

TEXAS Blues



Texas Bluebird Society Newsletter - Volume 10. Issue 1

MARCH 2011

Inside this issue:

Volunteers, New Members, Donors	2
Upcoming Events	3
NestWatch News	
Luke's Story	4
Musings From The Master	6
Nestboxes: From Start To Finish	7
Did You Know...	8

Mission Statement:

To spread "Bluebirds (and other native cavity-nesting birds) Across Texas ... one nestbox at a time" - through education; and, the installation of "NestWatch'd" nestboxes* in appropriate habitat; and, sustaining and increasing their natural food supply (insects and berries of native plants) - while enjoying the process and the bluebirds.

*www.RegisterYourNestbox.org or www.NestWatch.org

2010 Blue Feather Award

By Caryn Brewer

Congratulations to Debbie Bradshaw, recipient of the 2010 Blue Feather Award, given at the 2010 Summer Symposium in Henderson.

The Blue Feather Award is a service award given by the Texas Bluebird Society in appreciation for exemplary service benefiting TBS. Nominations for the award come from the Board of Directors and are submitted to previous recipients who act as the nominating committee. Debbie has exhibited a great passion with respect toward the conservation of bluebirds.

TBS especially appreciates Debbie's organization and dissemination of information regarding bluebirds and their habitats. Because of Debbie's efforts, hundreds of members have received newsletters, emails and information packets. This is turn ties in with our TBS statement "Bluebirds Across Texas . . . one nestbox at a time".

Debbie's commitment to TBS has her spending hours at her computer compiling information and working on the newsletter, TEXAS BLUES. Debbie is very 'savvy' with computer programs, having taught herself Publisher in order to give us a terrific newsletter. Her important contribution to the attention to detail and relentless determination to release a quality product on time is very much appreciated.

Responsibility for the monthly analysis of the membership data for the President's Report, preparing renewal notices and information packets are just a few examples of her time spent at her computer.

Debbie's talents also include speaking engagements regarding our beautiful bluebirds. She is an avid supporter of all of our events, driving miles to lend a hand in setups, enrolling new members, takedowns, and loading and delivering nestboxes to events.

Debbie has been very instrumental in the organization of our annual symposiums and our 'Kick-Off' events. Always searching for ways to improve the operation and administrative aspect of TBS, she has been responsible for improvements in all areas of TBS. Debbie's efforts have made the various volunteer jobs at TBS much easier. All of her diligence and hard work has really paid off for the Texas bluebirds we all love.

Thank you Debbie for an excellent job and outstanding service to TBS!



Board of Directors**President**

Pauline Tom
Mountain City

Vice President

TBA

Treasurer/AP

Katy Couvillion
The Woodlands

Assistant Treasurer/AP

Linda Crum
The Woodlands

Secretary

True Blue Friends Mgr
Judy Hetherington
Bronte

Membership/AR

Caryn Brewer
Conroe

Nestbox Inventory Mgr

Meg Scamman
Conroe

Speakers Bureau

David Smith
david.smith310@gmail.com
San Antonio

Board Member

Nancy Glover
Wills Point

Board Member

Jimmie Konkvicka
Stephenville

Contact Us

TBS
PO Box 40868
Austin, TX 78704

Pauline Tom
512.268.5678
ptom5678@gmail.com

Visit our website
www.txblues.org

**Volunteers Are Appreciated!**

TBS had a very successful booth at the Native Plant Society Symposium in Denton, TX October 8-9, 2010. There was lots of interest in the nestboxes and in bluebirds in general. Thanks to the TBS volunteers staffing the booth:

Rebekah Haydin, Cecelia Odle, Rex Reves, Joe Simmons, Pauline and Ron Tom

The booth was organized, and staffed when possible, by Judy Hetherington. At the end of Saturday, there were 46 new memberships and 8 nestboxes sold in addition/instead of memberships plus a couple of donations.

Be a volunteer, contact Pauline Tom, President, at ptom5678@gmail.com.



