preparing for winterizing and repairing/ maintaining our trails and nest boxes. Stand by for further guidance and details.

Do not miss your chance to win the stunning original watercolor painting, by Mary Ann Brock, valued at \$350! This painting was used for our 2018 conservation prints/stamps series. The framed and matted watercolor will be displayed at the Aiken Center of the Arts, 122 Laurens St SW, until November 2, 2018. Raffle forms are available and tickets are each \$5 - or - five for \$20.

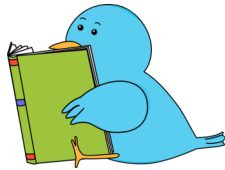
Your Board of Directors is considering adding another Director position to our board. This will take our number of Directors to 8 and can be a big assist as we continue to grow, add merchandising to our website, and expand our membership, and increase trails and services across South Carolina. More information on this to follow in next couple of weeks.

Just a reminder that our next meetings will be on October 22 and November 19 at the Odell Weeks Center at 7 PM. Enjoy the Fall, keep those feeders and bird baths filled, and enjoy our feathered friends.

See you on the Trails.....

Mike

Insider News!



And the winner is....Nancy Moseley!! We all know Nancy's work through her stunning captures of Nature photography from her contributions to our Facebook page! Often seen around town with her camera, it's no surprise she had the winning shot! Nancy's photo will be recreated by Nature artist Mary McCullough into the second of our Conservation Series stamps and prints. Here's a sneak peek at the winning entry~



Photo by: **Nancy Moseley**

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:

mcgrathjtl@atlanticbb.net

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 .

!!! ATTENTION !!!

From Oct. 29-Nov. 2, AmazonSmile will increase the donation rate on all eligible smile.amazon.com purchases. This will be their largest bonus donation promotion to date, and is a great opportunity for the South Carolina Bluebird Society.



Bluebird on **Ronnie Hucks'** spotter—who's looking at who?

Tales From The Trail...by Jim Sproull

Early this year I had three bluebirds hatch in a box in my backyard. Each morning as I was drinking coffee on my screen porch I would watch both BB parents make trip after trip to my mealworm feeder to satisfy the youngins' incredible appetites. One morning I noticed little activity from that box. I thought that was strange, but I had several meetings that day so I left my house. The next morning, again seeing no activity, I opened the box. To my surprise, two of the babies were dead. I remembered that I had a box at the Aiken Historical Museum with baby BBs about the same age as this one. I also remembered an article in the Spring 2018 issue of Bluebird where the author talked about the feasibility of transplanting orphaned BB babies. So off I went with my orphan. The poor BB parents at the Museum now had five birds to feed rather than four! The good news is that one week later all five fledged.

Following this activity, another pair of bluebirds started a nest in a second box that I have in my backyard. This led to five blue eggs. Since we were leaving town for a week, I figured I would have a busy box soon when we returned. Upon checking this box, I saw a lot of pine straw sticking out of the opening to the box. A predator had raided this box and now only pine straw remained.

Now let's fast forward to the first box in my backyard two months later which had two BB eggs. Returning from a 4-day trip to the NC mountains, I expected these to hatch around the day I returned. Sure enough, one did. The next day I went to see if the second egg had hatched. To my surprise, there was a large amount of pine straw sticking out of the box. Was this the result of a Carolina wren or a predator? Either way it was not a good sign. I opened the box to find the baby plus the egg on the wood bottom of the box with all the rest of the pine straw filling the rest of the box. I now know the mayhem was the work of a raccoon. Not knowing if the parents survived or if they did, if they would take care of this baby, I knew I had another box with three babies that had also hatched the day before. I put these four babies together and four days after this trauma, all four seem to be doing well. Nature can be harsh. It's emotionally hard losing bluebirds as we pull for them to survive. It's nice to read in Bluebird of ways that we may be able to help.

Today I will complete that story. I placed that baby with four other newborns in a box on Winsor Place. That went just fine for about four days with five young birds in the nest. When I visited, I saw a pile of dung with seeds in it—(raccoon?) in the backyard. About two days later when I visited, there were four birds in the box. About two days later there were three birds. Yesterday there were only two birds and they were ready to fledge. Today there was pine straw sticking out of the opening and the box was empty !

The suspected predator playing the villain of Jim's story!



More From Our Talented Paparazzi...



