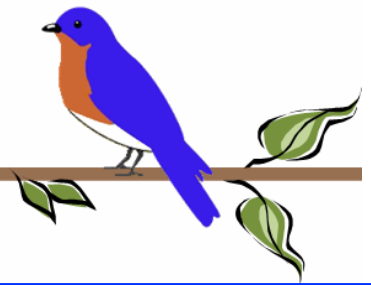


# TEXAS Blues



Texas Bluebird Society Newsletter • May 2018 • Volume 17. Issue 2

## *Bluebirds Across Texas ... one nestbox at a time*

### Where Does TBS Get All Of Those Nestboxes?

TBS is dedicated to their mission of increasing the number of nestboxes available for all native cavity-nesters with a special emphasis on bluebirds. How many of us were influenced to join TBS with the face-to-face membership incentive...free nestbox with membership? I know I was; a very visible demonstration that I love bluebirds!

TBS has been providing nestboxes since its inception in 2001. Think about it, that is a lot of “TX tough” nestboxes! Where would our organization be without a steady supply of nestboxes? A small organization with a minimal impact on bluebird conservation. As VP and Nestbox Coordinator, Lonnie Castleman, explains “the volunteers who build our nestboxes are the heart and soul of this organization! Because of their dedication to building nestboxes, we are still in the business of fulfilling our mission.”

In addition to giving a free nestbox to new “in person” members TBS sells nestboxes to any and all individuals or business who want to help cavity-nesters. Organizations such as Boy Scouts and Garden Clubs purchase nestboxes to create or improve bluebird trails. Many of our nestboxes are given as gifts and end up in other states. Creating and sustaining bluebird habitat is often included in a landowner’s wildlife tax valuation plan.

Nestboxes are promoted at every TBS event where you can always count seeing a large display. TBS also gives away a nestbox to members attending our event who sign up for Cornell’s NestWatch program. Just one more way that a nestbox not only provides a home for a cavity nester, it provides critical nesting activity data to research scientists around the world.

President Pauline Tom stated in her State of the Organization report “At this point in TBS history, we have constructed over **15,000** “official” TBS nestboxes and branded each with the TBS logo.” Approved by the North American Bluebird Society, our specific for Texas nestbox includes features to assist our nesters in combating long hot summers.

### How It All Started

In the beginning co-founder Keith Kridler built, hundreds of nestboxes, literally from scratch! TBS started with one builder at a time. As TBS grew it became obvious that nesting building is no longer a one man job. After a temporary solution, Hetherington’s to the rescue! Brian and Judy Hetherington began building the official TBS nestbox after attending a bluebird workshop in 2004. Along with Bob Houck and their naturalist club,



VP/Nestbox Coord. Lonnie Castleman presents at Kickoff 2018 in Bryan.

...cont. from page 1 **Where Does TBS Get All Of Those Nestboxes?**

they built over 10,000 nestboxes in their 8 years of tenure before moving to Australia. Again our many thanks to Brian, Judy, Bob and their team. With a honorary lifetime membership, they remain a part of the TBS family.

TBS had a great system in place. The Hetheringtons, our primary nest box builders, did an incredible job providing both excellent and consistent quality on each nestbox. Having one building team in one location facilitated material deliveries and transporting logistics to convey nestboxes to a specified location. Now what?

Seeking volunteers to be our new "official" Nestbox Builders, TBS began soliciting interested members. As individuals began volunteering, TBS realized that our former perfect solution, a few builders all in one area, was not going to be realized. Complications! The TBS Board arrived at an innovative solution to the multiple locations dilemma. This solution had a name, Don Lawrence!

With his background in quality control procedures, (then) board member, Don Lawrence, volunteered to create a "Nestbox Builder" program complete with TBS certification. This process would guarantee each nestbox the organization distributes would be essentially the same. An absolute priority for TBS is providing the exact same construction quality and materials in each nestbox.

