

# NESTBOX NEWS

Newsletter of the South Carolina Blue Bird Society

(An affiliate of NABS)

## OCTOBER 2024

[southcarolinabluebirds.org](http://southcarolinabluebirds.org)



## THE SYMBOLISM OF OUR BELOVED BLUE BIRDS

Article from Bird  
Feeder Hub

## WHY SOME BLUEBIRD EGGS ARE WHITE

Dr. Michelle  
Vieyra explains

UPDATE ON  
BLINKY  
THE OWL

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Please, peruse our website to view upcoming public presentations and Bluebird Society meetings. You can also purchase a complete Nestbor setup (box, pole, predator guard) on our website.

Check out our Facebook group, South Carolina Blue Bird Society

Contact Steve Baker if you would like a Bluebird seminar presentation for another organization that you may belong to! Please use our website to register.



# PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE - - OCTOBER 2024

As I pen this, it has been 8 days since Hurricane Helene. I know that you join me in sending prayers and concerns for those who have been impacted by this event. As so many are doing, please continue to reach out and assist neighbors, fellow citizens and SCBS members in any way that you can.

It is going to take a long time for us to recover across the state from this huge storm. Some areas have been hit lightly and some devastated. Here in Aiken, we have hundreds of trees down, power has been restored in some areas, cell phone service is still sporadic, and tragically, we did have some loss of life. I hope that you are safe and able to receive this newsletter.

Our Bluebird habitat has truly taken a beating in some areas. Some trails have been hit and Nestboxes destroyed. The vegetation will eventually grow back and trails can be reconstructed. We have not yet been able to access some trails, but Please be cautious as you go out to check - - there may still be some limbs and other things dangerously hanging in trees out there!

I have noticed a deafening "Silence" for the last few days - - created by the lack of Birdsong. I am sure that our feathered friends have been scattered far and wide by the storm and are terribly confused. This may also impact / delay those Bluebirds that typically begin to migrate to our areas now and over next two months. BUT - - Mother Nature has a way of not only healing, but also rejuvenating things after storms have passed.

Since the usual habitat / fall food sources have been beaten up so badly, we may need to assist Her. Our Blue friends, and other cavity dwelling birds may require a bit more help than normal when they begin to reappear. So, as you are able, consider repairing or replacing, even adding to, your bird feeders and water features. The bluebirds may also seek out our Nestboxes to snuggle up together on cold nights.

Our next SCBS meetings will be on Monday, October 21 and November 11 at 7 PM. Meetings are normally held at the Lecture Hall in the Sciences Building on the USC-Aiken campus in Aiken. We will send an update to you with a ZOOM link for those not able to attend in person.

If you have not submitted your final Trail Monitoring data, please provide it to our Data Guru, Glen Hendry at [gwhendry@hotmail.com](mailto:gwhendry@hotmail.com). We will then be able to finalize our 2024 nesting season statistics to provide to our members and to the Cornell Ornithology Labs.

We will keep you posted as thing progress. But PLEASE be safe, help those in need, and our continued thoughts and prayers go out to anyone impacted by the hurricane.

Hoping to see you soon and back on the trails again when able ....

Mike

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SOUTH CAROLINA  
**CONSERVATION**  
BANK

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## Aiken Land Conservancy Protects Another Crucial Property

We are thrilled to announce that on July 16th, we successfully closed on a significant property acquisition! This milestone is a testament to our shared commitment to conservation and the protection of our natural heritage.



*Red-cockaded woodpecker by Christopher Lindsey*



# Protecting Gopher Tortoises: A Rare Opportunity

## The Korn Tract: A Strategic Acquisition



The 302-acre property, known as the Korn Tract, features longleaf pine, wiregrass, and most importantly, state-endangered gopher tortoises. The property provides a home to at least 12 other rare species, including red-cockaded woodpeckers, Eastern coral snakes, Swainson's warblers, spotted turtles, and several declining fish species. The Korn Tract was actively listed for sale at the end of 2023, and its species and habitats would have been in jeopardy if the property fell into the wrong hands. Despite the challenge presented by purchasing a sizable and expensive property, Aiken Land Conservancy (ALC) rose to the occasion. Staff navigated through a complex (and expensive) due diligence process to ensure that everything was set to apply for funding assistance to purchase the land.



