

# The Bird Box Bird Box

Spring 2020 Newsletter of the  
Virginia Bluebird Society [www.virginiabluebirds.org](http://www.virginiabluebirds.org)



Virginia Bluebird Society

## The Bird Box Bird Box

### Virginia Bluebird Society 2019 Biennial Meeting & Conference

Dateline: November 16, 2019, Dorothy Hart Community Center, Charlottesville, VA

Nearly 100 bluebird enthusiasts from throughout the commonwealth gathered in Charlottesville in November to attend Virginia Bluebird Society's biennial conference. Following a brief business meeting, which included elections of officers and new members to the board, the conference went into full swing.

Bet Zimmerman Smith, North American Bluebird Society board member and owner of the well-regarded website *sialis.org*, was the keynote speaker. Bet's topic, *Bluebirding Oddities, Expect the Unexpected*, discussed weird nesting locations, nest construction, eggs, occupants, and bluebird plumage. Each discussion of an oddity was accompanied by supporting



Keynote speaker Bet Zimmerman Smith, with Christine Boran

photos, many submitted by bluebird trail monitors from throughout the U.S.

Separate breakout sessions offered conference attendees the opportunity to learn about pest and predator management, attracting bluebirds to your backyard, and bluebird photography. VBS founder and former president Anne Little closed out the educational portion of the conference by narrating a newly revised version of *The Tale of the Bluebird*, the authorized presentation

for VBS County Coordinators and board members when doing community outreach programs. See the following page for awards presented at the conference to Society volunteers who have made exceptional contributions in the past two years.

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Left: Past presidents and current president of the Virginia Bluebird Society, left to right, Anne Little, Carmen Bishop, Cathy Hindman, and Valerie Kenyon Gaffney

Right: Anne Little, Cathy Hindman, and Valerie Kenyon Gaffney admire the canvas given to Cathy in appreciation of her contributions as President

Photos by Doug Rogers



## **Award Recipients at Biennial Meeting and Conference** **Bluebirder of the Year, Helaine Krob, presented by Carmen Bishop**

Helaine has been an active member of the Lake Fairfax Bluebird Trail Team for many years. In addition to helping care for the bluebirds at the park, she has consistently assisted with bluebird education and outreach in the area for years. She regularly participates on behalf of VBS at a spring nature festival in Reston, and this year she also staffed a VBS table at the 4-H Fair. She always offers to go the extra mile, sometimes literally, by picking up and dropping off the shared display materials and taking care of the many other details that need to be attended to. She also updates the VBS CafePress store on the website.

### **VBS Heritage Award, David Kinneer, presented by Christine Boran**

The Heritage Award recognizes an individual who has been a long time bluebirder. This is a special person who lives and breathes bluebirds, and has spent many years promoting bluebirds and the love of bluebirds. David conducts consistent outreach to friends, family, and the public with longstanding service and education of bluebirds through his amazing photographs of these birds in action that continue to inspire.

David and his wife Janet moved to their present location in Fredericksburg in 2004. That was when hosting bluebirds began. While serving in Viet Nam with the Marines, he had bought his first 35mm camera. He started shooting with film cameras when his children were young. He admitted later that he became discouraged waiting for development of the film to see the results of his photos. He gave up the camera for a while, saying, "I put the camera on the shelf." In 1999 he purchased his first digital camera and really loved the option of immediately seeing the photos, and the use of the delete button right then and there instead of waiting for development of an entire roll of film. David is shooting sometimes several thousand images per day! He edits them and posts them in various locations online, including Facebook pages. I and many others are consistently awed by his talent and the adoration he has for the bluebirds. His passion for sharing these beautiful birds with us is greatly appreciated and we are very grateful for that.

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### **Barbara Chambers Memorial County Coordinator of the Year, Daphne Cole, presented by Vickie Fuquay**

This award is given in memory of Barbara Chambers and the energy and inspiration she brought to bluebird conservation. A county coordinator's job is to collect the data for the county and pass it on to VBS. This award is given to a county coordinator who goes the extra mile to organize, inspire, and further bluebird conservation in their county.