Don contacted volunteers willing to build at least 250 nestboxes, at least once during a 2-month window per year and explained the certification process. Each builder received training from Don on "our" most economical and accurate method for building the nestbox. After a satisfactory session, each volunteer builds four Nest Boxes on his/her own, sends those four nestboxes to TBS for inspection and approval. Once approved, one nestbox will serve as a production sample from that volunteer, and will be saved as an archived sample. One of the four production prototype nestboxes will be mailed back to the volunteer so all his/her future helpers will



have a TBS approved nestbox as a model to review and compare with the nestboxes they are building. The other two nestboxes will be added to the TBS inventory. Although Don has passed the coordinator torch to Lonnie Castleman, he still remains the "go-to-guy" and still actively visits builders and assists in any way he can.

Don explains, "We utilize a 1" X12" x12' Select Western Red Cedar, each one of these boards will make four nestboxes. It takes 65 boards to create 250 nestboxes" McCoys is the supplier for cedar and screws and delivers the materials to each builder when Nestbox Coordinator

Lonnie calls in the order. The particular size of Cedar board we use is hard to find. Fortunately, McCoys have been great working with us to meet our supply criteria. "One thing we know for sure is that the price of the lumber is going UP, UP, UP!" states Lonnie. When Lonnie assumed the coordinator post in 2015 a load of cedar (65 boards) cost \$1,600. The last order placed cost TBS \$2,400. Now you know why TBS is always asking for money for nestbox supplies! **In spite of the rising costs of lumber over the years, TBS has never increased the cost of membership!**

Following Don's lead, Lonnie has traveled over a 1,000 miles visiting each and every builder. "What a fascinating group of people. From all walks of life and living all over the state, they all share a common trait - intense dedication! They are the backbone of the organization and we appreciate each and everyone of them. You know I will go anywhere anytime to give a bluebird presentation. I've never met a bluebirder I didn't like... they are good people. Our builders are extra special good people, I love these guys to death! They are a God-send to the organization."

We agree with Lonnie. First and foremost, THANK YOU to our nestbox builders! You are truly the unsung heroes of TBS. Without your willingness to build the zillion nestboxes we need every year, TBS would soon cease to exist. The nestbox is the inspiration and motivation to join TBS at a festival, presentation or event. Over the next few newsletters we will be featuring our nestbox builders, sharing their stories and photos. Story begins on page 4.

\*Special thanks to McCoys for graciously providing TBS with a \$10,000 line of credit enabling us to begin our mass nestbox building!

## In Memoriam

March 18, 1939 - May 1, 2018

# Don Lawrence

*Don was a giver. He gave of himself to almost every person he met. He truly never met a stranger. I am thankful for the short time I got to spend with him. Don was my mentor, lodge brother and brother in Christ! I never saw him that he didn't have a smile on his face and a twinkle in his eyes. That is how I'll always remember him! — Lonnie Castleman*

**2010** - Don joined TBS in November. He was already a TX Master Naturalist and NABS member. He volunteered to give presentations, write articles, construct, install, and monitor nestboxes. Began phoning/emailing Pauline with ideas. Identified himself as "Boomerang" since he said "he always comes back."

**2011** - Don enthusiastically begins joining in TBS activities collecting new members wherever he goes.



**2012** - Don Lawrence, Local Coordinator for the Summer Symposium (held in Gainesville), received recognition with True Blue Friend plaque for his many hours handling local arrangements and fine details. For instance, Don designed and built the screen needed for projection. Don designed and created the "sight barrier" between the presentation section and the dining/silent auction section by adding the black plastic around precisely-sized rented scaffolding. He made all arrangements with local hotel for lodging and meeting rooms; with the Civic Center; with the restaurant for Friday evening social and the caterer for lunch. He also served as Local Registrar for mail-in payments. Smooth running Symposium. Job well done. (TX Blues Oct. 2012)

In November Don was elected to the Board of Directors. among his many contributions he took on the task of providing our new member packet to anyone who joined online.

