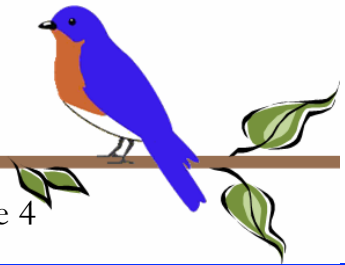


TEXAS Blues



Texas Bluebird Society Newsletter October 2015 • Volume 14. Issue 4

Young Alec Wyatt Inspires Everyone!

Alec Wyatt sees many hours of birding in his future! He enjoys monitoring his nestbox trail - and entering his observations into NestWatch, leading bird walks for kids, and inspiring others to enjoy and protect birds.

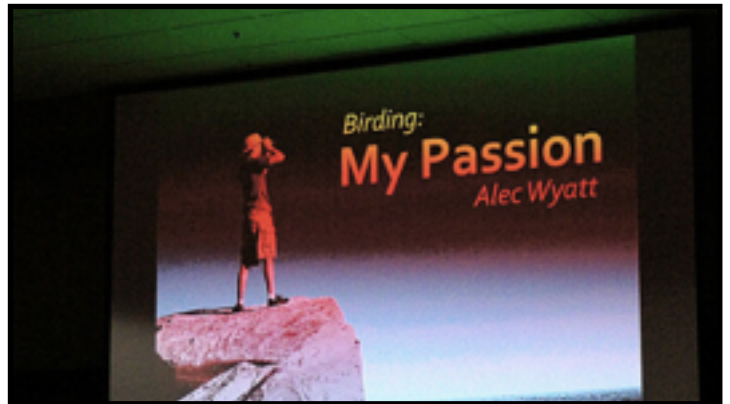


Alec, long time resident of Colorado, has already birded in eighteen states. He has recently relocated to San Antonio and looks forward to the birding prospects in Texas.

Alec shared his first hand knowledge of nestbox monitoring, the importance of reporting your observations to NestWatch, and how, as citizen scientists, we are contributing invaluable quantities of data for world-wide research.

His second presentation "Birding: My Passion" revealed through slides

his love of birding, how it has grown over the years, his forays in the birding world (see achievements below), and his very personal story of success and heartbreak in his own backyard.



Just a few member quotes from our event evaluation forms.

"My favorite is Alec's personal story. He is a really good speaker and has a wonderful inspiring story!"

"It gives me hope to see and hear young men his age stepping up and being a leader."

"His talk was clear, educational, and heartfelt."

Following is a peek at Alec's story --

"Just as the numerous eggs inside the nest boxes are preparing to hatch, disaster strikes the Black Forest. A destructive wildfire is ravaging the woods, destroying large swaths of habitat and homes. Ignited early in the afternoon of June 11, an uncontrollable wildfire is raging toward my nest box trail. I was forced to evacuate my home as a massive smoke plume engulfed my beloved woods.

However, if you missed the symposium, you will have to wait until the March newsletter for the rest of the story!



Last year, 15-year-old NestWatcher Alec came to the Lab of Ornithology for the **2014 Young Birder's Event** held in July. He had earned a coveted seat among 16 of the most promising young ornithologists around the world. Earlier this year, he took home the **American Birding Association's 2014 Young Birder of the Year** award. Photo © Karen Izdepsk.

(Right) Alec, now 16, shares his experiences at the Summer Symposium.



Count on another great presentation by Alec at the Bluebird Season Kickoff on 3/12/16 in Bastrop.

TBS Raised \$3,557 From Silent Auction FUNdraiser

A SPECIAL THANKS TO THOSE WHO DONATE OFTEN, AND THOSE WHO BUY OFTEN!

Thanks to our many donors for providing a wide variety of auction items. As always, the Silent Auction funds are used to purchase the wood and other materials needed for our volunteers to assemble Texas Nestboxes.



Volunteers will perform the various after sale tasks needed to coordinate the Silent Auction closing. Winning bidders receive items, TBS receives money!

Thank You Donors!

Individual Donors:

Benni & Jimmie Konvicka
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The SnK Wildlife Reserve
Troyer's Birds' Paradise
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Watercolor & Whimsey
Wildlife Woodworking

Send auction items for Season Kickoff
March 12, 2016 to:

Bev Davis

2411 Stablebridge Dr.

Conroe, TX 77384

aution@texasbluebirdsociety.org

Or, send a check and Bev and Benni will be happy to shop for you!



Summer Symposium Highlights



President Pauline Tom presents the 2015 annual awards to two hardworking and dedicated TBS members

Blue Feather Award



In recognition of the countless hours of extraordinary service as Treasurer with superb and gracious team support.

Congratulations

KEN RAY

Bluebirder of the Year



Recognizing **her** efforts in spearheading the Tierra Verde Nestbox Trail (Arlington) with heavy emphasis on NestWatch'ing.