Daphne is fairly new on the VBS scene. When asked if she would consider becoming a county coordinator for Nottoway County, she didn't even hesitate, said yes, and jumped right in!

She is a Master Naturalist and had been able to get in some volunteer hours by monitoring bluebirds in a neighboring county. She first applied for three nest

cams for local schools, got them installed, and within a week had nesting bluebirds. Next she wanted to know if we had teaching tools or a power point. She was presenting a program on bluebirds. As children brought home reports of eggs being laid and baby blues hatching, the whole town was buzzing about the bluebirds at school. I told her if she had spaces like cemeteries and parks she should apply for boxes to put up around town through the Grants for New and Refurbished Bluebird Trails. She applied for 10 boxes and got those up very late spring, with bluebirds finding them right away. Next she wrote an article for the local newspaper about the new bluebird trails, which heightened the interest of the town's population. With her trails quickly filling up with bluebirds she again applied for 8 more boxes to add to the town's trail. To date she has installed 5 nest cams, 18 nest boxes and has a column in the newspaper reporting to the town about her bluebird trails!

This "go-getter of a gal" retired from teaching three years ago but has continued to educate those near and far about the needs of bluebirds and how to welcome them to her area of the state. I think bluebirds were just waiting for her to step up to the plate and she has hit a home run for her town and county with VBS sponsored, monitored, and maintained bluebird trails. She is a shining example of what it means to go the extra mile for bluebirds as a County Coordinator and we are so pleased she is on our team.



*Bluebirder of the Year, Helaine Krob, center, with Carmen Bishop, left, and Valerie Kenyon Gaffney, right.*



*Heritage Award recipient David Kinneer, center, with Christine Boran, left, and Valerie Kenyon Gaffney, right*



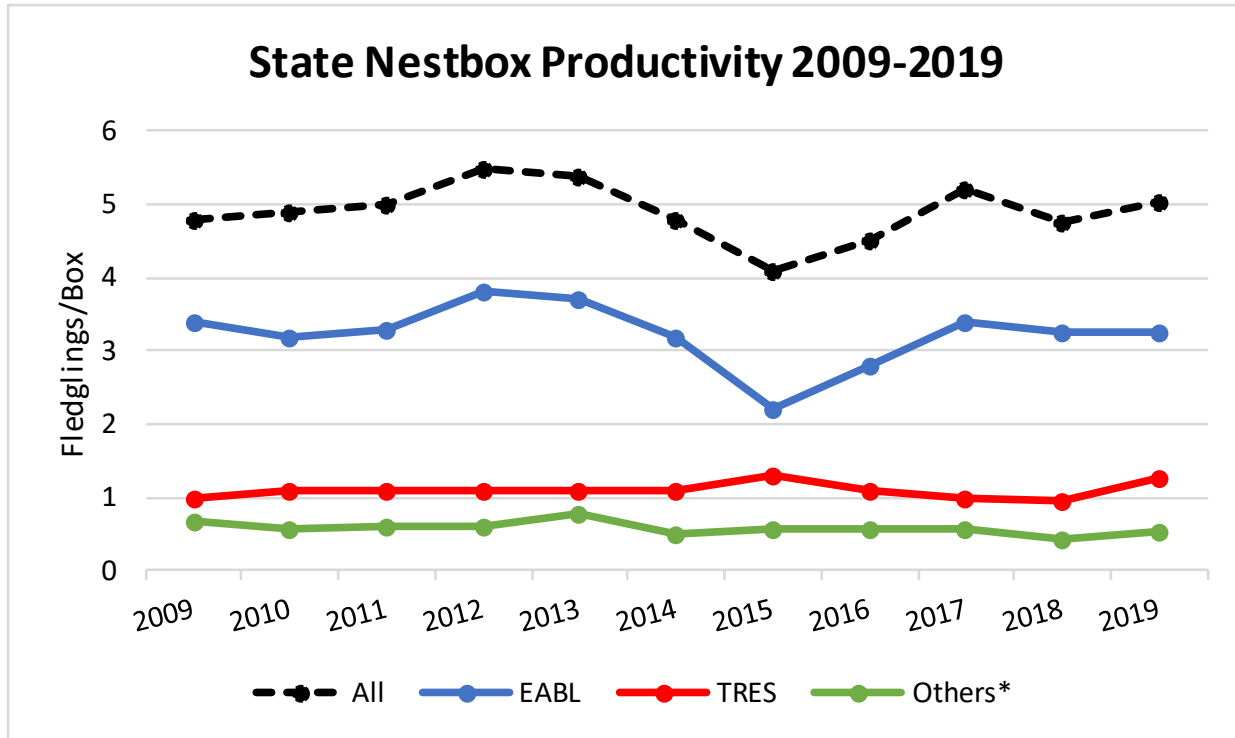
*County Coordinator of the Year, Daphne Cole, with Vickie Fuquay, left, and Valerie Kenyon Gaffney, right. Photos by Doug Rogers*



