



**Virginia
Bluebird
Society**

The Bird Box

March 2007

Calendar

This Month: Time to renew your VBS membership if you haven't.

This Month: Establish trail monitors' schedules and prepare monitoring notebook.

April 1: All bluebird trail monitoring should begin this week.

April 24: "Citizen Scientists Using Technology to Assist Incubation Behavior Studies of Bluebirds," Dr. Caren Cooper of Cornell Univ. 7-8 p.m. at Shenandoah Univ., Winchester, Hester Auditorium, Gregory Science Bldg. (bear right past library). RSVP Kayceelichter@hotmail.com.

April 30 - May 5: New River Bird Festival, Oak Hill West Virginia. VBS booth, Saturday May 5. See www.birding-wv.com

May 4-6: Virginia Society of Ornithology (VSO) Annual Meeting. Northern Neck. Banquet, field trips, presentations. Headquarters, Stratford Hall, Westmoreland County. See www.virginiabirds.net.

May 12-13: Garden Fair of State Arboretum of Virginia at Blandly Farm, 10 miles east of Winchester on Route 50. VBS booth.

May 15: Deadline for your articles for the July *Bird Box*.

June 23: Purple Martin Field Day, Louisa County, hosted by Lance Wood. Contact Ron or Priscilla Kingston, 434-293-5173, Kingston@cstone.net.

Sept. 20-23: NABS Annual Meeting. University of Georgia, Athens. See www.nabluebirdsociety.org.

A Reliable Bluebird Friend

The first time I met Klytia Salcedo, she was quietly assembling Noel guards from hardware cloth. The year was 1997, and an article about bluebird box trails in the *Washington Post* had drawn me to a box workshop along the Potomac River. There were many enthusiastic helpers there that day, but only Klytia was willing to torture her hands by working with the hardware cloth. She chuckled and smiled and said that understandably no one else wanted to do it, so she figured she better make them because it had to be done.

That's Klytia's *modus operandi*. Quietly, and sometimes single-handedly, she does what *has* to be done for the bluebirds on her trails, and for us at VBS. Elsewhere in this newsletter, you can read that Klytia was awarded the VBS Heritage Award. Those of us who know Klytia understand why she received this special accolade.

Since 1980, Klytia's careers have had her serving in the Air Force, working for the State Department, and selling real estate. In 1985, shortly after marrying Kevin Roper, a Defense Department expert, the National Wildlife Federation introduced Klytia to the world of bluebirds and its box trail at Claude Moore Farm in Loudoun County. By 1989, Klytia had established her 20-box neighborhood trail in Fairfax County, a trail she still monitors single-handedly. Now a mother of three children, ages 10, 13, and 16, this native Floridian also personally oversees the efforts of the monitors and the conditions of boxes on five public park trails. Fairfax County hosts 48 bluebird trails sanctioned by VBS, and Klytia is the county coordinator, collecting all of the nesting data from these trails, and giving bluebird presentations at libraries, community centers, and bird stores.

Klytia's quiet passion and energies are not solely reserved for native cavity nesters and her family. A devout Catholic, she weekly visits the elderly in a Burke nursing home, and volunteers at her children's private schools. Organizations working on conservation, recycling, animal rights, organic farming, and clean water and air, have a devoted advocate in Klytia. The thousands of cavity nesters that have fledged from Klytia-overseen trails have no idea how much they owe their quiet and modest landlady. VBS, however, knows her behind-the-scenes dedication makes a difference.

— Sarah McDade



Klytia Salcedo-Roper with Bluebird Heritage Award
(Story, page 3)

Two Grant Programs for Box Trails

Last fall, the VBS board revised its Youth/Scout grant program and created a second grant program. See page 3 for details on the revised Youth/Scout grant. See page 4 for information on the VBS grant program for new or refurbished bb trails for the new public lands grants. See the VBS Web site, www.virginiabluebirds.org, for details and applications. VBS members who need applications but don't have computers, call Barbara Chambers, 703-978-6609.

Promoting bluebirds and other cavity nesters

The Bird Box

Issue 8.3

Newsletter of the
Virginia Bluebird Society
www.virginiabluebirds.org

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We welcome your written items and artwork (photos and drawings) for *The Bird Box*! Send your materials by e-mail or on diskette to Sarah or Bob.