Congratulations

DONNA PIERCY

Native Plants Are For The Birds: *Carolina Snailseed*

Shiny red berries of Carolina snailseed (*Cocculus Carolinas*) accent the wild tangle of growth along the wood's edge. The showy berries, which are actually drupes, have developed from the small inconspicuous whitish-green blooms of late spring and summer. The two-inch wide compound clusters of ¼ inch fruits have turned from apple green to glossy red as they matured, creating a familiar autumn scene. Although the fruit is poisonous to humans if ingested, it is eaten by a number of both game and nongame birds that often disperse the seeds. Some small and large mammals also eat it.

Carolina snailseed, sometimes called red-berry moonseed, is a member of the Menispermaceae or moonseed family. Its native distribution includes much of Texas and runs eastward to Florida and north to Kansas and Virginia. It is found along roadsides, thickets, and in disturbed sites. Carolina snailseed is a fast growing, deciduous, native, perennial vine that climbs to twelve feet or more. It is adapted to various soils of both uplands and bottomlands. It is tolerant of full sun but prefers partial shade.

Carolina snailseed's leaves grow alternately two to four inches and are typically heart-shaped but vary significantly. They have a veined texture with a dark green upper surface, paler lower surface with soft dense hairs.

Carolina snailseed is often found growing with greenbrier, which has similar shaped leaves, but the twining Carolina snailseed does not have the thorns or tendrils of greenbrier and its leaves are not as leathery.

Carolina snailseed seeds look like little snails, hence the common name. The hard round seeds are compressed laterally and sculptured with ridges. The vine can be propagated from seeds or woody cuttings. It can become invasive in a landscaped area, but works well in a natural setting. It is pretty, drought, disease and insect tolerant.

When I see the scarlet clusters of Carolina snailseed's fruit dangling from a post oak or hackberry tree, mingled with greenbrier or wild grapevine, draped over sumac or twirled around a rural mailbox, it seems to be the perfect picture of fall.

Autumn is full of color with the bright yellows of Maximilian sunflower, golden aster, broomweed and goldenrod. Snow on the prairie, frostweed and boneset add patches of white. American beauty-berry, wild morning glory and eryngo add their shades of purple.

The elms, ashes and bois d'arcs start to yellow and persimmon leaves turn bronze. Virginia creeper leaves blend in colors of pink and burgundy while sumacs flash their brilliant oranges and reds.

But for me, it's the red berries of Carolina snailseed that carry my thoughts back to the carefree autumn days of childhood.

By **Marilyn Blanton**, Education Chair and past President of NPSOT Trinity Forks. Photos by **Greg Lavity**



We Have Nestbox Trails - Why Not Food Trails Too?



For those of us who love bluebirds putting up and maintaining nest boxes is a labor of love. Many of us even go so far as to buy meal worms and put them out to help feed their young.

All this is good, but there is one other thing that not enough of us do that would also greatly help our beloved bluebirds; and that is to plant native wildflowers, shrubs and small trees for them.

During the spring and summer, much of the diet of bluebirds consists of insects, and this is especially true for the chicks. So, planting wildflowers, shrubs, and trees that flower and attract insects is a great way to benefit the whole family. Some wildflowers that are easy to grow and usually easy to find seeds or plants in a nursery include Indian blanket, Blue Mist Flower, various Sunflowers, Prairie Verbena, Liatris, purple or other coneflowers, and salvias.

Shrubs and flowering trees offer double duty in that the flowers attract insects for spring and summer food, but they also provide fall and winter food in the form of a fruit. Some of my favorites of these include, Arrowwood Viburnum, Rusty Blackhaw Viburnum, Deciduous Holly (also called Possum Haw Holly), Sumacs, American Beautyberry, Rough-leaf Dogwood, American Elderberry and Yaupon Holly. There are many other wildflowers, shrubs and trees that benefit bluebirds so select the ones that you like that are indigenous to your region.



What I would like to see is a native plant food trail along side our next box trails for bluebirds. We could easily plant food producing wildflowers, shrubs, and flowering trees along the route of the nest box trail. Wildflowers could be planted almost anywhere and would be a beautiful addition and welcomed by both birds and people.

Shrubs could be planted in strategic sites at the base of existing trees or by creating specific shrub gardens. Flowering trees which are usually small could be sprinkled along the edges of bluebird nest box trail so as not to detract from the open areas that bluebirds need.

Three immediate benefits result from this project. First, planting to attract insects would add a much needed food source for raising their young and planting fruiting shrubs and trees would also provide equally valuable food sources during the lean times of winter. Second, we would be helping our native pollinators whose numbers are declining rapidly, in part due to the fact that much of our landscape consists of only a few non-native drab, dull, sterile plants that do not help birds, butterflies, or pollinators. We need more plant diversity of native plant species for all wildlife. Third, we would immediately add beauty to our landscape through the flowers, colorful fall fruit, the butterflies, bluebirds, and other colorful birds attracted to the plantings.