Beauty by:

**Laini
Courtney**

Ronnie Hucks' hawk at Congaree,
right, and **Barbara Ray Spences'**
Red Shouldered Hawk in her
backyard, below



And the Beast!
Contrast of Nature
snapped by **Laini
Courtney**



Left: Pine Warbler

Center: Baltimore Oriole

**Bottom left: Yellow Throated
Warbler**

**Bottom right: Great Crested
Flycatcher fledgling**

**Bottom right: Cedar Waxwings
in chilly January**

**Top right: Mr. Blue at the ice
decorated feeder**



Photos by: Barbara Ray Spence

SAVE THE DATE

Member Meetings*

7:00 pm at O'Dell Weeks, Rm. #3

October 22, 2018

November 19, 2018 (week before Thanksgiving)

!!! Drawing for the raffle !!!

No Meeting Merry Christmas

January 28, 2019

February 25, 2019

March 25, 2019

April 22, 2019

May 20, 2019 (week before Memorial Day)

June, July, August Summer Break

September 23, 2019

October 28, 2019

November 18, 2019 (week before Thanksgiving)

No Meeting Merry Christmas

Board Meetings*

5:30 pm at The Reserve

November 12, 2018

February 11, 2019

May 13, 2019

August 12, 2019

November 11, 2019



PRESENTATIONS

Jan 28 - - GC Council ... Columbia

Feb 06 - - Dogwood GC ... Orangeburg

Mar 20 - - Wilson GC ... Greenville

Mar 26 - - Dogwood GC ... Honea Path

Apr 04 - - Trenton GC ... Trenton

TBD - - St Mathews GC ... St Mathews



View from Glen & Gail Hendry's campsite on their vacation to Colorado!

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





SCBS DIRECTORY



Photo by: Selina Spillman Juvenile Red-tailed Hawk

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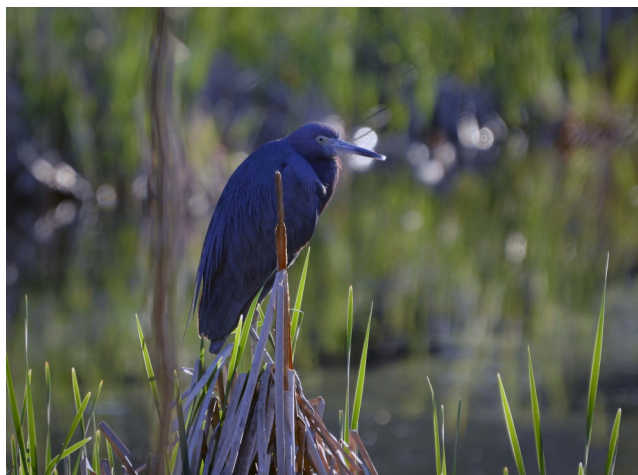
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Terry McGrath/mcgrathjtl@atlanticbb.net



Little Blue Heron photo by Ronnie Hucks



The Corks Were Poppin' While The Storks Were Stoppin'...

The Silver Bluff Audubon fundraiser this year was another huge success! One hundred twenty five people, some old faces and a lot of new ones, gathered together on a Saturday night in August to view hundreds of shorebirds including Roseate Spoonbills, Wood Storks, Great Egrets and Little Blue Herons! We were also graced by one of the Bald Eagles who nest at the Center! It was a doubly special evening as they had also received news that Audubon South Carolina's Silver Bluff Sanctuary in Aiken County is now permanently protected by a conservation easement, thanks in part to an \$807,000 grant from the South Carolina Conservation Bank and a donation by the National Audubon Society. Despite the rainy start, (the skies cleared at 7pm), it was a fantastic evening of wine, food, friends *and* the birds!

Thanks to all for their hard work...see *you* next year!



Photo courtesy of Silver Bluff Audubon Center



Photos by: Terry McGrath



**YOUR PICTURE
HERE**



Members Share Their Trail Photos...



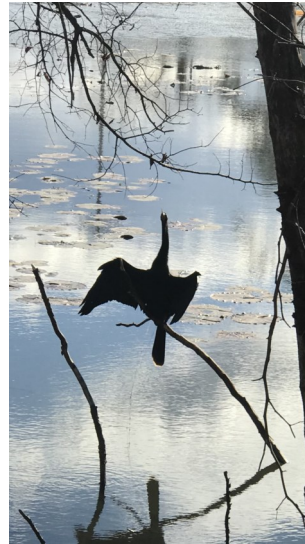
Not exactly a trail, but this Great Crested Flycatcher was perfectly content to build a nest in a hanging basket on member and trail monitor [Lynn Moredock's](#) mom's porch!



...and the largest bluebird in the world guards his territory at [Terry McGrath's](#) house!



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KT Wright-Cooks' photos of the bluebird activity in her back yard delights us!

