



Mission: To increase the population of bluebirds and other native cavity-nesting birds through the promotion of bluebird awareness among concerned citizens.



Volume 10  
Number 1  
Spring 2003

# Bluebirds *Across Nebraska*

www.bbne.org

An Affiliate  
of NABS

## Last President's letter

Having completed a four year term as president of Bluebirds Across Nebraska, I would like to say it has been a lot of fun. The friendships I have formed and the people I have met will stay with me for the rest of my life. What I might have given the organization was by far outweighed by what the organization gave back. I have never before been part of a group like Bluebirds Across Nebraska.

To be given the honor of being president was at first a surprise, then a challenge. Often times I had no idea what I was doing; but there was always a force behind me that guided me in the right direction. That force was Steve Eno. With his help and guidance I have survived the last four years and come out the richer for the experience. Thank you, Steve.

I would like to thank all of the members of BAN for the last four years for you have given me something that will never be forgotten. You have given me a feeling of being needed, of being welcomed and, most of all, being part of your group.

To the next president of BAN may you find the same satisfaction that I have. May you accept the challenges and enjoy them. May the list of people you now count as friends grow substantially. May your life be as much enriched by this experience as mine was.

Thank you all for the last four years.

**Bill Seibert**

President of Bluebirds Across Nebraska

From Executive Director Steve Eno

## Thank you Bill!

It has been a real pleasure and honor working with Bill for the last four years. He has done an outstanding job as President and the organization has benefitted so much from his leadership.

I've also enjoyed being able to spend so much time with Bill and Sandy and feel fortunate to consider them such good friends.

## 2003 Bluebird Convention

By Bill Seibert

When first asked to head up the 2003 North American Bluebird Convention about two years ago, I flatly turned it down. It seemed an overwhelming task. A one-day conference was not bad, but three days with all of the NABS people looking over us was scary. Steve Eno knew more than I did and would not take no for an answer. One of the factors that influenced the decision to pick me as director of the convention was my intention to retire soon. "No, no, no" fell on deaf ears and I finally accepted the job. I was not sure where to start.

With the help of a group of BAN people, we started planning. Relying on input from the others, as I had never attended a NABS convention before, we soon got the idea of what lied ahead. The NABS people told me if I needed help, all I needed to do was ask. That would have been a big help had I known what to ask. You might say I was flying blind. The core group got us started and we laid out the direction we intended to head.

It really helped when Sandy and I attended the 2002 NABS convention in Penticton, BC. Then I knew that I really should be scared. Those people seemed to have every detail in complete control. It did give us all a clearer view of what we needed to accomplish.

One theme seemed clear from the start of the planning. We would maintain a Nebraska flavor to this affair. We wanted the normal attendance of around 200 from the Midwest. We wanted the characteristics of our normal conference like the raffle, the Friday night dinner and the camaraderie. We wanted everyone to see what the people of BAN are like. I felt if we could do what we normally do, we would be all right.

The Bluebirds Across Nebraska team did not just get by hosting the North American Bluebird Convention. We provided an enjoyable time for people from across North America. Everyone seemed to genuinely be having a good time. I don't feel we could have asked

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# Next meeting - Sunday, May 18th

The spring potluck picnic meeting will be held on Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 at Indian Cave State Park, located in the southeast corner of the state. The park is located approximately 15 miles southeast of Brownville. **The previous newsletter mistakenly gave the date as May 17<sup>th</sup>.**

Indian Cave State Park is one of Nebraska's most beautiful parks, with bluffs overlooking the Missouri River. The park is also known for its good birding.

Please bring your own table service and a covered dish

to share. Drinks will be provided.

BAN's annual election will be held at this meeting. The slate of officers for 2003 includes:

Sandy Seibert, President

Denny Cradick, Vice President

Sharon Holliday, Secretary

Elva Osten, Treasurer

Dorothy Matzke, chair of the nominating committee, will conduct the elections.



## Bluebirders of the Year

Having had such a very successful year, it was impossible for BAN to select just one Bluebirder of the Year. Pictured above are the 2002 Bluebirders of the Year receiving their awards at the banquet in Kearney. (Pictured left to right) Loren Jensen of Edgar; Julie Milota of Papillion; and Lawrence Fuchs of Belden. Chuck Finley presented the awards.

## Nature Society News

Two issues of *Purple Martin Capital News* (currently published as *Nature Society News*) dated January and April 1974 were sent to BAN from Oregon bluebirder Patricia Johnson. One of the issues contained a letter captioned "How About Bluebird Trails in Nebraska" which was sent in by now-Buffalo County Coordinator Valerie Vierk. In 1974, Valerie was 30 years younger and way ahead of her time. "This is my third year of putting out bluebird houses, but I have yet to have the pleasure of a bluebird nesting in any of them." She then went on to tell of her birding experiences and to describe Sandhill Crane viewing in Nebraska. The letter ended "Are there other bluebird lovers in Nebraska?" Well, it took a long time, but there sure are. Way to go Val!

