



The Bird Box

Summer 2011

VBS Needs State Fair Volunteers

The State Fair of Virginia will be held Sept 29 through Oct 9th this year. The fair is located in Caroline County just off I-95, next to Kings Dominion. We have maintained an exhibit during the Fair for the past two years. It's a great way to get out our message for conserving the bluebirds.

Our exhibit at the State Fair attracts a large number of people. This year will be especially busy because of a wonderful initiative we've undertaken with the help of the fair authorities. The school children attending the fair will have a VBS question on their worksheet. Teachers have been given material in their "Fair Packet" which pertains to this question, and they will be discussing it with their students before they arrive at the fair.

We need volunteers to man the VBS table at the fair to answer the students' questions as well as adult queries about cavity nesters and bluebirds, and also to explain what our organization does for our communities.

VBS members in Caroline County and surrounding areas are especially encouraged to volunteer their time.

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Beth Elkins. Beth_elkins@yahoo.com 540-775-2464

'The Bluebird of Happiness' VA License Plate

Motorists in Virginia have a new opportunity to show how much they care about Virginia's wildlife by being one of the first to drive away with the latest in the series of Virginia Wildlife Conservationist License Plates, *The Bluebird of Happiness*. Not only will drivers have a chance to show everyone they care about wildlife, but they will also help increase public awareness about the importance of preserving and protecting Virginia's diverse natural resources.

After the first 1,000 Bluebird plates have been purchased, the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) will receive \$15 of the \$25 additional annual fee. In 2010, the Wildlife Conservationist License Plate series generated \$369,420 for DGIF's conservation efforts. The proceeds are reinvested in wildlife management, research, educational programs, and for purchasing public lands that benefit all wildlife while assuring that outdoor opportunities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, boating, and wildlife watching will be enjoyed by Virginians and by future generations.



Anne Little and Steve Living with new license plate release

The artwork for the new Bluebird Wildlife Conservationist License Plate was designed and executed by the nationally renowned wildlife artist and conservationist, Spike Knuth. He has been painting birds in their natural habitat since the 1950s and has five state waterfowl duck stamps to his credit. After 29 years of service, Spike retired from DGIF where his paintings, writings and photography highlighted the beauty of the wildlife and nature in a multitude of publications, including *Virginia Wildlife Magazine*, the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail guides, posters, and brochures. He has donated more than 460 original paintings and nearly 100 prints to Ducks Unlimited and other conservation organizations to support fundraising efforts.

DGIF Executive Director and avid birder Bob Duncan predicts, "*The Bluebird of Happiness* (the eighth in the Wildlife Conservationist License Plate series), will be one of our best-selling plates." Since 1991, the DGIF and the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) have worked hand-in-hand to develop the very popular series of wildlife license plates. The complete wildlife series includes Mallard Duck, White-Tailed Deer, Wild Turkey, Bald Eagle, and many more. All are currently available through DMV offices.

The Virginia Bluebird Society (VBS), a DGIF conservation partner, was thrilled to hear of this addition to the Conservationist License Plate series. "The Bluebird is emblematic of conservation success in Virginia and this plate celebrates that success," said Anne Little, President of the Virginia Bluebird Society. To date, with the support of DGIF, VBS has helped to fledge over 158,000 cavity-nesting birds through their Bluebird Box Trails.

To learn more about the DGIF Wildlife Conservationist License Plates visit <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/plates/> or The Virginia Bluebird Society <http://www.virginiabluebirds.org>. *Lee Walker*



Barb Chamber's new license plate

The Bird Box

Issue 13.1

Newsletter of the
Virginia Bluebird Society
www.virginiabluebirds.org

Our e-mail address is:
vbs@virginiabluebirds.org

If you have a new e-mail 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!*
E-mail your materials to Pallav Das.

Bluebirds All Around

The Twin Springs Elementary School at Danville has a Bluebird Trail on school grounds. It was started by the school's Ecology Club (4th and 5th graders) about eight years ago. The students put together the ten boxes and also helped put them up. Several classrooms helped monitor the boxes for several years.

The boxes eventually fell into disrepair as they were built from pine and had shingled roofs. Moreover, they had no protective guards of any kind, and as a part of the trail was around a pond, they occasionally fell victim to black snake predation. Several of the boxes played host to flying squirrels who redecorated the boxes by chewing the holes larger.



