



This newsletter of the Texas Bluebird Society is published four times a year.

Send street or email address changes to Caryn Brewer at: records@texasbluebirdsociety.org or send to our P.O. Box.

Register for Nesting Season Kickoff event on January 29, 2011 at Beaumont Botanical Gardens. Details on page 3



Texas Bluebird Society
PO Box 40868
Austin TX 78704

NestWatch

Deadline for entering this year's data is 12/31/2010.



to enter your nesting data, it helps scientists keep tabs on our feathered friends!

Photo by Meg Scamman



CUTE AS A BUTTON! As many of us have discovered, flying squirrels may occupy bluebird nestboxes, especially during the winter season. Keith Kridler promotes reducing competition for a home by simply installing more nestboxes.

Damage they can cause: Eggs missing - usually broken eggshells in nest or at least some egg yolk/white. Nestlings partially eaten or missing. Dead adults (bites around head and neck/breast meat eaten, normally smaller feathers pulled out.) Nest may not be (look) disturbed. Box taken over, filled with grass. Acorns in box. Flying squirrel comes out of box when opened. Can enter a 1" hole. Most likely in boxes in, on or near trees.

Leave door open if you want squirrels to abandon **before** having young, then remove nest. Caution: Flying squirrels may bite if you push your hand into nest. (Courtesy of www.sialis.org)



Congratulations to Jennifer Fleming



Jennifer Fleming, Board Member and 2011 Nesting Season Kickoff Meeting Coordinator submitted these two photos in the Pecan Festival Photo Contest and won 1st and 3rd place respectively.

ALL NATIVE CAVITY-NESTERS

are protected by federal law. Do not disturb the birds or the nest.

Monitor the nest and report to NestWatch.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Page 2
Summer Symposium Review

Page 3
Kickoff Registration Form

Page 4 & 5
Members Share Experiences

Page 6
Musings From The Master

Page 7
Thanks Volunteers!
Silent Auction Donations
New Members

Page 8
Member Photos



New Election Process for 2011 Board of Directors

Vote in Cyberspace Polling Booth

November 1st - 15th

Watch for email election ballot from TBS on November 1st

On November 1st our Election Administrator (tbsvote@gmail.com) will email an election notification to each email address in our records. Simply click on the web link provided to access your confidential Board of Directors election ballot at BallotBin.com

If you want to provide /change your email address (or confirm that we have it correctly), provide your email address to records@txblues.org on or before October 28th. If you do not receive the emailed ballot from "Texas Bluebird Society Vote" on November 1st, please notify our Election Administrator at tbsvote@gmail.com

To nominate a Board Member: Send nominations by email to tbs@tbsblues.org on or before October 22nd. If you miss this deadline, the ballot allows for write-in candidates. Secure permission from the nominee before submitting their name.

*Incoming Board Members are elected to 2-year terms. Others elected to 1-year terms. There is no "competition." Each nominee, if elected, will serve.

If you do not have an email address, you may mail a ballot to
TBS Elections, P O Box, 40868, Austin TX 78704

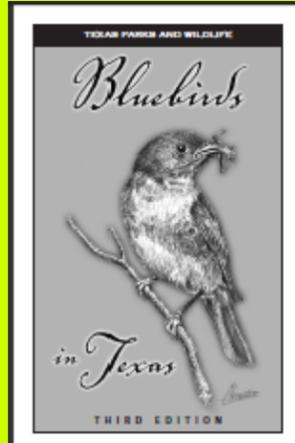
2011 TBS Board of Directors Nominees



- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Caryn Brewer | Judy Hetherington |
| Katy Couvillion | Jimmie Konvicka |
| Linda Crum | Meg Scamman |
| Nancy Glover | David Smith |
| | Pauline Tom |

The ballot will also include 5 survey questions:

1. Provide venue name and city if you know of a venue in Texas where TBS might hold an event for 125+ (lectures and lunch) with 25+ tables (auction, sales, displays) for a rental rate of \$300 max.
2. How many miles would you be willing to travel to attend a Symposium/Season Kickoff?
3. Would you consider attending a regional member gathering with potluck meal? If yes, County?
4. Did you have bluebirds nest in 2010?
5. Age



TP&W "Blue Book" Online

TBS provides a subsidy to Texas Parks and Wildlife for the printing of their publication *Bluebirds in Texas*.

To help reduce future printings, TBS is pleased to announce this publication in its entirety is now available in PDF format on our web site under Resources/Getting Started.