*Gopher tortoise burrow*



*Eastern coral snake*

## Successful Funding and Future Plans

Thanks to a generous grant of \$1,090,000 from the South Carolina Conservation Bank (SCCB), we were able to close on the Korn Tract. ALC will hold the property until the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources can purchase it from us to add to the adjacent Aiken Gopher Tortoise Heritage Preserve. Once incorporated into the Preserve, the land will be managed with prescribed fire and made accessible for the public to enjoy for generations to come.



Aiken Land Conservancy

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**Thank you for your continued support to  
make conservation projects like this possible!**






The Aiken Land Conservancy has been protecting Aiken's natural and historic resources since 1990.

Go to [conserveaiken.org](https://conserveaiken.org) for more information or to make a donation to help us protect the places you love.



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Baby birds are fledging.  
So should you now clean  
out the nest boxes?

Photo credit: Bill Bender

Gannett  
SHARON SORENSON  
May 22, 2024 at 4:30 AM

The first broods of bluebirds, Carolina wrens, and chickadees have fledged. So should we rid the nest boxes of old nest material and all its mess as soon as babies fledge?

Research says, that depends.

According to Cornell's NestWatch.org website, "the threat of ectoparasites (e.g. mites, blowfly larvae) from the old nesting material can act as a strong deterrent for cavity selection."

Most birds build new nests in new locations for new broods. Facing limited nest cavity options, however, some birds, especially bluebirds, may build the second (or third) nest atop the old. The downside, then, is the buildup of nest materials putting babies dangerously close to the top, within easy reach of predators.

But what if the bluebirds have a choice – empty, clean boxes or used but successful boxes? Using 100 nest boxes, researchers M.T. Stanback and A.A. Dervan (2001) cleaned half of the boxes and left the rest. "When the bluebirds were left to make a choice to re-nest in a box with a positive association or to avoid ectoparasites, a whopping 71% of them chose to move to a clean nest box."





A male eastern bluebird clings to the opening of the pair's chosen nest box.

So between broods, evidence says to clean out the boxes as soon as birds fledge.

At the end of the season, however, another study by W. H. Davis and colleagues (1994) found that bluebirds “preferred nest boxes with old nest in them. There, parasitic wasps kill blowfly pupae over the winter; therefore, removing old nesting material may actually compromise this natural process.”

But note that the Davis study refers to over-winter situations. What ramifications could that have?

First, old nests in winter boxes often house small mammals, including mice. And mice are far from neat and tidy, thus calling for a soapy solution cleanup in chilly late February. Pair that complication with the fact that our resident cavity nesters--bluebirds, chickadees, Carolina wrens, titmice – nest early. They're on territory year-round; they check out potential nest sites in mid-winter; and they grab the best cavities before migrating cavity nesters like house wrens arrive.

Mice or other small mammals occupying nest boxes in winter also means birds can't use the nest boxes for winter roosts. The same birds that nest in cavities will use cavities for protection against bitter cold, multiple individuals of a species often huddling together for warmth.

Considering the combination of factors while weighing the pros and cons of cleaning, the answer seems obvious. Clean 'em out. And do it after each brood fledges. Year-round. At the end of the season, remove the nesting material (car ice scraper works well). Scrub inside with a mild detergent and water. Avoid insecticides or other toxic substances.

Should we remove nests that aren't in boxes, situated, for instance, in trees or bushes? According to NestWatch.org, “There's no need to do any clean-up [of these nests]. Most birds don't reuse their old nests. [Building a new nest] reduces the prevalence of nest parasites such as mites and lice. And building a new nest in a new location also means predators are less likely to find the nest site before the young birds fledge.”

Need to know more about nest boxes, how to choose, mount, and monitor them? Check out a comprehensive guide for over 60 cavity-nesting species at [nestwatch.org/learn/all-about-birdhouses](https://nestwatch.org/learn/all-about-birdhouses)

## Bluebird Symbolism

### (MEANINGS & INTERPRETATIONS)

By Mary Richardson



There are three species of bluebirds found in North America. The [eastern bluebird](#), western bluebird, and mountain bluebird. All are brightly colored birds with sweet dispositions and cheerful songs. It's no surprise that so much symbolism has popped up around these beautiful birds. In this article we will look at the many aspects of bluebird symbolism.

Bluebirds are believed to symbolize many things, such as love and hope. When you dream about bluebirds, it's said to be representative of joy and prosperity. Many legends of Native Americans include stories about Bluebirds, which are believed to be a sign of good luck.



This article will explore the in-depth spiritual significance of bluebirds in their relationship to dreams, encounters, mythology, and tattoos.

