

The Bird Box Bird Box

Fall 2023 Newsletter of the
Virginia Bluebird Society www.virginiabluebirds.org

November Meeting - Save the Date

Please join the Annual Meeting via Zoom if you cannot attend in person. We need your vote to have a quorum for our election. To attend via Zoom, click [here](#).

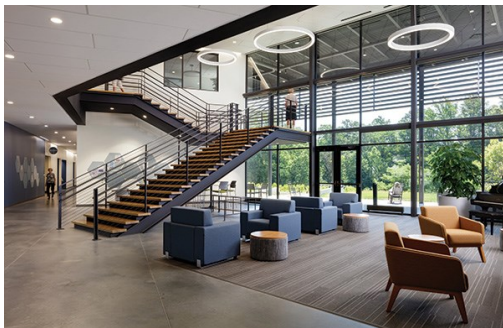
What: [Virginia Bluebird Society Annual Meeting](#)

When: Saturday, November 4, 2023, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Where: The Center at Belvedere (<https://thecentercville.org/>)
540 Belvedere Blvd
Charlottesville, VA

Agenda Items:

- Business Meeting
- Election of 2024 Officers and Board Members (see Slate of Officers below, and at [Board Candidates November 4, 2023 — Virginia Bluebird Society](#))
- Vote on proposed amendments to VBS Bylaws (see Bylaws on page 4 and at [Summary of Proposed VBS Bylaws Changes June 2023.pdf - Google Drive](#))
- Discussion of 2024 VBS Biennial Conference, November 2024
- Doug Rogers' slide show of bluebird photos



The Center at Belvedere, Charlottesville, VA

Slate of Officers Election of 2024 VBS Officers and Board

The slate of candidates for 2024 VBS officers and board members is shown on the following page. These positions will be voted on at the November 4, 2023 Annual Meeting.

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The Bird Box Bird Box

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	Position	Candidate	Location
2024 Slate Of Officers	President	Valerie Kenyon Gafney	Prince William (NOVA)
	President-Elect	Barbara Katz	Fairfax (NOVA)
	VP- Education	Cathleen McGarvey	Pittsylvania
	VP-Trails	Dana Glenn	Roanoke
	Secretary	Carol Kaufman	Montgomery
	Treasurer	Mark Murphy	Fairfax (NOVA)
	Past President	Cathy Hindman	Prince William (NOVA)
	Director	Jen Kettelkamp	Rockingham
	Director	Pam Narney	Westmoreland
	Director	Doug Rogers	Albemarle
Director	Alison Davis-Holland	Arlington (NOVA)	

Valerie Kenyon Gafney, Incumbent Candidate for President



Valerie has been serving as VBS President since 2019 and is looking forward to serving VBS for another term. She is retired from a 25-year career with The Washington Post, is a Virginia Master Gardener, treasurer of Prince William Wildflower Society, a member of Centennial Garden Club, and Vice President of Lifelong Learning – Manassas. When not giving presentations on bluebirds to schools and community organizations she likes nothing more than immersing herself in a good book with Eleanor Rigby, her indoor cat, at her side.

Barbara Katz, Candidate for President-Elect



I have been a bird enthusiast for most of my adult life, and for about the last ten years I have welcomed bluebirds to my yard by maintaining bluebird nest boxes. It has been a great joy year after year to observe two, and sometimes three, clutches of bluebird eggs hatch and the nestlings successfully fledge. Two years ago I happily accepted an invitation to monitor the Nottoway Park bluebird trail in Vienna, Virginia. It was about then that I learned of and joined the Virginia Bluebird Society. I am an attorney licensed in California and the District of Columbia. In my prior life, I held a variety of jobs in the public sector, including California Indian Legal Services, the Office of the Solicitor for the United States Department of the Interior, and the Criminal Division of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Cathleen McGarvey, Candidate for Vice President - Education



Cathleen Drake McGarvey is a wife and mother of two children. She has been an educator for over 26 years and holds a B.S. in Elementary Education from SUNY College at Old Westbury. She is certified in Early/Primary Education PK-3 and Elementary Grades 3-6. Citizen Science and Environmental Stewardship have been an integral part of her classroom. She has been a bluebird monitor since 2013 and a Virginia Save Our Streams and local Water Quality Monitor in the Danville/Pittsylvania County area. She travels and teaches across elementary and middle schools as a STEM Teacher. She will work toward expanding the nest box program across the region and state in collaboration with Virginia Bluebird Society members.