Old BB box

The Twin Springs Bluebird Trail needed help and it came in the shape of a generous grant from the Virginia Bluebird Society. We installed twelve new



New BB box

boxes on the trail and sure enough the Bluebirds, Carolina Chickadees, Tree Swallows and House Wrens immediately began inhabiting them! Already, we have active Eastern Bluebird nests, active Carolina Chickadee nests, one active Tree Swallow nest and one active House Wren nest. The Tree Swallow, in fact, is a new bird to the schoolyard and probably would not have even given us a second glance without the new box!

Not surprisingly, now there's a buzz about the birds at Twin Springs Elementary. Classrooms are asking to be active monitors again and the teachers are excited and pleased with the new additions. The refurbished Bluebird Trail at Twin Springs will be a tremendous asset to the local bluebird habitat and the community for years to come. *Mary Foster*

VBS Awards – Any Recommendations?

Virginia Bluebird Society is an organization, which runs on the love that people have in conserving Bluebirds and other cavity nesters, and their habitat. Our volunteers are the life-blood of VBS. Our members' work is done away from the limelight, in the quiet company of nature. We realize that extra effort deserves recognition. That is why we've instituted awards to applaud the hard work put in by our members. Following is the list of awards. Please contact Barb Chambers before 10/1 to nominate someone for an award. Awards will be given Nov 5th.

County Coordinator of the Year - A county coordinator's job is to collect the data for the county and pass it on to VBS. A county coordinator who goes the extra mile such as write newspaper articles or do speaking engagements, these are the county coordinators that deserve special recognition.

Bluebirder of the Year – This award is given to the individual who promotes bluebirds by outreach to schools, & community groups; promoting good bluebird management techniques; and helping others to love and care for the bluebird.

Volunteer of the Year – This award is given to an individual who helps promote and enhance VBS. By giving of their time and energy, this individual helps VBS and the bluebird to grow and flourish in VA.

The VBS "Heritage Award" - This award is not given every year by our organization. It 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.

Virginia's First Eggs in 2011

I must admit that I was sure Virginia's first nestbox egg for 2011 would be from a Carolina chickadee. Not so! It was a Bluebird in a box on a Henry County trail managed by Jim Philpot, down on the North Carolina border. It was reported on March 21st. Jimmy and Carol Doyle are the county coordinators, there and their own first egg was also a bluebird. It came in fifth on March 25th. Henry County is just west of Danville.

I heard from 27 different trails, covering 17 different dates, March 21 to April 19. Kaycee Licklighter got it all started when she reported a first bluebird egg on her trail on March 22nd. Her Clarke County trail came in second. Kaycee's Blandy Farm trail is off State Route 50 in northern Virginia, east of Winchester. That's a long way from the Virginia-North Carolina border!

There is a map of all of the Virginia counties on the VBS website under the county coordinator's button. Scroll to the bottom of that list and you will find the map there.

I really think we can't, and don't, see a progression up the state from South to North, because these bluebirds, and our other cavity nesters, are not migratory birds. They stay around all winter and so can be right there when it is time to nest. Remember, Virginia bluebirds tend to select their boxes in February!

So, how do we explain what's happening? I think the older, more experienced birds are claiming a nestbox and starting to nest and breed as soon as they are ready. They are right there to claim "their" box. The later nesting birds could be from last year's fledglings, perhaps, and they have no experience -- except as helpers! Probably that's why we see infertile eggs in those nests. The experienced birds have an edge, and they nest first and early. This, of course, is mere conjecture on my part.

Here is the list of the dates and locations from those that sent in their First Egg dates. (EABL is an Eastern bluebird; CACH is a Carolina chickadee; and CAWR is a Carolina wren.)

How does YOUR trail compare to these dates for the first eggs?

