



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



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Bluebirds *Across Nebraska*

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Your report form is important

by Bill Seibert, Statewide Directory Chair

Here we are again getting close to the end of the bluebird season. Where does the time go? Before any more time gets away from us, we all have one more important task to complete to bring the season to a gratifying end. Enclosed with this newsletter is BAN's Annual Bluebird Report Form.

The information you submit about your trail is important. At the spring quarterly meeting, several members, including myself, reported that their bluebird numbers were down this year and the sparrow numbers were up. The drought last year in the Midwest and South more than likely had a negative impact on the number of returning bluebirds as their winter food sources were diminished. And those that did return were delayed by the cool, wet spring here in Nebraska and Iowa. Bluebirds are usually able to start their first nesting before the arrival of tree swallows and house wrens, but in many areas that didn't happen this year and the competition for nest boxes started early. The cool, wet weather then gave way to high temperatures and little precipitation. It will be interesting to see what effect these conditions have had on the bluebird population. The number of fledglings reported may go down this year, but we won't know until all the forms are in. This year, more than ever, every bluebird fledged needs to be accounted for.

This will be my first year of compiling the report forms for the Statewide Bluebird Directory, but I know that each year in the past when Sandy compiled the data, she received several reports too late to be added to the total. And each year we had a surprising number of people tell us they did not turn in a report form. A year that results in lower numbers because of Mother Nature is one thing, but a year of lower reported bluebird num-

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2003 BAN Officers

2003 BAN Officers from left: Executive Director Steve Eno; Vice President Denny Cradick; President Sandy Seibert; Treasurer Elva Osten; Secretary Sharon Holliday; and Past President Bill Seibert. The officers for 2003 were elected at the May 18th meeting.

Share the experience

From Sandy Seibert, BAN President

Bluebirds Across Nebraska is now ten years old. The organization has truly been a success story. The population of bluebirds in Nebraska and southwest Iowa has increased many times over in these last few years. Membership has grown not only over most of Nebraska but also into Iowa, South Dakota and Kansas. Many of our members have received awards for their conservation efforts or have had their work acknowledged on television or in newspaper articles. We have certainly made many people aware of the plight of bluebirds. But we must not allow ourselves to sit back on our laurels.

Each one of us can make a difference. The County Coordinators do a fantastic job of working with children and adults by putting on workshops and talks but they can't reach everyone. If you are given the opportunity to work with a youth group, senior citizens, a garden club, or whatever, grasp that opportunity and share the joy you find in "bluebirding." Make your family, friends and neighbors aware of your love

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Potluck picnic meeting - August 17 at Maskenthine Lake

The next meeting of Bluebirds Across Nebraska will be a potluck picnic meeting on Sunday, August 17th, at Maskenthine Lake, located two miles north of Stanton and 10 miles south-

east of Norfolk. To get to the meeting location, use the park's north entrance from 839 Road and bear left into the park. The meeting is being held at the large picnic shelter located on the west

side of the lake. The picnic will start at 1:00 followed by the meeting at 2:00. As always, please bring your own table service and a Dish to share. The meetings are open to all BAN members.

Kids get involved building, monitoring boxes

For several years Gene Gaddie of Stanton has held a box building session with the Leigh 4th grade class. They then go out, put up the boxes and Gene lines up monitors for the boxes. The letters he receives from the students give you some idea of how well his program goes over. Here are just a few excerpts:

"I learned that bluebirds have many enemies and are very beautiful birds."
- Brooke

"Thanks for telling us about bluebirds. My grandpa & grandma might join bluebirds. I like building the bluebird houses."
- Ryan.

"Thank you helping me put up the bluebird houses. It was really nice of you. Also thank you for letting me ride in your car. It was awesome."
- Tyler.