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Dana Glenn, Candidate for Vice President - Trails



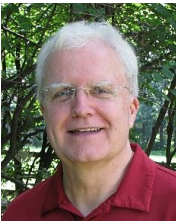
Dana Glenn is a retired middle school teacher from North Carolina. She is a North Carolina Certified Environmental Educator. She has been involved with bluebirding since 1998. She has been a member of the North Carolina Bluebird Society (NCBS) since 1998. She has served on the Board of NCBS several times over the past 25 years. She has been a County Coordinator since 1998. She served as the State Coordinator for several years during the 2010s. She was honored as “Bluebirder of the Year” by NCBS in 2003. Over the years, she has traveled to NABS conferences across the U.S. and Canada. After moving to Roanoke, Virginia in 2020, she joined the Virginia Bluebird Society. She was honored to take on County Coordinator for Roanoke and Botetourt Counties in 2023. She has just finished Virginia Master Naturalist training in June 2023. Bluebirds and other native cavity nesters are her true passion. She truly enjoys educating others about bluebirds and other native cavity nesters. Dana enjoys nothing more than being on a bluebird trail and learning what techniques and tricks work best in promoting the success of all trails.

Carol Kaufman, Candidate for Secretary



I'm a native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and relocated to Southwest Virginia in 2017, where I reside in Radford with my husband Ed and our two golden retrievers, Gracie and Ripley. I am currently a member of Virginia Bluebird Society, VSO, a certified member and Membership Chair of the New River Valley Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists, and also the Trail Coordinator/Monitor for the New River Valley Bird Club bluebird trail. My career prior to retirement was in Project Management so I hope to bring those skills to the Board Secretary position with the VBS. AND, I LOVE Bluebirds!!

Mark Murphy, Incumbent Candidate for Treasurer



Mark Murphy is retired from a career in the IT industry where he worked with several nonprofits and fundraising organizations. He is a board member and IT administrator for the Virginia Native Plant Society and volunteers with the Northern Virginia Science Center Foundation. Mark is grateful to his wife Donna who introduced him to a love of bluebirds.

Pam Narney, Candidate for Director



Pam Narney is a Certified Virginia Master Naturalist, an educator, citizen scientist, osprey blogger, and bird lover.

When Pam became a Northern Neck Master Naturalist in 2009, she was introduced to bluebirds, and bluebird monitoring, which gave her another reason to be outside experiencing nature. She has been monitoring trails, refurbishing trails, giving presentations, and training bluebird monitors ever since.

Pam has been the County Coordinator for Westmoreland and Richmond Counties for over 12 years.

Last year for their dedicated service, Pam and her husband John shared the 2022 Virginia Bluebird Society's County Coordinator of the Year Award.

Pam loves wearing her “Ask Me About Bluebirds” pin and especially enjoys leading bird walks. Bluebirds bring joy. Pam shares that joy with Northern Neck residents, especially the children.

She continues to educate people on the Northern Neck about the beauty and bounty of the area in which they live, especially those beautiful bluebirds.

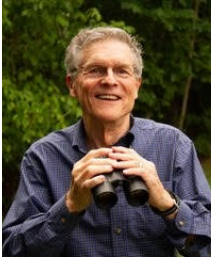
Jen Kettelkamp, Candidate for Director



My name is Jen Kettelkamp. I'm an Instructional Coach for Kindergarten-2nd grade teachers at Bluestone Elementary School in Harrisonburg, Virginia. I've been teaching for 18 years. I live with my husband and two teenage boys. When I'm not at school or checking bluebird boxes, I am throwing pottery on my potters wheel. I have been bluebirding for three years monitoring the eight nest boxes Bluestone Elementary received through a grant from the Virginia Bluebird Society. After seeing firsthand how excited students become when learning about bluebirds, I thought I would take the next step and join the board with hopes of being someone to inspire the younger generation to love and care for bluebirds. I look forward to working with you all.