Barbara Chambers, State County Coordinator

Date	Bird	County	Name
3/21	EABL	Henry	Jim Philpot
3/22	EABL	Clarke	Kaycee Lickliter
3/23	EABL	Greene	Pat Wilczek
3/24	EABL	Fauquier	Cindy Shea
3/25	EABL	Henry	Jimmy Doyle
3/25	EABL	Rockbridge	Steve Kveck
3/27	EABL	Patrick	Christine Boran
3/27	EABL	Williamsburg	Sara Lewis
3/28	EABL	Culpeper	Barb Tracy
3/30	EABL	Fairfax	Phil Gbur
3/31	EABL	Shenandoah	Steve Morlan
3/31	EABL	Lancaster	Tom Teeples
4/2	EABL	Fairfax	Lee Martin
4/4	EABL	Rappahannock	B Patterson
4/4	EABL	Fairfax	J Kennedy
4/4	CAWR	Botetourt	T. Evans
4/9	EABL	Runnymede	Ron Frost
4/10	EABL	Fairfax	Anna Goddard
4/11	EABL	Fairfax	Suzanne Miller
4/11	EABL	Fairfax	Sean Duffy
4/13	EABL	Fairfax	Lentz Wheeler
4/13	EABL	Fairfax	J. Connors
4/17	EABL	Fairfax	Bill Brown
4/19	CACH	Fairfax	Gail Moeller

Research Project

Bob Peak of Henderson, KY a member of the North American Bluebird Society since 1990 is doing some research on the incidence of *white* bluebird eggs in various parts of North America. He is particularly interested in the percentage of white eggs that bluebird trail monitors/managers have discovered over the course of time. He would appreciate any data you would be willing to share. You can email Bob at blubrds@bellsouth.net if you have any white eggs to report.

Brown-headed Nuthatches in Southside VA

The bluebird efforts in Southside Virginia are off to a great start this year. In late February, we had our annual monitor meeting and training day. An important point we focus on during this meeting is how to identify the different nests that one might find in a bluebird box. Our most important instruction is to NEVER allow a House Sparrow to nest in our boxes. Additionally, this year, we asked the monitors to keep an eye out for the Brown-headed Nuthatch (BHNU) nests.



Egg and nestling stages

Upon doing a little research on our sprightly little nuthatch, I found that they had been put on the watch list for the Audubon Society. In the past 35 years, their numbers have dropped by 45%, which is really troubling. BHNUs need a very specific habitat, which consists of open, mature loblolly and longleaf slash pine forest. They particularly like the presence of snags and stumps and thrive in open understory rather than dense undergrowth. These birds are showing up in parks and neighborhoods that have large live pines in open areas. BHNUs readily feed on suet, sunflower chips and peanuts. Here in Southern Virginia, they are beginning to use our bluebird boxes for nesting.

Two years ago two successful nestings were reported and all nine, baby nuthatches fledged. Last year three nests were built and eggs were laid in them. Bluebirds, however, built over the nuthatch nest with eggs and raised their own families. In light of the decreasing numbers of the BHNUs and our overwhelming increase of bluebirds in the area, I asked that the monitors notify me at the first sign of a BHNU nest. I had purchased a plate with an 1 1/4" hole, which would

keep the larger bluebirds from interfering with their nest. Surprisingly, the very first BHNH nest showed up in my own backyard!

In early March, they began building a very tidy nest with strips of bark and a few leaves. Right away, the bluebirds came along to claim the same box. Feeling very guilty (local bluebird lady that I am), I got my husband to put the smaller hole-plate on the box. We watched the bluebirds continue to try in vain to get in the box for several days, while our feisty little nuthatch buzzed their heads until they finally gave up. After building and building and building, I began to wonder if they were ever going to lay any eggs! They even stuffed the ventilation holes along the top of the box with strips of bark. I checked the house on March 28th . . . nothing. Then, I had my husband to check on the 29th to see if they had laid their first egg, and he said there was a "pile of eggs". Sure enough there were 6 tiny cream eggs with reddish brown spots and I realized they had been covering their eggs until they were through. I checked again a week later to see if all was well and there were 7 eggs! So incubation began on the 30th of March.

Both parents were seen going and coming from the nest box during incubation and at times both would stay in the box together. We watched and waited and they hatched April 13th, 14 days after the last egg was laid. Once the babies hatched the activity picked up. They were both busy feeding, but the amazing part to watch was how well they defended the nest, not letting any bird come even close. They also took advantage of my bird feeders all winter and spring. The feeders were located within 25 ft. of their box and the birds monopolized the feeders completely. It was amazing to see the tiny BHNUs harass any woodpecker that came to the suet feeder. Even the Red-bellied Woodpeckers were buzzed and chased from the yard. The parents were seen gathering insects from the bark on my pines as well as carrying suet, nuts and shelled sunflower seeds to the nest. They knew they had a good thing going with multiple feeders and three sources of water within sight. Today, as I write this article my box is finally silent as all 7 babies have fledged. For a week, though, the box sounded like it contained squeaky dog toys and I was surprised they did not fledge until day twenty-two.