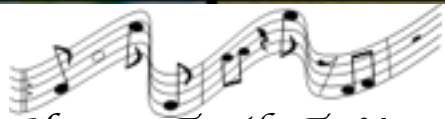
Properly selected native plants are superbly adapted to the growing conditions for years and if properly planted need no or only a little help to get established. Once established they do not require fertilizing, rarely is trimming needed, do not require watering except during a drought, and of course no pesticides, so require less maintenance than most of the non-native plants that are used in landscaping.

If you do not maintain a bluebird next box trail where you could plant a native plant trail, do not feel left out. Good news, you can plant native wildflowers, fruiting shrubs and trees in your yard, pasture, along a fence or in that vacant lot.

Wherever there are bluebirds, they will find the insects attracted to native plants and the fruit of native plants and thank you for improving their habitat.

By **Glenn Olsen**

Glenn leads tours with GOBirding Ecotours. Tours have a primary focus such as birds or photography but always include aspects of the ecology and natural history of the region. When not in the field, Glenn teaches bird identification, landscaping and gardening classes through Rice University's Continuing Studies Department, Houston Audubon, and the Texas Master Naturalist Program. Glenn helps landowners and homeowners improve habitat for wildlife through GO Native Landscaping. Contact Glenn at 832-517-2478 or h.glenn.olsen@gmail.com



Happy Trails To You and the Bluebirds

Member **George C. Henry** captures the bird activity while strolling down the Bluebird Project Trail sponsored and NestWatched by **Jim Marshall** and his team of volunteers.





"When Nature made the bluebird, she wished to propitiate both the sky and the earth, so she gave him the color of one on his back and the hue of the other on his breast" John Burroughs



© David Kinneer

On their way to adulthood.
Photos by David Kinneer



© David Kinneer

When people ask me why I love birds, I wish I could just show them a photo of an Eastern Bluebird. I think that would answer the question.

-kimberly kaufman

Ted & Friends Attract Bluebirds At Champions Golf Course

By Ted Shetzer

When I joined Champions Golf Club in 1982, it was for the golf. Champions has two beautiful 18-hole courses, one called Cypress Creek and the other one Jackrabbit Road. The club was founded by two champion golfers, Jack Burke and Jimmie Demaret, and at the time it was built in 1957, it was so far out in the country that many said it could never succeed. Now of course, Champions Golf Club is a world-renowned tournament course. I'm 89 years old now and I'm still on the courses many times a week, but it's no longer for the golf—it's for the birds.

I had noticed that there were a few bluebird houses on the courses, but never once did I see a bluebird. Finally, one day in 1996 I asked Jack Burke why we had no bluebirds and he replied, "That's a good question. How would you like to find the answer?" That was 19 years ago and I think I found the answer.

At that time I knew nothing about the nesting and feeding habits of bluebirds. After some study, I learned that our birdhouses, which were located in heavily wooded and overgrown areas, needed to be moved to mowed grassy areas near scattered trees because bluebirds like to sit in trees where they can look for bugs that make up their diet. I relocated the existing bird houses and built 18 new ones.

It was not until three years later that the first pair of bluebirds took up residence on the Cypress Creek course. Since they didn't nest until early June, I believe now that it was probably a second nesting for a pair who first

nested elsewhere, but was wooed away by the fine new bluebird houses at Champions. The pair successfully raised three young, after which they nested again that year and fledged three more. From those first six fledgling in 1999 it has been exponential growth—the year 2012 saw 61 young bluebirds added to Champion's bluebird population, 2013 saw 86 and in 2014, an unusually cold year, we reached a record of 91 new fledglings. By the end of the year, 2015, an unusually wet year, we will have more than doubled that number.

The club publishes my BLUEBIRD UPDATE in its weekly email newsletter, which has caught the attention of homeowners whose houses adjoin the golf courses. As a result, by 2015 14 of those homeowners have joined the program. I provide them advice on purchasing the bluebird houses, situating them and what to expect during the year. Although it seems we are running out of space, we will add new houses next year by fastening them to trees throughout the two courses. Also, even more



Susan and Hugh Stephens, the first homeowners to join the BLUEBIRDS OF CHAMPIONS GOLF CLUB program.

homeowners bordering the courses have expressed an interest in putting up houses and hosting bluebird families beginning with the start of next year's nesting season.

For the 19 years that I have been involved, The Bluebirds At Champions Golf Club project has been time-consuming: building houses, relocating houses, repairing and replacing houses, monitoring the units twice weekly from mid-February through mid-August, meeting with homeowners and maintaining records. At first the results were discouraging, but now seeing all our bluebirds makes it worth the effort. The club members and course neighbors see me drive my golf cart around the courses, approach each birdhouse and "knock" before I open it carefully and peer in to find either tiny blue eggs or "gummy-bear" babies—while my two Shih Tzus, Toby and Magoo wait patiently in the cart.