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Doug Rogers, Candidate for Director



Doug Rogers served as VP Trails for the past ten years. He is past president of the Monticello Bird Club and is an active member of the Virginia Society of Ornithology. He monitors 15 bluebird nest boxes and is frequently available to help with installation of nest boxes for all who ask. Doug is an avid photographer whose main subjects are birds and wildlife. His photos have been published in *Birdwatching Magazine*, in local news articles, and research papers. He is also a frequent contributor of both photos and articles for *The Bird Box*.

Alison Davis-Holland, Candidate for Director

Alison Davis-Holland is the VBS County Coordinator for Arlington County. She learned under Barbara and Charlie Chambers in nearby Fairfax County after finding an abandoned nest box trail in a park nearby. Alison is a cartographer and writer who creates story maps to visualize and tell the stories behind geographic data. As a kid, she could be found crabbing, canoeing, collecting molted cicada shells, searching for crawdads, and falling in love with many a frog and toad. As an adult, she attended lots of nature programs with her kids and started nest box monitoring with them in 2008, the same year she became a master naturalist. For fun, she likes to eat tasty food, travel around the world, putter through flat water on a kayak, make any kind of art, and write personal essays. She and her husband will be empty nesters this fall.

Proposed Bylaw Changes

An important item of business at the November 4 VBS Annual Meeting will be the approval of changes to the organization's Bylaws. Summaries of these changes are provided here. To see a redlined copy of the current Bylaws with these changes go to [Summary of Proposed VBS Bylaws Changes June 2023.pdf - Google Drive](#).

1. Reformat Bylaws text, add cover page.
2. **Article I, Section IV.** Delete entire Section: "Membership will begin..."
3. **Article II, Section I, Section II.** Add President-Elect to list of officers. Change terms of all board members from two years to one year.
4. **Article II, Section IV.** Extend terms of board members whose terms expire at the 2023 fall annual meeting to December 31, 2023.
5. **Article II, Section V.** Delete entire Section: "Any elected member of the board..."
6. **Article III, Section II.** Change to allow proxy voting at the annual meeting.
7. **Article III, Section IV.** Delete entire section: "Each county of the Commonwealth..."
8. **Article V, Section I.** Add President-Elect and Past President to Executive Committee.
9. **Article VI, Section II.** Change audit of Treasurer accounts from annually to reviewed biennially or at the direction the Executive Committee.
10. **Article VI, Section IV.** Delete "All withdrawals from the corporation bank account will be by check."

Bluebird Rescue

By Cathy Hindman, VBS Past President

I have monitored a nest box trail for over 10 years at the Quantico Medal of Honor golf course on the Marine Corps Base in Triangle, Virginia. We currently have 22 boxes that we check by driving a golf cart. Anne Little, one of the founding members of the Virginia Bluebird Society, started this trail around 1995. One box had three bluebird eggs and a week later had four Tree Swallow eggs added to the nest. I was curious whether the eggs would all hatch, so I kept a close eye on this box. I only saw adult Tree Swallows and no bluebirds were around. Often birds will be preyed upon by hawks in the area.