VBS News

Bluebird Board Business

The VBS Board of Directors met on November 4 in Winchester. Among the topics discussed was the electronic availability of *The Bird Box* via e-mail to those who prefer that method to the mailed printed version. Requests should be sent to vbs@virginiabluebirds.org. Also, VBS members need to notify Anne Little at thegate@cox.net if they have a change of e-mail address. Anne, with the help of Cheryl Phillips, the VBS Administrative Assistant, maintains the membership list. VBS memberships totaled 366.

David Mitchell reported that, as part of the Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) project, he and **Elizabeth Sellers** banded 177 new birds of 34 species at Banshee Reeks last spring. In 2007 they will also be banding at Blandy Farm, along with **Sarah Rockwell** from the University of Maryland, who is working in conjunction with the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center to learn more about Eastern Bluebird migration.

The Board donated \$250 to the North American Bluebird Society (NABS) to go toward the cost of the 2007 annual meeting at the University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia in September. The VBS Heritage Award and Bluebirder of the Year Award were given respectively to **Klytia Salcedo-Roper** of Fairfax Station, and **Earl Morris** of Cave Springs (see page 3).

Annual Meeting in Winchester

On November 4, a crisp but beautiful fall Saturday, VBS held its Annual Meeting at the Shenandoah Valley Bird Festival in the northwest corner of Virginia. In addition to board members, people came from the Northern Neck (Lottsburg), from nearby Loudoun County, and from as far away as Danville, Virginia, to attend the business meeting and/or the presentation on "Bluebird Stewardship" conducted by **Anne Little** and **Brian Swanson**. The VBS display was set up and hundreds visited it, asking questions about Bluebirds and other cavity nesters. Special thanks to **Carl Little**, who manned the display during the board meeting.

Board member **Kaycee Lichliter** was missed, but her article in the *Oak Leaf*, "Reporting from the Blandy Bluebird Trail," and the article in Cornell Lab's Spring 2006 issue of *Inside the Bird Box*, commending Kaycee and **Greg Baruff** for their management of the Blandy Trail, were circulated.

Brian Swanson gave an update on NABS and recommended attendance at the NABS annual meeting in Athens, Georgia, September 20-23, 2007, for all VBS members. Detailed information can be found on the NABS Web site at www.nabluebirdsociety.org.

The highlight of the meeting was a 10-minute video produced by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) to elicit support from environmental groups in Virginia, including VBS, for the Teaming With Wildlife Initiative. This coalition will use its influence to encourage Congress to approve more grants for state non-game programs and to begin legislating grant money for state educational and outreach programs having to do with conservation.

Special appreciation was expressed to **Carol Heiser**, Habitat Education Coordinator at DGIF, for loaning VBS a beautiful male Eastern Bluebird taxidermy specimen to be used in our educational displays.

Jeff Trollinger, from DGIF, gave VBS a special challenge when he mentioned that Virginia has 36 Wildlife Management Areas, 75 percent of which have open land. These lands offer a unique opportunity for VBS to establish bluebird trails on public property.



Barbara Chambers and Girl Scout Rebecca Saalbach installing new trail at Laurel Hill Golf Club in Lorton. VBS grant money aided Rebecca as she achieved her Gold Award upon initiating this trail and its monitoring procedures among friends and neighbors.

Attention, All Scouts

There are *new* conditions for the Youth/Scout Grant that VBS has been offering for several years. The biggest change is that all boxes built must now be *donated* to VBS to be used wherever the needs are in the state. Also, the boxes built will be placed and monitored on public lands and parks by trained VBS monitors. The scouts or youths, ages 13-18, must build their project boxes using the VBS plans on our Web site: www.virginiabluebirds.org. The price of the box unit is about \$28.

These grants will range from \$70 to \$210 depending on the number of boxes to be built. Applications must be submitted by Sept. 30th to Phil Kenny, philkenny1@cox.net, 703-255-5423, and will be awarded by October 30. All work must be completed by March 1 of the following year. Those details can also be found on the VBS Web site.