Many thanks to Jack Burke for his unwavering support of the bluebird program for all these years and for the dinner he held in recognition of my work, which have added to my ultimate reward—seeing hundreds of bluebirds where once there were none.



Toby and Mogoo "help" Ted monitor.

Musings From The Master...

You Ask - Keith Answers

Question: This morning we discovered 5 new eggs in the BB box ! Yay! However, one egg has a hairline crack in it. Should it be removed right away? Thanks much!! JoAnn Ziifle



Answer: Is the "crack" a thin white line? If it is then it will be dried urine as the white streaks on bluebird eggs are dried urine and these show up about like white chalk on a blackboard. In a few days they disappear.

Normally you see a "dented" egg instead of a "cracked" egg. Think chicken eggs here. You have a very porous calcium eggshell that to the human eye appears to be solid but in reality, looked at under a microscope, an egg shell is an "open lattice" calcium deposit. Google images of eggshells/microscope and you can see the beauty of the eggshells.

Then under the calcium layer there is a thick skin membrane that is what protects the contents of the eggs from bacteria. Even dented eggs in a bluebird nest will hatch. Only time to remove the cracked or dented eggs from a nest would be if the whites or the yolk were leaking out of the eggs.

Take a chicken egg out of the egg carton, put it carefully in a small clear drinking glass. Do not crack the egg, put it in shell and all. Pour about 1/2 to 1 cup of apple cider vinegar to just cover the egg and watch the acid in the vinegar, begin to "fizz" and tiny bubbles will come up to the top of the vinegar. Within 24 to 48 hours you will have a table egg with the entire eggshell removed. You can now "play" with a soft, skin/membrane covered egg. Nature is amazing, eggs in a 365 day-year. All of these, from a breeder farm could hatch. Thanks for writing and asking!

It appeared to be a dark crack. However, it ended up being a horsehair brought in by mom or dad.

Question: I have a Craftsman 500 Degree InfraRed Thermometer. I have used it in the past to "shoot" box temps. Never thought of "shooting" egg temps. Just checked my back yard box of 4 BB eggs: one was 97.2 and one 96.5 back of box was 67.4 very cool. I think I am going to be carrying this tool along on my BB trails!! Do you "feel eggs" or use a tool? Thanks for all your information - I enjoy your ideas. Dr. Dean Rusk

Answer: I don't like to "feel eggs" to check temperatures of them. Most/many people now have infrared thermometers for people/animals. They make some really cheap \$15.00 or so commercial heat sensors that you can "shoot" a laser on these eggs and or baby birds and it will give surface egg and or skin temperatures, accurate to 1 or 2 degrees. There are a LOT of uses for these scanners, we keep one in the kitchen near the stovetop as we cook wild game and or meat and you then KNOW that you have properly cooked the meat. She would KNOW how hot the eggs are. 99°F is ideal, normally bluebirds with my scanners show 95-97°F. They should hatch 12 to 13 days after the last egg was laid. There are lots of fun things to show the kids. They LOVE using the temperature scanners.

Human fingertip temperatures in a group of people can vary 20°F! Depends on if you have partially clogged arteries—Metabolism varies from person to person. Get one of these and use them at a bluebird meeting.

Touching a "bird egg" with a bare finger and you transfer human salmonella strains to the bird egg and vice versa! Ditto for flu and cold viruses. Probably much more dangerous to baby bluebirds, giving



them "germs" than a healthy human getting something back from these eggs! Share this if you like with that core group or whom ever.

Keith Kridler, everyone's resident expert, our favorite speaker, and cofounder of TBS, participates in several List-Serve groups focusing on bluebirds and their behavior. Keith has given us permission to publish his contributions.

Nests to Die For - Open Pipes

Exposed vertical pipes with open tops pose a tremendous hazard to birds and other wildlife. They are particularly hazardous for birds that either fall into these openings, or enter looking for nesting space. Once inside, birds are unable to open their wings to fly out, and the smooth sides make it impossible to climb out. Inevitably, the birds suffer a miserable, unnecessary death from starvation and exposure.

Open pipes are a threat to all birds

Open pipes kill birds indiscriminately. Both common birds and protected species have been found among the layers of dead birds in open pipes. And the destruction can occur in pipes from one to 10 inches wide.

Audubon California staff pulled down a 20-foot-tall ventilation pipe in 2009 from an abandoned irrigation system and discovered a seven-foot-long black mass composed entirely of decomposed carcasses of hundreds of dead birds and animals including kestrels, flickers, bluebirds, and fence lizards. The date etched into the concrete at the base of the pipe showed that it had been in place for more than 50 years.