## What Does a Bluebird Symbolize?

Bluebirds are found throughout North America. People tend to think of their songs as sounding cheerful, and they aren't viewed as being aggressive birds. They are small and "cute", with a brilliant blue color that isn't seen too often among common birds other than the [blue jay](#). Perhaps for these reasons people tend to smile when they see them, and they bring feelings of happiness and cheerfulness.

Some of the most common things associated with bluebirds are:

- happiness
- tranquility
- loyalty
- positivity
- growth
- prosperity
- good health
- fertility and birth
- messages from God
- new beginnings
- faith and hope

### Happiness, positivity

You have probably heard of the saying "the bluebird of happiness" which as shown up in the songs and stories of many cultures for a long time. The charming appearance and song of bluebirds seems to bring joy to people wherever they are seen. Therefore, the bluebird will show up as a reminder of the importance of joy, and to offer you a sense of hope. They may visit you when you're in the midst of sacrificing your own happiness.



pixabay.com

Image: 272447 |

## **New Beginnings**

Bluebirds and sometimes the color blue itself is seen as an indicator of new beginnings and positive change. This could be indicative of taking a new step in your career, relationship, or any aspect of life. This may have come about because people associate bluebirds with spring. After not seeing them much during the winter, they are one of the first birds in the spring to come back to bird houses and begin to nest.

## **Messages from God**

There are some cultures that believe bluebirds are able to deliver messages from God. These messages are considered to be ones of positivity and joy, usually coming from angels in time of distress to reassure you things will be okay. They can also remind you not to give up and that good things will come to you through perseverance.

## **Fertility**

In many cultures, the bluebird is believed to symbolize fertility. Perhaps it is their associate with spring or nesting in birdhouses. But if you have been trying to conceive, a bluebird can be a symbol of fertility and a new baby on the way.

## **What Do Bluebird Dreams Symbolize?**

Dreams about bluebirds have been interpreted by many cultures through history. Here are some ways that mockingbirds are interpreted in dreams today:

Dreams of bluebirds can be symbolic of spiritual growth, so the meaning of the dream may be that you are in the process of growing into a deeper relationship with God. If you are currently lacking in your faith, dreaming of a bluebird may be God's way of telling you that you need to further develop the spiritual aspect of your life.

Bluebirds can also represent guardian angels or a loved one that has passed. The bluebird symbolizes they are watching over you as you go through a difficult time.

However, dreams of bluebirds may also mean that you are about to receive very good news or experience a stroke of luck that will greatly enhance your level of happiness in your life.

Many people believe that dreaming of a bluebird is a predictor of good luck and prosperity that is about to occur in your life. No, this doesn't necessarily mean that you will win the lottery, but that you will experience something positive, such as a new job or relationship.

Bluebirds, or their feathers, may also appear to you in a dream at moments when you are faced with a difficult decision. If you are uncertain as to whether you made the right choice, the bluebird may come to you in a dream as a sign of reassurance.

If you are coping with a major illness, dreaming of a bluebird may symbolize peace and healing.



## **Symbolism in Visits or Encounters with Bluebirds**

Bluebirds may be a little bolder and show up to visit you in your backyard rather than coming to you in a dream. While the symbolism is the same, the message is more urgent. When you see a bluebird, it usually means that a period of struggling is about to come to an end, and that you will experience great happiness in your life.

If you already feel fulfilled in your personal and professional life, then seeing a bluebird fly through your yard may serve as a reminder for you to spread happiness to others. Even though bluebirds symbolize joy, a bluebird visit may not necessarily mean that joy will be magnified in your own life. The bluebird may be trying to tell you that someone in your life needs you to cheer them up.

As mentioned before, many cultures believe that a bluebird represents fertility, so you may want to start preparing for a new baby or at least take a pregnancy test if you receive a visit from a bluebird.

If you aren't expecting a child, the bluebird visit may simply mean that you are about to begin a fresh chapter in your life. Either way, be ready to make some big changes, but don't be afraid to take the leap. The bluebird came to reassure you that everything was going to be okay.

## **Superstitions about Bluebirds**

- Spotting a bluebird in the morning means that you should prepare for trouble
- Beginning of good fortune in a person's life
- End to struggles
- Dead bluebird represent the spirit of a loved one who has passed on
- Guardian angels that have the capacity to ward off evil spirits in your life

# **Bluebirds as Spirit Animals & Totems**

## **Spirit Animals and Totems**

Bluebirds are considered to be spirit animals, and their dark blue coloring symbolizes loyalty, wisdom, and faith. Most significant is their representation of heaven and the afterlife.