Another Great Summer Symposium!

Many thanks to **Andrea Brown**, Symposium Coordinator! Many helping hands made this another great Summer Symposium in Henderson on August 14th. Guests speakers Keith Kridler and Greg Grant delighted the audience with facts and anecdotes to help spread the word on Bluebirds and Woodpeckers, another "cool" cavity nester. The pictures below tell the story. How great? Attendance 105; New Members 41; Silent Auction Fundraiser \$2,182.00.



Nesting Season is just around the corner. Be prepared, join us to learn all about it!
Guest Speakers * How To Demos * Variety Of Topics From Installation To Fledging

Nesting Season Kickoff
Saturday, January 29, 2011
Beaumont Botanical Gardens



Presented by:
Texas Bluebird Society



Sponsored by:
Golden Triangle Audubon Society

THANKS, Volunteers Are Appreciated!

CARYN BREWER
 ANDREA BROWN
 LINDA CRUM
 HARRY EVANS
 JENNIFER FLEMING
 JOHNNY FLEMING
 BILL GRIFFITH
 JUDY HETHERINGTON
 BRIAN HETHERINGTON
 DEB LUTEN
 IRENE MORALES
 BARB OHLMAN
 DEBBIE BRADSHAW PARK
 JOHN PARK
 MEG SCAMMAN
 PAULINE TOM
 RON TOM
 VANESSA VOISINET
 RICHARD VOISINET
 TOM WHEELER



Linda Crum, Caryn Brewer, and Harry Evans make last minute adjustments at the 2010 Summer Bluebird Symposium in Henderson.

Next annual event will be the 2011 Nesting Season Kickoff Meeting in Beaumont on Saturday, January 29, 2011.
 Registration is on page 3.

TBS Thanks The Following Donors For Their Financial Support:

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Texas State Aquarena ■ Andrea Brown Home Place Realty ■ Angela Turner ■ Aspects, Inc. ■ Cynthia Reid ■ David Shiels ■ Dawn Martin & Kelly Bumgartner Home Place Realty ■ Debbie & John Park ■ Debbie Jasek ■ Diane Flynn ■ Dorothy Szepesi ■ Droll Yankees Inc. ■ ERVA/Nature House | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gail Prather ■ Grace Hessman ■ Greg Grant ■ Grubco Incorporated ■ Gwenda & Glenn Vinkler ■ Harry Evans ■ Jeremy Costlow, Texas Bank ■ Jim Anding ■ Jimmie Konvicka ■ John English ■ John Hobbs ■ Juli McCrary ■ Katherine Coward ■ Keith Arnold ■ Keith Kridler | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Don Lawrence ■ Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Austin ■ Luminant Power ■ Lysle Mockler ■ McDonald's, Henderson ■ Martin Sabel ■ Mike Scarbrough ■ Willie George, Texas Bank Henderson ■ Natalie Nichols ■ Pat Chamberlain ■ Polly's Paint Box ■ Richard Voisinet ■ Vanessa Voisinet ■ The Nature's Way | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Rio Frio Lodging & Hill Country Nature Center ■ Ron & Pauline Tom ■ Round Rock Express Baseball Club ■ Rusk County Electric Coop. ■ Sandy Burns, Home Place Realty ■ Susan Catalina ■ Suzanne Cross ■ Van Ert Enterprises ■ Walmart, Henderson |
|---|---|--|--|

Thank you for your donations to the Summer Symposium Silent Auction.

Welcome New Members! 156 have joined since June 26th including:

- | | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Betty Archley David Aufdembrink Deb Banfield Bobby & Bambi Barnes Richard Barnett Irene Beckham Paul Belyea Blue Creek Property Owners Assoc. Cindy Bobo Gene Bobo Ceci Bonnickson Kelli Bonnickson Rose Mary Brasfield Tiffany Breed Billy Brooks Robert Burke Gail Burnett Jim Card Garry Child Diana Christopher Harvey Colleen Debra Corbett Larry Cotton | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bud Crozier Dona Curren Sherry Daggett Rosemarie Dailey Dianne/John Daly/Smith Robert Darrow Beverly Davis Jerry Davis Denise Dawson Nancy Dever Tim Dever Jay Dickson Nancy Dickson Connie Draper Jody Driskill Leslie Dunn Sandra Eakin Loretta Fanning Robert Fayle Jerry Fenley John Ferguson Dr. J. A. Foltin Mary Ann Funderburg | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anita Garner Herschel Garner Trish Gendron Anne Goodroe Joni Groom Mike Hall Barbara Hannemann Irene Hanson Anita Harris Rebekah Haydin Linda Hiles Cindy M Huey Bill Jobe Betty C. Jordan Lance Jordan Jane Joslin Lori Kennedy Campbells Kerri Leslie Kirwan Patricia Kirwan Patty Koeninger Carolyn Krpec Tony Krpec Gay Lance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Betty Lee Susan Nenny Tom & Karla Lowe Kay Lowery Sandra Lucas Debra Luten Paul W. Mackie Lise Mansfield Belinda & G.A. McLaughlin Michael McNeill Marjorie & Paul Merritt Dan Mitchell Janice Myers Joel Nachimson John & Mindy Nelson Susan Nelson Marilyn Nerren Jo Norwood Dinah Oliver Louis Parks Kathy Pierce Gail Prather Graciell Pratt | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Louise Raby Therese Ray Germaine Reconnu Ellen Reeder Nancy Rinehart Jo Nell Rogers Rinske Roosma Nita Schiro Sheri Schned Don Schwarzkopf Donna Shepherd Ann Shumate Julia Squib Star Ranch Tx Kari Steph Dorothy Szepesi Jean Thompson Laura Tinsley Randall Todd Alvie Vesperman Fred Vesperman Joanne Wafer Ellen Warren Howard Williams |
|---|--|--|---|---|

Board of Directors

President
 Pauline Tom
 Mountain City

Vice President
 LeAnn Sharp
 Utopia

Treasurer/AP
 Linda Crum
 The Woodlands

Secretary/Editor
 Debbie Bradshaw
 Sour Lake

Membership/ AR
 Caryn Brewer
 Conroe

Renewals
 Jennifer Fleming
 Orange

True Blue Friends Mgr.
 Judy Hetherington
 Bronte

Technical Liaison
 John Park
 Sour Lake

Nestbox Inventory Mgr.
 Meg Scamman
 The Woodlands

Speakers Bureau
 David Smith
 Battus@aol.com
 San Antonio

Contact Us

PO Box 40868
 Austin, TX 78704

Pauline Tom
 512.268.5678 (Home)
 pauline@txblues.org
 LeAnn Sharp (Work)
 830.966.2320

Visit our website
www.txblues.org

Musings From The Master ... Tools of the Trade



Keith Kridler, everyone's resident expert, our favorite speaker, and co-founder of TBS, participates in several List-Serve groups focusing on bluebirds and their behavior. Keith has given us permission to publish his contributions to these groups. This is an edited excerpt from the Bluebird Monitors Yahoo Group.

ONE OF THE BEST TOOLS to carry with you while checking nestboxes is what Beekeepers call a "Hive Tool". You can find these in the better hardware stores where they keep their "pry bars" and or in the paint departments. This one is yellow and I like to paint small tools yellow that you "might" lay down in the yard or drop in the fields while out working!

This one is 9" long and I like the ones with the slot to pry out and grab a nail head in the hooked end of the bar like this one has. I use the Duplex or double headed 8D or eight penny concrete form board nails as latch pins to hold my side opening nestbox doors shut. These sometimes get stuck or rust in tight in a box over winter and this bar is perfect for pulling out these nails.

These are a hard tempered steel bar that can be sharpened to a fine razor edge. The bar is wide enough to smash small paper wasp nests with in early spring but you have to get a little close to the insects. J

For side opening nestboxes the hooked end is also sharp and it is great for scraping out the last of the dust and dirt left over in the bottom of the nestboxes after you pull out a nest. The small size and the hooked end lets you get right into the corners of nestbox floors.

Keith orders his online at :

https://www.dadant.com/catalog/product_info.php?products_id=737



Also available at better hardware stores in the pry bar section.

You can use the flat end of this tool to lift up a nest to gently poke into a big wad of nesting material that Deer or White Footed Mice or flying squirrels bring into a nestbox This way you are keeping your tender fingers back from the actual rodent in case they want to bite you.

The shape and size of the tool is perfect to carry in the back pocket of a pair of blue jeans. It is just tall enough that you always have it there in your pocket where you can grab it in a hurry. It is stiff enough and sharp enough to remove the toughest of those pesky mud dauber nests.

In a pinch you can even use this as a plant trowel to dig up small seedlings or to dig a small hole and drop in some seeds along the bluebird trail.

