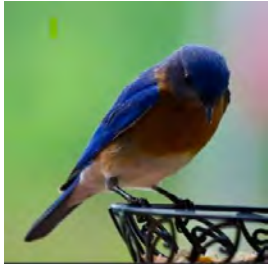


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Federal law protects all native nesting birds!

TBS Board Members

President - Lisa Lee

VP - Annette Banks

Sec/Treas - Leigh Dye

At Large - Ann Fox
Dr. Thomas Wheeler

TBS Transition Continues

Still looking for bluebird volunteers...

TBS is looking for volunteers to fill the following positions. We need members to volunteer to serve on the Board of Directors to help make decisions to lead TBS forward. We are always in need of members to transport nestboxes from our builders to storage facilities. TBS needs enthusiastic members to serve as booth hosts at events.

I am requesting each member to search in your heart to reach out and serve as a TBS Volunteer so TBS can continue its mission to spread "Bluebirds Across Texas ... one nestbox at a time. We look forward to new volunteers to serve contacting us at

leighann.txblues@gmail.com. Leigh Ann Dye, Secretary

Upcoming Fairs / Past Events

Brazos Bryan - Sep 28, 2024

Fair on Square - Huntsville – October 5, 2024

Nutcracker Market - Montgomery - November 9, 2024

Peanut Festival - Aubrey - Oct 5, 2024 - Host Needed

TMN -Annual Meeting - Oct 24 - Oct 27 - San Marcos - Host Needed

Heritage Festival - Edgewood - Nov 9, 2024 Host Needed

43rd Annual Christmas - Crockett Host Needed



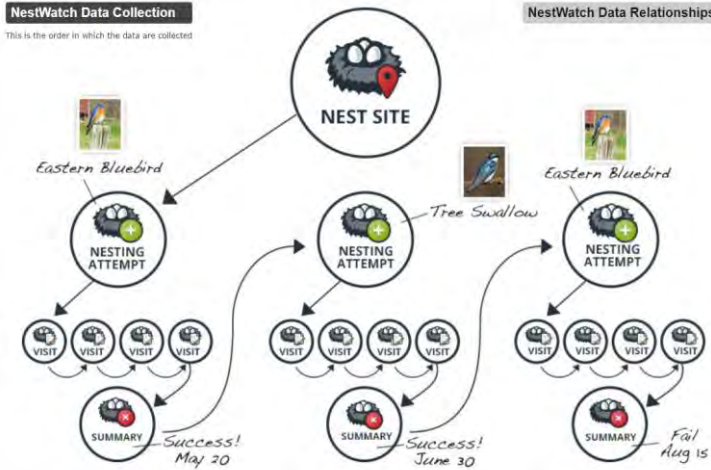
On JUNE 10th, Texas Bluebird Society welcomed 18 new household memberships at the Jacksonville Texas Tomato Fest.

Harold Latham came from up past Denton near Red River and Ron Tom came from Mountain City, south of Austin to introduce festival goers to bluebirds and TBS and NestWatch - Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

The new location of our canopies was on sidewalk in front of Austin Bank. There was little or no internet /Wi-Fi. So, inadvertently we're just now reporting.

The festival had 400 vendors and counted about 20,000 attendees.

NestWatch



NestWatch by Cornell University is a monitoring program designed to track status and trends in the reproductive biology of birds, including when nesting occurs, number of eggs laid, how many eggs hatch, and how many hatchlings survive. The database is intended to be used to study the current condition of breeding bird populations and how they may be changing over time as a result of climate change, habitat degradation and loss, expansion of urban areas, and the introduction of non-native plants and animals

When entering information please use the following link to ensure consistency in data entered: Understanding your data: <https://nestwatch.org/learn/how-to-nestwatch/understanding-nestwatch-data/>

If your new to Nestwatch consider taking a quick online class through cornell lab of ornithology <https://nestwatch.org/learn/how-to-nestwatch/nest-monitoring-protocol/>, this helps teach proper methods for checking the nest, and get a quick certification in completing nestwatch monitoring!