Where open top vertical pipes can occur

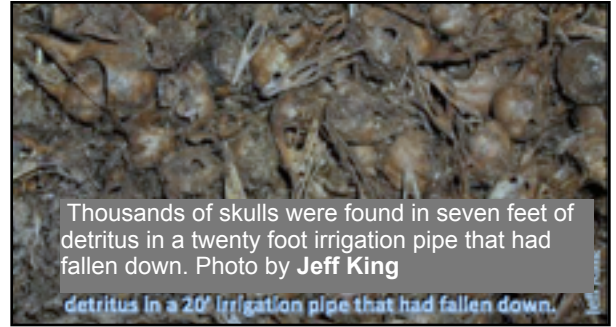
Open vertical pipes occur in more places than you might think, including:

- Sign posts
- Fences
- Survey markers
- Building plumbing vents
- Irrigation systems
- Chimneys

How you can help on your property

- Look around and identify all the open top vertical pipes on your property.
- Cap, close, remove or screen all of them.
- Even pipes placed temporarily will trap birds.
- Put screens over sapling protector tubes, or leave openings at the bottom for birds and wildlife to escape.
- When you visit other properties – public or private – share what you know about the dangers of open pipes.

Courtesy of Kern River Preserve Audubon Society, Wheldon Ca.



MSNBC.COM news report by Miguel Llanos

Will legislation help fix this problem?

Although the open pipe issue has garnered world wide attention, the center of the crisis seems to be firmly planted in Nevada, where legislation is being passed to help aid the closure of these death traps.

PVC pipes used to mark boundaries at over three million mining claims and similar pipes on federal lands have proven to be deadly traps for certain species in the American West. Last month, more than 100 groups signed a letter to the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the USDA Forest Service (FS) concerning this problem. In the letter, the groups called on the two agencies to accelerate efforts to address this long-standing threat to birds at mining claims under their jurisdiction.

Crazy Weather This Year!



Although the floodwaters of the West Fork of the Trinity River were lapping at the bottom of the box on June 21, the pole stayed in the ground and the box remained intact.

The baffle was badly damaged but we were pleased that the entire set up was not swept downstream in the strong current. Before the flood, there was a nest with four eggs. Monitor Cindy Compton could not check the box for a couple of weeks because, as she said, she "did not have a canoe." After the waters receded and Cindy was once again able to get to the box, the eggs were gone. She never saw chicks so NestWatch reporter Roberta Marshall recorded that no chicks had fledged for that attempt. Cindy cleaned out the nest. The bluebird pair returned and built a new nest and laid two eggs. One egg hatched and that chick fledged around July 24. The hearty adult bluebird pair provided a lesson in persistence and dealing with obstacles that Texas weather can bring. Project Bluebird Trail in Ft. Worth. Report and photos by **Jim Marshall**.



There Is Still Time To Record 2015 Nesting Activity!

For the last several years Texas has maintained its lead at the top of the NestWatch charts for most number of Eastern Bluebird nesting attempts reported. We are still ahead at this point, with South Carolina and Ohio closing in fast! As always, TBS encourages members to be citizen scientists by participating in the NestWatch program. Another way TBS supports NestWatch is through our own "one free nestbox for NestWatch" program. At our annual event (March 12, 2016 in Bastrop) we will again be offering a free nestbox to members promising to participate in the NestWatch program. Keep Texas in the lead, let's NestWatch!

In addition to providing invaluable nesting research data to scientist worldwide - it is a great opportunity to share the wonders of nature with your children, grandchildren, or even the next door neighbor.

Online event registration opens November 1st at 2016event.rsvpbook.com



2016 Season Kickoff (with Silent Auction FUNdraiser)

www.txblues.org/2016event



Saturday, March 12, 2016

Bastrop Convention & Expo Center, 1408 Chestnut Street, Bastrop, TX 78602

9:00 AM–3:00 PM

Doors open at 8:30 for Registration and Silent Auction On-line registration: RSVPbook.com/2016event

Featured Speakers

- Dr. T. David Pitts**, author of "Studying Eastern Bluebirds," out of print *a few copies available for online registrants, while supplies last*
- Alec Wyatt**, American Birding Association Young Birder 2014
- Jane Tillman**, president, Native Plant Society of Texas (Austin Chapter)

Registration Costs and Deadlines

- Early Bird Advance Registration: \$20.00. Box Lunch and 10 Door prize tickets. Deadline: February 12th
- Standard Advance Registration: \$20.00. Box Lunch and 2 Door prize tickets. Deadline: February 27th
- At-the-door Registration: \$10.00. No meal and no door prize tickets.