The color blue, in general, is associated with feelings of peace and harmony. This is appropriate for the bluebird, as males and females work together to protect the nest and care for their broods.

Bluebirds are here to remind people to approach life with a humble heart and to not overlook the small blessings in life. Often, bluebirds have been said to symbolize confidence. If you are experiencing a struggle in your life, the prescience of a bluebird is meant to give you the confidence to withstand your trials in life and possess the perseverance and endurance that's necessary to make it through hard times.

The bluebird spirit is also one of encouragement in the face of struggles. It reminds us to persevere through difficult times rather than giving up.

## **Bluebird Totem Animal**

If you have a bluebird as your totem, it shows others that you are a trustworthy, loyal person and that they can relax and feel comfortable in your presence. A bluebird totem gives you the drive to take action towards achieving your goals and dreams in life. Since bluebirds remain monogamous during the breeding season, the totem is symbolic of romance, loyalty, and monogamy.

Carriers of the bluebird totem are highly protective of their homes and loved ones, but this totem comes with a huge responsibility. The bluebird totem means that you are supposed to offer spiritual guidance to others and help them to strengthen their spiritual beliefs.

Those with a bluebird totem also seek peace and want to be peacemakers in conflicts with others.

# **Spiritual and Cultural Meaning of Bluebirds**

## **Bluebirds in Christianity**



In Christianity, a bluebird is symbolic of immortality and representative of the Holy Spirit. Many Christians perceive the bluebird as symbolizing the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Bluebirds are often viewed as being Guardian Angels that have been sent by God to watch over us.

Surprisingly, it is claimed that nobody has ever seen a dead bluebird, which likely fuels the belief that bluebirds are spiritual beings. Additionally, bluebirds have been known to appear to people shortly before their death, presumably to escort them to the afterlife.

Don't worry, seeing a bluebird doesn't always mean that your life is about to end. Bluebirds are believed to be spiritual messengers from God, and are often viewed as being a means of spiritual guidance. Often, the presence of a bluebird signifies a new beginning rather than an end.

## **Bluebirds in Native American Culture**

Native American tribes were captivated by the utter beauty of a bluebird's feathers and associated the bird with royalty and courage, but many tribes found even deeper spiritual meaning in the bluebird.

For instance, the Iroquois tribe believes in reincarnation, the ability of the spirits of their deceased loved ones to live on in another form. Many members of this tribe have been known to associate the bluebird with immortality, as these birds have been said to represent the circle of life.

The Cherokee and Chippewa tribes believe that bluebirds are messengers sent to them from the Creator of Life to deliver information relating to the tribe's survival, whereas the Seneca tribe believes that the presence of a bluebird following the death of a loved one means that that person's spirit has one more thing left to tell you before they move on.

## **Mythology and folklore**

While Bluebirds have had no known significance in Greek mythology, Bluebirds have been repeatedly mentioned in both French and Russian folklore, and are believed by these cultures to bring about positive energy and even be a manifestation of happiness.

Chinese mythology has it that Bluebirds were the Goddess Xi Wangmu's messengers and the sight of a Bluebird meant that Xi Wangmu was present and providing protection. Koreans also believe that bluebirds are God's messengers and that the birds watch over people and tell God what the person has done.



## **Bluebird Tattoo symbolism**

A bluebird tattoo is typically symbolic of happiness and even more, eternal happiness. Some of the other common meanings of bluebird tattoos are:

- Good luck
- Heaven
- Guardian Angels
- Worry-free Attitude
- Prosperity and Luck
- Springtime
- Joy
- Positive spirit of those who have passed

## **Are Bluebirds Considered Good Luck?**

Bluebirds are definitely considered to be good luck, but skeptics insist that any good luck charm is up for debate. Sure, if you dream of a bluebird, it may very well mean that you are about to experience good fortune and prosperity in your life.

That prosperity may come in the form of a financial blessing, a new addition to your family, the end of a struggle, or the passing of a college exam, but since there are many meanings and interpretations of the bluebird, it's really hard to say. But yes, happiness and luck are two of the main things that a bluebird symbolizes.

Bluebirds have deep spiritual significance, so a bluebird may be representative of spiritual development, rather than personal or professional growth. Aside from good luck, bluebirds also



symbolize healing and good health, so that 'luck' may come in the form of a negative test result or an illness going into remission.

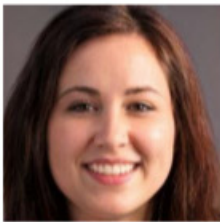
While you could most certainly experience good luck following a dream or encounter with a bluebird, what's more important is the hope, love, peace, and confidence that a bluebird gives to those who are fortunate to cross its path.