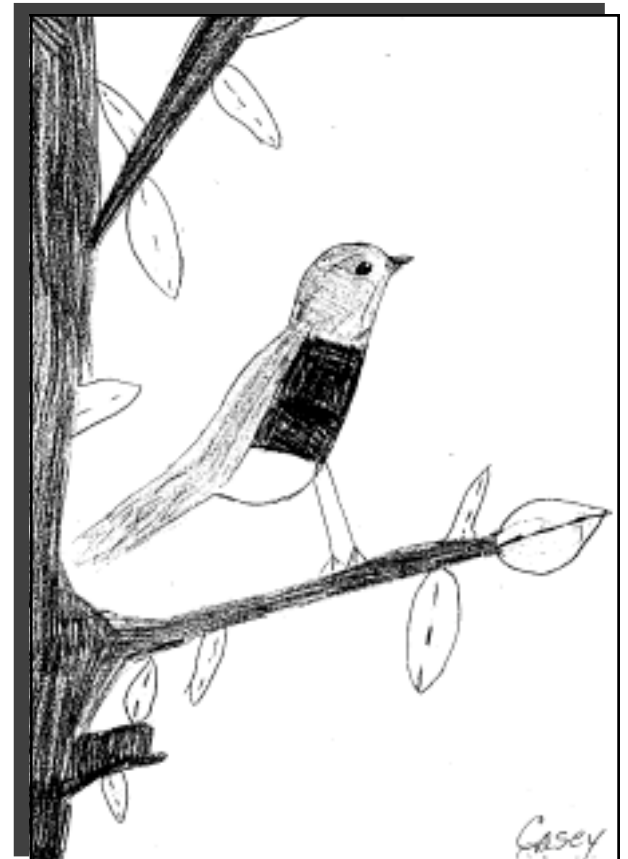
"The most interesting thing I learned was that the male sings to let the other birds know that it is his nest."
- Casey

"I never knew about the birds but now I know what to do if something goes wrong."
- Alex

"I learned that bluebirds need care and there are a lot of enemies in the bluebird's life."
- Chelsea.



Bob Engelbart helps Leigh 4th graders assemble bluebird box kits. He has monitored their boxes for several years. Below: Children used their artistic talents to depict the bluebird.



Miscellanea



Norfolk Plant Fair

Thanks to Gene Gaddie and the dedicated group of Northeast Nebraska County Coordinators and Bluebirders, the Norfolk Plant Fair was again a big success! Ten 3-year memberships were sold. BAN Booth 2003 Norfolk Plant Fair, from left: Brown/Rock/Keya Paha coord. Carolyn Hall of Bassett; Cedar/Dixon coord. Lawrence Fuchs of Belden; Bub Blake of Chambers; Stanton coord. Gene Gaddie of Norfolk; Wayne coord. Donna Liska; Madison coord. Tony Dohman of Norfolk; Loretta and Bob Engelbart of Leigh. Not pictured: BAN executive director Steve Eno of Raymond; Platte coord. Jerry Sander of Humphrey and Cowboy Trail coord. Julie and Bill Beutler.

Lifetime members

Dedicated bluebirders and conservationists Phil & Anna Brey of Valparaiso were inadvertently left off the list of BAN's lifetime members in the last newsletter. In addition to successfully fledging bluebirds for a number of years, the Breys recently granted a conservation easement to Wachiska Audubon for a piece of native prairie that they own 6 miles west of Ceresco.

State fair booth - Aug. 23-27

Volunteers are needed to man various shifts at BAN's booth during the first five days of the State Fair. Booth volunteers are there to pass out free information sheets, answer questions, and sell memberships along with a few BAN sale items.

The booth is located in Game & Parks Outdoor Alley. Call Steve Eno (402) 783-3011 if you want to help. Free gate passes are available to volunteers.

Kestrel program update

Bluebirds Across Nebraska will soon be producing an educational brochure on kestrels. Denny Cradick, Chairman of the I-80 Kestrel Program, will be taking the lead on this brochure. It will contain basic information on kestrels, the boxes being used, monitoring, and the I-80 trail system. The Nebraska Department of Roads and BAN plan to add 10 more boxes west of Lincoln this fall.

The July 2003 issue of NEBRASKAland featured an article on kestrels and this program along with a beautiful color photo of a kestrel bringing a rodent to its nest - a box placed at the I-80 rest stop north of Lincoln - to feed the five chicks inside.