On June 6, I checked the box and counted six hatchlings, but it was hard to tell which was which. I came back three days later and removed all the babies to get a good count and age. The bluebird babies were six days old, and the Tree Swallows were smaller. I observed the box for 35 minutes and saw Tree Swallows feeding them seven

times! I contacted Anne Little to ask if the bluebirds should be moved to bluebird boxes with adult bluebirds feeding. She said, "YES," because bluebird parents teach the fledglings how to find food, and they stay together throughout the winter. I put out a plea to monitors in Prince William, Stafford, and Fairfax Counties, looking for bluebird hatchlings the same age. Susan Kruyne answered me with good news regarding nests located at Fuller Heights Park just a quick drive away. We met up on a Sunday and I made the transfer. We used two boxes, so we didn't stress out the adults. One box of four

received two nestlings. One box of five received one nestling. Fortunately, birds can't count, and the eight-day old nestlings were accepted right away. Susan sent me photos of the growing babies the next week. All bluebirds fledged and the tree swallows had a successful brood of three (one egg did not hatch).



Above: Three bluebird hatchlings in a container for transferring. Photo by Cathy Hindman



Left: Bluebird nest with six growing babies. Photo by Susan Kruyne



Six bluebird and Tree Swallow hatchlings - assessing their age. Photo by Cathy Hindman

Teeshirts, Sweatshirts, and more — check it out!

Show your love for bluebirds and support VBS; shop the store at

[Virginia Bluebird Society](#) | [Official Merchandise](#) | [Bonfire](#)



Beautiful blues at Ford's Colony in James City County.

Photos by Michael Milner



Virginia's Iconic Black Bears along the Bluebird Trail

by Christine Boran, Woolwine House Bluebird Trail, Patrick County

Throughout the years of my bluebird trail here in the Blue Ridge Highlands of Southwest Virginia, I'll periodically lose nestling birds and equipment to Black Bears. Upon finding the destruction, I feel sad for the loss of the birds first of all, and then I feel sadder as I watch upset parent birds divebomb me at their destroyed nest box. After I get a grip, I collect the pieces of equipment on the ground, note my trail binder of the outcome, and then I know to wait until next season to reinstall new equipment at that same location. This season, I lost two more nest boxes to Black Bears. Bluebird and Tree Swallow young were taken by the bear and there was destruction to most of the equipment with some salvageable, such as a Noel Guard easily reshaped to be used again or a stovepipe guard not bent up too much. Usually the hollow electric metallic poles are "done for good" for any possible reinstallation. They can be cut again in a workshop and used elsewhere for a project, or it goes into the metal scrap pile for recycling. Those pages in my trail binder are then closed for the season.

As a Virginia Master Naturalist and a bluebirder, I'm for ALL native wildlife. So, with this thinking, I try to stay realistic and not to be angry with a Black Bear destroying a manmade nest box and associated equipment installed by me, a human, along the same habitat they thrive in, too. Can I post a sign on a nest box that tells bears to stay away? No, I cannot. They are doing what they know best naturally to survive. Black Bears are an iconic and beautiful native species where I live. I love the birds and the bears. Though I'd prefer he or she bear not get to my trail nest boxes, there is nothing I can do about it. I know that a bear that has "attacked" one of the nest boxes has the keenest smelling capability; it is much keener than a bloodhound's nose. This helps them find the numerous food sources available to them in nature. A meandering, foraging bear smells the young birds and any fecal matter left on the nest box side walls installed at 6 feet off the ground. This attracts him to "investigate" a very interesting food source. Frankly, I really don't see it as an attack at all. This is how I look at it, and I cannot think of it any other way. We add predator guards to deter most predators – that's good! A 500-600-pound bear cannot be stopped, no matter how many strategies we have tried. Some of my trail boxes are near woods, some are near pastures, some near creeks and ponds, which the Tree Swallows like, and some are in homeowners' yards. In my experience with bear destruction of equipment, where the nest box is located doesn't necessarily make a difference because bears walk all day to forage for the immense amount of food they need. Let's not forget those bear moms are followed by their cubs – more mouths to feed!

In the meantime, I am celebrating a generally successful bluebird trail season for 2023 as well as knowing (and accepting) the restoration of our Black Bear population in Virginia is progressing well. There is always next year to try again at those locations, and I'll hope for the best and carry on.



Nest box #46 with loss of 13-day old tree swallows to a Black Bear, photo dated June 12, 2023.