That same 1974 issue contained an article about bluebirds which was written by bluebird enthusiast Larry Zeleny (who two years later founded the North American Bluebird Society). If you would like a copy of Val's letter or Larry Zeleny's article, contact Cheryl Eno.

## Mountain Bluebird Conference

### Workshop rescheduled for September 20th

Due to the largest snow storm to hit the Denver area in 80 years, the Mountain Bluebird Workshop scheduled for March 18<sup>th</sup> at the Wildcat Hills Nature Center south of Gering/Scottsbluff was canceled. Bob Niebuhr of Great Falls, Montana and Myrna Pearman of Red Deer, Alberta, Canada and other mountain bluebirders generously agreed to schedule their trip to the 2003 NABS convention in Kearney so as to stop in western Nebraska to put on the workshop.

The group made it as far as Casper, Wyoming on Monday, but all roads out of Casper were closed. Sarah Winfrey, Director of the Center, had to call all 60 of those registered for the event to tell them it was postponed.

The event has now been rescheduled for Saturday, September 20, 2003. Bob Niebuhr (president of Mountain Bluebird Trails) and Myrna Pearman (numerous credits including past Roger Tory Peterson "Nature Educator of the Year," author, and featured speaker at the 2003 NABS convention in Kearney) are taking time out of their busy schedules to return to Nebraska. In addition to an interesting and educational program, lunch will be provided. There will also be a few sale items offered and Myrna Pearman will autograph her new book "Mountain Bluebird Trail Monitoring Guide." If you would like to attend, please R.S.V.P. to Sarah Winfrey at the Wildcat Hills Nature Center, (308) 436-3777, P.O. Box 65, Gering, NE 69341 or e-mail: [swinfrey@ngpc.state.ne.us](mailto:swinfrey@ngpc.state.ne.us). Space is limited, so please register early.

There will be a \$10.00 registration fee for this event, which will include lunch, a cedar nesting box and a mounting pole. More information will be in the next newsletter.

# Miscellanea

## Falls City workshop held

Richardson County Coordinator, Cliff Elwonger, and Cass County Coordinator Ron Eaton, put on a workshop at the Emanuel United Methodist Church in Falls City on February 22<sup>nd</sup>. Over 20 people attended with 5 becoming new members. The Falls City newspaper was there to cover the event and ran a lengthy article about the workshop and BAN. A picture of Cliff was featured in the article.

## Friendly competition continues

There has been an ongoing friendly competition going on between Cass and Otoe Counties to see which can fledge the most bluebirds. Last year Otoe County fledged 4,226 bluebirds while Cass County fledged 2,976. **Ron Eaton, Cass County Coordinator**, won't let one "loss" slow him down -- after all, the bluebirds came out the big winners in all of this.

Congratulations to Otoe County for their "big win" in our friendly challenge. They not only beat me, but buried me to boot! I wasn't even close. Keep up the good work and I'll keep working hard too. – Ron Eaton

## Wash PVC

BAN is looking for volunteers to clean out PVC boxes. BAN was given 25-foot long pieces of PVC which had been used for an irrigation system which left calcium deposits on the inside of the pipe. The best method of cleaning is to soak them in a wash tub or horse tank and then scrub them with a stiff brush and soap. Anyone interested should contact Steve Eno.

## Building boxes

Connie Conover and Sanford Downs have and continue to put in countless hours building boxes for Nebraska and Western Iowa. BAN will soon be receiving a semi load of 24,000 board feet of cedar. Connie & Sanford could sure use some help. Connie has a state-of-the-art workshop at his home in Lincoln. Working with BAN's box builders guarantees to be a good time and an educational experience. If you are interested, contact Connie or Sanford (numbers are given on back of this newsletter).

# Bird Watcher's Digest

Everyone who attended the NABS 2003 convention in Kearney enjoyed the talents of husband and wife team, Bill Thompson, III and Julie Zickefoose. Bill's parents were the founding publishers of BWD and Bill is the current editor of the popular birding magazine. Both Bill & Julie frequently contribute articles and Julie's artwork is routinely featured in the publication. As long-time subscribers, Steve & Cheryl Eno highly recommend this publication.

*Bird Watcher's Digest* is celebrating its 25th anniversary of publishing. Begun in Marietta, OH in 1978 by Bill & Elsa Thompson, it is about bird watching, for bird watchers, by bird watchers.