**2013** - Continues his contributions as a board member and "...promotes bluebirds across Texas" at every opportunity.

*"Don's contributions to TBS were always from his love for bluebirds. His little changes in nestbox construction helped streamline production. I will miss him and his sense of humor." — Linda Crum*

**2014** - Banner year for TBS and Don! Nestbox Certification Program resolves construction dilemma. Don develops the Nestbox Certification Program and successfully implements the new process certifying four members, Don Mitchell, Shannon Ramsey, Jim Estes, and Mike Price. Read the complete story in October 2014 TX Blues. (Right) Don, a retired carpenter, designed jigs to ensure cuts and holes would be standard during construction.



*"Don is missed already. He leaves quite a legacy as he developed the TBS Nestbox Certification process and got many in his part of the woods started with bluebirds. What a delight that he made it to the 2018 Event in late February. I can remember so clearly the last time we exchanged smiles." — Pres. Pauline Tom*



### Blue Feather Service Award To Don At 2014 Symposium

Nominating Don was an easy decision this year. Don has devoted countless hours to the start-up of our new nestbox production process. This procedure supports the continuation of main mission—nestbox construction and distribution, many at a time. Throughout Don's service as a Board Member since 2012, he has assisted—and always with a smiling face and encouraging words—with the numerous tasks involved to create the smooth-running, successful Kickoff and Summer Symposium events. Although these activities require many hours of Don's time, he doesn't laze around the rest of the year. In addition to maintaining his own bluebird habitat, including his famous "restaurant row..." (Read the complete story in October 2014 and March 2015 issues of TX Blues.



## Meet Certified Nestbox Builder Don Mitchell

“Need another batch of nestboxes? No problem, it is nestbox party time!” Don shares the nestbox building fun with his wife and fellow Indian Trail Texas Master Naturalists. (It is my understanding that a reliable supply of doughnuts and or cookies make the magic happen.)

Don spent 15 years with Otis Elevator followed by 25 years with the International Union of Elevator Construction. The intricacies of mechanics and electrical are second nature to Don and have found a niche in other areas of his life. Like restoring antique cars and all types of woodworking projects. (Spoiler alert: there is a '61 Pontiac Bonneville he is restoring for a 50th anniversary. The first car he and his wife Cathy, owned.)

Don began his nestbox building career by providing neighbors with nestboxes and feeders so all could enjoy the local birds. He “googled” and joined TBS in 2010. Don noticed the request for nestbox builders in an issue of *TX Blues* and volunteered to become one of the first participants in the Nestbox Builder Certification process. Don Lawrence quickly certified Don. Now nestbox building expanded from just a few to a batch of 250 at a time.



Once Don receives his 65 board shipment from McCoys Building Supplies the exacting chore of creating 4 nestboxes from one piece of lumber begins. It can be quite tricky placing the pieces of the nestbox pattern to avoid imperfections such as knotholes in the wood. Precision cutting is a must. The first time Don completed the entire process by his self. Since then Don has trained two friends, Travis Edwards and Jack Dunaway, to assist him with this critical task.

After all of the pieces for 250 nestboxes have been cut it is time to call in reinforcements; wife Cathy and other TMN friends to begin the assembly process. Coordinator Lonnie Castleman adds another consideration when building nestboxes - weather! “Construction usually occurs during the fall/winter timeframe. Good ole hot summers in TX are not ideal for for this type of work. The number of volunteers would diminish as rapidly as the temperature would rise” Lonnie predicts. Another issue is where to put 250 nestboxes after they are assembled. Not everyone has a workshop large enough to accommodate the building process and store the nestboxes. Another volunteer, Rex Reves, to the rescue. Rex transports the finished nestboxes for storage in his barn in nearby Waxahachie awaiting future delivery instructions to various locations. Don and his team have produced 1,000 nestboxes to date.