Photo by Christine Boran

County Coordinator Spotlight

Paul Bagley, Southampton County

Welcome to our newest County Coordinator, Paul Bagley. Paul's fascination with birds started by watching his grandparents' birdfeeders and learning about all the visitors to the feeders. As a young adult, that fascination grew into a passion for all birds.

Paul likes to share pictures and information about Virginia wildlife with on-line groups. He is an avid fly fisherman, and he helps protect that environment through river and boat ramp clean-ups.

Paul says, "I look forward to being a part of VBS and continuing to learn more about bluebirds and about VBS's efforts help them. I am also grateful to be involved with many people that have a like mind towards the species and other Virginia wildlife!"



Paul Bagley, Southampton County Coordinator, with a rainbow trout. Photo by Shannon Bagley



VBS s Our Volunteers!

A warm welcome to Lori Matherly, the newest member of the Nest Box Monitor Team at Chatham Elementary in Pittsylvania County. Married for 34 years to her wonderful husband Gary, they have two grown children and two precious grandchildren. Lori has been teaching Grades 2 – 5 at Chatham for fifteen years and says "My passion is seeing that 'light bulb' moment in children. I love to explore opportunities for the children to make new discoveries. Seeing their faces light up with excitement is what drives me to be the teacher I am. We are so very excited to be a small part of this endeavor to help save bluebirds."

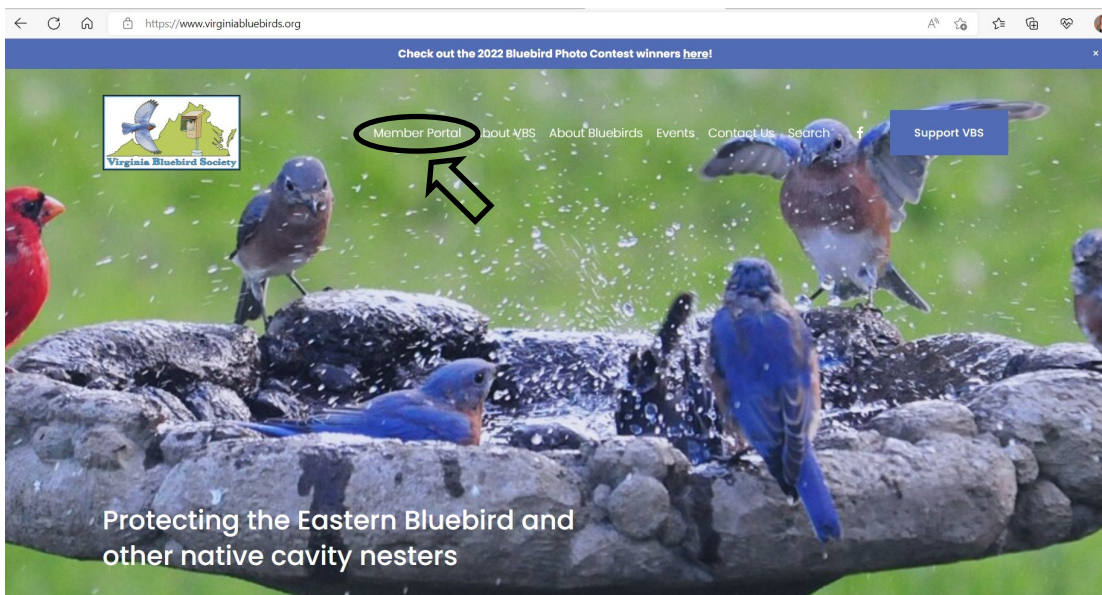
Left: Lori Matherly, newest member of the Nest Box Monitor Team at Chatham Elementary, Pittsylvania County.

VBS Member Portal

Have you tried out your online VBS member portal?

VBS provides an online member portal where you can view your membership information, update your profile, renew your membership, register for events, and more.

Select the "Member Portal" menu item on the [VBS Website](https://www.virginiabluebirds.org) to log in. Or go directly to <https://virginiabluebirds.app.neoncrm.com/login>.