*Bird Watcher's Digest*, from the beginning, has endeavored to deliver the joy, passion, and how-to of bird watching to its readers.

As part of their anniversary celebration, the Thompson Family and BWD staff invite you to become a subscriber AND benefit our organization. Half the cost of each NEW subscription will be donated to BAN.

Use the form below, or call the toll-free phone #, or visit the BWD website to place your order.

**Yes! I would like to subscribe OR give a gift subscription of *Bird Watcher's Digest* and help our club raise money!**

1-year (6 issues) of BWD = ONLY \$19.99 (we make \$10.00!)

## Bluebirds Across Nebraska

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# Welcome new members!!!

## (And thank you to all continuing members)

Not only do we want to thank you for your interest and support, but we encourage you to share your bluebirding experiences with the rest of the membership. We hope to hear from you about your successes or failures, questions or answers, problems or solutions, or anything you find interesting, helpful or entertaining.

Since the last newsletter, the following individuals and organizations have joined Bluebirds Across Nebraska:

**Loren Anderson**, Yankton, SD; **Mary Ash**, Arcadia; **Harry Batcheller**, Yankton, SD; **Cathy Bayman**, Nebraska City; **Sally Bell**, Broken Bow; **Douglas Boellstorff**, Johnson; **M J Boesen**, Kenesaw; **Don Boh2net**, Yankton, SD; **Tom Brady**, Yankton, SD; **Kayden Bridgman c/o Joan Hochstein**, Hartington; **Leonard Bruner**, Rising City; **Karen Buckow**, Plymouth; **Robert Callies**, Leigh; **Elaine Capellen**, Hazard; **Dick Carman**, Wayne; **Garner Clark**, Wood River; **Dick Classen**, Humphrey; **Julie Claybaugh**, Carroll; **Stacy Curro**, Plattsmouth; **Anton Curtis**, Grand Island; **Harry Davis**, Brownville; **Linda DeBlauw**, Crofton; **Robert Doeden**, Syracuse; **Oscar Eaton**, Bradshaw; **Judy Eisenmenger**, Yankton, SD; **Alfred Filips**, Crofton; **Jon Flom**, Yankton, SD; **Jim Gardner**, Seward; **Dennis Garrels**, Grand Island; **Jr Gauchat**, Fred, Brock; **Charleen Gausman**, Milford; **Arlyn Gehring**, Platte Center; **Bernadine Gocke**, Waco; **James Grupe**, Beatrice; **Pat Hagen**, Yankton, SD; **Tom Hamernik**, Clarkson; **Darrell Hansen**, Irene, SD; **Hansen Common Stock Farm**, Anselmo; **Bennet Hanson**, Burbank, SD; **Kerry Hanson**, Yankton, SD; **Diane Heeney**, Yankton, SD; **Denice Heim**, Plattsmouth; **Francis Hircock**, Ansley; **Deb Hostick**, Merna; **Robert Irwin**, Omaha; **Roberta Iverson**, Vermillion, SD;



**Kenneth Jenschke**, Stonewall, TX; **Ron & Sharon Johnson**, Columbus; **Daisy Kamback**, Yankton, SD; **Vickie Karmann**, Norfolk; **Judy Keck**, Crofton; **Marlyn Kouse**, Randolph; **Anne Kruse**, Grand Island; **Jim Heisinger**, Omaha; **Verl MacTaggart**, Burlington, KS; **Max Mader**, Grand Island; **Lori Maine**, Blair; **Julie Marshall**, Lorton; **Kenneth Meyer**, Nebraska City; **Nancy Miller**, York; **Karen Mount**, Yankton, SD; **Jim Mueller**, Yankton, SD; **Gerald Mueller**, Yankton, SD; **Marilyn Murphy**, Dunlap, IA; **Keith Neuhalfen**, St Helena; **Wayne Nielsen**, Yankton, SD; **Ken Olmer**, Humphrey; **Bob & Elsie Olsen**, Pacific Junction, IA; **Linda Parker**, Pleasant Dale; **Michael Pearce**, Superior; **Ginger Peschl**, Tyndall, SD; **Norma Luebbert**, Yankton, SD; **Clem Rist**, Humphrey; **Lorraine Ritchie**, Seward; **Vonn Roberts**, Lincoln; **the Rudeen Family**, Ceresco; **Bernie Ruskamp**, Pilger; **Greg Sander**, Lincoln; **Bob Scheckler**, Wayne; **Paul Scheid**, Volin, SD; **Marvin Schuett**, Bloomfield; **John SeEVERS**, Seward; **Ann Sherman**, Yankton, SD; **Kris & Tim Simmons**, Otoe; **Helen Soley**, Nebraska City; **Jacqueline Sontstedt**, Crofton; **Greg Stach**, Yankton, SD; **Claudette Stappert**, Hartington; **Ron Steuben**, Rodgers; **Lee Stevens**, Malvern, IA; **Willard Still**, Broken Bow; **Laurie Studier-Arnett**, Dannebrog; **Barbara Teachoot**, Shenandoah, IA; **Liz Thanel**, Garland; **Dale & Suzzy Thomas**, Auburn; **Carmen Tilgner**, Wayne; **Lynn Wallace**, Seward; **Iona Wayman**, O'Neill; **Alice Weatherwax**, Anselma; **Don Weldon**, Beatrice; **Colleen Wellsandt**, Talmage; **Jim & Shirley Wemhoff**, Columbus; **Isabelle Whitmore**, McCool Junction; **June Wilgocki**, Columbus; **Ray & Mary Wistrom**, Blair; **Frieda Woken**, Beatrice; **Marge Wollenburg**, Odell; **Jacie Zoerb**, Litchfield.

