



# Nest Box News



Summer 2021

[www.southcarolinabluebirds.org](http://www.southcarolinabluebirds.org)

Volume 10 Issue 3

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*What an issue we have this quarter! Trails are expanding, member meetings have resumed (fingers crossed) and we carry on! Make sure you mark your calendars for our meeting schedule, and keep sharing the kinds of information you want to see in the Nest Box News. Thanks to Will Haltiwanger for another idea for nest cams, and see on **pg. 10** the correction to Monty Carters' article Nestcam 101 from the Spring issue.*



**Enjoy your summer/fall and I can't wait to see y'all in September!!  
(Isn't that the name of a song?! LOL!!!)**

**Terry McGrath, SCBSS**

**Editor**

*Smell the sea and feel  
the sky, let your soul  
and spirit fly into the  
mystic...*

**Van Morrison**



One less cicadia! Thanks, **Bill Bender**



**Bill Bender** captures Cedar

**Did you  
hear the  
meetings  
are back??**

## President's Perspective by Mike DeBruhl



The heat is on and summer has arrived ---and our 2021 season is going well. Make sure to keep those feeders and bird baths filled!

Although we experienced an "extended lull" in member meetings this past year -- our SCBS has been busy. We are pleased to announce that **our MONTHLY MEETINGS WILL BEGIN AGAIN ON SEPTEMBER 21. We will resume meeting on Tuesdays (instead of Mondays) at 7 PM AT O'DELL WEEKS CENTER ! This will be followed by meetings on October 19 and November 16 .... So put those dates on your calendar!!**

It seems quite fitting that our first meeting will be on THE AUTUMNAL EQUINOX / FIRST DAY OF FALL -- when the sun is directly above the Equator. This will also be nearing the end of our 2021 nesting season and we will be wrapping up our yearly statistics.

We are pleased to announce that we have established the SCBS Scholarship with USC-Aiken! This \$1,000 scholarship and \$500 for expenses, will be awarded annually to a student in the Biology Department who will assist SCBS with projects and research. Our first recipient is assisting our Trail Committee and Bennett Tucker as we work on developing better predator guards (snakes) in Hitchcock Woods. We know this will be successful and hope to be including other Universities around the state in years ahead.

Some business -- you may have received a notice to renew your SCBS membership. Please do so as expeditiously as possible so that we can ensure beginning our educational presentations again in late Fall. Also, I encourage you to also join the North American Bluebird Society (NABS). We are a major affiliate of NABS and the quarterly magazine Bluebird, fact-sheets and general information are well worth the dues. You can pay your SCBS dues and join NABS online at [southcarolinabluebirds.org](http://southcarolinabluebirds.org) and [nabluebirdsociety.org](http://nabluebirdsociety.org), respectively.

We are planning on repairing / replacing several nest boxes on our older trails ( such as in Hitchcock Woods, NWTF ), and others showing wear. We want our feathered friends to have only the best nesting environment!

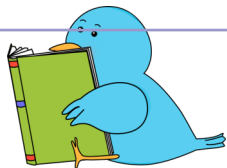
Through the diligence of our dedicated monitors, we are expanding our existing trails and adding new trails as well. Many thanks to all Monitors - and do not forget to provide your data to SCBS Data Guru Glen Hendry.

We will soon be awarding our designation of SCBS Certified Bluebird Habitat to one of our very active chapters in the next month or so. Additional details will be announced as we near award date. We recognize a chapter dedicated to SCBS charter demonstrating two+ year track record of community involvement and participation, monitoring, timely reporting, education, and nest box expansion. Stand by for further announcements...

Looking forward to seeing you on September 21<sup>st</sup>. Until then ....

Cheers and See you on the Trails .... Mike

## Insider News!



By: Terry McGrath

DON'T MISS  
THE DEADLINE!

**N** The Nestbox News and our website at  
**E** [www.southcarolinabluebirds.org](http://www.southcarolinabluebirds.org) is looking  
**W** at a merchandise section to make available a  
variety of shirts, ball caps, prints and  
stamps, etc. More to come...