I use these all the time to remove door trim or baseboards. They work great as a light duty wood chisel where you can whack them with a hammer to cut through finish nails and not worry about ruining the cutting edge on a high dollar "real" wood chisel.

I like to paint small tools yellow that you "might" lay down in the yard or drop in the fields while out working!



2011 Season Kickoff in Beaumont (with Silent Auction FUNdraiser)

Presented by the Texas Bluebird Society. Sponsored by the Golden Triangle Audubon Society
Saturday, January 29, 2011
 Beaumont Botanical Gardens, Tyrell Park
 6088 Babe Zaharias Drive, Beaumont, TX 77705

9:00 AM – 3:00 PM
Doors open at 8:30 for Registration and Silent Auction

Building a Nestbox
 Bluebird Basics
 Recordkeeping with Cornell's "Nestwatch"
 House Sparrow & Predator Control
 Gardening for Bluebirds

PLUS:

Greg Grant
The Hole Truth: East Texas Woodpeckers
Cliff Shackelford
Nuthatches in Texas: Nuttin' but the Truth



©Jennifer Fleming, photographer.

REGISTRATION COSTS and DEADLINES (limited to first 107 due to space limitations):

Early Bird Registration: \$12. 10 Door prize tickets! Deadline: December 1, 2010.
 Advance Registration: \$12. 1 Door prize ticket. Deadline January 15, 2011
 At-the-door Registration: \$6. No meal and no door prize tickets

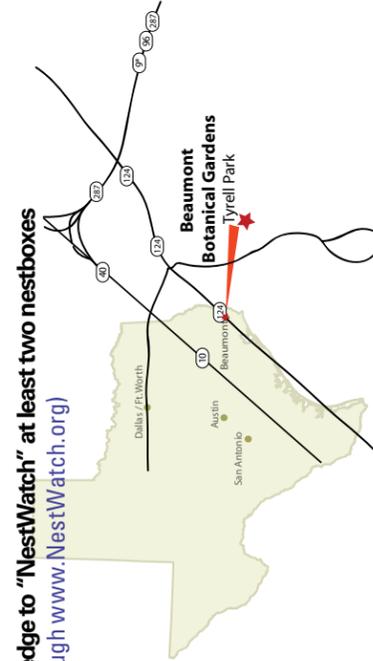
FREE Nestbox to members who pledge to "NestWatch" at least two nestboxes (submit observations to Cornell through www.NestWatch.org)

For More Information:

Debbie Park:
 debbiep@texasbluebirdsociety.org
 409.287.4020

To Donate a Silent Auction Item *:

Johnny & Jennifer Fleming
 5215 Barrett St.
 Orange, TX 77630
 409.886.3975



Donations received after Jan 15th will miss the publication deadline.

*TBS is recognized by the IRS as a 501c3 "charitable" organization. Donations are tax deductible, as allowed by law.

The Hampton Inn, 3795 I-H10 S, Beaumont TX, 77705, offers a "Kickoff" rate of \$71.10 (plus tax). Price includes breakfast. We will notify registrants of Friday Night Social Dinner details.

Revised 10.12.2010

ADVANCE-Registration (includes hot lunch)
Limited to first 107 due to space limitations.

Registrant #1

Name _____ Name for Name Tag _____
 Street Address _____ City _____
 State _____ Zip _____
 Contact Phone: _____ E-mail _____

Registrant #2 (same street address)

Name _____ Name for Name Tag _____
 Contact Phone _____ E-mail _____

# of Registrants	Description	Cost (ea)	Total Due
	Member	\$12	
	Non-Member	\$12	

* \$15 Membership at this event includes FREE nestbox! (This is not a firm commitment for membership. Please do not send membership dues now.)

*Do you plan to join at the meeting? Yes No

For Planning Purposes Only

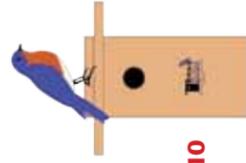
TBS Members and New Members: TBS will provide to you FREE a nestbox at this event if you pledge to "NestWatch" at least 2 nestboxes (submit observations to Cornell through www.nestbox.org).

Do you plan to participate? Yes No N/A

\$15 Nestboxes available for purchase (based upon availability). How many do you plan to purchase: _____

Mail Registration Form with Payment (\$12.00 per registrant) made payable to "Texas Bluebird Society" to:

Debbie Bradshaw
 1218 Attaway Rd
 Sour Lake, TX 77659



EARLY BIRD Registration Deadline December 1, 2010
ADVANCE Registration Deadline January 15, 2011





WOW, That's A First For Me!