I hope this will encourage a few more bluebirders to look out for our Brown-headed nuthatches. I will clean out the box today and replace the 1 1/2" hole plate, once again putting out the welcome mat for my beautiful blues. My bluebirds will still have time for a couple of nests before the end of summer. *Vickie Fuquay*



Brown-headed nuthatches



Brown-headed nuthatch nestlings

My Experiment with Plastic Gourds

I have been observing bird behavior on my nest box trail in the Blue Ridge Mountains for quite some time now, and one particular observation has stood out. Along many a bluebird box trail riddled with tree swallows, there almost always seems to be one box that, when paired with another box, has the perfect bluebird fledgling habitat in one direction, and simply empty spaces perhaps to the northwest, in the other direction.

In the past we have hosted purple martins in plastic gourds. These chicks stay in the nest for over three weeks, and are able to fly so much better and farther than any bluebird fledgling. The memory of those images prompted us to try an experiment with these beautiful acrobatic tree swallows.

We ordered a pack of four bluebird gourds from the Purple Martin Catalogue. Could tree swallows be lured to a gourd, away from a preferred bluebird box? Swallows need a roomier nest as they test their wings before fledging. We didn't know what to expect.

This is how our experiment unfolded. Whenever we found a bluebird pair losing out to swallows this past spring, we placed a bluebird gourd twelve or so feet away from that box. Each and every time, the swallows immediately abandoned the wooden box to claim the hanging gourd. The gourds faced ponds, deep hayfields, the northwest, or large areas too risky for a bluebird fledgling to make a safe landing. We, obviously, were not able to hang around our trails constantly to care for bluebird fledglings as they emerged, but it was a comfort knowing they were in the best housing, with their entrance holes facing good BB fledgling habitat.

We were pleasantly surprised by the results of our experiment, and we want to build on this year's experience. First, we want to figure out a better way to hang these new "tree swallow gourds". We would like to have a better arrangement than our hastily jimmied leftover fence posts, nailed on 2X4s and utility metal brackets. Also, in hindsight, it may have been better to face the entrance hole opposite from the post for better predator protection. A wide ring of hardware cloth is firmly stapled around the wooden posts to deter snakes.

Has anyone else ever tried keeping tree swallows away from a favorite bluebird nest box? Does anyone have an idea how to better hang these plastic gourds? They are, in fact, too heavy for the black flowerpot hanging poles found at the big box stores. Please share your experiences through this newsletter. May everyone have a wonderfully successful 2011, bluebird trail monitoring season!

Linda Kerns



Swallow claiming bluebird gourd

Book Review



'**Magic Summer of Blue Birds**' is a fascinating story of the relationship between a grandmother and her grandchildren and how she introduces them to the magical world of Bluebirds. Over an adventurous summer holiday, Grandma Nellis reads every day to the kids about the slowly unfolding lives of a bluebird pair and how they establish their home on Green Ridge Drive on Baker City, Oregon. The book is appropriate as a "read-to-me" book from about four years old. VBS members and other lovers of bluebirds would particularly appreciate the loving way in which the whole concept of bird conservation has been made accessible to young kids, including how to build and put up nest boxes! Young readers, especially those who visit grandparents for extended periods in summer, may find this a very satisfying self-read book through grade five.

'**Magic Summer of Bluebirds**' is based upon a journal actually kept about the "natural doings" around a home in the U.S. Pacific Northwest. Observations were written by a young woman who is now recounting blue bird stories, thirty plus years later, to her grandchildren. The journal includes daily activities of bluebirds and introduces key constructs and descriptions of "habitat," "perils," "starlings and English sparrows," and "bluebird trails." The book is lucidly written by Lucille and Miki Nellis, and charmingly illustrated by Tom Novak. It's available from Buffalo Creek Press, Cleburne, Texas.

'**Magic Summer**' is a cut above regular picture books. It has potential for inspiring children, and adults, to be patient when in nature and to observe its wonders over an extended period of time. The story is worthy of many re-reads as it offers varied paths a skilled reader can explore with children. One of the subtle pluses is that a child may be encouraged to keep a daily journal of activities and observations so that they, too, may recount adventures many years later. The landscapes and the bird drawings are especially appealing.