Photo by Brian Hetherington

Other volunteers include:

Doug Boyd	Jennifer Fleming
Andrea Brown	Nancy Glover
Mark Carlson	LeAnn Sharp
Linda Crum	David Shields
Debbie Dalton	David Smith
Elsie English	

TBS Thanks The Following Donors For Their Financial Support

Tim Bailey	Shauna Feely	Robert Langley	Nancy Podio
Kelly Blotter	John Ferguson	Jamie Light	Linda Reid
Doug Boyd	Anna Goodman	Susan Lipka	Simonetta Rodriguez
Kimber Briggs	Bill Griffith	Roy McKinnis	Diane Shaktman
Van Carson	Lynn Hill	Microsoft Corporation	David Smith
Shane Carter	Bruce & Vicki Houff	Mission fish	Ed & Kay Sones
Catherine Clement	Vicki Huff	Karen Nelson	Star Ranch Texas
Tim & Nancy Dever	Bill & Betsy Jones	Susan Nenny	Sally & Thomas Todd
Teri Dickinson	Mike Klotz	Dorothy Norris	Bob Warneke
Carol Dowd	Jim & Benni Konvicka	Jennifer Palmer	
Brant Edwards	Gwen Lambert	Louis Parks	

Welcome New Members!

• Cora Abbott• Sara Holland Adams• Anita Anderson• SA, Austin• Gretchen Antill• Tim J Bailey• Helen Ballew• JB, Round Rock• Olga Beishir• Norma Beissner• KB, Trophy Club• Tina Bertucci• AB, Orange• SB, Georgetown• Nancy Blansett• Marilyn Blanton• KB, Schetz• Fred Bourgoise• Alton Bowman• LB, Ft. Worth• Kimber Briggs• Julett M. Broadnax• GB, Taylor• Mark Byrd• KB, Gladewater• Kay & Bob Cage• Rebecca Caldwell• Cecil & Polly Carter• CC, Sabinal• MC, Brookshire• Jan Cheney• Michael Chmiel• Laura Christian-Crawford• Janet Church• TC, Roanoke• Lily Cosse• Cherry Craven• Elizabeth Cummings• AD, Elgin• Arlene Schneider David• Tom DeKunder• DD, Keller• TD, Lucas• Marcia Dilly• Paul Dowlearn• JD, Lucas• Ted Dracos• Mr & Mrs Cliff Dukes• Betty Dunn• Richard Earnest• Brent & Annette Edwards• Jo Ann Eichenour• Jeanne Erickson• SF, Richardson• Calvin Finch• May Foreman• MF, Pearland• Helen Fremin• Eva Fromme• Ruthanne Funke• Pick & Kathy Galloway• Monika Glowe• Eric Grahmann• Michael Hagan• Gayla Hamilton• Henry Hamman• Gailon Hardin• Michael Harper• PH, Austin• Lynda Harvey• Carolyn Hayward• Jane Henry• Amber Hernandez• John Herron• BH, Gordon• Neal Horn• Harriet S. Horton• Suzanne Howard• Vicki Huff• Ann Hunter• Karen Huston• CJ, Keller• LJ, Nevada• Glenda Janca• JJ, Elgin• Elmer & Monica Johnston• Janice Keene• Cherie King• PK, Magnolia• Gwen Lambert• ML, Allen• I. Erika Lantry• James Latham• Don Lawrence• IS, San Antonio• Dottie Leslie• Maxine Lindauer• Mr & Mrs Ron Loper• JL, Austin• Leslie Mansolo• Jim Marshall• MM, Florence• JM, San Antonio• Lenora McKenzie• John Melancon• PM, Roanoke• ML, San Antonio• JM, San Antonio• Karen Moore• Carolyn Moore• LM, Magnolia• Mary Moses• MM, Keller• Kay Myatt• Karen Nelson• Robert C Northcutt• MN, Sabinal• SO, Sherman• Gilbert Palmer• Jennifer A Palmer• Camilla Palmer• Mark Pape• Dennis Parker• Paul Parkman• Greg & Patty Pasztor• Janet Phillips• Pat & Carolyn Powers• David Pruitt• Suzanne Putz• Red Bud Ranch• Madison & Linda Reed• Tiana Franklin Rehman• Linda Reid• Caryn Resnick• David Reta• Dale Rhea• Hardin Grover Rhorer• Lynn Richards• Carrie Robbins• Nellann Roberts• Simonetta A. Rodriguez• Javier Saldivar• Natasha Schischakin• Pamela Scruggs• Diane Shaktman• Donna Skaggs• ES, Argyle• Kris Stanley• Roger Stoppelberg• Adelaide Leavens - Streams & Valleys, Inc. • CS, San Antonio• Sally Todd• Jane Knaus Unity Church of Wimberley• Debbie VanNess• Bill Volk• WV, Austin• KW, Willis• Francene Wemohs• Toby Wilkinson• Sandra Wilkinson• David E. Will• CW, Leander• LW, The Woodlands• Deedy Wright• Joseph Yglesias• Michael & Angela Young• DZ, Roanoke

We print names of all new members who give us permission on the Membership Form.