TBS is lucky to have Don and his friends on the nestbox construction team. They make it look easy, but it is a complicated process that requires strong organizational skills to manage the process from start to



finish. After Don, Travis, and Jack complete cutting out all of the pieces, it takes the team between two to three days to finish the assembly process. Sometimes with sweaters and the heaters running. Don adds the wonderful cedar smell permeating the workshop is a pleasant side effect of the building process.



Don married his wife Cathy in 1970, so he has a little more time before their 50th to finish that car. They have two sons and four grandchildren.

## Meet Certified Nestbox Builder Shannon Ramsey

Shannon spent 39+ years in the oil industry, starting, literally, from a pencil and paper accountant to his last 12 years managing all computer systems including developing and managing technology rollout and implementation projects for Valero's retail stores.

Whether he was manually creating spreadsheets or developing highly complex computer systems, Shannon followed a guiding principle for success: standardization and consistency. On paper or with a program, following specific steps in a specific order creates a quality product. Shannon explains why the Nestbox Certification is so important. "The nestbox is a standardized and consistent item. It should not make any difference who builds the nestbox; each and every nestbox should be exactly the same regardless of any other consideration."



After retiring in San Antonio at the end of 2007, Shannon and his wife, Judy, moved to a farm in Timpson, Texas that had been in his family for almost 150 years. "I've always thought that my grandad would be quite upset with me for taking up so much scarce pasture space just to build a place to live and work," Shannon jokingly admits. Shannon always had a "mobile" workshop where he accumulated a variety of tools for projects over the years. With his move to the family farm he finally had a permanent workshop space and plenty of tools for any project.

After we had been here a couple years, we went to the Blueberry Festival in Nacogdoches in June of 2010 and we joined the Texas Bluebird Society on that day. Among other things, the application that I had to fill out asked what jobs I would like to volunteer for. I don't remember how many boxes I checked off, but I do remember thinking that I would really like to build those nestboxes.



Shannon continues his story. "I waited for a phone call but none came. I renewed in 2011, no phone call. I renewed again in 2012 and 2013, but no phone call. The third week of July, 2014, I got a call from some guy I had never heard of named Don Lawrence asking me if I was still interested in building nestboxes. Once again I said "yes," and then Don said, "Well that's a good thing, because I am on my way to your house and I will be there in about two hours to see if you can do it."

"Don showed up just as he said he would that afternoon. He walked me through building one nestbox. Then he gave me two 6-foot long boards, a drilling jig, a branding iron, a boring drill bit and a router bit. He asked me to build four nestboxes and ship them to him for examination and certification" states Shannon.

"I knew after Shannon walked me through building the first box that I would certify him" Don Lawrence exclaimed. To date Shannon's dedication to standards and consistency has produced 1,000 quality nestboxes for TBS. Remember, our builders are asked to build a batch of 250 nestboxes. Shannon standardized his process during his first run and has been tweaking the process ever since. A lot of measuring cutting, and assembling translates into a solid 50 hours of work to create a batch. Shannon is definitely a fast builder of quality nestboxes!

Shannon married his wife Judy in a surprise wedding ceremony in Santa Fe, NM the day after Christmas, 2006. Between them they have 5 children, 4 boys and one girl. They have eight grandchildren, 5 boys and 3 girls. Three live near Denver, CO, 2 in Hobbs, NM, and 3 right where they live on the farm. Future nestbox builders?



## Another Fun & Educational Event!

Presentations:

**LONNIE CASTLEMAN**, TBS VP

*Bluebird Basics*, PowerPoint: <http://SHARE.txblues.org>

**ROBYN BAILEY**, NestWatch Project Leader

*NestWatch*

**DR. CAREN COOPER**

*Citizen Science and How It Can Help Bluebirds*

**DR. PATICIA A. GOWATY**

*An Informal Remembrance of Forty Years of Bluebird Passions*

**NITA SCHIRO**

*Planting for Pollinators With TX Native Plants*

**Jeff and Mary O Parker**

*Backyard Photography*

Emcee - **Paul Nelson**

## NestWatching Is Important!

TBS has always been a strong advocate for reporting nesting activity to Cornell Lab's NestWatch.