**N** We value all our SCBS members for their  
**E** interest in keeping the Bluebirds and all  
**W** cavity nesting numbers strong, but we  
**S** still need help! As we break the Covid  
chains and get a little more "normal",  
consider volunteering at a presentation  
or event. It's a great way to connect  
with others and help spread the word!  
Let me know what you  
think...[mcgrathjtl@atlanticbb.net](mailto:mcgrathjtl@atlanticbb.net)

### GREAT FOR A GIFT!

**Lifetime Memberships** are available.  
If you're interested in finding out  
more, contact Mary Shultz at:  
[shultzim@att.net](mailto:shultzim@att.net).

join  
now!

Another great reason for becoming a  
member of the SCBS is Member pricing  
for a complete nest box, pole and baffle  
is 75.00. Non- members would pay  
\$88.00!

For information on joining NABS, see <http://nabluebirdsociety.org>

For information on bluebirds and other cavity nesting birds in SC,  
go to <http://southcarolinabluebirds.org>

## Deadlines

for contributions to the Nest Box  
News are: Jan 15, April 15, July 15  
and Oct 15 send your pictures, com-  
ments or articles to:  
[mcgrathjtl@atlanticbb.net](mailto:mcgrathjtl@atlanticbb.net)

## !!! ATTENTION !!!

Use **Amazonsmile** for your online  
shopping!! When you shop, designate  
SCBS as your non-profit charity of  
choice and they will donate 0.5% of  
your purchase total to SCBS .



Bluebird factsheets are now available on  
the **North American Bluebird Society** web-  
site. The one titled "**Getting Started with  
Bluebirds**" is a great way to familiarize  
yourself and others with the joy of moni-  
toring bluebirds and promoting healthy  
habitats for them.



Baltimore Oriole ...  
This fellow looks  
ready for a summer  
vacay in our area...

Photo by **Bill Bender**



# Save The Date 2021

*We are dipping our toes in the pond and are going to be having regular members meetings, starting September 21st. Subject to change as needed due to Covid-19 variant infections and official decree.*

*Some of the options coming up include:*

## **\*Presentations**

August 4, 2021      Summerville—presentation of essay winner

October 2, 2021      Master Gardeners—Augusta

## **\*\*Board of Directors Meetings 2 pm @ The Reserve**

June 8, 2021

September 14, 2021

November 9, 2021

## **\*\*\*Member Meetings\*\*\* 7 pm@ O'Dell Weeks Rec Center**

September 21, 2021

October 19, 2021

### **LIFETIME MEMBERS**

November 16, 2021

**NO MASKS REQUIRED**



Alexander, Karen, Antaki, Charolotte, Bendle, Tim & Mary, Brant, Doug & Elena, Brenneman, Ron & Dori, Brock, Roger, Burke, Jim & Sharon, Call, Tracie, Carter, Monty, Chin, Ed & Cindy, DeBruhl, Mike, Eastman, Caroline, Frick, Randy, Fuller, Muf, Hendry, Glen & Gail, Hill, Jim & Jackie, Hurst, Cindy, Koehler, Paul, Krauss, Janis, Moseley, David & Nancy, Myers, Greg & Shirley, Oliff, Barry & Cyndy, O'Neill, Bob & Barbara, Petit, Elizabeth, Powers, Amie, Radford, Scott, Raynor, Robert, Reed, Debbie and Randy, Rodin, James, Sacks, David & Maggi, Shultz, Mary, Simpson, Jean, Smith, Elizabeth, Snyder, Debbie, Tucker, Bill & Sandy

### **CONSIDER A LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP FOR \$200**

**\*Contact one of your Board members if you are interested in helping**

**\*\*Members welcome—call to set up a seat**

**If there is anyone with experience writing grants, etc. contact Mike DeBruhl page 5**





\*Debbie Reed/reeddebbie1@bellsouth.net

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Roger Brock/rwbrock@mac.com

Glen & Gail Hendry/gwhendry@hotmail.com

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#### Nest Box News

#### Facebook Page Editor

Nancy Moseley/fmoseley@bellsouth..net

www.facebook.com/groups/  
SouthCarolinaBluebirdSociety

## SCBS DIRECTORY

### Officers

#### *Director Emeritus*

Jim Burke

#### *President*

Mike DeBruhl/cmdebruhl@atlanticbb.net

#### *Vice President*

Steve Baker/sjbaker614@aol.com

#### *Secretary*

Debbie Reed/reeddebbie1@bellsouth.net

#### *Treasurer*

Tim Bendle/tim.bendle@gmail.com



Cardinal



Junco

Photos by: **Bill Bender**

## **FROM THE ARCHIVES ...**

**Volume 14, Number 3**

**Summer 1992**



**All of the information in this column, From The Archives, indeed comes from the older back issues of some of the very first publications. At the time, the title was called, simply, Sialia. It was a compilation of facts, opinions, questions and black and white photos and hand drawn sketches.**