Upcoming Events

Saturday, February 19, 2011

Keith Kridler, Naturalist
Breedlove's Nursery & Landscape
11576 Hwy 64 West Tyler, TX
11:00 AM

Saturday, February 19, 2011

Montgomery Co. Nature Center
1300 Riley Fuzzel Rd Spring, TX
(adjacent to Peckinpugh Preserve)
9:30 AM

Tuesday, February 22, 2011

Utopia Garden Club
Utopia Methodist Church
Church Street Utopia, TX
2:30 PM

Saturday, April 9, 2011

Milam County Nature Festival
Ledbetter Park in Cameron
FM 1600, Cameron, 76520
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Due to our publication schedule we are not able to list many of our upcoming events.

Don't miss out on the chance to hear one of our presenters, visit our booth at one of your favorite fairs, or attend an educational session, just because we were unable to list the event in this publication.

Visit www.txblues.org for the latest event updates

Save This Date!

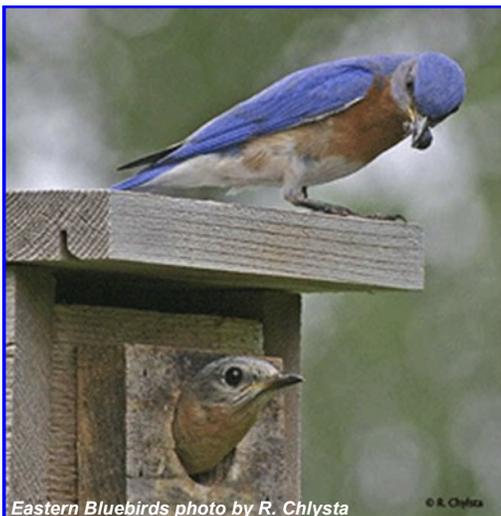
2011 Summer Bluebird Symposium

Saturday, August 20th

Somervell Expo Center
202 Gibbs Blvd.
Glen Rose, TX 76043

NestWatch Update: Welcome to 2011!

The NestWatch database was successfully rolled over from 2010 to 2011. Now, when you login to your NestWatch account, your data entry is automatically set to the new year. However, your 2010 data will remain open for editing through the rest of this year. Our [tutorial videos](#) will help to walk you through the editing process if needed. If you were unable to enter your 2010 data on time, please email our staff for other options: nest-watch@cornell.edu.



2010 Data in Review

NestWatch saw a lot of activity last year. Here's a brief overview:

3,233 new users joined NestWatch in 2010, bringing the number of user accounts to more than 11,500.

5,393 new nest sites were registered in our database during 2010. These sites, combined with others already registered, produced 12,687 nesting attempts in the last year. The project has registered more than 110,000 nesting attempts since 1997.

NestWatch participants across North America monitored 119 species. Eastern Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, and House Wrens were the most monitored species with 4,302, 2,908, and 1,025 monitored attempts, respectively.

NestCams

2011 marks the twelfth year NestCams has been able to showcase amazing images and videos of birds at their nest sites. To start this new year off with a bang, we have our never-before-featured Great Horned Owl camera [now streaming live](#). Other new cameras for 2011 may feature Barred Owls and Western Bluebirds. In the meantime, we will also continue to present footage from the nests of Eastern Bluebirds, Barn Owls, Chimney Swifts, and more. Keep watching to see what unfolds this season! (*Reprints from Cornell Ornithology Labs' NestWatch News*)

The Story Of Luke—in his own words and photos

THE REQUEST

My name is Luke. I am an Eagle Scout with Troop 179. For several years I have been a member of TBS. I have placed lots of nestboxes and monitored my own. I have also planted trees and made several environments for family and neighbors that attract song birds.

I wondered if you could please help me with a confirmation of my membership and work. I am applying for the Hometown USA Award with the Boy Scouts of America.

I have also earned 10 out of 12 of the badges offered, and I only needed to earn 3 for the award. I monitored my mealworm feeders, my bird baths, my suet feeder, and my boxes. I planted 10 bald cypress with a friend from my troop.

I am happy to help in any way. I have more pictures of my bluebirds too. Just let me know what I can help with. I am installing a new nest box next week up in Hood County. I am hoping to get neighbors in Pecan Plantation watching and monitoring too. I will let you know how it goes.



Luke and fellow scout install Bald Cypress trees. Just one of his many conservation activities.

THE STORY

I have always liked birds and butterflies because I had a great grandmother that got me interested. She gave me her bird identification book, and I have kept track of all the species I have seen and where I saw them.