Recognizing Patrick County Bluebird Trails

by Christine Boran, County Coordinator, Floyd and Patrick Counties

It occurred to me as a County Coordinator that the largest reward I get is being involved in Virginia Bluebird Society protocols of trail planning and installations, training the monitors “in the field,” and being there for them for the multiple nesting seasons for questions. In Patrick County, there are two trails I would like to highlight success for the bluebirds and recognize the outstanding and enthusiastic trail managers who make it possible for those trails to succeed by careful monitoring. This year, I am wishing and recognizing a happy 10th anniversary of the bluebird trail at **Fairy Stone State Park**, and also a 13th anniversary of the bluebird trail at **Primland Resort**. Let’s get to know more about these trails and the great individuals who manage them. With my sincere thanks, I want to say to them, “It takes a bluebird village” and you make it happen year after year.

Fairy Stone State Park, Stuart, VA

Fairy Stone State Park’s trail was planned in fall 2013 with my meeting with the State Park Manager at the park located in Stuart, Virginia, in Patrick County. I am thrilled this park is located eight miles from my home. After the State Park Manager was excited to support the project and signed the proposed VBS Grant forms, he asked his assistant manager to drive around the park in his truck with me to look at locations to install the nest boxes. These included discussions of mowing requirements, areas left natural with tall grasses, and locations conducive to be witnessed and enjoyed by park visitors and staff but not too close to disturb the nesting birds. After locations were agreed upon with the park, I submitted the signed VBS grant form and ordered the VBS protocol equipment from nest box builder Paul Davis, who resides in Nelson County. I knew Paul from serving together on the VBS Board as Directors, and I was well-aware of his amazing workshop skills and the love he had in building the nest boxes. On March 28, 2014, Paul and I met in Bedford County, at the National D-Day Memorial, a halfway point between Patrick and Nelson Counties, so that Paul could transfer the nest boxes and equipment to me. With the help of a state park volunteer, I was able to install the trail at the agreed locations in April 2014.

As a member of the Southwestern Piedmont Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists, I met fellow chapter members and husband-and-wife team Brian and Jessica Phillips to volunteer as the new trail’s managers. Brian and Jessica shadowed me for training on my 50-box Woolwine House Bluebird Trail in Patrick County that same year, and then I took them on a tour of the newly installed trail at Fairy Stone State Park. I want to recognize Brian and Jessica for their diligence in not only monitoring this trail but also that Jessica emails reports after each monitoring day of the nesting activity to the state park staff. These two photos show Brian and Jessica in training in 2014 and this year 2023 at the state park’s office next to the office’s hand-painted barn quilt, a Patrick County tradition. I asked Jessica to share thoughts with me on their monitoring this trail and what really was significant for them. This is what she said: “We enjoy the opportunity to get to check the nest boxes at Fairy Stone State Park each week. It is like Christmas morning when you get ready to open a present and you’re not sure what is inside, and all of the excitement and anticipation builds just like approaching a nest box and getting ready to open it. It is pretty cool to hear the young tweeting as we approach the nest boxes and when we open the nest box and the young think we are the parent bird bringing food and their mouths are open. Brian has had a few encounters with the mother birds brushing the side of his face when he opens the nest box. Overall, this has been a very cool experience and we can't wait for the years to come to see what else is in store for us.”



Top: Brian & Jessica Phillips at Fairy Stone State Park in April, 2014

Bottom: Brian & Jessica Phillips at Fairy Stone State Park in July, 2023

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Primland Resort (Highlands Golf Course), Meadows of Dan, VA

Primland Resort’s bluebird trail was planned in 2010 to be installed along their award-winning Highlands Course located inside the 12,000 acres of Blue Ridge Mountains’ natural beauty and at the elevation of their golf course at 3,000 feet. Primland created such a course to keep naturalized Blue Ridge mountain habitat intact surrounding the course. The Golf Superintendent, Brian Kearns, contacted me to start a trail along the golf course. I met with Brian to talk about the plans for the bluebird trail, provided VBS nest box plans and installation methods, and enjoyed a tour with him of the golf course with gorgeous mountain views in a golf cart, looking at proper locations for the nest box installations to be visible to the golfers but not too close to the course. The trail equipment was built at Primland’s own workshop that winter and was officially installed and announced publicly in March 2011 with a photo of the newly installed nest box with a bluebird couple on it, and that they achieved the Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary for Environmental Quality. The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program, endorsed by the U.S. Golf Association, awards this certification to golf courses that preserve and enhance wildlife habitat and protect natural resources.