# Virginia Bluebird Society Nest Box Activity 2019

By Ann D. Dunn, VBS Data Manager

Reports on the 2019 breeding season for our cavity nesters are in. Fifty-one counties and cities are represented giving us new high numbers for trails (645) and nest boxes (5293) monitored this year. A summary of results is shown in the table on page 4. Distribution of species was as follows: 66 percent Eastern Bluebirds, 24 percent Tree Swallows, 6 percent House Wrens, 3 percent Carolina Chickadees, with a smattering of Titmice, Carolina Wrens, and Brown-headed Nuthatches. This represents a distribution shift from last year, favoring Tree Swallows over Eastern Bluebirds but the percentages for each match their average over the past decade (bluebird range, 58-70; Tree Swallow range, 20-29).



\*Others

include Brown-headed Nuthatches, Carolina Chickadees, Carolina Wrens, House Wrens, and Titmice

Overall nest box productivity, measured as average fledglings per box (Figure 1), was a respectable 5.2, falling close to the average for the past decade (5.4, range 4.1-5.5.) Productivity for bluebirds remained essentially the same (3.4) as 2018, but increased by 32 percent for Tree Swallows (0.94 to 1.24).

Nest box usage, measured as the average nesting attempts per box, for both bluebirds (0.96) and Tree Swallows (0.32) remained essentially unchanged from last year and were close to their respective decade averages (bluebirds 0.93, range 0.68-1.11, Tree Swallows 0.93, range 0.23-0.38) . Nesting survival as measured by the percentage of eggs developing into fledging chicks was 83 percent for bluebirds (decade average, 81 percent) and 80 percent for Tree Swallows (decade average 78 percent). Tree Swallows showed a five-percentage point increase over that of 2018.

Thirty-one of 51 sites provided records on breeding dates. Among these the prize for first egg goes to Fluvanna county (March 4) and last bluebird fledging to Patrick County (September 15). The average first egg date for the state was April 2 (same as in 2017, but five days earlier than 2018). The average last fledging date was August 22 (August 21 in years 2017 and 2018), with an average duration of 142 days (135 days in 2018 and 140 days in 2017).

The weather seems to have been kinder to our breeding birds this year; rainfall was more normal and spring temperatures did not encourage dangerously early nestings. However, midsummer temperatures included periods of 90 plus degrees, which may have interfered with second and third nestings by bluebirds. This may explain the unusually high number of unhatched eggs reported this year.

Tree Swallows had an especially good year. How much of this may be related to timing of their arrival to breeding grounds? In the past and in most parts of the state, they have tended to come approximately a week after bluebirds have begun nest building. Recent scattered reports, however, suggest that sparrows are now arriving a few days earlier, accompanied by visible signs of heightened competition between the two species. We hope to look at this more closely and would like to ask our monitors to include timing dates on Tree Swallows in their reports.

Many thanks to all our wonderful trail monitors who made this report possible and my apologies for asking for yet another more piece of information.