I took a merit badge class down at Moody Gardens for Boy Scouts called Bird Study. This and helping my brother with conservation projects got me more interested. Because I am a home school student, I was able to attend some day time events at Arbor Gate Nursery, where I first met volunteers from the Texas Bluebird Society. This is where I joined and bought my first nest box with my own money. I have bought and installed more since for other people.



Luke earns money to buy and install nestboxes for friends and neighbors.

I talk about nest boxes and bluebirds to lots of groups and individuals. The most recent was a presentation I made at Lone Star College for a group of Boy Scouts. Some of them were very interested and asked me about buying and building their own nestboxes.



Presentation to a local scout troop at Lone Star College.

I have been monitoring boxes for about 3 years.

I had a Downy Woodpecker winter in one of my nestboxes.

You just never know what you are going to see out there!



Bad hair day?



I have worked with other scouts on habitats at Lake Livingston State Park, Edith L. Moore Nature Sanctuary, Zube Park, Coles Crossing Neighborhood, Waller County Area, and Hood County Area. I have planted trees and native plants to improve habitat. I have also installed and monitored feeders and bird baths in my own yard everywhere I have lived for the last 3 years

Trimming up at Lake Livingston.



Luke adds photography to his list of talents. Luke's dad took the award photo of course, all other photos on these two pages are courtesy of Luke.

Luke joined TBS three years ago. Now, at the ripe old age of 17, Luke is making a name for himself in the world of conservation.

Luke is one of the youngest members of TBS. His dedication to wildlife conservation is both impressive and inspiring. Hearing of members of the "younger generation" like Luke, who care about the future environment and are already taking steps to get involved now, gives us all hope for the future of our blue feathered friends.



Congratulations Luke!

Winner of the "Hometown USA" Award presented by the BSA

The Win

I am an Eagle Scout with BSA Troop 179 in Cypress, Texas. I just earned the "Hometown USA" award from BSA. This award required many hours spent on a special project as well as earning conservation related merit badges.

I am waiting to hear about the William T. Hornaday Award, which I have also been working toward with my conservation efforts. The Boy Scouts of America are very involved in conservation and with a policy called "Leave No Trace."



Musings From The Master...



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 posted 01/01/11.

... critical times for the survival of wild animals. They still need fresh clean water, they need shelter from winter weather, protection from predators and they need a constant supply of easy to find food.



Red Cedars provide three of these four essential requirements

CEDAR FEEDERS, NATURALLY!

This is one of my favorite bird feeders. The Eastern Red Cedar has pollen on male trees and the females set fruit. Red Cedars grow on all types of soils and can tolerate a wide range of winter hardiness zones.

They are an extremely long lived tree and can form solid walls of limbs creating wonderful wind breaks. They "bloom" in the south during December or January and then it takes nearly 12 months for the fruit to ripen before birds and wildlife will eat the berries.

While the outside of the trees appear to be a solid wall of greenery the insides of these trees are surprisingly open with well spaced branches on the larger trees. All different species of birds and animals will climb up into these trees during the winter months to sleep inside these windbreaks.

Hard stiff limbs and branches inside the main tree create a maze for any of the larger predators that attempt to enter the tree to capture a roosting bird. Nice thing about cedars is that during heavy snow or

even during ice storms the outer limbs will catch the snow and ice leaving large amounts of ripe fruit available for the wildlife to eat. Normally there is still open ground under the larger trees during snow storms and much of the fruit will have dropped down under these trees and is accessible to the wildlife when all other areas are covered in deep snow.

Many of the "weed" seeds that birds need to survive are small and light weight and are carried by the winds in the fall. These seeds will blow up under the cedar trees and most of these will be eaten at some point during the long winter.

The next two months are critical times for the survival of wild animals. They still need fresh clean water, they need shelter from winter weather, protection from predators and they need a constant supply of easy to find food. Red Cedars provide three of these four essential requirements.

Many people are allergic to the pollen from cedars but here in East Texas MOST of the "cedar" pol-

len that causes the allergies to act up is actually blown in from central Texas and is the pollen produced by the "Mountain Junipers" that cover much of the hill country. You can actually cut down the pollen producing or "male" Eastern Red Cedars around your property and there will still be enough pollen blowing in from your neighbors to pollinate any female cedar trees you leave on your property.

Look around your area and notice just how many different species of trees, bushes and vines still have fruits and berries that are providing living "bird feeders"! Now is a GOOD time here in the south to look around your



yard or property and add some new trees or shrubs that will benefit wildlife for generations to come.

Where Do They All Come From?