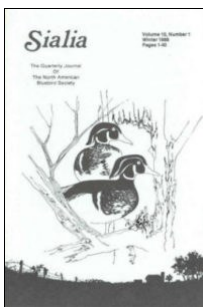
**These 5.5"x8.5" booklets are available through some of the Board members. If anyone is ever interested in a particular season or year, let me know and I will try to match up your request with a **copy to lend**. Three booklets per request. Mailing not available.**

**I can bring your requests to the next SCBS meeting...**

**Terry McGrath (find my info on pg.5 of the newsletter)**

**Sialia Back Issues (in PDF format)**

**Some back issues of Bluebird are available call 513-300-8714 for availability.**



**Back Issues of Sialia/Bluebird**

**Winter 1979 (Vol1, No. 1) through Spring 2008 (Vol. 30, No. 2)**

**\$5.00 each (including postage)**

**Call 513-300-8714 for availability**



Hey! Is there room for us out there?! Fledgling Titmice in an owl box in Hitchcock Woods.  
Thanks, [Glen and Gail Hendry](#)!

Kitty Yundt and I got a call from a business near The Bay concerning a bluebird nest in a wreath on the front door. They were concerned that the constant opening and closing of the door would cause the bluebirds to abandon the nest. Although not an ideal situation, there were two eggs already in the nest, so we tried relocation. The parents took to the new location and Kitty monitored the nest. Unfortunately, a snake claimed the two eggs. The pictures show the wreath, nest, the new location and an A+ for the peat pot experiment Kitty used on another box on her trail. Sometimes, you have to just make do! On a side note, there was an SCBS nest box set up not 10 feet from the porch!!



Original nest location



Close up of nest cup



Kitty Yundt with new nest location



Peat pots, not just for flowers!



Peat pot perfection!





**Ask  
Your  
Friends**



**A member wonders if you can feed TOO many mealworms to birds?**

**Dried mealworms are nutritious. They provide a blended balance of protein, fat, and fiber to promote healthy, vigorous birds. Mealworms appeal to a bird's natural instinct. Insects, like mealworms, are a natural part of many birds' diets.**

**The North American Bluebird Society also offers the following note of caution regarding feeding mealworms:**

**HOWEVER...**

**"Because they do not provide complete nutrition, mealworms should be used as a supplemental food only. They are calcium depleting, which can leave young birds with weak bones or cause egg binding in laying birds. To counter this, put the mealworms in a plastic bag with calcium carbonate or calcium citrate powder, and shake it gently to coat them. Both forms of calcium are available at health food stores or online.**



**YUMMY**



***Bernie Daniel at NABS thinks this Mountain Bluebird needs his compass adjusted!!***

**A mountain bluebird spotted on the Port Royal Golf Course last month. (Photograph by Neal Morris)**



**More than 100 bird species were spotted in Bermuda last month - including the first sighting of a mountain bluebird on the island.**

**Paul Watson and Erich Hetzel of the [Bermuda Audubon Society](#) said the unusual visitor was seen as part of a month-long birding competition in February.**

**In a story in the spring edition of the Envirotalk newsletter, the Audubon Society members said 110 bird species were seen, including a variety of uncommon visitors.**

**The mountain bluebird - a species that usually resides in the central and western mountains of the US - was first reported by Andrea Webb at the Port Royal Golf Course.**

**Adult male mountain bluebirds are sky blue but generally lack the orange chest found on Bermuda's resident eastern bluebirds.**

**The female of both species are duller in color than their male counterparts, but still have blue tints to their wings and tail.**

**Mr Watson and Mr Hetzel wrote: "It is not known if more birds were present this winter or more observer sightings occurred due to increased coverage but a total of 110 species were documented here during February, so quite a few more than the resident 20 or so species - and a lot more than the usual kiskadees, sparrows, and starlings commonly observed here.**