## Thanks to our lifetime members

Special thanks for the continuing support of our lifetime members:

**Curt & Vicki Barr**, Fort Calhoun; **Dick Behrens**, Omaha; **Nancy & Jack Betts**, Yutan; **Jim & Mary Carlson**, Utica; **Leland E Carmichael**, Unadilla; **Richard Cherovsky**, Wahoo; **Marlys Christensen**, Valentine; **Almon & Pam Conover**, Lincoln; **Bill & Betty Cook**, Beatrice; **Wayne Davis**, Lexington, KY; **Wilfred & Audrey DeVries**, Cortland; **Emma Driver**, Honey Creek, IA; **Susan Eno**, New York, NY; **Irma Eno**, Lincoln; **Steve & Cheryl Eno**, Raymond; **Eno-Wagner Family**, Philadelphia,

PA; **Connie & Chuck Finley**, Nebraska City; **Larry & Peggy Fletcher**, Lincoln; **Jim & Mary Jo Fosnaugh**, Walton; **Alice Franks**, Lincoln; **Lawrence & Julia Fuchs**, Belden; **Steve & Mary Gilbertson**, Aitkin, MN; **Gayle Goering**, Platte Center; **Richard Hahn**, Papillion; **Carolyn Hall**, Bassett; **Keith & Molly Herpy**, Pierce; **Marie Hitz**, Lincoln; **Gordon Hopp**, Unadilla; **Jon & Jackie Howe**, Livermore, CO; **Robin Ritchey Huebner**, Stanton; **Charlie & Cora Humm**, Rulo; **Brent Jensen**, Oak; **Loren Jensen**, Edgar; **Rodney Johns**, Alliance; **Dwight Johnsen**,

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## S.D. workshop held, first county coordinator found

It has always been a goal of Cedar County Coordinator Lawrence Fuchs to spread the word about bluebirds into South Dakota. Lawrence and Knox County Coordinator Toni Lynn Merchen put on a workshop on March 1<sup>st</sup> at the Corp of Discovery Welcome Center near Yankton, SD.

Both Lawrence & Toni were surprised by the 100 people that turned out for the workshop. Besides putting on a very informative program, 30 people signed up as members that afternoon.

Another goal of Lawrence's was to get a BAN County Coordinator in South Dakota. BAN now welcomes Kenneth Henseler of Yankton as the organization's first South Dakota County Coordinator.

## Lifetime members

Continued from Page 4

Cordova; **Don Johnson**, Ceresco; **Jan & Richard Johnson**, Wakefield; **Randy P Johnson**, Ashland; **Keith Kelly**, Grand Island; **Richard & Kathy Kujath**, Beatrice; **Larry Labart**, McCool Junction; **Jerry Larsen**, Omaha; **Gene & Bobbi Lewallen**, Rochester, MN; **Shirley Linderholm**, Cambridge; **Don Maas**, Omaha; **Roscoe & Elaine Malick**, Lincoln; **Mark & Leanne Manning**, Crete; **Don Mason**, York; **Stan & Dorothy Matzke**, Bennet; **James & Marie McLochlin**, Omaha; **Dr. David McMaster**, Nebraska City; **Jay & Sharrell Merritt**, Lincoln; **Julie Milota**, Papillion; **Phyllis Niebuhr**, Crete; **James & DaNelle Nisley**, Minot, ME; **Martha Nuffer**, Elkhorn; **Leland & Elva Osten**, Lincoln; **Jim & Sue Palm**, Weston; **June & Jerry Papst**, Papillion; **Paula Petersen**, Garland; **Donald J Peterson**, Elmwood; **Amy Polivka**, Shelby, IA; **Keith & Cheryl Radel**, Faribault, MN; **Hall Ranch**, Bassett; **Vera Rauscher**, Fairmont; **Dick & Sandy Rieckman**, Alvo; **Barbara Rivers**, Raymond; **Sally Ruben**, York; **Duane Ruh**, Sargent; **Joyce Schiermann**, Lincoln; **Victoria Scoville**, Omaha; **Dorene Scriven**, Minneapolis, MN; **Bill & Sandy Seibert**, Omaha; **Thomas Shutts**, Pickrell; **Nancy Smith**, Papillion; **Richard Sok**, Grand Island; **Terry Stiles**, Syracuse; **Mary Teten**, Talmage; **LaVerna Waite**, Platte Center; **Floyd & Marty Raiser VanErt**, Carson, IA; **Judith Voekler**, Pierce; **George Wenzl**, Steinauer; **Leo Wenzl**, Elk Creek; **Ann Wick**, Jeff, John & Barb, Black Earth, WI; **James Wight**, Bartley; **Derry & Phyllis Wolford**, Shenandoah, IA; **Sandy Wortmann**, Crofton; **Merlin Wright**, Peru; **P. H. & Bev Young**, Valentine; **Mary Zimmerman**, Raymond.