Ron Duecker, Retired Executive Director, Ohio Bluebird Society

While visiting my daughter and family in Ft. Worth from May 27 -June 7th I saw bluebirds building a nest on the branches of a LIVE OAK tree. They live on approx.6 acres on the western outskirts of the city. Sitting on the back porch of the daughter's house, my wife and I first saw a Bluebird making trips from a nearby horse pasture to the tree, that is located 30-40 ft. from where we sat, flying into the outer branches approx. 25 - 30 ft. above ground. With my curiosity aroused, I walked under the tree and after a few minutes was able to locate the nest they were building in the fork of some small branches. The leaf growth was too thick for me to get a good picture. I have never heard of a bluebird building an open cup nest on branches of a tree. Have you ever heard of this?

Note: Dr. Patricia A. Gowaty (renowned bluebird researcher) and A. C. Bent (of the early Bent series on N A birds) found open Eastern Bluebird nests in the same oak tree at Clemson, years apart. Dr. Gowaty saw open nests repeatedly in oaks at Clemson in 1977 or 1978 and again in the 1990's.

Keith Kridler: Live Oak Trees have very thick canopy and have lots of thick twiggly branches where a bluebird could weave a nest. West of Fort Worth the tree cavities are in really short supply. It would not surprise me at all where there are few nestboxes or natural cavities in a area to find bluebirds nesting outside of cavities.



Andrea Brown, 2010 Summer Symposium Coordinator helps out at other local events.



TBS participates in many events around the state. Do you have a favorite local event you would like TBS to host a booth? Contact us at 512-268-5678, or email pauline@txblues.org

Heavy Duty Installation Secures Nestbox

Charles Bartlett, Mitchell Lake Audubon Center Volunteer

In the alternative method we are now using, it so happens that Home Depot and Lowe's sell a cyclone fence post pipe which is just a tiny bit bigger than the top rail pipe diameter. So, we can cut the top rail into nestbox poles of the desired length (e.g., 8'-10'), and then cut the fence post into shorter lengths approximately 24" long.

We take a sharpshooter trenching shovel and drive it 18" into the ground. (Note: this will not work in the rock of the Edwards Plateau.) We then wiggle the shovel just a little bit to barely loosen the soil. Then, we take a sledge hammer and drive the 24" long pipe into the ground until only about 4" is visible above the soil line. At that point we lift the pole, nest box, and baffle assembly until the end of the pole can slip into the slightly larger pipe now installed in the earth. It makes a very stable socket for the nest box pole.

Stop the rain. A radial saw to score three shallow (1/4") cuts on the underside of the roof does a nice job of intercepting rain running off the roof. A bead of Premium Water Resistant & Pain-table Caulk across the seam between the roof and back finishes the job.

Bluebirds Across Texas



Are we ready? Photographer unknown



A human's eye view. By Patti Marshall. (Montgomery)



Babies enjoying a nap. Photo by Howard Williams. (Dripping Springs)



Protect your nest from fire ants! Photo by Keith Kridler. Mount Pleasant



Road is a little noisy, but I love the color! Photo by Keith Kridler. (Mt. Pleasant)



Crunchy on the outside, gooey on the inside. Mealworms are a treat for the entire family! Photo by John Park. (Sour Lake)



It's been a good life so far, Mom and Dad say I am ready, look out world, here I come. Photo by John Park. (Sour Lake)

Fire Ants Can Quickly Kill Baby Birds

Donna Shields

The thrill of bluebird babies was overwhelming! First time bluebird parents! Several days after the hatchlings were a reality my husband and I were observing from a swing across the yard. The parents were attempting to feed the babies but were too concerned about some activity on the pole supporting the box. I walked over and took a closer look and became nauseated at the fact that fire ants had stung my bluebird babies to death! Everything was fine that morning and now they were beyond death's door. Nothing I want to experience again ever and hope to learn some prevention techniques

Pauline Tom: That is a heartbreaker, for sure. It happens that fire ants can nearly always be stopped with a 1/2"ring of Tanglefoot around the pole (preferably under a baffle so the Tanglefoot is not exposed). It must be refreshed during the season. Tanglefoot is a very sticky substance, and the ants get caught in it. The product is available at some nurseries and local feed stores. It is also offered in the on-line catalog of the North American Bluebird Society. www.nabluebirdsociety.org