**"To put things into perspective, the average number of species seen in February over the past ten years was 84.**

**"The lowest total number observed, 46, was in 2011, while 2019 had the highest, 102."**

**Other unusual sights included two European golden plovers and a ruff, which were spotted at LF Wade International Airport, along with a Lapland longspur, a species not seen in Bermuda for 15 years.**

**Birdwatchers also reported a surf scoter on Spittal Pond, American robins, northern mockingbirds and a short-eared owl.**

**The story added: "A regular spring migrant seen by several at Warwick Pond was a lovely purple gallinule, and an early barn swallow was found on February 22."**

The essays are coming in for presentation to Summer Corners Bluebird Brigade! We will be going to Summer Corners on August 4, 2021 to give a presentation and award the lucky Junior Bluebirder his/hers award.

17 Wood Duck Babies from 21 eggs!

Photo by: [Mike DeBruhl](#)



**Editors note It seems I omitted the last two paragraphs on Monty Carters' submission for nest cams in the Spring 2021 issue. Mea culpa!**



I would also recommend this design. I believe the next time I build a box, I will attempt to make a variation of this one to make it easier to remove the camera for charging.

<https://birds.walkingdown.com/birdhouse/>

I hope this information is helpful for those that have been wanting to setup a camera in the nest box but didn't know where to start. I'll leave you with a final link below to a guide from NestWatch on this same topic. Do your research on what will work best for you, and best of luck in your digital bird watching.

<https://nestwatch.org/learn/all-about-birdhouses/installing-a-nest-camera/>

Monty Carter

Update: on the 7 eggs I had on my trail that I shared last issue, only 4 were viable...but they were beautiful babies! [Terry McGrath](#)



box-



**The Screech Owl on Glen & Gail Hendrys' trail in Hitchcock Woods in the Spring 2021 issue successfully fledged!! YAY!!!**



screechowlfilm.mp4

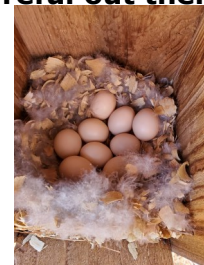
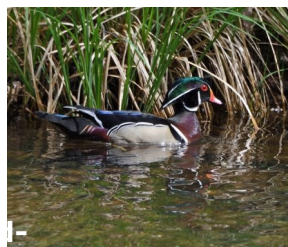


14 year old Miss **Skylar Cottell** is checking the birds in her Grandparents' backyard. Skylar was recently visiting her **Nana Lee and Papa Dean Nissen** in Aiken and was excited to go on the trail to see the BBs. She took lots of pictures and really wanted a close-up look in the Nissen backyard, even in the rain. A great start for her as the next generation of Bluebirders.

**Photo by Mike DeBruhl**



**Davis Slaunwhite** was monitoring the trail at National Wild Turkey Federation when he heard & then noticed this bad boy 2 feet from one of the bird houses. Canebrake Timber Rattler!! Be careful out there.



**In the case of this WoodDuck, any hole will do! Glen & Gail Hendry** have this nest in an owl box in Hitchcock Woods, 1/2 mile from water!



## **South Carolina Bluebird Society Partners with University of South Carolina Aiken**

The SCBS has recently provided its inaugural annual scholarship to the University of South Carolina Aiken (USCA) in the amount of \$1,000. The scholarship is to be distributed with the following stipulations:

*The scholarship(s) will be awarded to a full-time, degree-seeking student(s) majoring in Biology and in good student standing. The Biology Chair and/or Biology faculty will make recommendations for this award. Students will be required to comply with the Mission Statement of the South Carolina Bluebird Society (SCBS) as follows: "The South Carolina Bluebird Society is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization dedicated to the recovery and conservation of the Eastern Bluebird and other cavity-nesting birds native to South Carolina and elsewhere." As such, students will assist the SCBS in conducting research on bluebirds and other cavity nesting birds as prescribed by the SCBS including habitat, predators, trail monitoring, nest box siting, etc.*

In addition, SCBS has provided USCA with funding of \$500 to initiate a project as described below.  
**Goals:**

"The funds for this project are established to determine the best method(s) to deter predation of cavity nest boxes (primarily utilized by the Eastern Bluebird). These methods are to include both physical and chemical deterrents and must be a non-lethal solution to the predator.