# Virginia Bluebird Society Nest Box Activity 2019

County	Trail Leader/County Coordinator	Bluebirds			Chickadees			Tree Swallows			House Wrens			Other			All												
		Number of trails	Number of Boxes	Nest Attempts	Eggs	Hatched	BB Fledged	Nest Attempts	Eggs	Hatched	Fledged	Nest Attempts	Eggs	Hatched	Fledged	Nest Attempts	Eggs	Hatched	Fledged	Birds Fledged per Box									
1	Albemarle	39	421	450	1915	1855	1447	12	47	41	35	144	682	576	528	4	21	19	18	1	1	0	0	611	2666	2491	2028	4.8	
2	Augusta	1	8	4	19	13	13	1	1	0	0	3	18	18	18										8	38	31	31	3.9
3	Bedford	3	36	40	180	150	138					10	38	21	17									50	218	171	155	4.3	
4	Buchanan	3	61	49	203	181	165					24	115	110	107									73	318	291	272	4.5	
5	Chesterfield	3	63	148	237	225	210	4	23	23	23	2	8	8	8									154	268	256	241	3.8	
6	Clarke	1	132	80	318	270	263					139	746	605	570	12	64	49	48	1	5	0	0	232	1133	924	881	6.7	
7	Culpeper	4	34	32	149	137	135					28	139	108	107									60	288	245	242	7.1	
8	Fairfax	60	731	506	2171	1800	1728	52	258	196	189	296	1354	1171	1119	110	509	409	389	44	94	66	58	1008	4386	3642	3483	4.8	
9	Fauquier	3	139	92	382	303	280	1	1	0	0	53	320	250	247	5	30	19	19	7	34	29	29	158	767	601	575	4.1	
10	Floyd	2	12	9	41	36	36					7	38	30	24									16	79	66	60	5.0	
11	Fluvanna	2	52	52	234	199	191	3	14	14	13	34	154	134	127									89	402	347	331	6.4	
12	Franklin	2	21	16	75	72	69	0	0	0	0													16	75	72	69	3.3	
13	James City	13	205	200	889	707	678	13	61	39	39	1	4	4	4	3	10	6	6	9	43	38	35	226	1007	794	762	3.7	
14	Giles	1	8	8	35	33	32					3	15	13	13									11	50	46	45	5.6	
15	Gloucester	5	34	34	148	148	148	5	29	29	29	5	30	30	28	1	4	4	4					44	207	207	207	6.1	
16	Goochland	1	9	8	35	35	35					8	36	30	28									17	75	69	64	7.1	
17	Grayson	2	18	10	41	36	36					8	41	32	29	5	15	10	6	1	6	6	6	24	103	84	77	4.3	
18	Greene	4	73	80	366	349	340	4	23	23	23	19	93	88	87	1	5	5	0	1	5	5	5	105	494	465	455	6.2	
19	Hanover	1	8	4	15	15	15					1	5	5	4									5	20	20	15	1.9	
20	Henrico	5	68	52	216	197	190	10	52	39	39					15	50	43	41				77	318	279	270	4.0		
21	Henry	2	233	392	1676	1633	1611	1	5	5	5	1	4	4	4	2	11	11	11	1	3	1	1	397	1699	1654	1632	7.0	
22	Highland	3	35	15	67	55	45					28	147	122	113	12	42	41	31				55	256	218	189	5.4		
23	Iale of Wright	6	88	152	670	584	565	5	16	10	10	15	66	53	48	6	32	31	26	1	6	0	0	179	790	678	649	7.4	
24	James City	14	213	203	901	765	729	10	51	46	46	4	18	16	16	6	34	28	27	12	56	48	48	235	1060	903	866	4.1	