## Boxes put up at LBJ State Park

BAN County Coordinators Derry & Phyllis Wolford of Shenandoah, Iowa put up bluebird boxes at the LBJ State Park in Stonewall Texas on February 5<sup>th</sup> of this year. They met with Kenneth Jenschke, Maintenance Officer, and Don Schuch, Park Manager, to install the boxes. Derry even sold Ken a membership to BAN. The latest report from Texas is that bluebirds are attempting to build nests in two of the boxes.

Derry & Phyllis have also been busy working with youth groups in Iowa. They recently put on two programs for 4-H groups where they built boxes and watched the new "Bluebirds Inside the Nestbox" video.

## Bluebird Convention

Continued from Page 1

for a more gratifying convention than we had. If I were asked why it was such a success, I would answer "the people of not only BAN but of the Midwest." I would like to thank everyone who volunteered in any way for this convention. The list is too long and I know I would again leave someone out. Everyone should know that this was a group effort and the people of BAN deserve the credit. Thank you all for letting me head up what turned out to be one of the most enjoyable experiences of my life.

# NABS holds 26th Annual Convention

This was NABS's largest convention ever with approximately 400 people attending from 31 states and 3 provinces. BAN thanks everyone who helped put this together and especially Bill Seibert who spent almost two years of his life organizing the event.



One donut, one muffin, two granola bars, one apple and an O.J. were put in 100 sacks for breakfast for the early Friday morning birding field trip. (left to right) Sandy Seibert, Phyllis Wolford, Joanie Cradick, Bill Seibert and Denny Cradick.



From behind the scenes. For the over 400 people that registered for the convention, this gives you an opportunity to put a face with a name. Julie Beutler of Meadow Grove took on the overwhelming job of being in charge of registration. Julie received a limited edition of a pewter Sandhill Crane that was specially crafted for presentation to speakers and others at the NABS 2003 convention by Nebraska artist, Gary Ginther of Cambridge.



John Dinan, non-game wildlife biologist of Nebraska Game & Parks was presented a Sandhill Crane in appreciation for his working with BAN over the years. John was fundamental in helping start BAN in 1993.



Steve & Cheryl Eno receiving the NABS Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Field of Bluebird Conservation from NABS Award Chairman, Dave Cook.

Photos courtesy  
Leland Osten

# Convention in Kearney, Neb., March 20-23



What an honor. BAN president Bill Seibert and Executive Director Steve Eno accept a Certificate of Achievement Award on behalf of Bluebirds Across Nebraska from Nebraska Game & Parks Director, Rex Amack. BAN has had an ongoing relationship with Game & Parks since its inception in 1993.



Carnac wasn't available but BAN was fortunate to have the "Great Gilnac" a/k/a Minnesota bluebirder Steve Gilbertson entertain at Friday night's social gathering. Julie Zickefoose was a good sport and did a fine job as Gilnac's Ed McMahon.



BAN had quite a few busy days in sales. Besides its regular line of sales items, there were special shirts, vests, caps, and wine, all with the NABS 2003 logo. Setting up the sales area are: (l-r) Joanie Cradick, Sandy Seibert, Elva Osten.



Not enough can be said about the talent of the speakers at the convention. It was a truly amazing group. Speakers (top, left to right) Dr. Wayne Kramer, Denton, NE; Dr. Kevin Berner, Richmondville, NY; (center, left to right) Bill Thompson, III, Whipple, OH; Al Batt, Hartland, MN; Ron Cisar, Omaha, NE; Paul Tebbel, Kearney, NE; John Acorn, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada; (front row) Julie Zickefoose, Whipple, OH; Myrna Pearman, Red Deer, Alberta, Canada.