Air drying in the sun! Photo by: ***Laini Courtney***



Ronnie Hucks caught this hummer sitting still, a gorgeous Bluebird in a Sycamore tree and a Bluebird posing



Colorado was a popular vacation spot as ***Ronnie Hucks*** "Magpie" and ***Glen & Gail Hendrys'*** Mule deer pose for a snapshot

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 are looking for a speaker to talk on Bluebirds and other birds at one of our monthly garden talks in Cedar Creek. Please contact me if you have someone willing to come to Cedar Creek. We meet the 2nd Monday of each month. Thanks

The **answer** was of course YES!!!
It has become quite obvious that the exponential growth of the SCBS is due to education and outreach!

??

You spoke to our group, the adult FFA class at Aiken High back in 2016, and I vowed then to get some bluebird nest boxes set up, but I haven't! Obviously I need another talk! I was hoping you could speak to us again, we do have turnover in our group so there would be new people. We're about 40 in total, and we have a computer and whiteboard for your use. We start at 6 and you would have about an hour to speak and answer questions.

The **answer** was another YES!!! More volunteers are needed to help cover our ever increasing presentation requests!

??

I'm a teacher at Irmo Middle and sponsor of the ACTION club. Our students hope to attract bluebirds to our courtyard by planting shrubs and building birdhouses. Any advice you can give us would be much appreciated. This is a unified project for students with and without disabilities

The **answer** directed this teacher to the SCBS website and Sialis.org



Ask Your Friends



KT Wright-Cook asks:

I could use some advice, please.

The last year 2017, my first year of having babies. First to nest in my Bluebird box were Chickadees. Then I saw a Mr. & Mrs. Bluebird hanging around. I got so excited! Well, next thing I knew she had laid eggs, I watched and waited and one day my parakeets who hang out by the back door watching the wild birds eat...they were squawking loudly and frantically. I looked out and I saw my Bluebird parents dive-bombing every other bird. I grabbed my camera and went outside. I was dive-bombed too, but I sat still. The babies all fledged. What I found odd was they all seemed to head southwest towards the open land Duke Power lines and towards the river. They never came back. No young, no teens I never saw anyone come back until one day. Mr. & Mrs. BB came back to the nest and laid more eggs.

See now this was my first brood batch of babies...so I didn't know about removing nest etc. But they laid 3 eggs as opposed to the 5 she laid before. They fledged, I missed the fledging. Again, I never saw the family the rest of the year.

This year, I saw Mr. & Mrs. Bluebird again, excitement again! The house was ready for them. No Chickadees this time. So she laid about 5 eggs. I after reading so many posts here. I stayed away as much as possible. I wanted the babies to come back. Oh and yes I feed mealworms live and dried. Anyway, this time I missed the fledging, pretty much missed everything. So this time after this batch left the nest I removed the nest and cleaned it. Waited then for a new batch of eggs. Nothing. I never saw them again. I am so saddened. I do not understand why they do not come back as young. I don't have any clue as to where they go. I am in the upstate. Is it because I am further north than you all down there? Is it because I have the big open area of the Power-lines they can go to?? I mean there are Red Tailed Hawks that frequent here.

I am lost. I even had another brand new Bluebird house set up for them away from the other. They showed no interest in that one. I even had a bowl of mealworms nearby it. Still nothing. This house is near the tree the pair sit in to watch over the other house. That house oddly enough is beside the feeders where all the Cardinals, Chickadees, Goldfinch, etc all dine. It is like the Bird Diner!

Does anyone have an idea why the young do not come back? Where do they go? Why did they never come back? I am hopeful for next year I must say. Thanks to anyone.

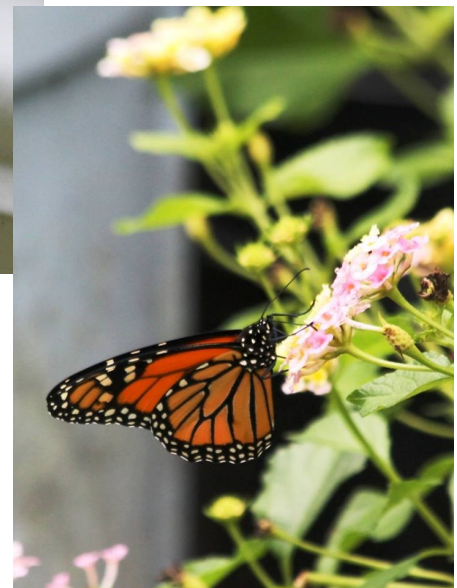
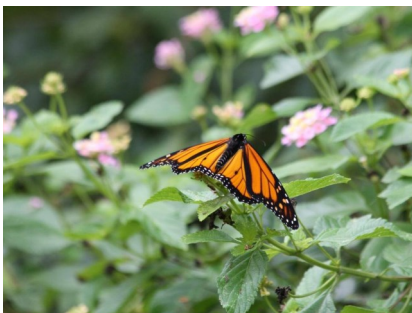
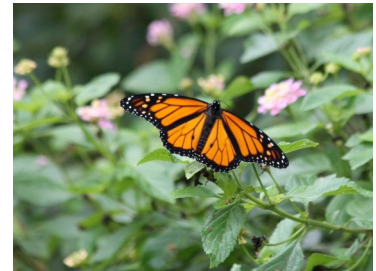