Pres. Pauline Tom acknowledges attendees who NestWatch at least 10 nestboxes this past year.

GREAT JOB!. As Citizen Scientist you are making a major contribution to research data worldwide! (top) Pauline Tom. (L to R) Sue Abernathy, Royceanna Kendall, Bill and Susie Johnson, Sandra Spurlock and Lonnie Castleman. Every egg counts!

**Bluebird Season Kickoff**  
February 24, 2018 - Bryan, TX  
[2018event.txblues.org](http://2018event.txblues.org)



A different bluebird photo is chosen for each TBS event. This year's beautiful photo is from David Kinneer.



The Silent Auction FUNdraiser is our primary source to raise funds to purchase lumber and supplies to build our nestboxes. It may not have been totally "silent" at times but the good natured bidding raised \$4,516! A huge help to combat the rising cost of lumber!



(L to R) Great Horned Owl, Peregrine Falcon, Golden Eagle, Harris Hawk.



**John Karger, founder of Last**

**Chance Forever** organization presented a marvelous program at the Friday night social. Last Chance Forever is a bird rescue operation located in San Antonio. The organization's mission is to help sick, injured, and orphaned **birds** of prey return to their natural habitat. John Shared a few of his nature ambassadors with us while providing interesting information on raptor behavior and recovery.

## 2017 TBS Award Winners

### Blue Feather Service Award Presented To Lonnie Castleman



Pres. Pauline Tom presents 2017 Blue Feather award to Lonnie Castleman.

Lonnie Castleman's service, with heart and soul, to and through Texas Bluebird Society is woven into the fiber of the organization, from the time he joined the organization. Lonnie loves people and bluebirds and Texas Bluebird Society. His passion comes through day and night in appointments made through his Distributor listing on the website or his magnetic TBS sign on his vehicle and scheduled bluebird presentations. Time and time again he has brought in new recruits through happenstance conversations, always getting them started with NestWatch.

With a smile on his face, Lonnie has logged thousands of miles and hours delivering nestboxes, meeting certified nestbox builders (whose work he coordinates), working the TBS booth at festivals, inspecting event venues, giving presentations, installing nestboxes, inventorying event supplies, attending (via GoToMeeting) and preparing for board meetings, event plans meetings, and official Power-Point presentation update meetings, affixing stickers, answering emailed questions, and much more.

Lonnie Castleman clearly rose to the top as the sole nominee for the 2017 Blue Feather Award.

### Bluebirder Of The Year Presented To Bill and Susie Johnson

*In recognition of outstanding initiatives and accomplishments that align with the mission of TX Bluebird Society*



Bill & Susie Johnson now monitor 32 nestboxes – those on their property, those they added at Pecan Valley Golf Course in Benbrook after attending the 2012 Symposium and hearing (from Jim Marshall) about the scout-installed trail that needed monitoring; and, those they added at Benbrook Lake after a park ranger talked with them while they were monitoring on the golf course.

During winter maintenance, they paint weathered nestboxes a light color to keep the nestbox interior from reaching temperatures that far exceed the ambient temperature. And, they add predator guards. They're active in keeping bluebirds safe.

They talk with people they meet while they monitor the nestboxes, sharing the joy of bluebirds. They're ambassadors. And, they make a difference beyond Benbrook by reporting to NestWatch their observations, making a difference into perpetuity as the records are housed at Cornell Lab of Ornithology. They're citizen scientists.

We're proud to recognize them as "Bluebirder of the Year".

(Left) Pres. Pauline Tom presents 2017 Bluebirder Of The Year award to Bill and Susie Johnson.