25	Lancaster	3	61	98	432	372	347	3	12	12	12					1	5	4	4				102	449	388	363	6.0		
26	Loudoun	38	498	326	1371	1161	1108	6	27	21	21	273	1288	1110	1045	104	482	432	432	11	4	0	0	720	3172	2724	2606	5.2	
27	Lynchburg City	1	6	7	31	25	25					1	5	5	4									8	36	30	29	4.8	
28	Madison	4	47	48	199	146	145	1	6	6	6	19	86	80	66									68	291	232	217	4.6	
29	Mathews	1	4	5	23	12	5																	5	23	12	5	1.3	
30	Montgomery	6	101	41	177	131	124					89	377	313	301	22	88	66	62	2	10	0	0	154	652	510	487	4.8	
31	Nelson	1	93	83	339	308	293	3	14	9	9	27	124	110	109	5	18	18	18	1	3	0	0	119	498	445	429	4.6	
32	Henry	2	18	10	41	36	36					8	41	32	29	5	15	10	6	1	6	6	6	24	103	84	77	4.3	
33	Northumberland	4	34	57	251	212	212	1	3	3	3													58	254	215	215	6.3	
34	Orange	4	37	54	244	265	253					1	3	3	3	3	3	17	12	12				58	264	280	268	7.2	
35	Patrick	4	63	113	501	400	388	2	13	9	9	7	31	23	22	3	16	13	13				125	561	445	432	6.9		
36	Pittsylvania	133	582	689	3015	2723	2657	26	139	121	116	142	740	701	616	23	110	106	105	3	12	12	8	883	4016	3663	3502	6.0	
37	Powhatan	2	21	35	161	137	136	1	7	7	7	5	24	22	22					3	14	14	14	44	206	180	179	8.5	
38	Pulaski	1	12	16	70	56	56					3	18	16	16	1	6	6	6					20	94	78	78	6.5	
39	Prince William	15	232	215	931	844	808	10	59	51	47	76	331	272	247	24	121	110	109	3	12	5	5	328	1454	1282	1216	5.2	
40	Rappahannock	6	77	46	199	186	171	5	27	22	22	17	75	71	59					1	5	5	5	69	306	284	257	3.3	
41	Richmond City	5	57	54	241	211	210	1	3	1	1	10	51	49	49	2	11	11	11					67	306	272	271	4.8	
42	Richmond	1	18	8	36	35	35	1	6	5	5	1	5	4	4	1	4	4	4					11	51	48	48	2.7	
43	Rockbridge	2	19	13	31	31	31	4	18	18	18	2	12	12	12	15	65	22	22					34	126	83	83	4.4	
44	Roanoke	3	63	62	271	219	197	6	36	42	35	20	98	73	58	5	25	16	13	2	8	8	6	95	438	358	309	4.9	
45	Shenandoah	1	5	6	27	24	20					2	12	12	11									8	39	36	31	6.2	
46	Spotsylvania	3	45	45	197	185	185	1	6	6	6	17	73	72	71	11	55	54	54	1	4	3	3	75	335	320	319	7.1	
47	Stafford/Fred'burg City	14	133	95	411	354	349	4	20	18	15	63	280	242	234	16	29	19	18	1	6	0	0	179	746	633	616	4.6	
48	Stafford	1	9	15	65	53	53																	15	65	53	53	5.9	
49	Warren	4	173	118	507	347	309	2	12	10	10	97	448	341	309	20	80	73	72					237	1047	771	700	4.0	
50	Westmoreland	4	74	96	430	401	396	2	7	5	5	7	28	26	26									105	465	432	427	5.8	
51	York	7	109	110	497	411	363	10	48	31	31	0	0	0	0	16	74	66	58	4	21	19	19	140	640	527	471	4.3	