***Editors Note: Check out more of KT's
photos on page 10...***

Project Butterfly by: Linda Burgess Photo credits: Nancy Moseley

Seems like our members are getting quite creative with the business of Nature! Linda Burgess and Nancy Moseley have been busy feeding and recording the growth of their perspective Monarch Butterflies. From Nancy's frantic search for more milkweed, to her friends who took several caterpillars off her hands when she had too many, these gals certainly had a fun experience. In Linda's words:

I started trying to attract Monarch Butterflies this summer and planted 2 Tropical Milkweed plants. I had read the Monarchs were in severe decline. I hadn't seen many Monarchs here in SC, but I thought I'd try anyway. I was passing by the plants one day and noticed the caterpillars, about 10-12 and thought "wow, that's great". What I hadn't read about or considered was how much these guys eat! As they were growing, the Milkweed was disappearing into the caterpillars! I was in a bit of a frenzy because Milkweed is all they eat. Cold Creek was getting a shipment the next day. I got 7 Swamp Milkweed and all was right with the world. I wish I could say this batch did well but I had one chrysalis on one of the plants, the next day, it was gone-I never found any others. That's when I decided Mother Nature needed help if I was ever going to raise Monarchs successfully. I watched as a female laid her eggs on the Milkweed I had planted 3 days prior. This time I had enough Milkweed and on the internet I found [*Raise the Migration*](#), headed by [*Tony Gomez*](#). I got several mesh cages and supplies. I've released three females and eight males so far. I also have a little male, named Sassafras, he could not hold on to his chrysalis and fell down. I wasn't right there, so his wings are wrinkled and he could not survive in the wild. He's in the Butterfly only cage where I put the ones that can't be released due to weather related issues. He has flowers in his cage and a cotton ball soaked in Hummingbird nectar. He really likes oranges. He gets to go outside in his cage. Boy, he really wants to go!



Editors Note: [*Linda*](#) has 4 Tropical Milkweed cuttings and 100 seeds on the way...

It's not only the Year of the Bird, it's the Year of the Lady Bird!

10. Crimson Chat

9. Tropical Parula

8. Banaquit

7. American Goldfinch

6. Brown Gerygone

5. Goldcrest

4. Gold Headed Cisticola

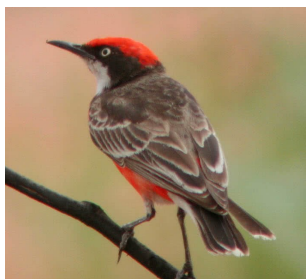
3. Pardalote

2. Weebill

1. Bee Hummingbird

Pretty Little Fliers

10.



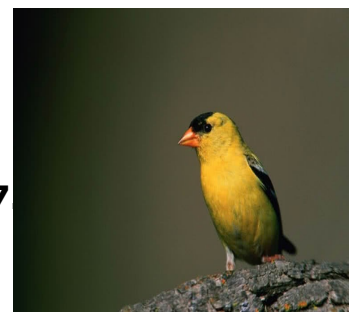
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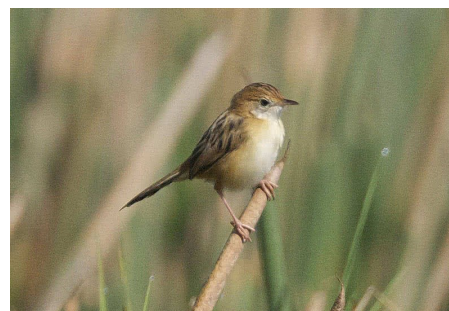
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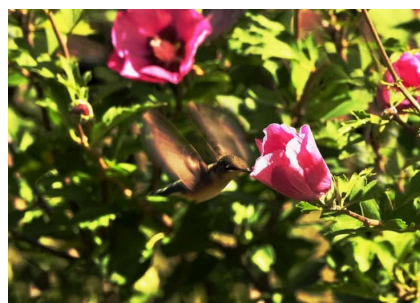
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Courtesy of: <https://themysteriousworld.com/top-10-smallest-cutest-birds-in-the-world/>

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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