All the applicants must still present a bluebird trail program to an organization in the community. VBS will assist with a videotape and other materials for this part of the project, as usual. VBS considers this grant of continuing importance because mentoring new generations of bluebirders or box builders is essential to the continued support for both the habitat and the bluebirds. Who better than someone who has had a hands-on experience with both? We hope it will last them a lifetime.

— *Barbara Chambers*

Collecting Data For 2007

In the past couple of months I have entered data concerning about 2,660 nest boxes from all over Virginia. I thought this would be a good time to outline a few suggestions for monitors as you begin collecting data this nesting season.

All of the VBS forms are updated and available online in PDF format. Anyone who can't get the forms that way can call or write me.

More of you are sending me data via the Internet. For a spreadsheet version of the forms, e-mail me at ce.chambers@verizon.net, and specify whether you have a PC or a Mac.

A few of you have been sending me only the number of fledglings on your trails. Now I'm happy to get any data I can get, but I'd sure like to have somewhat more information; at least the number of nest boxes involved, and desirably also, the number of nest attempts, eggs laid, and eggs hatched. That is the stuff in the annual summary forms.

For the County Coordinators: One of my minor headaches with the data I get is that trail names seem to change from year to year. Clearly enough, I always expect (and hope) to see new trails, and expect at least a few older trails to go out of service. But it often seems like the same monitors are doing differently named trails each year, but each with the same numbers of boxes. So I have this suggestion: before you send me the results from a bunch of trails, please check last year's data and see if the trail names are consistent. And please indicate whether there really is a new trail, and if not, whether you have changed the name from "Joe's Golf Course" to "Carol's Country Club."

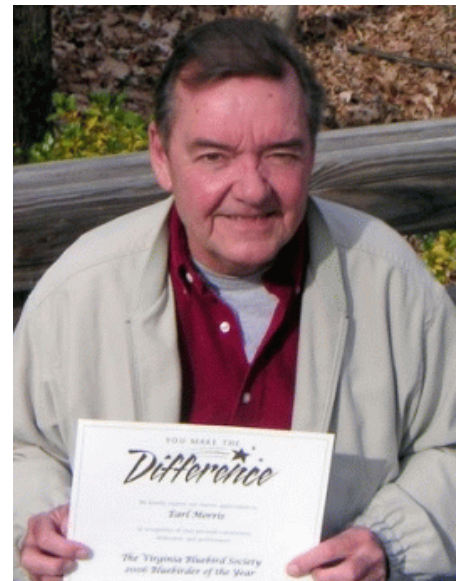
Some folks indicate that their data is from "multiple trails." Could you break that data down to the individual trails?

— *Charlie Chambers*

2006 Bluebird Heritage Award

At its annual meeting in November 2006, in Winchester, VBS awarded **Klytia Salcedo-Roper**, of Fairfax Station, its Heritage Award. (Also see story on Klytia, page 1.)

This award, not given frequently, recognizes an individual who has been a long time Bluebirder. It is given to a special person who lives and breathes bluebirds and has spent many years promoting their welfare.



2006 Bluebirder of the Year

Earl Morris of Roanoke County was named Bluebirder of the Year at the VBS Annual Meeting in Winchester. This award is given annually to the individual who promotes bluebirds in Virginia by outreach to civic groups and others, by promoting good bluebirding techniques in the field and by helping others learn to love and care for the bluebird.

From Other Bluebird Skies

Patrick Ready of the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin (BRAW) has created a Cavity Nesters Guide with photographs to illustrate the nests and eggs of the most common cavity nesters. The species covered are Eastern Bluebird, Tree Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee (in Virginia we're looking at Carolina Chickadees), House Wren, and House Sparrow.

This two-page guide is posted on the BRAW Web site, www.braw.org. Scroll down the left side to Nest I.D. There is a printable PDF version on the bottom of page two. Trail leaders might want to place this in the trail notebook, as it should help new monitors.

Not What You Want

In the House Sparrow nest shown below, note the debris enmeshed in the loosely woven grass. In a previous year, this box fledged 13 bluebirds. The property owner has numerous old, untended nestboxes on the property, creating a haven for House Sparrows. In 2006, the bluebird lost out to the House Sparrow.