Ken Barnhill featured

The May 12th Lincoln Journal Star contained a very nice article about Gage County Coordinator, Ken Barnhill, featuring a large color photo of Ken checking a PVC box along with two other color photos of bluebird eggs and nestlings.

Ken's family has farmed in Gage County for over 50 years. His interest in bluebirds started when he discovered a bluebird that had become trapped in a stovepipe on the back of their farmhouse. He took the stovepipe apart and the bluebird flew out. From then on, he "started building bluebird boxes like crazy." Ken has become so involved in putting on workshops in Gage County and neighboring Kansas areas, that he is now officially a Co-coordinator for Gage County.

Carolyn Hall - Ak-Sar-Ben Good Neighbor Award Winner

Thanks to Otoe County Coordinator Mary Teten for sharing the following about a fellow coordinator:

Carolyn Hall of Bassett (Keya Paha, Brown & Rock County Coordinator) has been named a recipient of the 2003 Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben Good Neighbor Award which recognizes individuals from Nebraska and western Iowa who have performed neighborly acts and deeds unselfishly without personal gain. From the Omaha World Herald: "[Carolyn] takes any lady who needs a ride to church, a trip to the doctor, to do a little shopping, or just a ride in the country." (*Perhaps a ride in the country to see a bluebird or two?*)

Spring Business and Potluck Meeting

MINUTES of the BAN Spring Business & Potluck Meeting
May 18, 2003, Indian Cave State Park, 1 p.m.
by Sharon Holliday, Secretary

BAN President, Bill Seibert opened the spring business meeting following a potluck luncheon provided by over 50 people from Nebraska, Iowa and Kansas. Clifford Elwonger, Richardson County coordinator, welcomed BAN to Indian Cave State Park where he currently monitors nestboxes for BAN. Minutes were approved from the last meeting and Sanford Downs (in the absence of Dorothy Matzke) presented the slate of officers for next year: President Sandy Seibert, Vice President, Denny Cradick, Secretary, Sharon Holliday and Treasurer, Elva Osten. The slate of officers for 2003 was elected by unanimous vote. BAN Treasurer Elva Osten then gave the financial report.

Connie Conover reported the production of 1605 more nest boxes and a variety of other products constructed. George Wenzl was congratulated for his donation since 1997, of over 4000 poles used for nestbox mounting.

Chuck Finley announced that BAN now has new county coordinators from Iowa, South Dakota and Kansas.

Sandy Seibert, Membership and Statewide Directory Chair, reported BAN's membership at 1669 members with 176 current members on a six-month grace period.

Newsletter Chair, Cheryl Eno shared several copies of our newsletter in a new "cream color/blue lettering" style as to voice opinion from BAN members.

BAN is still looking for someone to cover the Publicity Committee.

President Bill Seibert expressed his appreciation and "thank you" to all the people who helped make the NABS (North American Bluebird Society) 2003 Convention a truly well organized and planned conference which was held in Kearney, March 20-23. This was largest NABS convention ever with approximately 400 people attending from 31 states and 3 provinces. Bill shared the many positive comments he heard from attendees about the friendly people found in Nebraska, specifically the town of Wilcox that welcomed a

birding tour group to their town during a rest break. Bill felt that bluebirders from across North American learned what Nebraska and the BAN organization was all about!

Denny Cradick reported that there are ten kestrel boxes along rest areas of Interstate 80 with one active nest. The Sierra Club is helping BAN monitor the nestboxes. Bill advises that people be trained in the proper way of monitoring kestrel boxes and it was suggested that training may be shared through our newsletter. A concern with bluebirds near kestrel boxes was shared by members but since kestrels eat more insects and choose birds as their last resort, so far BAN feels there is little alarm about losing bluebirds to kestrels. However, BAN wants to emphasize that people be very vigilant with it comes to placing traps in kestrel boxes and monitoring them.