Friday Evening Dinner and Social

- Hampton Inn, Bastrop. Deadline: February 27th
- 6:00 Social Hour with frozen margaritas. *Any outside liquor must be served by bartender!*
- 7:00 Fitty's BBQ Dinner \$15.00

Lodging: Hampton Inn, Bastrop

- \$129.00 + tax through February 12th.
- Sleeping Room Reservation Method: www.Hamptoninn.com group code **TXA**
- 240 S. Hasler Blvd, Bastrop, TX 78602 512.321.2898

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

To Donate a Silent Auction Item:

Beverly Davis (281) 660-0521 eventplans@txblues.org (512) 268-5678 or (972) 217-1516

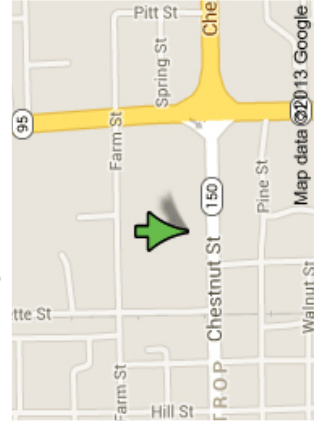
2411 Stableridge Drive
Conroe, TX 77384
auction@texasbluebirdsociety.org

Call Benni Konvicka for auction information: (254) 968-6663

Donations (or notification of donations) received after February 27th must be processed manually, one-by-one, and will miss the program publication deadline.

TBS is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) "charitable" organization. Donations are tax deductible, as allowed by law.

GreatCities.com provided use of the Bastrop Map Logo.



ADVANCE Snail Mail Registration (includes Box Lunch)

On-line registration available at RSVPbook.com/2016event

Registrant #1

Name _____ Name for Name Tag _____
 Street Address _____ City _____
 State _____ Zip _____
 Contact Phone _____ E-mail (for e-mail updates) _____

Registrant #2 (same street address)

Name _____ Name for Name Tag _____
 Contact Phone _____ E-mail (for email updates) _____

# Registrants (Please circle)	Description	Cost
1	2 Member	\$20.00
1	2 Non Member	\$20.00
1	2 Friday Dinner	\$15.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Check # _____ Total Due: _____		

To register more attendees, please include an additional sheet with your mailing.

For Planning Purposes Only

1. TBS Members and New Members: TBS will give you a FREE nestbox at this event if you pledge to "NestWatch" at least 2 nestboxes (submit observations to Cornell Lab of Ornithology through www.nestbox.org) in 2016 nesting season.

Do you plan to participate? Yes No N/A

2. \$15 Nestboxes available for purchase (based upon availability). How many do you plan to purchase? _____

Mail Registration Form with Payment made payable to "Texas Bluebird Society" to: Linda Crum, Registrar
9 Crescent Falls Ct.
The Woodlands, TX 77381

EARLY BIRD Registration—Deadline February 12, 2016
STANDARD Registration—Deadline February 27, 2016
AT-THE-DOOR Registration available (no lunch or door prize chances) TXblues

Only TBS Event In 2016

Bluebird Season Kickoff

March 12, 2016

Bastrop Convention Center

1408 Chestnut Street Bastrop, TX



All of the same good stuff as our previous events -

- ✓great presentations
- ✓nestwatching nestboxes
- ✓member networking
- ✓informative displays
- ✓expert advice
- ✓Silent Auction FUNdraiser!
- ✓ another Friday Night Social at Hampton Inn

Online event registration opens November 1st at 2016event.rsvpbook.com

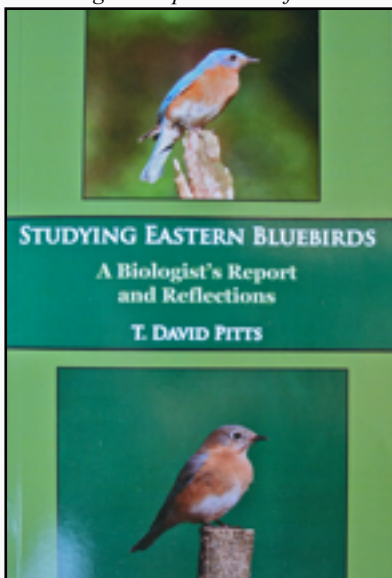
Limited quantity of Dr. Pitts' *Studying Eastern Bluebirds* (autographed) available at \$19.95 for online registrants.

Hampton Inn
240 South Hasler Blvd.
Bastrop, Texas

www.hamptoninn.com online reservation code: TXA (\$129 rate.)
Alert! SXSW (huge Austin event) is scheduled same weekend, hotels are booking fast.



In 2011 published
Studying Eastern Bluebirds:
a Biologist's Report and Reflections



FEATURE PRESENTATION:

DR. DAVID PITTS

The Night Life Of An Eastern Bluebird

An Eastern Bluebird spends half of its life in the darkness of night. What does a bluebird do at night? What does it **not** do at night? Where is the best place for a bluebird to spend the night? Why?