TEXAS

Texas Master Naturalists – Cross Timbers Chapter

Benbrook, TX 76126

Coordinator: Donna Honkomp
Phone: 512-373-5817

[Visit Website](#)

Texas Master Naturalists – Bluestem Chapter

1052 Bones Chapel Rd
Whitesboro, TX 76273

Coordinator: Michael Peterson
Phone: 940-360-5709
Email: gstolo@pete109@hotmail.com

Texas Master Naturalists – Bois d' Arc Chapter

2505 N Center Street
Bonham, TX 75418

Coordinator: Christine Miller
Phone: 903-583-7453
Email: miller.christine94@gmail.com

[Visit Website](#)

Friends of Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge

9897 N. FM1417
Denison, TX 75020

Coordinator: Mike Chiles
Email: mchiles@yaho.com

[Visit Website](#)

Coordinator: Jack Chiles
Email: chilesjack@bcglobal.net

Texas Bluebird Society – Buda

Buda, TX

Coordinator: Barbara Vinson
Phone: 512-295-2710
Email: bvinson@rivermaps.net

[Visit Website](#)

Tarrant County NestWatch

Fort Worth, TX 76248

Coordinator: Kimberlie Sasan
Phone: 682-597-0612
Email: kimberlie@s@gmail.com

Texas Bluebird Society – Mountain City

Mountain City, TX

Coordinator: Pauline Tom
Phone: 512-523-5678
Email: ptom5678@gmail.com

[Visit Website](#)

Fulshear Chapter

5307 Lake Hill Farm Way
Fulshear, TX 77441

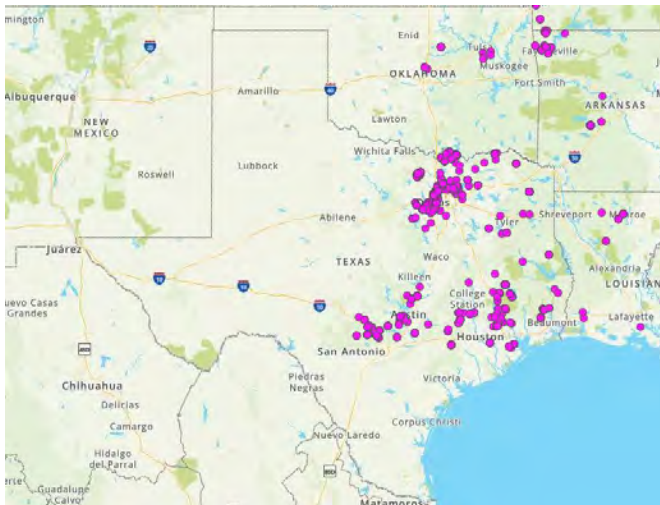
Coordinator: Pat Mollere
Phone: 281-533-9124
Email: pcmollere@yahoo.com

Cibolo Center for Conservation

140 City Park Road
Boerne, TX 78006

Coordinator: Darla Reid
Phone: 830-368-7679
Email: darla@cibolo.org

[Visit Website](#)



NestWatch Chapters are based at nature centers, parks, wildlife refuges, zoos, and other nature-minded organizations across the United States. These organizations help us teach others about the NestWatch program and train participants in their local communities. The list to the left contains the Texas Chapters.



We have had a great success so far this year in entering information into NestWatch, below is picture of early captures of data for the Eastern Blue bird.

Texas Bluebird Society Partners with Carriage Inn, Huntsville Texas

By Phyllis Campbell, Past President Texas Bluebird Society

A recent partnership between Texas Bluebird Society and Carriage Inn has brought the sweet sound of songbirds closer to home for Carriage Inn residents. For the last several months, residents have been enjoying frequent bluebird sightings while nurturing a small bluebird habitat in their community courtyard.

The community has an active group of birdwatchers which began thinking about the habitat project last year. An informational session was scheduled by Phyllis Campbell and during the session she shared photographs and introduced a sequence of events to follow should residents want to move forward with the initial phase of the project - placement of three bluebird nestboxes around the property.

Residents began to note their observations, and the project was up and going!

An informational, dated journal and photo album are on display in the front lobby so all residents, family members and visitors can look and learn about the project.

Also, informational meetings are held every couple of months and the residents come together to share stories and ask questions.

As of date, the nestboxes have successfully fledged 14 bluebirds and 6 Carolina chickadees! The 2024 nesting season has been fun and a great success!



Peggy Price, resident of Carriage Inn, has enjoyed working on the project. “We love our bluebirds and Carolina chickadees. They bring us so much joy and happiness!”