# 10th Anniversary Conference

## At Mahoney State Park March 27th, 2004

Bluebirds Across Nebraska will be hosting a special conference next year in celebration of its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The conference will be held on March 27, 2004 at Mahoney State Park -- located half way between Lincoln and Omaha, just off I-80. For those who have not been to Mahoney State Park, there is plenty to do. It has been rated one of the top 10 state parks in the country. The SAC Museum and Wildlife Safari Park are just minutes away. There

will be a Friday night banquet with entertainment.

A reservation form will be included in a future newsletter. A block of rooms and cabins have been reserved under Bluebirds Across Nebraska. Cabins range from \$105 to \$120/night and can sleep up to 4 or more. Rooms in the lodge range from \$65 to \$80/night. These rooms and cabins will go fast, so we suggest you reserve one as soon as possible. Call Mahoney State Park at (402) 944-2523.



Bluebirds Across Nebraska recognizes the importance of education in attracting and fledging bluebirds as well as habitat preservation, landscaping for wildlife, bird feeding, etc., and is happy to offer a number of books on these subjects to its members at very reasonable prices.

*Bluebird Trails, A Guide to Success*

- Scriven - \$12.00

*Enjoying Bluebirds More* (booklet)

- Zickefoose - \$4.50

*Mountain Bluebird Trail Monitoring Guide* (booklet)

Pearman - \$4.00

*How to Control House Sparrows* (booklet)

- Grussing - \$4.00

*Landscaping for Wildlife*

- Henderson - \$13.00

*Woodworking for Wildlife*

- Henderson - \$12.00

*Wild About Birds* (feeding guide)

- Henderson - \$20.00

These books will be available at the May 18<sup>th</sup> and August 17<sup>th</sup> meetings, but if you are unable to attend an upcoming meeting, you can order any of the books by contacting Steve Eno, 2500 W. James Dr., Raymond, NE 68428; (402) 783-3011; cleno@aol.com. The prices listed above include shipping.

## Minutes of BAN Quarterly Meeting at Mahoney State Park, February 9, 2003

On a cold, snowy day in February, 29 members attended BAN's winter meeting at Mahoney State Park. Minutes of the previous meeting were approved, the financial report was presented, and committee reports were given. Highlights from the committee reports include:

**Box Production:** Sanford Downs reported that box building was going strong. He gave out 10 nuthatch boxes for members to try.

**County Coordinators:** Chuck Finley introduced new Pottawattamie County (Iowa) Co-Coordinator Emma Driver.

**Fundraising:** Steve Eno reported that there would be a full line of sale items at the convention in Kearney.

**Newsletter:** Cheryl Eno expressed an interest in finding a new newsletter editor.

**Miscellaneous:** Pottawattamie County (Iowa) Coordinators Floyd & Marty VanErt showed a video from Omaha television station KETV featuring their conservation efforts with bluebirds. Floyd & Marty said they received many calls from all over Iowa immediately after the story aired.

It was decided that BAN's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference will be held at Mahoney State Park on March 27, 2004. Mary Teten and Ardie Hopp volunteered to help with the conference. In response to Mary Teten's suggestion, it was agreed that registration to BAN conferences be free to children 12 and younger.

Joanie Cradick and Lawrence Fuchs are working on BAN 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorative sale items.



"Look at this shirt, Remus! You can zip-a-dee-doo-dah all day long for all I care, but you keep that dang Mr. Bluebird off your shoulder!"

# Landscaping for birds

Reprinted from *Backyard Chatter*

By deciding to enhance your property for wildlife, you provide beauty for your home, create excitement for your family and affect the future survival of wildlife in your area. No matter what the size of your property or budget, you CAN make a difference.

Few people would deny that there is pleasure in having birds in the garden. Their activity interests us, their colors enchant us, and their songs brighten the day. Add the fact that they eat lots and lots of insects, and in some cases, pollinate our flowers. It's no wonder that feeding and watching birds is a major national pastime.

More and more, however, you hear people sadly saying that "there just aren't as many birds as there used to be." In some ways this is true: development, pesticides, indiscriminate cutting of forests, unchecked predators, disruption of migration paths – all of these have cut down considerably on the numbers of some bird species. With greater awareness and environmental protection, some are making a comeback, and for this we can be grateful. At the same time, we can each play a part in recreating desirable habitat for birds and they will reward us by visiting our yards in greater variety and numbers.