Tim Branham, Primland’s hired Naturalist, Interpreter, and Trail Guide, presently monitors the bluebird trail along the Highlands Course and sends me the nesting data for the VBS. After Tim was assigned to care for the bluebird trail there, Tim shadowed me on monitoring my own 50-nest box Woolwine House Bluebird Trail for training in May 2019. I asked Tim what the highest elevation of their trail’s nest box, and he told me at the elevation of 2,830 feet. I asked Tim to share a few words of his experience as a bluebird trail manager and what he enjoys the most, and this is what he said, “My name is Tim Branham. I monitor the Primland Bluebird Trail at Primland resort in Meadows of Dan, Virginia. I’ve been caring for this trail since 2018 under the guidance of Brian Kearns and Christine Boran. One of my favorite experiences while monitoring this trail has been getting to know and recognize some of the individual birds, some of whom have returned to the exact same nesting box for consecutive seasons.”



Left: Tim Branham at Primland Resort along their Highlands Course

Right: Tim Branham (left) and Brian Kearns (right) at Number 13 Fairway Nest box at Primland’s Highlands Course. Photo by David Kimbal.

The President's Box

October 2 and this newsletter should have been in your in-box yesterday. My bad! Ever have so much going on that things keep getting kicked down the road, knocked further down the to do list? Yep. That's what's been happening with me.

I never found time to write an *Attracting (and Feeding) Birds with Native Plants* column. I still need to submit my nest box trail data to the Prince William County Coordinator. And I really need to think about relocating a couple and winterizing the nest boxes on the trail I monitor. But lest you think I've done nothing but sit glued to the camera in my backyard nest box all summer, I can assure you: not true! Much has been happening behind the scenes with VBS.



Since the 2023-24 FY New or Refurbished Trails Grant Program was able to accomplish more for less by awarding nest box equipment rather than applicants acquiring and then seeking reimbursement for equipment, the board recently approved the purchase of 165 nest boxes. If equipment on your trail needs replacement, applying for a grant is as easy as clicking on this link.

And although it's a year off, I'm excited to announce we have selected a date and venue for the November 2024 conference: November 1 and 2 at Virginia Crossings Hotel and Conference Center in Glen Allen. We're also working on selecting a keynote speaker. Soon we will be deciding on breakout session topics. If you have topics to suggest or presenters to recommend, please email me: vkg3105@gmail.com.

Personally, I've been talking 'the Blues' to anyone who asks: the Pocahontas Master Naturalists in Chesterfield, residents of a retirement community here in Woodbridge, several northern Virginia area elementary schools, a garden club here and there, and perhaps coolest of all, at the Virginia Correctional Facility for Women in Goochland. If your group or organization is interested in a program and it's within a reasonable drive from Woodbridge, let me know. I'm more than happy to take my show on the road. Bonus points if there is a place to get really good ice cream along the way!

Finally, we recruited a very talented slate of candidates for the 2024 board. You will find their bios and photos on pages 1-4 in this newsletter. And speaking of the upcoming election, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of you attending the Annual Fall Membership Meeting, November 4, either in person at The Center at Belvedere, 540 Belvedere Blvd., Charlottesville, or via Zoom. We are proposing important changes to the bylaws and will be voting for new officers and directors. In order to conduct business, we will need you to reach a quorum.

So one way or the other, I hope to see you at the annual meeting on November 4. I'd love it if you came in person; to put faces to names, to catch up with old friends, and to make new ones. But if that's not possible, please Zoom in with us.