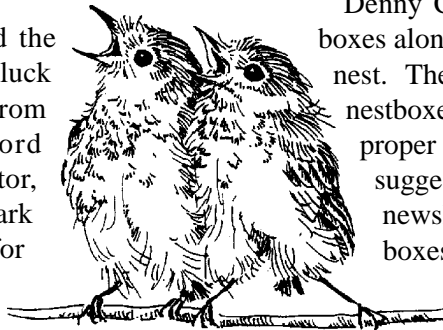
Steve shared that since the stated mission of BAN is to increase the population of bluebirds and other native cavity-nesting birds, BAN will be working with Game & Parks on a wood duck program and will be applying for a grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund to establish such a program.

Through our grant monies as well as money from our organization, a semi trailer/truck will deliver approximately enough cedar wood to build approximately 9,000 more nestboxes!

Derry Wolford shared that Iowa has several groups interested in monitoring bluebird nestboxes and hopes that Iowa can follow the lead of BAN when it comes to its overall organization.

BAN members shared how fortunate we all have been having Bill Seibert our President for the past four year term and thanked him for a job well done. Bill turned the rest of the business meeting over to our next President, Sandy Seibert and wished her much luck. Sandy asked individual people to introduce themselves as they shared their nest box report. Several birders shared their usual problems of sparrows and wrens and many speculated a cool, rainy spring may be to blame for slow return of the bluebird as well as the tree swallow.

The summer potluck & business meeting will be held August 17th at Maskentine Lake at 1 p.m.



Please complete enclosed report form

Continued from Page 1

bers because we did not make the effort is another. Please make sure you turn in your report form in a timely manner and encourage everyone you know to do the same. Let them

know that we need their help this year and that their bluebirds will make a difference. It doesn't matter if you fledged 500 bluebirds or none, we need YOUR report form.

Nest box trap warning

by Floyd VanErt

Nest box sparrow traps are death traps—and they can mean death to the wrong birds unless they are properly monitored.

Either very frequent or constant monitoring is a must! Anyone setting a trap should take all the necessary precautions.

Special attention needs to be given to when, where, and for how long the traps are set.

Weather plays a big role.

In cooler weather, the traps should never go longer than one-half hour without being checked, preferably less.

In hot weather, traps should never go unchecked for longer than 15-20 minutes.

It is not always necessary to maintain constant eye contact with the box which has a trap set inside, but you should return to check the box very soon.

Sometimes, it may be hard to go back and check on the trap when you are out monitoring a bluebird trail.

In that case, it may be better to simply clean out a sparrow nest from the nest box and not place a trap.

You may have to go back later to do the trapping; but at least that way, you are not letting the pesky sparrows reproduce.

I send out a warning with every trap.

Unfortunately, not everyone reads that warning.

One gentleman bought a couple traps and e-mailed me a few days later to tell me how well he liked the trap—he had trapped two male sparrows so far in his bluebird box.

He then went on to say that he had since had the trap set for TWO DAYS but had not caught any more.

I immediately e-mailed him back and, in not very nice words, told him to get that trap out of that box—and to READ THE WARNING!

I get a lot of e-mails and phone calls about trapping.

I stress in strong words about the danger of setting traps and trapping other birds.

One fellow asked how the trap knew the difference between a bluebird and a sparrow.

Some other kinds of traps are sold without a warning of any kind.

Sandy Seibert gave a talk about bluebirds at a meeting in Iowa in late June and stated that the best kind of nest box was the one that is monitored.

The very same advice is necessary with a trap.

You **MUST** monitor the trap you set.

If you are not going to trap properly, you are better off to not trap at all.

Ground traps are a little different, but they too should be monitored regularly—at least every half day at a minimum.

In hot weather, I put the ground traps in the shade in case a protected bird is trapped.

There are many ways to trap sparrows once you know how.

Normally, you will trap the male in a short time.

However, if the nest is started and the female is trapped first, the whole picture changes.

Then the male may become extremely skeptical and be very difficult to trap; but the male is the guy you really need to get.

If you only trap the female, the male will only call in another female and take over the nest box again.