The tendency today when building houses is to clear-cut the lot, construct the house, add a few small foundation plantings, and then surround it with a vast expanse of green lawn. Grass has its place but, with the exception of robins, flickers and starlings, it is of no benefit to birds, nor to most other wildlife for that matter. Flower gardens are lovely and add back some food and cover, but not nearly enough to sustain large populations of birds. When landscaping for birds, you need to think about the four essential needs of wildlife: food, water, shelter and space. By carefully choosing a variety of trees, shrubs, and other plants, then adding additional food with bird feeders and water as needed, you can create a habitat that will bring you endless enjoyment through every season.

Birds come in a wide variety, so it is only natural that they have a large range of preferences as far as food, nesting sites and shelter. If all species enjoyed the same plants, there would be overcrowding and too great a drain on limited resources. Therefore, when you are choosing plants, strive for diversity to ensure the greatest assortment of species in your yard. You will want to consider trees, shrubs,

grasses, flowers, vines, brambles, and even dead trees, known as "snags." Those birds that don't migrate will need seeds and berries to carry them through the winter, as well as pines or other non-deciduous trees and shrubs to offer protection from snow and cold temperatures.

It is best if you can plant in levels, extending from taller trees at the top, down through shrubs to flowers and ground covers, since different birds live and feed at different heights. These should be grouped, rather than planted as individual specimens, and can be placed along the border of your property or as "islands" in your yard. Hedges are also very enticing to birds, especially if you have the space to make them at least eight feet wide. If you have an out-of-the-way corner, many bird species will appreciate a thicket of blackberries, raspberries, honeysuckle bushes, or native roses.

If you have a dead tree trunk that is not endangering any structure, keep it in place and add ivy or other vines to disguise it and offer protection to birds. Many species use snags even without any green covering, both for food and nest holes.

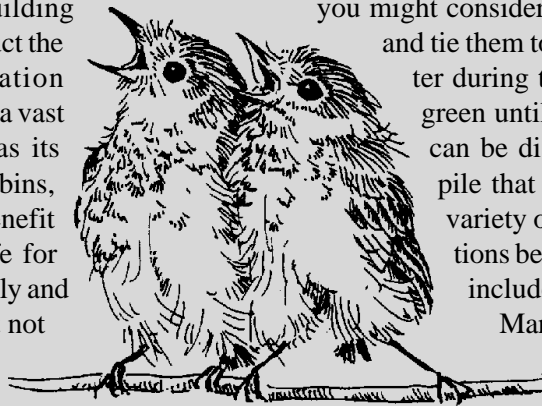
If most of the trees on your property are deciduous, you might consider collecting discarded Christmas trees and tie them to posts to create a windbreak and shelter during the winter months. They will remain green until warmer weather, at which time they can be discarded, perhaps by forming a brush pile that will provide year-round shelter for a variety of wildlife. By studying plant descriptions before buying, you can plan a habitat that includes food sources throughout the year.

Many birds nest when natural food sources are at their peak, giving them easy access and allowing more time to tend their young.

A sure sign that you are meeting the needs of birds is their willingness to nest in your yard. Mated pairs work very hard to choose the right site, and must consider many factors including shelter, safety, access to food and water, and appropriate conditions for fledging the young.

The more you learn about the birds in your area, the more obvious it will become that it requires variety to keep them all satisfied. No one garden will be sufficient for all the birds, but by choosing your plants with care, you can develop a yard that will attract many different species.

– The information for this article was obtained from the Windstar Wildlife Institute. Visit their website at [www.windstar.org](http://www.windstar.org)



# BAN's County Coordinators

Each of BAN's County Coordinators is a valuable part of the organization. They are just a local call away when questions or problems arise on your bluebird trail. There are many benefits to being a BAN County Coordinator - contact Chuck Finley if you are interested in getting involved in your area.

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**Ken Henseler \*\*\***  
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\*\*\*Welcome our newest County Coordinator

## BAN Membership Renewal Form

- Individual - 1 year ..... \$7.00
- Individual - 3 years ..... \$15.00
- Family - 1 year ..... \$10.00
- Family - 3 years ..... \$25.00
- Business, Corporation,  
or Civic Organization - 1 year ..... \$50.00
- Lifetime Individual ..... \$70.00
- Lifetime Family ..... \$100.00
- Additional Tax-Deductable  
Donation ..... \$\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Please check if you have had a change of address or phone  
Please mail this membership form and your  
tax-deductible contribution to:

**Membership, BAN**  
**P.O. Box 67157**  
**Lincoln, NE 68506-7157**

# Meeting focuses on bringing back bluebirds

Reprinted by permission from *The Wood River Sunbeam*

Bluebirds Across Nebraska Hall County Coordinator Gordon Backer was at the Wood River Senior Center last Wednesday to encourage reversal of the area's longtime bluebird inhabitation decline.