Master Naturalist Nestbox Assembly Day Tells The Story

Nine members of the Big Country Master Naturalist Chapter met in the Big Country Hall, Abilene, TX to assemble 250 nestboxes for the Texas Bluebird Society. Roger Clark provided the photos.



Drilling the last hole

Brian and Judy Hetherington and Bob Houck had cut, drilled, and branded the 500 nestbox pieces earlier in Bronte.



Assembling the nestboxes

Some of the Master Naturalists were "experts", having assisted with assembly before. The rest were first-timers but learned quickly.

It took less than 4.5 hours to unload the nestbox pieces, assemble the nestboxes, perform the quality checks, drill the last hole for the door latch and load onto the trailer and back of car.

Hard work, but all enjoyed the afternoon. (Wow, that is fast work, 250 nestboxes!)

Everyone benefits from the dedication and expert craftsmanship of our volunteers. Many thanks! Assisting with assembly were: **Roger Clark, Carol Danko, Jean Dotson, Brian Hetherington, Judy Hetherington, Okie Okerstrom, Robert Pritz, Shannon Roysden, and Jimmy Shipp.**



Trailer loaded and car being filled

Where Do They All Go?

During the last two years TBS has distributed over 2,000 nestboxes. Our team in the Bronte area work very hard to keep up with the demand for Texas nestboxes; a sure sign of bluebird conservation activity. Where do all of these nestboxes go? To new members, events, presentations, online sales, local member distributors, member gifts, and members who agree, at a Symposium or Kickoff, to monitor at least two nestboxes and report their data to the Cornell NestWatch program.

Nestboxes are assembled in Bronte and delivered to the TBS storage units in Kyle and Conroe. Over the last year we have been able to have the Bronte team, cut, drill, and ship some nestboxes in pieces/parts for assembly at the Conroe storage site by local volunteers. Live near Conroe? Volunteers are always welcome!



New Bluebird Trail At Spring Creek Greenway

How wonderful to have hundreds of miles of bluebird trails here in Texas. One of the newest is located in Spring, Texas. In the photo at left, volunteer **Al Barr**, TBS member and Texas Master Naturalist, is installing a nestbox on January 14, 2011 with **Fred and Linda Crum**, TBS members, assisting. Photo by

Ken Kramm, Texas Master Naturalist, who will monitor the Bluebird Trail and report data to NestWatch.

Look around; ask around; there is probably a bluebird trail near you! No? You could be the volunteer who starts a new trail!

For directions & details visit www.springcreekgreenway.com.



Texas Blues, the 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.

Need Nestboxes?

Purchase in quantities of 4 from our website www.txblues.org (Sales tab)



Photo courtesy of Luke H., one of the youngest members of TBS. Read his story, accomplishments, and enjoy more of his photos on pg. 4.

ALL NATIVE CAVITY-NESTERS are protected by federal law. Do not disturb the birds or the nest.

Monitor the nest and report activity to NestWatch.

Bluebirds Across Texas ... one nestbox at a time

Texas Bluebird Society
PO Box 40868
Austin TX 78704



Register your nestbox,
record nesting activities
with NESTWATCH.
www.nestwatch.org



Did You Know...

- ▶ Bluebirds are associated with hope, happiness and many other things we love. As a result, they have probably appeared in more songs, poems and literature than any other bird.
- ▶ One of the most famous WWII-era pop classics was a Nat Burton song sung by Vera Lynn. "There'll be bluebirds over the white cliffs of Dover, tomorrow just you wait and see." Bluebirds are unique to North America. Despite the reference to England in Nat Burton's song, bluebirds are not found in England. (How sad for them!)
- ▶ Bermuda is the only place outside the North American continent where the bluebird has ever been known to breed. Throughout Bermuda's history bluebirds were very abundant, attaining population densities much higher than are found in the American continent. The first and most drastic decline of the bluebird population occurred in the late 19th century when the House Sparrow was introduced. Pesticides, the decline of habitat, other pest birds, rats, lizards, feral cats and mites play a part in the decline of the bluebird in Bermuda. The Bluebird (in Bermuda) is now completely dependent on nesting boxes for their survival. Courtesy of the Bermuda Audubon Society
- ▶ Both parents feed their young as often as 5 times an hour. A few mealworms sure can help mom and dad.
- ▶ Bluebird babies grow as much in one day as a human baby grows in one year.
- ▶ Favorite berries include Yaupon, Lantana, Elderberry, Pokeweed, Rough-leaf Dogwood, or Escarpment Black Cherry. Please check with your County Extension Office to see if plants are adaptable to your area.