# EABL Nest At National Butterfly Center In Mission

The National Butterfly Center (NABA) is the place to be to see beautiful amazing butterflies! It also has a fantastic bird feeding station area where local and often rare species can be found. The 100+ acres is a wildlife center and native species botanical garden with many trails for exploration. In addition to creating the perfect environment to attract butterflies, NABA has taken great efforts to create a natural feeding area for birds. Trees, shrubs, dead wood, flowers, and hidden water sources create the perfect backdrop for observing and photographing birds. "My husband and I spend the "winter" in the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV) and the National Butterfly Center is one of our very favorite places!" (John and Debbie Park)

Eastern Bluebirds spend the winters in the LRGV but seem to want slightly cooler weather in the Spring. The breeding population in the LRGV is slim, so you can imagine the excitement when NABA discovered bluebirds nesting in their backyard! Photographs and comments supplied by Luciano Guerra and Marianna Wright.



(left) 1/17 Eastern Bluebird perched atop our visitors' pavilion roof.



(Right) Yep, there are little ones inside.



(left & right) 4/11 Photos this morning of the Eastern Bluebirds flying into and out of the nest box at the National Butterfly Center as they feed their young and keep the nest box clean by removing the fecal sacks. Nesting bluebirds is something that we rarely get to see here in south Texas.



Phaon Crescent



Crimson Patch



(above left) 4/16 Here are photos I took this morning at NABA of one of the first baby Eastern Bluebirds hatched out in the Rio Grande Valley in a very long time (if not ever). I believe these to be the first photos taken of one of the babies. It won't be long until they're ready to fledge. (above right) Bluebirds feed babies about seven times an hour.



## A Mother's Day Salute to Those with Little Mouths to Feed (and Those Trying)...

By **Kate Moran**

As Mother's Day approaches and we enjoy time with our mothers or our children, I find myself walking to my back fence, traipsing through my gate to check my nestbox, only to be disappointed to find that it remains empty this year. In that moment, I can't help but see some parallels between the family trying to have a child and my bluebirding friends who are "empty nesters."

The thought further arose after reading the blogs and Facebook posts (I follow some of the other bluebird groups outside of TBS) from members venting that they still don't have any takers in the nestbox(s) they have set up on their property. The usual complaint sounds all too familiar: "I've had a box up for a couple years now and I still can't get bluebirds to move in. What am I doing wrong?" I can't help but draw the parallels to motherhood and trying to have a child. Infertility sucks! While I personally have not faced this challenge from the childbirth perspective, I can empathize with my birder friends and their plight.

So many of my friends have come to me for advice (since I'm a labor and delivery nurse) asking me what's wrong and why can't they conceive? My responses (while they are human specific) don't sound all too different from when I help my birder friends attract a nesting couple. Explore all options! "Have you repositioned the box facing west, east, etc.?" "Have you mounted your box on a pole versus your fence or tree?" "Is your box appealing visually to a bluebird scoping the terrain, or is it hidden?" "Are there too many other cavity nesting birds (or pests like house sparrows) making things stressful for your bluebird perspective family to move in?" There are so many factors involved with making your situation just right to house a nest full of babies that you need to be willing to experiment before you throw in the towel. Most importantly: **never throw in the towel.**

Funny thing I usually restrain myself babies and bluebird babies is "care-try and try and try again to host a thing to maintain it. Like with preg-and then count down the days until work and worrying involved with finally get that mama bluebird who sets in. "Will the neighbor's cat kill should put up a baffle?" "Maybe I to deter the sparrows?" "Maybe I other trap to start killing the sparrow competition?" "Are they going to have enough food after this full week of non-stop storms?" "Are the babies due date for flying away going to coincide with that hurricane coming in?" "Are the wasps or ants going to make mom leave?" "I've seen a lot of snakes this year, so maybe one of them will kill the whole clutch?" I'm pretty sure I've mentioned in a previous article that I'm the worrying type if you can't already tell.