Reviewer's warning: if the reader is not knowledgeable of plants and animals of the Pacific Northwest, please review the glossary BEFORE reading to children. *V.K. Fry*

Territorial Bluebird Battle

One April evening, while preparing dinner, I glanced out back and was startled to see four Eastern Bluebirds engaged in battle! It was both aerial and ground combat and not a pretty sight. Grabbing my binoculars and camera (point and shoot Sony), I raced outside.



Bluebird territorial battle

Awfully occupied with their struggles, the birds paid little attention to me as I approached. Two males fought each other and two females did the same, and at one point a male watched from a low fence as the females skirmished on the ground. It appeared that one female might actually become seriously wounded as the other pinned her down. Mouths were agape as they attempted to peck at each other. This confrontation of the bluebird couples lasted at least twenty minutes until it appeared that one couple had won the property rights.



The battle rages on

And now for the rest of the story -- shortly thereafter, a female laid six lovely blue eggs, in an old nest box, just 100 feet from the newly erected one that I thought was the reason for the battle. Both were bluebird boxes, but one was old, on a wooden pole, and had a holly tree with its branches encroaching on three sides. Last year we had Carolina Chickadees successfully nest there. Not a good place for bluebirds, I thought.

One morning we discovered that disaster had struck the old box! Grass nesting material had been pulled through the entrance completely blocking the hole and the eleven-day old hatchlings were missing. Predator, unknown! Lesson learned -- use baffle and entrance guard.

A week or so later a second pair of bluebirds made a nest and laid four eggs in the new box on a metal pole on the edge of the golf course, where the battle had taken place. Happily, I can report that all seems well with the second new box nest and four hatchlings. Hopefully, we'll be able to watch the adults teach their fledglings to come to our suction cup window feeder for homemade gorp suet, just as many bluebirds did all winter.

Trying to watch and help our backyard nesting birds can certainly be an emotional roller coaster ride, as many birders will agree! *Marjorie Ludwig, Pinehurst, NC*



New bluebird box tenants

The Answer Lady

Question: We have had a chickadee nest abandoned this past April because of a Carpenter Bee getting into the box. What can be done about these pests? They are large and noisy!

Answer: Dear Reader, I too have had Carpenter Bees in my boxes, but not in the nest itself, so a little on-line research was called for. I found good information at Clemson Extension Service. The Latin name for these Carpenter Bees is, *Xylocopa virginica*,! This bee resembles the Bumble Bee but without the yellow, or any hairs, on its abdomen (see drawings).



Carpenter Bee
(abdomen is dark, shiny, and hairless)

Bumblebee

Photo Source: Dept. of Entomology, University of Kentucky

The female carpenter bee will bore a one half inch perfectly round hole into any unpainted wood, found outside, each spring during April and May, after she has mated. The male is territorial and more aggressive but has no stinger. The female does have a stinger but seldom uses it. She will lay her eggs in this tunnel she has excavated on your deck railing or nest box. In late summer the fully-grown bees will emerge, by digging through the wood plug the female had fashioned.

They are real pests! No redeeming qualities, frankly! One nest site will cause minor damage but repeated colonies over the years can cause major damage. The bee drills in for the half inch and then turns at 90 degrees and can drill another 4-6 inches! That would be the death-knell for a sturdy nest box! Whenever I've heard their buzzing at a box, I've tried to locate the hole and stuff it with a plug of masking tape! Wood putty would be fine too. They are both too sticky to drill out of. The buzzing is extremely loud and unmistakably that made by the Carpenter Bee. The member above, found the bee inside the box, in the nesting materials, putting the sticky pollen food into the moss at the base of the nest. So it had laid at least one egg. Wherever it is found, the Carpenter Bee is a predator. If they drill into a nest box, the pair of nesting adults will abandon it. They might even decide to leave their nestlings, there. In the above case, however, they abandoned the eggs and not just in one, but in two boxes, as another bee went into that too. It couldn't have been the first Carpenter bee, because they had killed it.

Summer 2011 Calendar

Sept 15-18 NABS Conference,
Jackson, TN.

www.nabluebirdsociety.org

Sept 29-Oct 9 – State Fair of
Virginia, Caroline County,
volunteers needed, contact Beth
Elkins, 540-775-2464

Beth_elkins@yahoo.com

Oct 1 – Deadline for nominations
for VBS awards. Send nominations
to Barb Chambers, 703 978-6609,

bj.chambers@cox.net

Oct 1 – Deadline for nominations
for VBS Board of Directors and
Officers. Send nominations to Paul
Davis, 434 361-0141,

davis138@aol.com In addition

Nominations by any member in
good standing may also be made
from the floor at our bi-annual
meeting on November 6th.