Have a fabulous Fall!

Need a Presentation?

Know a Master Naturalist or Master Gardener chapter in need of a program? How about a garden club, scout troop, middle school eco club? Elementary school classroom? Your home school group?

VBS has programs we will be tailor to your audience. We can always present via Zoom, and depending upon where and when your group meets, may be able to present in person.

Recent presentations by board directors were given to a Danville Girl Scout troop, the Centreville Garden Club, Hill City Master Gardeners, and Southside Bird Club among others.

Interested? Email: vbs@virginiabluebirds.org



Newsletter of the
Virginia Bluebird Society
www.virginiabluebirds.org

Our email address is:
ybs@virginiabluebirds.org

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 birdboxeditor@gmail.com.

The Bluebird Advisor



I feel sure I saw several bluebirds in and around my nesting boxes this morning. Are they already looking for nesting sites in this part of the country (mid-late January)?

Anthea C. Proffitt
Amelia, Virginia

Nesting boxes and natural cavities are likely to attract the attention of bluebirds at any time of the year. In winter bluebirds frequently use the boxes for sleeping quarters. Sometimes as many as a dozen or more will pack themselves into a single box at night for protection against cold winter winds. In your case, the bluebirds may have been using one or more of your boxes for this purpose. In January their instincts are likely to be aimed at self-preservation rather than procreation.

Reprinted with the permission of the North American Bluebird Society, *Sialia*, Vol 8, Number 4, page 139. *Question Corner, Lawrence Zeleny*.

How do we attract bluebirds to a box when none has been seen in the area in years?

Eleanor S. Harvey
Englewood, New Jersey

Assuming that the nesting box is in suitable bluebird habitat there is nothing much that you can do other than to keep House Sparrows out of the box. It is surprising, however, how often bluebirds will show up at a properly located nesting box even in an area where bluebirds have not been seen for years. In the early spring these birds may search far and wide for suitable nesting spaces. Plantings that provide winter food for bluebirds are often effective in attracting these birds.

Reprinted with the permission of the North American Bluebird Society, *Sialia*, Vol 7, Number 2, page 50. *Question Corner, Lawrence Zeleny*.

And a final word or two from VBS's Bluebird Advisor: Put up new nest boxes this fall. The bluebirds will be around all winter and they can use them for roosting and will surely remember their location in the spring when a bluebird's brain turns to procreation. And don't forget, now is the best time to plant shrubs and perennials that support wildlife.

Mark Your Calendars

September-October Clean and winterize boxes, add clean grasses or pine straw, install ventilation plugs

October 31 Deadline for submitting **TRAIL SUMMARY REPORTS** to your County Coordinator. For blank forms or CC email address, contact vbs@virginiabluebirds.org.

November 4 VBS Annual Meeting. See page 1 for details.

January 30 Deadline for submitting articles, photos, ideas, and artwork for the Spring newsletter

November 1-2, 2024 VBS Conference

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.

How To Join

Go to [Virginia Bluebird Society](http://www.virginiabluebirds.org) and click on Support VBS. You can also join or renew by snail mail. Send your name, address, phone number and/or email address along with a check for

\$25 for a one-year General membership

\$75 for a three-year General membership

\$60 for a one-year Sustaining membership

\$100 for a one-year Endowment membership to:

Virginia Bluebird Society

726 William Street

Fredericksburg VA 22401

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



Become a Member!

www.nabluebirdsociety.org

Visit Us Online For

- Fact Sheets
- Events
- Nestbox Plans
- Speakers
- Tips/Guidance
- And more!

MISSION:

To engage in such educational, scientific and charitable pursuits as may be beneficial to the prosperity and well being of the three species of bluebirds and other native cavity-nesting bird species.

Send An Article to The Bird Box

We welcome articles and photos from our active VBS members. We want to share our success stories. 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 by January 30 to be considered for the spring newsletter. Please include your location, identification of people and birds in photos, and name of photographer or artist. Please send photos separately as jpg files if at all possible.