from saying to both moms of human full what you wish for." It's one thing nesting bird, and it's quite another nancy, you don't just get pregnant 9 months pass. There is a lot of growing healthy babies. When you is nesting in your box, the worrying mom and dad now?" "Maybe I should hang those mylar streamers should invest in a Van Ert trap or

In the end, you need to remember to have a positive attitude and roll with the punches. I know some friends who let the stress get to them too much where they removed nestboxes off their property because of the emotional toll. It's nice when people tell you they conceived their child with no problems or got the bluebirds to house in their box as soon as they put up one. Well, it's nice but annoying. Truth of the matter is, people try really hard on average to get their desired results. And, the results are WORTH IT!

That's the main theme of this article that I hope to convey. All the worrying and all the trying just makes the feeling of seeing mom lay eggs, care for them, and watching them fledge all the more special. It's a feeling that you can never fully explain to the non-birder community, but one that can be shared nostalgically with those already indoctrinated into the world of birding. Some of you may currently be housing and supporting your bluebird mamas through a round of babies right now. We're all with you and rooting for your bluebird mama on this Mother's Day.

So, I just want to say Happy Mother's Day (AND Father's Day coming up too—you guys are every bit involved as much as moms) to all you ladies who have entertaining little human babies, moms who don't have any human babies and prefer to just have the furry or feathered kinds of kids, and all the in between who want one or both of those options.

# Look Who's Here!



Our bluebird family out and about! **Terry Vaughn** in Scurry, on 4/29. Looks like Mom is building another nest.



**Report nesting activity**  
[nestwatch.org](http://nestwatch.org)



There are five of these little guys in my bird house. I have never had a bird house before, and I enjoy watching their parents tend to them. I'm worried because we are supposed to be getting a bad thunderstorm today. **Kim Roulias** 4/13

**Annette Barker Regier** - Great pic! My 5 fledged the evening of a long thunderstorm (2 days ago?). I was wondering what were mom & dad thinking. But all is good, they are all together in nearby trees, feeding them mealworms.



4/11 **Daniel Bishop** shares a peak of his brood on day 11. Will be fledging soon! (Trophy Club, TX)




Second clutch of the season! I am hoping they are done laying lol. We have never had such a big clutch. Will they all fit in my little box?! The three fledglings from the first brood are still hanging around with mom and dad as well. Will they help with these babies too? This year is the first year the fledglings have stuck around this long. 4/13 **Meg Elizabeth**



[Share your photos and stories!](#)

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 Texas Bluebird Society [www.txblues.org](http://www.txblues.org)

Sweet, yesterday was fledge day (day 18) for our single Eastern Bluebird mom and her 4 fledglings. Didn't know if this day would happen but I'm happy to report the birds have flown the nest box. 4/2 **Kolette Martin Studdert** (Spring, TX)

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EventPlans Team  
(Mountain City)

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Nestbox Inventory

### Moved?

Send email/address changes  
to [records@txblues.org](mailto:records@txblues.org)  
Mike LeDeau  
Membership Secretary

### Contact Us:

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

## Volunteers Are Appreciated!

Caryn Brewer  
Lonnie Castleman  
Susan Crowson  
Linda Crum  
Beverly Davis  
Walt Davis  
Harold Latham  
Patti Marshall  
Don Mitchell  
Shannon Ramsey  
Shannon Ramsey  
Mary Sydow  
Ann Thames  
Richard Thames  
Pauline Tom  
Ron Tom  
Vanessa Voisinnet



Bluebird enthusiast Linda Crum presented (her usual) fantastic program to 80 people at Arbor Gate nursery in Tomball. With the help of Susan Crowson, Patti Marshall, Caryn Brewer, and Mary Sydow accepting membership applications and distributing nest-boxes, TBS has 39 new members!