These funds can be used to procure equipment or other materials to accomplish the stated goals."

**Methodology:** The basic steps shall be as follows:

**Physical Barriers:**

Observe predator behavior in the field to determine method of access to the nesting boxes.

This may include physical observations in the field as well as the use of cameras.

Assess the noted behaviors and develop potential solution(s) to prevent these behaviors.

Procure and construct the physical barrier(s).

Observe predator behavior with the physical barrier in place.

Review effectiveness of physical barrier and revise as necessary.

**Chemical Barriers:**

Perform research of existing documentation to ascertain the existence of proven chemical barriers.

Interview herpetologists or other "experts" in the field to see if chemical barriers have been proven.

Procure and prepare ingredients as necessary.

Apply chemical barrier(s) in the field surrounding active nest box.

Observe predator behavior when contacting the chemical barrier.

Review effectiveness of chemical barrier & revise as necessary.



U of SC Aiken

Center for Research  
Excellence



BY DEDE BILES | [dbiles@aikenstandard.com](mailto:dbiles@aikenstandard.com)



**Stable View is known as a venue for equestrian sports in the Aiken area, but it also is a haven for endangered Red-cockaded Woodpeckers.**

**The following Stable View news release, which was issued June 11, provided an update on efforts there to attract the birds and accommodate their nesting needs:**

**Stable View started with one adult Red-cockaded Woodpecker and now has five adults and four chicks that have recently hatched. Below is a timeline of our RCW population's growth:**

**2017: Stable View started a significant conservation endeavor to identify, conserve, and manage the habitat in support of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers. This was when Stable View added RCW Biologist Mark Pavlosky Jr., MPJ Wildlife Consulting LLC to the team.**

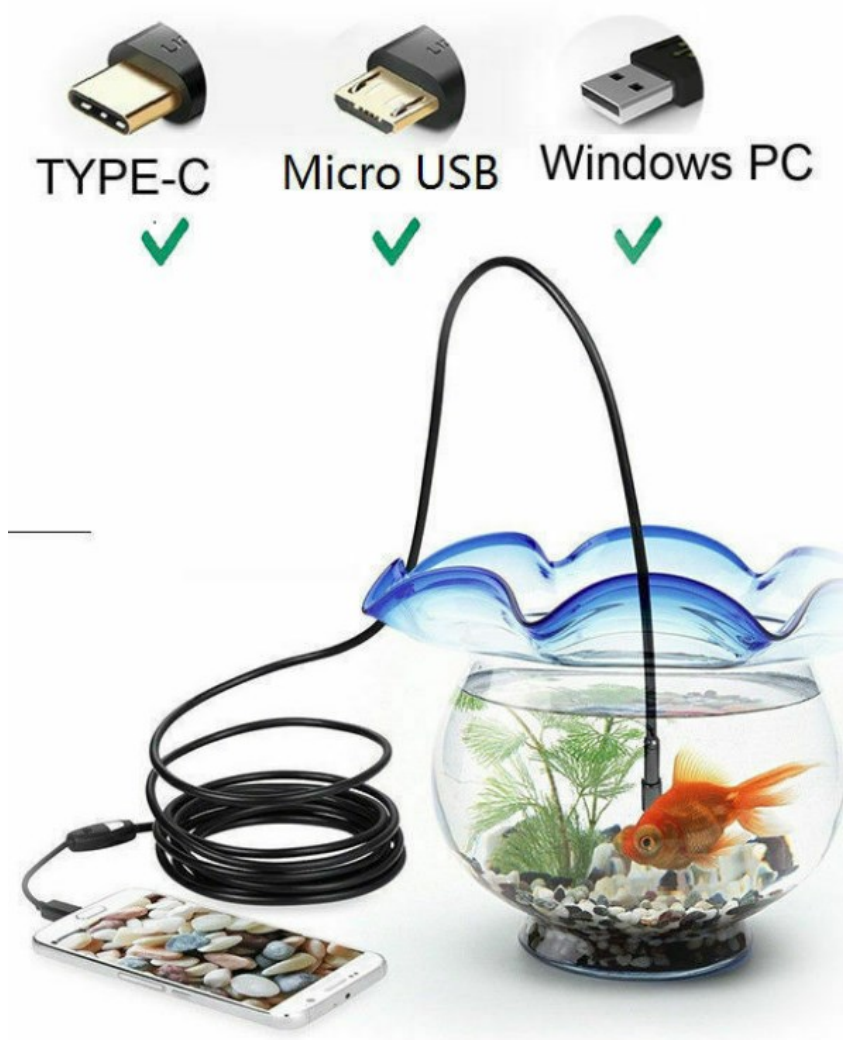
**2018: Fifteen artificial cavities (the holes that RCWs use as nests in the trunks of long-leaf pines) were created to attract the birds. These artificial cavities are part of three "recruitment clusters" spread over 850 acres.**