The next phase of this very rewarding project has already begun. Another nestbox has been placed outside windows at the Assisted Living wing so folks can sit and enjoy observing and watching the bluebirds.

An informational meeting has been scheduled for August and they will learn the basics of having bluebirds and ask questions. They also have a project journal and photo album to enjoy!

Stay tuned for more news and updates from this much enjoyed and loved community project!

Bird Learning Opportunity

This article by Bet Zimmerman is a sample from sialis.org



Misinformation Online

Quick Tips: Just because it's online doesn't mean it's true. Check sources, rely on books, knowledgeable, experienced landlords and your local, state and national bluebird organizations. Don't believe everything you see online. And when trying to help others, stay in your lane.

Today I was cruising one of many Facebook sites on bluebirds, and I noticed a post that said, "Good afternoon friends, ID on these babies please and thank you!" with the following photo. There were a number of replies, one from a "top contributor" that said, "By nesting materials, I would guess chickadees."

I requested a side photo of the nest, but these were CLEARLY NOT chickadee nestlings. Yes, there was a bit of moss in the nest, but it was probably from a chickadee who started to build but the box was subsequently taken over by another bird – in this case House Sparrows, as is evident by the messiness, tell-tale grass seed heads, feathers, etc. For me, the side photo was conclusive.

Others proceeded to suggest Tufted Titmouse, and Nuthatch, despite the fact that the nest and nestlings look NOTHING like either. One posited Tree Swallows because of the presence of feathers (which Tree Swallows usually arrange in a much different manner, underneath and recurving over eggs/nestlings.)

Some of the other commenters were correct in their identification. One appropriately reminded the box owner that it is important to be absolutely CERTAIN that nests, eggs, nestlings or adults are indeed House Sparrows, which are not protected by law, before taking action to evict/destroy them.

Others reminded the poster how important it is to regularly monitor nestboxes, although unfortunately one said so in a bullying manner. The person WAS trying to avoid making a mistake.

On this same Facebook site, a commenter told another poster that the nest pictured above was a CHICKADEE nest... with blue eggs, in a nest made of grass, in a clematis? (Although they did correctly guess that the larger brown spotted egg was deposited by a cowbird.) Black-capped chickadee eggs have pinkish/mauve spots, and nests are typically primarily constructed of moss in cavities.

We ALL make mistakes. We are ALL learning. But we need to try to learn from people who know what they are talking about.

NOTE: Exercise care when using Google Artificial Intelligence (AI) to answer a question. AI scrapes information from billions of sites on the Internet and may pull from unreliable or unverified sources.

NESTBOX CLEANING



With a finite number of natural cavities to choose from, most birds can't afford to be too picky. Birds often choose to reuse successful natural cavities because constructing a nest from scratch requires critical and limited time and energy.

However, the threat of **ectoparasites (e.g. mites, blowfly larvae)** from the old nesting material can also act as a strong deterrent for cavity selection. With most birds not having the option to be choosy with their nest site selection, birds like the Eastern Bluebird simply build atop old nesting material if alternative cavities aren't available.

If you do not clean out your nest box, it may become filled to the brim with old nesting material. This can potentially leave the new nest dangerously close to the entrance hole, where predators can easily reach it. When the bluebirds were left to make a choice to re-nest in a box with a positive association or to avoid ectoparasites, 71% of them chose to move to a clean nest box (Stanback and Dervan 2001). Don't forget that leftover nesting materials make the perfect home for small mammals & snakes.



History of “Feathered Friends”

Texas Bluebird Society had a membership booth at Fair on the Square in Huntsville, TX on October 7^h, 2023 and 30+ people became new members. We had so much FUN and met so many wonderful and enthusiastic bluebird folks!

It was so exciting and like any other festival your time is limited to conversations and information, plus it was very hot!

All the new members were excited and had lots of questions. So, a few weeks after Fair on the Square an Evite was sent out and “Feathered Friends” had their first meeting in November 2023. (Series 1 Part 1)

The dates of the series of meetings begins in November and are held in the following months; February, July and September, the following year. (4 meetings total)

At each meeting there are topics pertaining to the time of the year -

November (Part 1) – I have a nestbox, what do I do now?

February (Part 2) – Nesting season begins and it’s an exciting time!