(Photo: Mary Kent)

Grants for New, Refurbished Trails

In the autumn of 2006, the VBS Board created a grant program to provide funds to VBS members who wish to build new bluebird trails or refurbish existing bluebird trails on public lands in Virginia. The nest boxes on these trails must be constructed of wood and include: mounting poles, and two predator guards. VBS defines a bluebird trail as having five or more boxes.

Particulars:

- T Grant applications must be submitted to the State County Coordinator (Barbara Chambers) no later than October 1
- T All grants will be decided and awarded by November 15.
- T All grants awarded in the fall must be completed by March 1 of the following spring.
- T The applicant must purchase the materials and submit complete receipts for any reimbursement to VBS. Submission of receipts to be received by VBS by March 15 in order for the applicant to be reimbursed.
- T The applicant must construct the nest boxes and two predator guards from materials purchased at a home improvement store (the cost for building a nest box with two predator guards and a one inch electrical conduit pole is \$27.75 in Northern Virginia). The applicant may purchase already constructed nest boxes from approved sources (VBS can provide sources for these). Refurbishment (roofs, predator guards, etc.) should be compatible with the rest of the trail. Upgrades to add mounting poles, predator guards, etc will be funded.
- T VBS prefers the nest boxes be constructed using the Carl Little design (see our Web site) but will entertain other proposals.
- T The trails must be located in appropriate bluebird habitat on any public land. This land can be in a park (city, county, state or federal); school property; public golf course; or any other public land. VBS can also assist with the placement of nest boxes for your trail.
- T The boxes must be mounted on one inch electrical conduit poles with both a snake and a raccoon guard (see our website for these plans).
- T The grant recipient must ensure that the bluebird trail is monitored weekly from April 1 through August 31.
- T New trail grants can be for as many as 20 nest boxes. Refurbished trail applications can be for as many as 25 nest boxes (a refurbished trail should already have bluebird boxes mounted on metal poles).

Nest boxes in urban areas will be given priority. A portion of the grant funds is provided by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) for construction of urban bluebird trails. All grants awarded with DGIF funds must affix DGIF signs (provided at no charge) to the boxes on that trail.

Reminder about House Wren Nests

By late May many Virginia bluebirders will be looking at twigs in boxes. This is a reminder that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service says that box monitors may remove false House Wren nests. If in doubt about a false or active one, check the box for a week or two, looking for a depression in the back bottom of the twigs to find a legitimate nest. Since federal law protects the House Wren, monitors may only remove the false nests. To avoid hosting House Wrens when bluebirds or other species are desired, move the box further away from brush or twiggy trees.

Purple Martin Landlord

[Editor's note: The following are excerpts from an interview with **Lance Wood**, a dedicated and successful Purple Martin landlord from Alexandria and Louisa County. This year's Purple Martin Field Day is Saturday, June 23, at the site of the Wood Family Martin Colony in Louisa County. For more information, check the PMCA Web site www.purplemartin.org or contact Ron and Priscilla Kingston, 434-293-5173, Kingston@cstone.net.]

Bird Box: Lance, the Purple Martin Conservation Association (PMCA) lists you as a mentor for Virginia. How long have you been working with Purple Martins, and what does a mentor do?

Lance Wood: I have been trying to attract and help Purple Martins since I was a child. I joined the PMCA in 1991, and the knowledge I acquired from that association allowed me in 1992 to re-establish my then-defunct martin colony.

A mentor tries to pass on the necessary body of essential knowledge about purple martins to other persons who want to attract and help them. The most important thing I do every year is to host and speak at the Purple Martin Field Day in late June at my martin colony in Louisa County. I put on that event with a great deal of help from my mother and from Ron and Priscilla Kingston of Charlottesville.

Q: What is the most important bit of advice you can offer to anyone who wants to establish a Purple Martin colony?

A: A successful PM landlord must have at least 3 things, and I explain them in great detail at the June Field Day.

1. Knowledge. Many pitfalls and serious challenges face any person who wants a PM colony. Each problem has a solution, and devoting the time to learn is **essential** to success.

2. Substantial amount of dedication and determination, or what I might call "moxie". Take the trouble required to establish and operate a PM colony the proper way, rather than in the slipshod, sloppy, easy way that puts the martins at risk and makes it very difficult for them to reproduce successfully.

3. Investment in proper equipment. It costs little more to buy the right kind of martin housing than to buy the wrong kind, yet people who do not know better frequently waste lots of money on "junk martin housing".