## Final Thoughts

If the symbolism of the bluebird was to be wrapped up in a single word, that word would be happiness. Sure, bluebirds are said to bring about good fortune, assist in life's transitions, and even be predictors of a new baby in the family, but the bottom line is that bluebirds bring joy to those who experience their presence.

Bluebirds symbolize happiness, love, hope, joy, and good luck. They have strong spiritual significance in the Christian religion, Native American tribes, and believed by some to be messengers of God or spiritual guides.

Many cultures associate bluebirds with fertility, but they can represent any life transition. If you dream of a bluebird or have an encounter with one, there are many ways of interpreting this visit, but the primary meaning of the bluebird can be summed up in one word: happiness. If you live in North America you can [attract bluebirds](#) to your own yard and enjoy them for yourself!



[Mary Richardson](#)

Mary is an outdoor enthusiast, nature lover, and amateur birdwatcher that enjoys sharing her knowledge and experiences with others.

<https://birdfeederhub.com/>



# Is this unusual?

Why some bluebird  
eggs are white.

By Dr. Michelle Vieyra

Anyone who has had the pleasure of taking care of a bluebird nest box knows that bluebird eggs are a beautiful shade of turquoise blue. It can then come as a surprise to some when they check their box and find... white eggs! People may be left asking, "How unusual are white bluebird eggs?" and, "Why does this happen?". To answer these questions, I consulted the scientific literature.

Depending on which nesting survey you look at, 2-9% of bluebird eggs are white. While this makes white bluebird eggs somewhat rare, they are not especially unusual as every nesting survey conducted over the last 120 years has found some small percentage of white eggs. So, what makes blue eggs blue and why are some not blue?

The colorful, hard-shelled eggs we see in the nest finish their structural development within the female's shell gland, which is basically a modified uterus. After fertilization in the oviduct, the ovum ("yolk") and the albumen ("white") move into the shell gland where shell calcification occurs. After calcification is completed, a colorful blue-green pigment called biliverdin is added to the outside of the shell. In the case of white eggs, this final pigmentation step does not happen. Now that might explain *how* white eggs occur but explaining *why* white eggs occur is not as easy. There are two competing hypotheses that attempt to answer this question.

The older hypothesis is that white eggs are due to a genetic mutation that affects either the manufacture of biliverdin shell pigment or the mechanism of coating the egg with it. A female with this hypothesized mutation could only ever be able to produce white eggs. This hypothesis makes sense if you are familiar with the variety of colors found on chicken eggs, a trait with known genetic factors. But even in chickens, diet and environmental conditions can play a role in producing an egg color not entirely predicted by genetics and the type of pigments used to color chicken eggs differs from that used by bluebirds. Multigeneration studies have observed daughters and granddaughters of white egg layers producing blue eggs and females hatched from blue eggs producing white eggs. These observations indicate that if this is a genetic



mutation then it must be inherited from both parents. So far no one has published a study showing that bluebird females who lay white eggs have a genetic make-up that is particularly different from those who lay blue eggs. Until someone does such a study, this hypothesis cannot be entirely verified. So, if white eggs are not due to a genetic mutation, what else might be going on?

The second hypothesis is that white eggs are produced by females with poorer health or nutrition, and that this occurrence is seasonal. Derivatives of the biliverdin pigment are necessary for lots of other physiological functions, including immunity and dealing with stress, so using it to color the eggs is expensive for the female. A female that is less healthy or nourished may not commit this expensive resource towards something not entirely necessary to the survival of the chicks. A study published in *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology* sought to test this hypothesis. These researchers monitored 778 clutches over the course of five years in Alabama. In the first week of incubation the body mass of the females was determined as a marker of body condition. These researchers did find that females that laid white eggs had a lower body mass, but they also found out something else they didn't bargain for – the females that laid the white eggs did so multiple times over multiple seasons. This muddies the water a bit and the authors concluded that perhaps this really is a genetic mutation, one that also affects the overall health and condition of the female bird. Instead of poorer body condition resulting in white eggs, a genetic mutation may cause both white eggs and a poorer body condition.

I will await further study before I conclude definitively that a specific genetic mutation was behind the white eggs I found in two of my nest boxes last season, but the evidence so far suggests that this is likely. In the meantime, I will continue to enjoy the splendorous beauty of those turquoise blue eggs and appreciate the rare white diamonds when I find them.