TOTALS 456 5293 5101 21681 19683 18011 210 1044 862 829 1719 8216 7012 6557 460 2055 1717 1645 111 358 265 248 7601 33354 28939 27287 5.2

## Introducing Newly Elected Board Members and Secretary

### Mike Bishop, Board Member

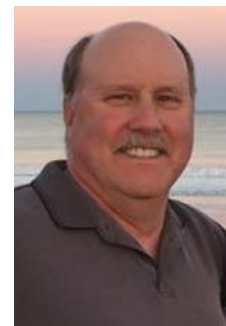
**Where do you live?** I live in Centreville and have been a Virginia resident all my life. I have a small cottage on the Chesapeake Bay and spend much of the summer there enjoying the vast biodiversity it offers.

**Why did you want to get involved?** I wanted to get involved because of my love of sharing the natural world with others and using my passion for native birds to get others to actively participate in the conservation of them.

**What is your favorite outdoor activity?** That's a tough one. My favorite activity is researching an interesting species of American animal and traveling back roads until I find it in the wild.

**One goal you have for this upcoming year:** My goal for 2020 will be to enhance the 3 Bluebird trails and 22 Purple Martin colonies I established and monitor to achieve the highest occupancy possible.

**What do you wish more people knew about you?** That's an even tougher question but I guess it would be that I'm not a detail type person. I like to see the big picture and live by the motto, 'Let's give it a try, if it doesn't work, we'll try something else and see what does work.' That drives some folks crazy that like definitive plans of action. Working in public safety for 37 years, I learned to make it work.



### Jane Hesler, Board Member

**Where do you live?** I live in southern Chesterfield county. It is a semi rural area.

**Why did you want to get involved?**

In 2011, my husband and I became Virginia Master Naturalists, Pocahontas State Park chapter. We volunteered to monitor the new blue bird trail that was established with the help of Barbara Chambers. We soon were hooked watching the complete life cycle of these amazing birds. My husband got busy making nest boxes and within two years we had two trails of about 25 boxes each.

**What is your favorite outdoor activity?** My favorite outdoor activity is walking and hiking.

**One goal you have for this upcoming year:** Our trails have been hit by predation in the last couple years from black snakes and wasps, in spite of our guards against them. Our fledge numbers have been down and I would like to solve this problem.

**What do you wish more people knew about you?** I have hiked for years in Europe and the US. I love snowshoeing and have taken trips to Canada and Italy, as well as throughout the US. My favorite trip was to Yellowstone in the winter where we stayed in yurts for a week and witnessed temperatures of 25 below zero. Certainly no bluebirds then but we saw abundant wildlife, including wolves.



### Sandy Jeter, Secretary

**Where do you live?** I grew up in Wheaton Maryland and moved to Prince William County VA in 1984.

**Why did you want to get involved?** After being introduced to our bluebird trail, my eyes were opened to the wonderful world of bluebirds.

**What is your favorite outdoor activity?** One of my many favorite outdoor activity's is hiking. My next favorite is taking outdoor pictures.

**One goal you have for this upcoming year:** To improve our Northern Virginia Community College, Manassas Campus bluebird trail with some bluebird nest box replacements and some repairs.

**What do you wish more people knew about you?** That I enjoy working on a team and can always find a positive way to view the world.



## Award Recipients at Biennial Meeting and Conference, continued from page 2

### Virginia Bluebird Society Volunteer of the Year, Judy Hall, presented by Valerie Kenyon Gaffney

This award is given to an individual who helps to promote and enhance VBS. By giving of their time and energy, this individual helps VBS and the bluebird to grow and flourish in Virginia. The 2019 recipient of the Virginia Bluebird Society Volunteer of the Year award is a woman who, after completing the Virginia Master Naturalist program, began monitoring bluebird nest boxes at Pocahontas State Park. In 2016, in part to meet her required Master Naturalist volunteer hours, Judy Hall accepted the position of editor of the VBS newsletter, *The Bird Box*. If you've never edited a newsletter, you cannot begin to appreciate the level of hard work and commitment that goes into producing a newsletter the caliber of ours. Through Judy's amazing powers of persuasion, gathering articles from board members and others, coupled with her very accomplished editing skills, Judy publishes a thrice yearly newsletter that keeps us well informed of what's happening in our organization. Judy Hall does a fantastic job helping VBS and the bluebird to grow and flourish in Virginia.



## Camp Chiricahua Birding

By Baxter Beamer, Recipient of the 2019 Young Birders Scholarship

For a young birder, spending a week in the Arizona heat among the Chiricahua mountains is like Christmas in July. This was certainly the case for my experience at Camp Chiricahua, a ten-day young birder camp run by Victor Emmanuel Nature Tours.