**2019: A single male RCW from the neighboring Hitchcock Woods population stopped by and called Stable View home.**

**2020: With the assistance of many partners, a translocation of one male and two female RCWs was conducted to grow the Stable View population.**

**2021: Earlier this year, the original male and one of the new females paired up and inhabited the first ever RCW nest at Stable View. A total of four eggs were laid, and two hatched. In early May, another RCW was confirmed on the property, also coming from the neighboring Hitchcock Woods. In June, another four eggs were laid, and two have hatched this past week.**

**In the past I have been reluctant to open my houses to check on the bluebirds. I recently purchased an endoscope with light and optional 90 degree mirror for about \$11 on eBay. It plugs into my cell phone. This makes it very easy to see what is happening inside without being very disruptive.**



**I got one with a fairly short cord, but they come with longer cords. You could use these as a alternative to the cameras mentioned in the newsletter. You could mount the camera in the box (it's about the size of the cap off a Bic pen) and run the wire over to an accessible spot nearby, then just plug in your phone when you want to check on things. The app I am using allows you to record still photos on your phone or videos. It can even be plugged into a laptop or PC. Supposed to be waterproof. It has a control to adjust LED brightness built into the cord. It is powered from your phone so no batteries required.**

**Will Haltiwanger**

***Editors' Note: Another great camera idea to help us get "up close and personal" with our favorite peeps!! Thank you, Will!***



## DID YOU KNOW?

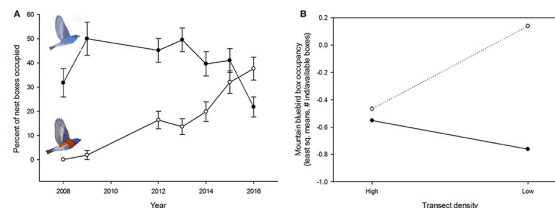
**Even well-fed cats kill birds. Do not let your cat roam outdoors without a collar on which several small bells are attached. The best solution is to keep your kitties indoors.**



**Because Bluebirds favor open grasslands with scattered trees, there is no need to wonder that this behavior of bluebirds is always associated with the woodpecker.**



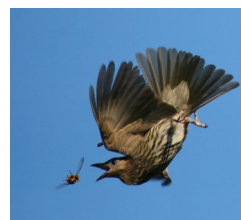
**The population of bluebirds was reportedly decreased up to 70 percent by 1970s for they could not compete with starlings and house sparrows.**



**Bluebirds are always linked with happiness in various songs and popular culture.**



**Bluebirds can spot a grasshopper from 50 feet away**



***Bye! See you next issue...***



***"Catbird singing his farewell"...Photo by [Bill Bender](#)***



Like us on Facebook! For answers to your questions and membership information to the South Carolina Bluebird Society and the North American Bluebird Society go to: <http://www.southcarolinabluebirds.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/SouthCarolinaBluebirdSociety>

**South Carolina Bluebird Society**

**P.O. Box 5151**

**Aiken, SC 29804-5151**



A member of SCBS? Great! Thinking of joining a group of like-minded "bird brains"? Contact us and we'll open the door to the best bird house around! We're over 1,000+ members and that's a lot of ideas, tips, and opinions! We'd love to hear yours! And while you're at it, consider a membership with our North American Bluebird Society (NABS). Go to [www.nabluebirdsociety.org](http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org) for info on how to join and a goldmine of information and printable PDF fact sheets on all things Bluebird and cavity nesters. If you are interested in backyard birding or a trail, this site is good for refreshing and new monitors. Consider a membership now to both sites and fly with us!