*Dr. Michelle Vieyra is an Associate Professor of Biology at USC Aiken. Her undergraduate lab maintains and monitors 31 nestboxes on the USCA campus in collaboration with the SCBS.*

## SCBS Trails – Huntington Beach State Park & South Strand Recreation Center (Article by Diane DuLoft)

Wild Birds Unlimited in Surfside Beach, SC sponsors two Eastern Bluebird Trails. In 2019, we started the Bluebird Trail at Huntington Beach State Park. The South Strand Recreation Center Bluebird Trail was established in 2023. We have a dedicated team of five customers who rotate monitoring both trails from late February through July.

Huntington Beach State Park is located in Murrells Inlet, SC, on 2500 acres, with 3 miles of pristine beach on the Atlantic Ocean. It also has a freshwater lake and brackish pond, making it a truly unique environment. Over 300 species of birds have been spotted within the park.

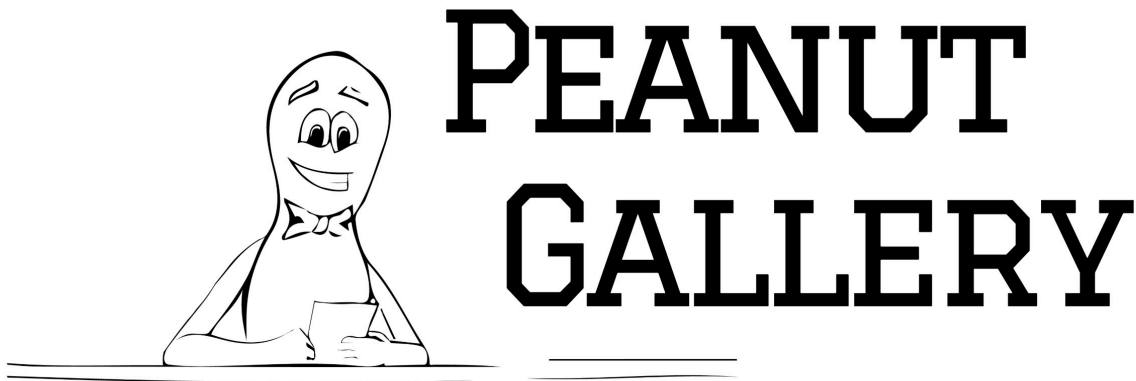
6 Bluebird Nest Boxes have been placed around the park. They are all mounted on a steel pole system, with raccoon baffles. In 2024, this trail fledged 27 Eastern Bluebirds and 4 Carolina Chickadees. The Park Ranger mentioned that he would occasionally see a Bluebird at the park before we installed the trail. Now he enjoys them throughout the year – a lot of them!

The Horry County South Strand Recreation Center is at the southern end of Myrtle Beach. There is a large facility that includes a full-size gymnasium, a fitness room and other rooms supporting the building. The surrounding complex consists of three multi-purpose fields, three baseball diamonds, a sand volleyball court, and a nature path encompassing the entire facility. There is a pond that is surrounded by a walking trail, which is where the 5 Bluebird Nest Boxes (outfitted with the same equipment as HBSP) are located. Success on this trail was minimal in 2024, as only 4 Eastern Bluebirds and 2 Carolina Wrens fledged. This trail is adjacent to the parking lot, but is protected by mature trees. There was some human intervention with a nest box that had 4 Bluebird babies in it that were about two weeks old. On week 3, the nest was on the ground behind the next box and no sign of any babies. Due to the seclusion of that walking trail, the location of that Bluebird Trail needs to be assessed further.

Wild Birds Unlimited - Surfside BLUEBIRD TRAIL STATISTICS										
HBSP	Bluebird	Brown-headed Nuthatch	Carolina Chickadee	Tufted Titmouse	Brown-headed Nuthatch	White-breasted Nuthatch	Carolina Wren	House Wren	Tree Swallow	TOTAL
2019	8		9							17
2020	9						14			23
2021	12		2				7			21
2022	30		6							36
2023	20		8							28
2024	<u>27</u>		<u>4</u>							<u>31</u>
	<b>106</b>		<b>29</b>				<b>21</b>			<b>156</b>
<b>SSRC</b>										
2024	<u>4</u>		<u>2</u>							<u>6</u>
	<b>4</b>		<b>2</b>							<b>6</b>

About this author: Diane & Rich DuLoft own the Wild Birds Unlimited store in Surf Side Beach, SC.