This camp truly exceeded my wildest dreams, expectations that I had created years before when I first started birding. Back then, older young birders spoke of Camp Chiricahua with words of the highest praise. I am proud to join their ranks. Camp Chiricahua provided an exquisite experience of immersion in natural beauty in one of the most biodiverse areas on the continent, in one of the most scenic settings that anyone, birder or not, could ask for.

Nearly more impressive than the birds we saw were the landscapes: expansive desert and mesquite scrub framed by dramatic cliffs and mountains, peaks encrusted with towering evergreens, and wetter riparian forest along the essential waterways; all existing under the beating July sun. From the perspective of an Easterner, this arid new world was almost alien.

The birds themselves were breathtaking and unique. Blue-throated Hummingbirds zipped past as we watched Pyrrhuloxias and Bridled Titmice, Elegant Trogons and Sulphur-bellied Flycatchers called in the forests, and Elf Owls and Common Poorwills serenaded us at night. We managed to find all of the local Chiricahua specialties, and I have the t-shirt to prove it! We totaled 190 species of birds, the majority of which were local breeding residents. Fifty of these were life birds for me.

The camaraderie was unparalleled. Our guides, Michael O'Brien, Louise Zemaitas, and Jennie Duberstein brought expertise, guidance, and humor to the camp. I couldn't imagine better leadership. The campers were like-minded bird enthusiasts (a few of whom were familiar faces to me) from all around the country and the world! One camper who hailed all the way from Panama gave me an opportunity to refresh my Spanish. To everyone new and old from Camp Chiricahua, I hope our paths will cross again.

These are memories that will always stick with me. I'm sure every birder remembers the first time they visit the Chiricahua mountains. I consider myself incredibly fortunate that I got to experience this beautiful area for the first time at this incredible camp.

I offer my heartfelt thanks to the Virginia Bluebird Society for awarding me a scholarship towards Camp Chiricahua. I hope these words give you a sliver of the experience you helped provide me with. Thank you.



*One of the iconic birds spotted during the week, a Painted Redstart bathes in a creek.*

## Virginia Bluebird Society Grants & Scholarship

Does your local nest box trail need some work? Nest boxes need replacing? Found the ideal location for a new trail, but lack the funds for equipment? Know a 4-H group, a Boy or Girl Scout troop in need of a project for community service hours? How about an elementary school science teacher, trying to incorporate outdoor learning in their classroom experience? Imagine if they could have a nest box with a video camera wired into the library. Know a young birder in your organization who wants to attend a workshop or summer camp, but is short on funds? VBS recently upgraded the application process for our grants and scholarships to make it easier to apply, and faster to receive approval. Check us out at <http://www.virginiabluebirds.org/about-vbs/grant-programs/>

## VBS Store: CAPS FOR SALE

and not just caps! Our VBS store has t-shirts, sweatshirts, water bottles, greeting cards and more all updated with the new logo including our Eastern Shore! Go to the VBS website, [www.virginiabluebirds.org](http://www.virginiabluebirds.org), and click on "Shop."

**Attention shutterbugs:** Please send in your BB photos to be featured on the greeting cards in our VBS store! You'll be credited on the card (if you'd like).

**Variety is the spice of life!** Got a great cavity nester photo? Send it in to add to our VBS greeting card selection. You'll be credited on the card (if you'd like).

Do you have a flair for selecting merchandise, an eye for a great photo, or a talent for graphics? We're looking for a **new Shopkeeper** for our VBS store.



Newsletter of the  
**Virginia Bluebird Society**  
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Our email address is:  
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If you have a new email address, or have recently changed it, please let us know.

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We welcome your written items and artwork (photos and drawings) for *The Bird Box*.  
Email your materials to Judy Hall.