Q: What would you advise people about the placement of Purple Martin housing?

A: For best results, martin housing should be located in an OPEN area near an occupied human dwelling or business.

Q: What type of pole do you recommend, and is it readily available in the commercial market?

A: I published an article in the PMCA magazine on this important subject. I pass out free copies of this article at the Field Day. Reprints can be obtained from PMCA. You should not trust the flimsy cheap, weak pipes and poles that are supplied with many commercial martin houses because they break or bend in summer windstorms, creating disastrous consequences for the martins.

Q: Do you have a preference for gourds or boxes?

A: The PMCA and I have learned over the years that better nesting success is achieved with large natural gourds. All gourds must be painted white and otherwise properly prepared. At the Field Day I show people how to grow gourds, and how turn them into ideal martin housing. Natural gourds can be purchased from many sources, including the PMCA.



Display of gourd-like housing for Purple Martins at last year's Purple Martin Field Day. (Photo: Lance Wood)

Did You Know?

A bird bitten by a cat will most likely die within 36 hours unless it receives antibiotics. Place a cat-bitten bird in a ventilated shoebox and take it to a licensed rehabber (see page 6).

Good Frame of Mind is Important

We all monitor bluebird boxes for different reasons. Some love the out-of-doors, some love wildlife, and others are committed to helping the bluebird re-establish its population.

No matter what inspires us to monitor the boxes, it's important to be in a good frame of mind and to allow enough time to do the job properly. This means checking the notes of the previous monitor **before** approaching a box. None of us wants to accidentally look into the box of 16-day-old hatchlings and perhaps cause premature fledging. That has happened. Also, allowing sufficient time permits us to make emergency repairs and observe activities around the boxes.

We're all monitoring boxes because we want to. Let's not let our busy lives interrupt the proper way to help the bluebirds.

Loudoun Bluebirds in Good Standing

Last year proved to be a terrific year along Loudoun County's bluebird trails. We started off the season by putting in three new trails, two located at the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship (BRCES) and one at the new Frazier Park in Hamilton. The trail at Frazier Park was set up as part of our habitat restoration project last spring. Adding these trails increased our total to 13 trails with a total of 174 boxes being monitored.

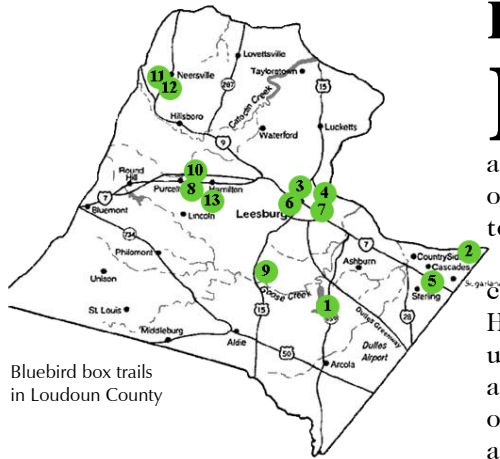
For those unfamiliar with Loudoun County, it is one of the fastest growing counties in the nation with a human population now exceeding 200,000. Habitat loss to developments of houses and strip malls are occurring at an unmeasured pace. Monitoring species such as bluebirds and reading the data is an important element in understanding the impact that development is having on our local species because when we are out monitoring we are gathering data and serving as stewards of our county's resources. Our trails are sprinkled across Loudoun, in parks, sanctuaries and farms that allow public access for our monitors (see map, left): (1) Brambleton, (2) Algonkian, (3) Morven, (4) Temple Hall Farm, (5) Claude Moore Park, (6) Rust Sanctuary, (7) Ida Lee, (8) Crooked Run Orchard, (9) Banshee Reeks, (10) Franklin Park, BRCES – (11) Farm Loop and (12) Meadow Trail, and (13) Frazier Park.

In 2006 the trails fledged 515 bluebirds, 20 chickadees, 320 Tree Swallows, and 78 House Wrens. In addition to the birds, our trail at Banshee Reeks continues to attract bats in the late summer. We think the bats may be using the boxes as a roosting spot as they begin their fall migration. The first egg-laying date has varied from trail to trail, ranging from the last week of March through June 1. The majority of first eggs appeared April 7-10.