### Question from Lauren:

Hi, I have a bluebird house and am concerned about bluebird eggs that did not hatch might have gotten too hot. There were four bluebird eggs June 7 in the house and they are still there now. Three days ago the male and female birds were still in/around the house, but I haven't seen them since. Earlier this year when we put up the box, chickadees had a nest there, but this is our first bluebird nest.

### SCBS Response:

**Lauren:**

Hope that you and yours had a wonderful July 4th.

Based on fact that the eggs have been in the nestbox since **June 7** (laid several days before that) .... you will need to dispose of the nest and eggs and clean the nestbox thoroughly. They are, unfortunately, past their expected "**Hatch by**" date, which should have been around Jun 21 or so.



Sorry about the loss, but we are seeing some such increase and I do think it is partly the heat. We do know that when we have a long stretch of 90 degree and above days (as we have had) the Male Bluebird can become temporarily sterile, thus eggs that do not hatch. 🥲

But, a bit of good news. Once you clean out the nestbox, there is a chance of one more brood before our season ends at **end of August**. If you can, suggest that you might move the nestbox to a more shady area to prevent excess heat in the nestbox.

We would love to have you join SCBS. I have attached a membership form - - or you may also join online at <https://southcarolinabluebirds.org>. And do take a look at our website for great information.

Thanks for your inquiry. All the best.

## An Observation from David Smith & Tom Lovelidge – Sun City Bluebird Trail



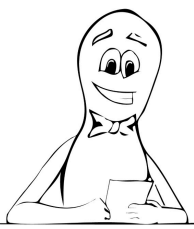
Last night when we monitored HC, we found this and thought you might want to share it with your SC Bluebird Society contact.

On 5/2, the nest was empty, on 5/9, there were 2 eggs, on 5/16, 5/23, 5/30, & 6/5 there were 5 eggs.

We've seen 6 eggs in a nest on a few occasions, but never have seen 8. The 5 eggs being in the nest for a month before the 3 were added seems strange. A couple of these eggs seem larger than the rest. I didn't notice the color/shade variation and think it's probably the photo or lighting condition.

Please let us know what the Society thinks.  
We'll continue the weekly monitoring,





# PEANUT GALLERY

## SCBS Response:

It would seem that the female laid 5 eggs originally. Since you saw 2 eggs on 5/9 and the 5 eggs on 5/16, the last egg (5<sup>th</sup> egg) was laid on 5/12 as the female lays 1 egg/day and will start to incubate after the last egg was laid. Typically, the eggs will hatch in 10-14 days so they should have hatched by the end of May. We instruct our trail monitors to remove the nest & eggs once they remain in the nest beyond the 2 week window (up to 3 weeks). After that, they will not hatch, and we declare the nest as abandoned. It could be that they were infertile, or the female was killed. The male will not incubate but he will go find another sugar momma.

Now that you see 8 eggs, it is possible that the same (or another) female has started laying more eggs. I would leave them (you might actually get more eggs) and it would be interesting to see if any hatch this time. If some, but not all eggs do hatch, you can gently remove the unhatched eggs once the young get about a week old. Dispose of unhatched eggs in the trash.

I have provided the link to the Nestling Growth Chart as provided by the North American Bluebird Society (NABS) that is found on our website. It shows the young on a day-by-day basis from hatching to fledging so you can make an educated guess as to the age of the young by their physical appearance (unless you know the exact day the hatched).

<https://southcarolinabluebirds.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/EABL-Nesting-Growth-Chart.pdf>

For future reference, you can remove a nest / eggs that has been sitting long enough that they will not hatch. We typically see a new nest in a couple weeks after that occurrence. We also remove unhatched eggs when some eggs do hatch when the young are about 1 week old.

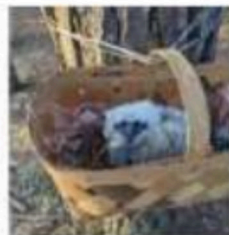


Re: Blinky our Favorite Great Horned Owl

I have good news and sad news about Blinky. He was officially released to the wild yesterday. The rescue agent, was amazed how fast he learned all his targeted training skills in less than 60 days (which was a month ahead of schedule). The Ranger said he is very confident in his survival when on his final day he spotted [Blinky] attacking a red tail hawk and taking away the Hawk's prey. Greg & Shirley Myers



March 11<sup>th</sup>  
found lying on  
ground  
(unprotected and  
abandoned)...