# The Bluebird Advisor

By Christine Boran and Anne Little



## Feeding Bluebirds

**Q: I love feeding the bluebirds and all the other birds, too. How far away from my bluebird nest box should I place my bird feeders?**

**A:** During the nesting season—generally in Virginia that is early March through end of August—the cavity nesting birds using our nest boxes are territorial and protective of their nests with eggs and young. When the young are hatched and growing inside the nest box, the parent birds are very busy feeding, guarding, and chasing away other species that come too close to their nest. The guarding of the nest box by the parents can force them to expend a lot of energy. During the fledging process, it's even more stressful for the parent birds. This is true for all native species using your nest boxes, not just the bluebirds. It is important to put a good amount of space between bird feeding stations and an active nesting in your nest box to alleviate this stress. The recommended spacing is 75-100 feet (or more) between feeding stations and the nest box. A tip: put the nest box on one side of your yard and the feeders on the opposite side – you can use a building, such as your house, a barn, etc., as a barrier where each location is hidden from the other. If you can, set these up so you can watch from the windows of your home and enjoy both activities of bird watching! It helps to have a tree or shrubs in the vicinity of both feeders and nest box for perching and cover. Remember, too, not to have any of the tree or shrub branches overhanging or too close to the nest box to keep predators from accessing the nest box.

*Do you have a question for the next newsletter's Bluebird Advisor? Send it to [woolwinehouse@gmail.com](mailto:woolwinehouse@gmail.com)*

## 26th Annual Purple Martin Field Day

**Date: Saturday, June 27, 2020**

**Time: Presentations begin at 11:00 a.m. Events end at 3:00 p.m.**

**Location: A private farm in Louisa County, VA (central VA about 70 miles NW of Richmond)**

How do you attract Purple Martins? At this event on the farm of Mrs. Merle Wood and her son, Purple Martin expert Lance Wood, you will learn the habitat martins require, and how to protect birds from predators. You'll see a spectacular martin colony that has grown from 4 martin pairs in 1992 to over 120 pairs! Buy gourd seeds and learn to modify them to create Purple Martin homes. Come and join the fun!

No registration. Admission is FREE, but donations are appreciated to help cover expenses.

Bring lawn chairs, shoes for wet grass, binoculars, notepad, bag lunch/drink, and camera. No pets, please.

**DIRECTIONS, PHOTOS & MORE INFORMATION:**  
[www.purplemartinfieldday.org](http://www.purplemartinfieldday.org)

Questions? Call Kathy Laine at (434) 222-1831 and leave your name and phone number.



*Purple Martin feeding nestlings  
Photo by Kathy Laine*

## Mark Your Calendars

- March 1** Clean out nesting materials added in the fall.
- March 11-15** NABS Conference, Kearney, Nebraska <http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org/events/>
- March 28** VBS Board Meeting, 10:00 am in Charlottesville; all county coordinators are invited. Email Valerie Gaffney.
- April 1** Begin monitoring bluebird nest boxes.
- April 15** Remove ventilation plugs from nest boxes.
- May 30** Deadline for submitting articles, photos, ideas, and artwork for Summer newsletter
- June 27** Purple Martin Field Day, Louisa County; see page 7 for information.

Check out our *Facebook* page <https://www.facebook.com/Virginia-Bluebird-Society-133048243442687/> for photos and videos throughout the year, and follow us on *Twitter* at [https://twitter.com/VA\\_Bluebirds](https://twitter.com/VA_Bluebirds).

## How To Join

Send your name, address, phone number and/or email address along with a check for **\$10** for an individual with an emailed newsletter, **\$15** for an individual with a mailed print newsletter, **\$15** for a family with an emailed newsletter, or **\$20** for a family with a mailed print newsletter, to:

**Virginia Bluebird Society**  
**726 William Street**  
**Fredericksburg VA 22401**

Membership forms are available on the VBS web site: <http://www.virginiabluebirds.org>

## Send An Article to The Bird Box

*We welcome articles and photos from our active VBS members. We want to share our success stories from your home and your trails. Send your original articles, photos, or artwork, or suggest a topic for a future newsletter. Submit materials to Judy Hall, Editor, at [birdboxeditor@gmail.com](mailto:birdboxeditor@gmail.com) May 30 to be considered for the Summer newsletter. Please include your contact information, location, identification of people and birds in photos, and name of photographer.*



**Virginia Bluebird Society**  
**726 William Street**  
**Fredericksburg VA 22401**