July (Part 3) - Predator and heat related topics

September (Part 4) – Season is over and time to get prepared for next season

We have all learned so much from sharing stories and experiences with each other and it doesn’t matter if it’s your 1st year or 20th year, there is always something fun and interesting to learn and share with others about having bluebirds!

If you would like to be added to the Evite list for upcoming meetings, please email Phyllis at phyllis.txblues@gmail.com.

Leigh Ann Dye has been recording and posting the meetings on the Texas Bluebird Society FB page. I hope that you have been able to watch and if not, our next meeting is scheduled for September 14th. This meeting will be the last one for Series 1 and after FOTS we will start all over again!

Texas Bluebird Society is planning on hosting a membership booth again, at this year’s Fair on the Square, October 5th, so please come by and visit!

The purpose of Feathered Friends is to “listen, learn and share stories”!

Happy birding and always do something that makes you happy!

Phyllis Campbell



Volunteers Share Bluebird Happiness

A Bluebird's Journey: My Experience with a Bluebird House - Todd Webster

In the quiet of a winter afternoon in January 2022, I mounted a birdhouse on my back fence. This birdhouse was not just any birdhouse—it was a handcrafted piece made by my dad using 1x6 cedar fence pickets. It had a slanted roof, and the front side featured a hinge point just below the roof, allowing easy access to the inside. My dad had carefully designed the entrance hole to be the perfect size for bluebirds. I chose to place the house on my back fence so I could observe the birds from my porch without disturbing them.

When my dad gave me the birdhouse, I was filled with appreciation and gratitude. To show my thanks, I 3D-printed him a bluebird house for Father's Day that year. Little did I know that this simple gesture would become the centerpiece of a delightful journey with bluebirds.

The First Arrival

I was shocked and thrilled when, just a few weeks after mounting the house, a pair of bluebirds found it and decided to make it their home. By late March, they were busy collecting twigs and grass to build their nest. Both the male and female worked tirelessly, filling the inside with nesting materials. The male, ever territorial, began to dive bomb me and make clicking sounds whenever I walked too close, defending his new home.

That first season, I watched in awe as the bluebirds raised a couple of broods. The process was fascinating—their dedication to building the nest, the care they showed in feeding their young, and the constant vigilance of the male in protecting their territory. It was a privilege to witness such a close-knit family working together.

Yearly Rituals

In spring 2023, the bluebirds returned, and this time they had three broods. Each brood brought new joys and observations. I have a video from February 26th of the pair working on their nest, and by April, there were photos of fledglings alongside adult males and a female. By May 21st, more fledglings were seen on the ground and fence railing, and in June and July, the feeder above the birdhouse was bustling with activity.

As the bluebirds became more accustomed to their home, they grew increasingly territorial. I moved the feeder 30 feet down the fence rail to give them some space, yet the male continued to chase off cardinals and mockingbirds. Despite his aggressive behavior towards other species, the bluebirds themselves got along well. Juveniles from earlier broods would often hang out at the box while the parents were feeding new fledglings.

Observations and Insights

Maintaining the birdhouse has been a straightforward task. After each brood fledged and left, I cleaned out the old nest to prepare for the next. This routine has allowed me to observe the bluebirds closely and learn about their behaviors and needs. This year, the second brood is almost ready to fledge. I hope the three young ones currently in the nest will make it out safely.

Fortunately, the bluebirds face few threats. Occasionally, a hawk or turkey vulture flies by, but they never seem interested in the bluebirds. The nest's location on an iron fence three feet off the ground has also deterred snakes, coyotes, and foxes.

Personal Reflections

Having a bluebird house in my backyard has deepened my appreciation for wildlife. We are fortunate to live in a place where we can observe so much nature from our porch. Watching the bluebirds build their nest, care for their young, and fiercely protect their territory has been a rewarding experience. It has taught me a lot about dedication, resilience, and the delicate balance of nature.

Despite the occasional heartbreak when a fledgling doesn't survive, I remain committed to providing a safe home for these beautiful birds. The bluebird house will stay where it is, and I look forward to many more seasons of watching and learning from my feathered friends.

In sharing my experiences, I hope to inspire others to create spaces for wildlife in their own yards. The simple act of putting up a birdhouse can bring incredible joy and a deeper connection to the natural world.

Thanks for what you all do.