Monitoring the nest boxes was done by a great team of volunteers, many of whom were new to monitoring but found out about the techniques through the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy (LWC), an all-volunteer nature organization. LWC's Web site, www.loudounwildlife.org, and quarterly newsletter, the *Habitat Herald*, sought out new monitors. LWC also hosted an educational event that Barb Chambers (VBS State Chairman of County Coordinators) helped provide. Through these outreach efforts, the Loudoun team grew to 45 volunteers.

Our plans for 2007 include establishing one or two new trails and bringing on new trail leaders and monitors to take care of them. If you're interested in helping set up a trail or joining a nestbox monitoring team, please contact me at nhamilton@loudounwildlife.org or 540-882-9638.

– Nicole Hamilton, Loudoun County Coordinator



Bluebird box trails in Loudoun County

Changed Your E-mail Address?

Please notify Anne Little at thegate@cox.net if you are a VBS member and have changed your e-mail address.

Looking for a Wildlife Rehabilitator?

To find a licensed wildlife rehabilitator for an injured bird, consult the March 2006 edition of *The Bird Box* or go to www.dgif.state.va.us. Remember that early intervention is important if the bird is truly injured, and only licensed rehabilitators are permitted to rescue wild animals.

Talk about Early!

[From a note to VBS President Anne Little:]

Today, Feb. 13th, while hiking here on Compton Mountain, where my wife and I monitor 25 boxes, I stopped to check one of the boxes (Nest Box 19) and found a complete bluebird nest inside. I had checked this same box about three weeks ago and there was nothing inside. This piqued my interest, so I then checked all of the other boxes. Box number 13, which is on my property, also has a nest about half-complete. All the others are still unoccupied. I had cleaned all of them out in the fall. These nests are definitely bluebird nests and not House Sparrow, Flying Squirrel or mouse nests. This early date for nest building is certainly an early date for us, but I fear that the young will not be able to survive, if the birds attempt to nest this early.

By sheer coincidence a friend took a photo [left] of a bluebird sitting on Box 19 last Saturday, Feb. 11th just after sunrise, when the temperature was 11 degrees.

– Roger Mayhorn

[Roger Mayhorn is president of the Buchanan County Bird Club in southwest Virginia and county coordinator for the area bluebird trails. The club has four trails with a total of 78 nest boxes.]



Bluebird on Compton Mountain, February 2007. Note the VBS educational label on the box. (Photo: Don Carrier)

I Didn't Want It to End

Call me nostalgic or soft-headed, but I wanted to keep reading *Beakless Bluebirds & Featherless Penguins*, by Sister Barbara Ann, for the rest of my life. I did finish it, however, deliberately leaving the last five pages unread for about three months!

This almost daily one-year journal penned by a naturalist nun transported me away from the hubbub of 2006, and gave me an opportunity to pause and appreciate the simple things surrounding me. From the very beginning, when the reader is given the tour of the bluebird box trail on the convent's grounds, and is clued in on the "bear" story, you realize the author will use her always-present sense of humor to share her thoughts. In this lighthearted manner, Sister Barbara Ann takes you into her world of wildlife observation, education, and care. I learned a lot of fascinating tidbits about the Eastern Bluebird.

This charmingly illustrated soft-cover book, published by Scriptorium Publications in 1990, was a gift to me from Barbara Chambers, one of the founders of VBS. I'm keeping my copy so I can reread it in a few years, but I ordered over the Internet two gently used, author-inscribed copies as gifts for other friends with an interest in bluebirds and nature. — Sarah McDade

Mentoring the Next Generation

Seventeen dollars for a children's book! *Blue Sky Bluebird* is a pricey but lovingly written and illustrated hard-cover book by Rick Chrustowski. Activities of a bluebird family are revealed through nest building, brooding, fledging, and migrating. There is a simple and revealing depiction of embryo development discretely meshed within the daily routine of parents-to-be. Apparently that is one reason the National Science Teachers Association placed *Blue Sky Bluebird* on its recommended list.