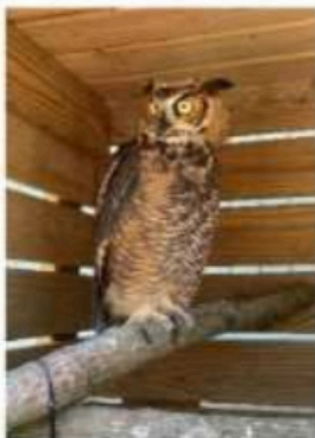
March 11<sup>th</sup>  
(spent night  
in basket)



March 12<sup>th</sup> Dr  
Nelson Vet  
Office (N.  
Augusta)



7 Weeks old;  
Athens GA  
Rescue Farm



Last Photo  
Taken June  
24<sup>th</sup> (3 1/2  
months old)  
(19.5" high;  
4.1 lbs)



Per Rescue  
Farm...  
anticipated size  
at maturity



## **As You Walk Your Bluebird Trail ©**

As you walk your bluebird trail  
You will soon realize that it is more than a trail  
All of Nature is waiting there  
Notice the turkey vulture circling above  
And the squirrels crouching in the pecan tree  
They are all watching you for signs  
Signs that you aren't there to harm them  
But rather a friend of the woods and trail  
Someone who appreciates Nature  
Stand quietly for a while – Listen  
Forget the sounds of the highway and city  
Nature will speak to you in many ways  
Perhaps the bluebirds carry a message from God  
Love one another, raise a family, help each other, enjoy  
life Yes, life is short but we all can make a difference  
As you make sure your bluebirds are doing well,  
Gaze into the sky and through the trees and into the  
pasture God's messengers will greet you along your trail  
Count your blessings as you count your bluebirds  
It is more than a bluebird trail

**Roger Brock, South Carolina Bluebird Society**



# TRAILS ON THE TRAILS

AS WE WALK OUR RESPECTIVE BLUEBIRD TRAILS, BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR TELLTALE SIGNS OF OTHER CRITTERS OUT THERE WITH US!!  
THERE ARE CLUES ABOUT WHAT MADE THE TRAILS UNDER EACH PICTURE. THEY MAY BE SYNONYMS.



1) 1985 Western Movie  
"Lonesome \_\_\_\_."



2) 1988 & 2024 Horror Movie "\_\_\_\_ Juice."



3) Augusta Tractor/Lawn Mower  
Company "John \_\_\_\_."



4) Salutation to a Break-Up  
Letter "\_\_\_\_ John."



5) 2006 Action Movie  
"\_\_\_\_ On A Plane."



6) 1968 Beatles Song "Rocky \_\_\_\_."



7) 1994 Gothic Horror Movie  
"The \_\_\_\_."

## Answers

- 1 Dove
- 2 Beetle
- 3 Deere
- 4 Dear
- 5 Snakes
- 6 Raccoon
- 7 Crow



Tom Lovelidge



Glen Hendry



# Holly Ruoff





# Amy Proctor





# Bill Bender





# Harriet Edmonds







Bill Bender





Steve Baker



Steve Roschelle

# OUR CORPORATE MEMBERS:

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR CORPORATE MEMBERS AND YOUR LOCAL BUSINESSES



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Gaffney, SC



<https://www.keoweefolks.org/>  
Friends of Lake Keowee Society  
Anderson, SC



<https://www.coldcreek.net/>  
Cold Creek Nurseries  
Aiken, SC



<https://beidler.audubon.org/>  
Beidler Forest Audubon Center  
Harleyville, SC



## Join the North American Bluebird Society

The South Carolina Bluebird Society is an affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society (NABS). NABS needs your support to continue their mission in Canada, Bermuda & the USA. Visit NABS on their website [www.nabluebirdsociety.org](http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org).



**Become a Member!**

[www.nabluebirdsociety.org](http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org)

Visit Us Online For

- Fact Sheets
- Nestbox Plans
- Tips/Guidance
- Events
- Speakers
- And more!

**MISSION:**

To engage in such educational, scientific and charitable pursuits as may be beneficial to the prosperity and well being of the three species of bluebirds and other native cavity-nesting bird species.

## Join the South Carolina Bluebird Society

**Give a membership to a family member / friend. It makes a great present!**

[www.southcarolinabluebirds.org](http://www.southcarolinabluebirds.org)



We appreciate your support and will continue to spend your membership dues responsibly to ensure the continued viability of the Bluebird population in South Carolina & adjoining states.



SCBS  
Newsletter  
assembled with the  
assistance of  
Mandy Gubsch  
from MGPrater Studio



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