### VOLUNTEER!

Host an event booth, give a bluebird presentation to a local club, or perform an admin task.

Contact  
Pauline Tom  
512-268-5678  
[pauline@txblues.org](mailto:pauline@txblues.org)

## Financial Support Is Appreciated!

Dawn Anderson  
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David Thompson  
Phyllis & Ben Tobias  
Robert Veach  
Bill & Sharon Vick  
Dr. Thomas Wheeler  
Barry Wilkinson  
Wendel Withrow  
Carrie Yarbrough

## Welcome New Members!

*\*New members who give us permission to print their names*

- Pam & Roy W Alspaugh
- Christopher W Anderson
- Dawn B Anderson
- Cindy & Albert W Anderson
- Christine Ando
- Tamie Arnold
- Ron Auvenshine
- Diego Barbosa
- Vanessa Boyd
- Beth Bradberry
- Denise Brehm
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- Lue Harden
- Leal, Rudy Harman, Richard
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- Candas Hrachovy
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- Barry Wilkinson
- Marcia Wilson
- Wendel Withrow
- Dixie Wofford
- Jeb Lupeyrolerie-Camp Cabana

## Change In Attitude Creates Angst For Future Observance Of The Migratory Bird Treaty Act!

The Cornell Lab's director Dr. John Fitzpatrick wrote [an analysis](#), as did [Lynn Scarlett](#), former Deputy Secretary of the Interior under George W. Bush. Following is an excerpt from Cornell Lab's Spring 2018 *Living Bird* magazine.

On the Friday before a holiday weekend in December, 2017, Daniel H. Jorjani— Principal Deputy Solicitor at the U.S. Department of the Interior—issued a 41-page opinion (M-37050) concluding that “the MBTA’s prohibition on pursuing, hunting, taking, capturing, killing, or attempting to do the same applies only to direct and affirmative purposeful actions....

Prior to this opinion, conventional interpretation of the MBTA promoted productive dialog involving industry, environmental groups, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Numerous common sense solutions have reduced the incidental, wanton killing of millions of birds by such hazards as open oil waste pits, oil spills, unprotected pesticide residues, unmarked transmission lines, and lethally situated wind farms. Under Jorjani’s new and extremely narrow interpretation, whole industries (e.g., energy, mining, chemical production) are suddenly freed from legal liability even if their actions result in predictable, avoidable, and massive killing of birds. Hope and incentive for dialog and compromise on behalf of birds is abashed by this storm. Not surprisingly, Jorjani’s opinion was hailed by energy companies and advocacy groups, including those for whom he recently worked.

Within weeks of Jorjani’s memo, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke received a remarkable letter signed by 17 former Interior department leaders who had worked under every U.S. President since Richard Nixon. Their letter emphatically denounced this unprecedented opinion as “a new, contrived legal standard that creates a huge loophole in the MBTA.” They pointed out that the MBTA “has been successfully used to reduce gross negligence by companies that simply do not recognize the value of birds to society or the practical means to minimize harm. Your new interpretation needlessly undermines a history of great progress....” First to sign this letter was Lynn Scarlett, who served as Deputy Secretary of the Interior under George W. Bush, and who [elaborates on these points in this issue of \*Living Bird\*](#).



Oil-soaked pelicans became the public face of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010. Under the new interpretation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, companies responsible for oil spills would not be deemed responsible for a spill's effects on birds. *Brown Pelican by Gerrit Vyn.*

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

The best way to express your opinion about the Migratory Bird Treaty Act is through your senators and representatives.

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The Texas Bluebird Society newsletter, *TX Blues*, is published four times a year: March ■ May ■ July ■ October  
Debbie Bradshaw Park, Editor  
Send stories/photos to [editor@txblues.org](mailto:editor@txblues.org)

**Federal law protects all native nesting birds!**

- Do not disturb birds or collect nests/eggs.
- Monitor and report activity to NestWatch.