Humans are visually oriented, so it is no surprise that most research reports about bluebirds deal with events and behaviors that happen during daylight hours when we can observe them. But Mother Nature does not relax selection pressure at sundown. For example, parasites may be more active at night and mortality due to predators and adverse weather commonly occurs at night. Fortunately, bluebirds are not defenseless; they have behavioral and physiological adaptations to promote their survival. However, nestlings, fledglings, and adults may differ in how they deal with certain challenges. This presentation will compare roosting behaviors of different ages and sexes of bluebirds and discuss constraints and consequences of some of the variations that bluebirds exhibit. Numerous questions will be posed. For example: True or False More bluebirds die at night than during daylight.

Bio highlights

- Recently retired; was a Professor of Biological Sciences at the University of Tennessee at Martin from 1969-2013; his primary responsibilities were teaching General Biology and Ornithology.
- B.S. from University of Tennessee at Martin;
- Ph.D. from University of Tennessee at Knoxville; Thesis title: "Ecology of Eastern Bluebirds in Northwest Tennessee"
- His most appreciated awards are the University of Tennessee National Alumni Association's Outstanding Teacher Award and the North American Bluebird Society's Research Award.
- Charter member of North American Bluebird Society
- Discovered method for determining the age of adult Eastern Bluebirds
- Documented the effects of harsh winter weather on Eastern Bluebirds



Bluebird Season Kickoff

Guest Speaker:

Jane Tillman

Jane Tillman is an active member of the Travis Audubon Society, a Capital Area Master Naturalist and a National Wildlife Federation Habitat Steward Host.

Jane was recognized by the four-million-member National Wildlife Federation as the 2011 Volunteer of the Year for her work training more than one hundred Habitat Stewards to create backyard wildlife habitat here in Austin. She was active in the effort to certify

Jane gardens for wildlife, and has a certified Best of Texas Backyard Wildlife Habitat.

Austin as an NWF Community Wildlife Habitat in 2009.

Jane teaches beginning backyard birding classes, leads field trips and gives talks about Central Texas birds and gardening for birds to garden clubs, neighborhood associations, libraries and the UT NOVA program.



Sneak Peek!



Sneak peek is over, have to save a few surprises on the program for March 12.

Go to txblues.org and visit Events tab for new details as the committee continues their efforts to develop the best Season Kickoff ever!

Election Time!
2016 Board Of Directors

Continuing their two year term:

Beverly Davis: Auction Donation Coord.

Ken Ray: Treasurer/AP, Executive Committee

Continuing their term on a year by year basis:

Pauline Tom: President, Executive Committee

Pat Nail: Executive Committee

Benni Konvicka: Silent Auctions, Executive Committee

Rex Reeves: Technical Designer, Executive Committee

Harold Latham: Media Coord./Festival

Don Lawrence: New Members, Nestbox Construction Coord.

Linda Crum: Membership Secretary, Assistant Treasurer

* *May be additional nominees on ballot*

Election Instructions:

Watch email for link to ballot and annual questionnaire on or about November 1st.

- There is no "competition." Each nominee on the ballot, if elected, will serve.
- We will email a ballot to each address in our records. Simply click on the link provided to access the ballot.
- If you want to provide/change (or confirm we have your correct address), provide your email address to records@txblues.org on or before October 20th.
- If you do not receive your election email by November 4th, please notify tbs@txblues.org
- If you do not have email, mail your ballot choice (Yes or No) to TBS, PO Box 40868 Austin, TX 78704.
- The ballot allows for write-in candidates. Secure permission from the nominee before submitting his/her name.

Norm Shoemaker relocated to Colorado and was only able to serve half of his term. We appreciate his many contributions to TBS. Happy bluebirding in your new home!

Former board member, **Linda Crum**, stepped in to fill the void accepting Membership Secretary responsibilities while continuing to serve as treasurer consultant. Thanks Linda!

Volunteers are APPRECIATED!

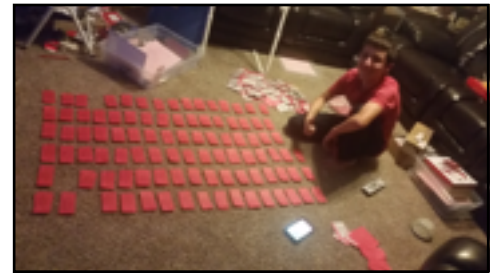


What Goes UP

Must Come DOWN



- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Elrey Ash | Kenlyn Lawrence |
| Olivia Ash | Cheryl Lewis |
| Phyl Baloga | Will McDaniel |
| Beth Becker | Kenny Munoz |
| Debbie Bradshaw | Lisa Munoz |
| Caryn Brewer | Pat Nail |
| Susan Crowson | Roland Nail |
| Fred Crum | Kevin Nelson |
| Linda Crum | Paul Nelson |
| Kay Dansby | John Park |
| Bev Davis | Ken Ray |
| Walt Davis | Judy Ray |
| Charlie Grindstaff | Rex Reves |
| Sara Harrod | Kelly Russell |
| Keith Kridler | Keith Schindler |
| Benni Konvicka | Selena Schindler |
| Jimmie Konvicka | Pauline Tom |
| Harold Latham | Ron Tom |
| Don Lawrence | Debra Wilson |



Usually Mom volunteers and the kids chip in to help. Just the reverse for **Kenny Munzo**. He is one of our youngest members and one of our best volunteers! He has volunteered for the last four events and Mom **Lisa** is volunteering her time too. All of those name tags don't make themselves.