At the end is a section called "Bluebird News" that summarizes the real-world status of bluebirds and the human efforts to bolster their numbers. Publisher Henry Holt indicates that youngsters in Grades One through Four would be a good audience for Chrustowski's work. — Kay Fry

Bluebird Kids

Milly Colella loves bluebirds. She lives in the Rockfish Air Park, in Nellysford, and serves as a VBS coordinator for Nelson County. I talked to Milly the other day while she was waiting on us at breakfast at Grill 151. She began telling us about some of the group's youngest members. We spoke with them, too. "First we count how many eggs we've got and we write it down on a sheet. We make sure there's no House Sparrows or anything in the box," says 8-year-old Olivia Leverone, the oldest of the three siblings. "We check on them each day," adds 6-year-old sister Abby. And not to be outdone by his older sisters, 4-year-old Harry has an important job as well. "I count the eggs and write them down every day!"

Some impressive numbers have come out. "Last year about three homeowners reported 20 blue birds that fledged from the Edgewood Park Trail," Milly says. "This year we reported 282 bluebird fledges from three different trails including Stoney Creek, coordinated by C.W. Waskey, a new trail at Rockfish River Loop Trail, and The Edgewood Park. In addition to the bluebirds, 29 chickadees and 53 Tree Swallows were fledged." Besides gathering data, the kids' father, Paul Leverone, knows why he likes them to look after the bluebirds. "They learn all about the birds from birth to adult. They get to see them fledge and to see what they eat." — Tommy Stafford
[excerpted from Nelson County Living, January 2007]

Did You Know?

Donations to VBS are tax-deductible.

Electronic Edition Available

You can receive *The Bird Box* in its electronic edition (PDF format) by e-mail, instead of its hard-copy edition. Just send a request to vbs@virginiabluebirds.org.

No Computer?

If you would like to contribute an article, photograph, or letter to the editor and you have no Internet access, you can still send your written contributions by mail to Sarah McDade, 8502 Crestview Drive, Fairfax, VA 22031.



Harry, Abby, and Olivia Leverone tending to a nestbox on a Nelson County bluebird trail (Photo: Tommy Stafford)

Visit Our Web Site

The VBS Web site offers nest box plans, trail monitoring protocol, trail data forms, news, and links to other useful sites:

www.virginiabluebirds.org.

How to Join Us

Send your name, address, phone number, and/or e-mail address along with a check for \$10 for an individual or \$15 for a family to:

Virginia Bluebird Society
726 William Street
Fredericksburg, VA 22401

Membership forms can be downloaded from the VBS Web site:

www.virginiabluebirds.org.

Nest Box at Frying Pan Farm Park



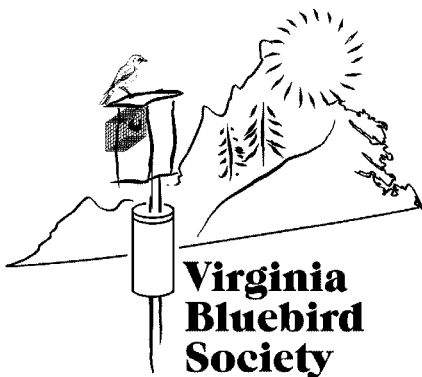
Carmen Bishop with nest box at Frying Pan Farm Park.

The newest addition to the Frying Pan Farm Park bluebird trail is an outdoor exhibit with a demonstration bluebird nest box. The exhibit includes a metal interpretive sign with information about bluebirds and other nest box users. The predator guards are directly labeled and defined. But the best part of the exhibit is the nest box which has been lowered for ease of access, fitted with a latch for opening, and sealed off with Plexiglas. Inside the box are a bluebird nest and five eggs (made from Sculpey clay). The sign invites people to open the box and see where baby bluebirds are born. The exhibit is located along a busy pathway between the Visitor Center and the dem-

onstration farm at the park. The activity around the box, including park visitors, frequent tractors and many House Sparrows, made it unsuccessful for the nesting of native species. The House Sparrows in the area competed for the box and even killed Tree Swallow nestlings. It was decided the box is in a perfect location for education, and a lousy location for native birds.

Frying Pan Farm Park is a diverse Fairfax County park located in Herndon, which features a working farm depicting early 20th century farm life, equestrian facilities, various historic structures, and a nature trail. The park also hosts a 13-box bluebird trail. Some of the scout programs offered at the park highlight bluebirds and the nest boxes.

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