During the latter half of the 19th century, Nebraska's pioneer settlers annually witnessed early spring bluebird arrivals. A large contingent of the beautifully colored birds would stay until late fall, serenading those within earshot with a cheery warbling song. During the summer and early fall, bluebirds would eat large amounts of crickets, grasshoppers and other insect pests; wild berries and seeds would suffice when insects weren't available.

During the next half century, the bluebirds' natural habitat, which consisted of grass-covered open rural settings containing native trees and shelter belts planted by early settlers, gave way to an expanding rural population. The influx brought forth many additional farsteads and extensive row crop planting, which was consequential in eliminating much of the native prairie grassland and its accompanying open spaces, as well as many trees and shelter belts, bluebirds previously used for nesting. Bluebirds gradually became less noticeable in the state as they migrated to more favorable locations. By the 1920s-30s era, bluebirds were virtually extinct as far as Nebraskans were concerned.

But another malady of mankind, misjudgment, was also significant in bringing forth the bluebird demise: a few Easterners imported starlings and sparrows from Europe in the late 1800s to combat escalating insect populations.

Starlings and sparrows, which rapidly multiplied, were ineffective as insect predators, and proved to be no more than grain-eating pests. Bluebirds, by nature, require pre-

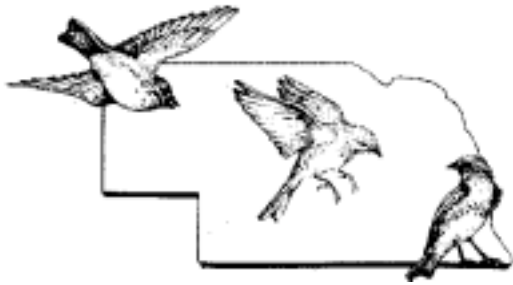
existing tree trunk/branch cavity nesting areas. They particularly favor hollowed-out spaces previously occupied and subsequently abandoned by woodpeckers, which make new nest cavities annually. Once secure bluebird nesting areas were gradually taken over by more aggressive species, the main culprits being starlings and sparrows. As a result, nesting boxes are necessary to promote and maintain an increased bluebird population.

Backer was in Wood River to provide information to those interested in hosting bluebird nesting boxes and/or volunteering to clean, check and monitor them. He showed various designs of nesting boxes to those in attendance, and presented two videos: "Bluebird Basics" and "Inside the Nest."



**Sheldon**  
**new NABS**  
**president**

Newly elected NABS president, Dean Sheldon, with outgoing president Doug LeVasseur. Dean is from Greenwich Ohio and has been actively involved with NABS for many years. Congratulations and best of luck Dean!



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**Lincoln, NE 68506-7157**

Return Service Requested

**Is it time to  
renew?**

Take a moment to check the date above your name and address. If your membership has expired, please renew today. Your continued support is appreciated.

**Calendar of Events**

- May 17** International Migratory Bird Day - BAN booth at Wildlife Safari Park
- May 18** BAN Spring Business & Potluck Meeting- *Indian Cave State Park*, 1 p.m.
- Aug. 17** BAN Summer Business & Potluck Meeting- *Maskentine Lake* - 1 p.m.
- Sept. 13/14** Pierce Threshing Bee - BAN Booth - Call Gene Gaddie if you want to volunteer
- March 27, 2004** BAN's 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference - *Mahoney State Park*
- July 7 - 11, 2004** NABS 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention – Ithaca, New York

Call the Seiberts (402) 334-8691 or the Enos (402) 783-3011  
*for more information or to volunteer.*

**Bluebirds Across Nebraska Board of Directors - 2002**

President	Bill Seibert	2115 S. 114th Street, Omaha, NE 68144	(402) 334-8691
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Bluebird Box Production	Connie Conover & Sanford Downs	4100 N. 44th St., Lincoln, NE 68504	(402) 464-7890
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Newsletter	Cheryl Eno	2500 West James Dr., Raymond, NE 68428	(402) 783-3011
Research	Charles Gardner	2115 S. 114 Street, Omaha, NE 68144	(402) 334-8691
Statewide Conference	Leland & Elva Osten	2500 West James Dr., Raymond, NE 68428	(402) 783-2733
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		6151 Yankee Hill Rd., Lincoln, NE 68516	(402) 423-8678
		705 9th Avenue, Shenandoah, IA 51601	(712) 246-3318

Raptor Recovery (402) 994-2009 - In Lincoln - Elaine Bachel 488-7586 - In Weeping Water - Don & Sharon Nielsen (402) 267-2935

Wildlife Resucue - In Lincoln - 473-1951