Thank You Volunteers! Thousands of hours are needed to produce our annual events. The Summer Symposium received rave reviews for the quality of our presenters and the superb organization of the entire event! Job well done. Special thanks to Brazos Master Naturalists for their support.

Thanks For Your Financial \$upport!

- | | | | |
|------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Whitney Campbell | Rose M. Holden | C.W. Bess | Mary O. Parker |
| Dorothy Hoffman | Danny Potter | Charles & Sue Wiseman | Lewis Boyd |
| Ernest Kroll | John D & Angela Turner | Ron & Pauline Tom | Jim Marshall |
| Amanda Schwede | Kay Dansby | Dr John and Judy Hutka | Sylvia & Michael |
| Janet Barron | Clyde Camp | Van T Hunn | Cooper |
| Sharon Brown | Janna Blanchard | Tom & Cindy Brisko | Gwen Snellenberger |

Welcome New Members! New members who give us print permission on Membership Form

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| • Wileme Atkin | • Joseph Hart | • Carolyn Muller | • CF, Kruggerville |
| • Susan D Adkinson | • Paul Herson | • Glenn Olsen | • MH, Lefors |
| • Janet Barron | • Dorothy Hoffman | • E A Willow Park | • EK, College Station |
| • Nate & Rhonda Bauer | • Marianne Herboth | • Lori Peakcock | • CL, Huntsville |
| • Jeff Brown | • Barbara A Hotze | • Katy Peterson | • PAM, College Station |
| • Huey Campell | • Jennifer Hrobar | • Marilyn Routsong | • VT, Denton |
| • Phyllis Cambell | • Linda Kennedy | • Linda Scales | • LW, Frisco |
| • Brenda Covey | • Cheryl Lewis | • Jessica Snow | • DW, Spring |
| • Whitney Campbell | • Jennabelle Matlock | • Lisa Street | • OW, Point Blank |
| • Kayron Dube | • Jolene McGowan | • Rebecca Thornton | |
| • Kirk Franz | • Tom G McGehee | • Alice Vance | |
| • Joyce Gillen | • Jim & Kate Measures | • J P Weatherford | |
| | | • Jacque Wortman | |

The Texas Bluebird Society newsletter, *TX Blues*, is published four times a year: March ■ May ■ July ■ October
Debbie Bradshaw Park, Editor
Send email/address changes to records@txblues.org

Board of Directors

- Pauline Tom:** President, Executive Committee
- Ken Ray:** Treasurer/AP, Executive Committee
- Pat Nail:** Secretary, Executive Committee
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- Beverly Davis:** Auction Donation Coord.
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Contact Us:

tbs@txblues.org,
PO Box 40868 Austin, TX 78704,
512-268-5678 (Pauline)



All cavity-nesting birds are protected by federal law.
Do not disturb birds or nest.
Report activity to NestWatch

TEXAS BLUEBIRD SOCIETY
PO BOX 40868
AUSTIN, TX 78704



Need Nestboxes?

Go to www.txblues.org
click *Nestbox Distributor*
tab for nearest location



2 New Citizen Scientist Projects Need Your Help In Nesting Season:

- Project 1 HOSP Egg Collection
- Project 2 HOSP Egg Swap

Project Manager **Dr. Caren Cooper** is turning to the citizen science community to assist her in gathering critical resources for her long term research. There are many ways to participate in these but, our primary goal is recruiting volunteers to send in house sparrow eggs they find for us to curate them into the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences collection.

Here we aim to assess the contaminants that have bioaccumulated inside of the eggs and create a pollution map. We are also interested in an egg collection project experimenting with a new invasive species management plan where volunteers replace real eggs with fake eggs in the nests of house sparrows and measure how many days the sparrow incubate fake eggs. All materials would be provided for volunteers.

Watch For March 2016 Texas Blues

Full project details, including background, results to date, as well as complete instructions on appropriate shipping protocol. Also included will be guidelines on how creating false eggs, the replacement method, and the required data/ recordkeeping for monitoring their behavior and nesting results. Reprint CitSci.org.

*Participation may change your HOSP management practices.
What would you change? Something to contemplate this winter.*



One of project's painted eggs

Do you oology?



Oology: the hobby of collecting eggs.