Oct 7,8 & 9- Eastern Shore Birding
and Wildlife Festival, Cape Charles,
VA

November 6 – Bi-Annual VBS
Conference, Fredericksburg
Virginia. 8:30-2:00 p.m.

Registration info available on our
website and forms will also be
mailed to members, or contact Anne
Little, 540 207-4298,
thegate@cox.net



BB eggs on the Sky Meadows trail

New Bluebird Trail at Sky Meadows State Park

The Shenandoah Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists has created a new bluebird trail at Sky Meadows State Park. It consists of 69 bluebird nest boxes divided into 5 trail sections consisting of from 12 to 20 boxes for each section.

In the summer of 2010, Timothy Skinner, the park manager, Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), requested our chapter to rejuvenate the existing trail. Through extensive research and planning, advice from other trail managers and previous experience, our chapter devised a plan that evolved to the present new trail, taking into consideration the parameters of the State Park, the Virginia Bluebird Society (VBS) and Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

In several workshop sessions, VMN volunteers constructed 40 new bluebird boxes, noel guards and snake guards, funded by the state park based on VBS plans (another nine boxes were donated). In the initial stages of the project we were approached by a local scout leader who enquired if one of the scouts could volunteer with us to earn his Eagle badge. Anthony Fala, the young scout, proposed to build and install an additional 20 nest boxes for the trail. The park agreed to extend the area for installing nest boxes in a new location. Anthony, then, applied for and received funding from VBS for the 20 nest boxes.



Scouts install box at Sky Meadows

Upon surveying the site and coordinating with the park, survey flags were set for each nest box location for approval by the park before installation. VMN volunteers and the scout with his team were able to construct and install all 69 boxes complete with guards before the first monitoring date of the season.

There are two sections of the trail (Tree Swallow Lane and Bluebird Meadow) that have paired boxes following the plan of the original trail on the West side of the park in hopes of attracting Eastern Bluebirds and Tree Swallows together. The three additional new trail sections in the park are single spaced (300 feet apart) in exceptionally good habitat for bluebirds. They are on the Gap Run and Rolling Meadows/Hayfield hiking trails along creeks with open meadows and scattered trees or tree lines.

There are 24 monitoring volunteers scheduled on a rotating basis to monitor the 5 trail sections weekly, entering their observations in the trail forms. Monitoring started on March 25th. To date we have eleven active bluebird boxes and two tree swallow boxes with nests with eggs or nestlings. The first egg date for the first nest box with Eastern Bluebird eggs was April 15th.

This wonderful bluebird trail is proof of what can be accomplished by the coordinated efforts of many conservation groups working together, possible funding, established data and protocols, great volunteer effort and the desire for conservation of our native cavity nesters. Virginia Master Naturalists are dedicated to the conservation of Virginia's natural resources.

Please visit the bluebird trail at Sky Meadows State Park and enjoy the beauty of the trail and nature. **Margaret Wester** Virginia Master Naturalist (VMN) Sky Meadows Bluebird Trail (SKBT) Manager

Virginia Bluebird Society Bi-Annual Conference in November

The 2011 Virginia Bluebird Society (VBS) State Conference will be held on Saturday, November 5th, in Fredericksburg, VA. Every other year, VBS holds a statewide conference in different locations around the state, in an effort to connect with all of our members. This year, the Conference will be held in historic downtown Fredericksburg, VA. The conference will run from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The \$20 registration fee includes breakfast, lunch and all programs for the entire day. Special hotel rates are available for the conference.

Our morning speaker will be Steve Holmer Director of Bird Conservation Alliance, through the American Bird Conservancy. His topic will be, "The Western Bluebird Recovery Effort in the San Juan Islands in Washington State". In the afternoon, David Mitchell who is a master bird bander, will tell us about bird banding here in Virginia and the involvement of the Virginia Bluebird Society in those efforts.

I hope you will join us for a great day of education and camaraderie with other interested bluebirders. All are welcome! It is not necessary to be a member of VBS to attend this conference. Please go to our website www.virginiabluebirds.org to get more details and a registration form. If VBS has your email address, we will be sending the info out in the next few weeks via email. Otherwise you will receive the conference info via regular mail. Hope to see you all in November for a great conference.



Virginia Bluebird Society
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**DATED
MATERIAL**