Some sparrows may actually become “untrappable”—they just die of old age.

Sparrows function differently in the field than they do around a farmyard.

I try to set people up on a trapping program, and it can certainly make a difference if done properly.

Below is the warning that goes out with every trap I sell—just a little plain English **WARNING:**

Because this trap has been specially designed for the live capture of undesirable nest box predators, please be aware that its use may also result in the capture of desirable and protected species.

Also be aware of the fact that a nest box, which has become sealed from escape by the trap being tripped, may very quickly become a “death box.”

Therefore, it is extremely important to use this trap in a responsible manner.

The following precautions should be taken whenever using this trap:

- Trap should be used only when you are certain, or strongly suspicious, that a nest box is being actively used by either English “house” sparrows or European starlings.
- Trap should only be put in place and set if you are able to watch the nest box continuously from a secluded place or return to the nest box to check it for capture within a very short period of time (no longer than one hour).
- Caution should be taken to be sure the captured bird is, in fact, either an English sparrow or European starling before taking any action towards disposal.

County Coordinator News

Betty Brecht - Gage County Bluebirder of the Year

From Sharon Holliday

Betty Brecht was recognized at the Fourth Annual Gage County BAN Workshop held Saturday, April 5, in Beatrice for her contribution this past year in promoting the Eastern Bluebird. Betty monitors a trail at the Beatrice Country Club which includes 38 nestboxes and last year fledged 73 bluebirds. Betty (right) is shown here receiving the award from Gage County Co-Coordinator Sharon Holliday.



Sharon Holliday and Betty Brecht

Bob Freiberg, Stanton County Bluebirder of the Year

From Gene Gaddie

Bob Freiberg of Stanton was named 2002 Stanton County Bluebirder of the Year. Bob fledged 126 bluebirds out of 35 boxes (19 sites, some boxes were paired). This was Bob's third year of maintaining a bluebird trail having fledged 4 bluebirds out of 4 boxes in 2000 and 41 bluebirds out of 15 boxes in 2001.

Kansas couple recognized at workshop

From Sharon Holliday

Oliver and Marguerite Russ of Seneca, Kansas were recognized at the BAN workshop held on April 26th at the Marysville Public Library for their efforts in promoting the Eastern Bluebird. The Russes have monitored a trail in Nemaha County for several years and before moving to Kansas, Oliver, then living in Lincoln without a bluebird trail of his own to monitor, built and donated boxes to Bluebirds Across Nebraska.



Marguerite and Oliver Russ

Fuchs celebrate 50 years together

Cedar County Coordinator Lawrence Fuchs and wife Julie, recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. The celebration was held at the Lutheran Church in Belden. Walking in, there was no doubt that bluebirds are a big part of their life. In addition to a wonderful collection of cute and artistic bird houses serving as centerpieces, Lawrence had BAN's three functional bluebird boxes on display and was overheard "talking bluebirds" several times throughout the afternoon. Lawrence even predicted that "before the day is over, I'll get a least one new member."



Photo courtesy Levi Krause

Eaton, Krause get youngsters involved

Cass County Coordinator, Ron Eaton, has always done an outstanding job of getting kids involved in bluebirding. Instead of working with large groups of kids, Ron goes one-on-one and is able to do a much better job of seeing that the boxes are put up and monitored. Ron now has others carrying on this one-on-one approach. Levi Krause, a friend of Ron's, helped Lydia, Anna and Haley Glanzer of Louisville (pictured above) put together these boxes and mount them for monitoring.

Bluebird recovery efforts continue to expand

With long-time active county coordinators in Iowa, BAN is excited to announce that Ken Henseler of Yankton, South Dakota and Bill Hellmer of Oketo, Kansas will be working as Bluebirds Across Nebraska County Coordinators to promote bluebird awareness in two more neighboring states. As long as the bluebird is unable to recognize statelines, BAN won't either! Welcome aboard Ken and Bill!

Iowa Bluebird Conservationists

On June 29th at the Indian Creek Historical Society Museum east of Glenwood, the Iowa Bluebird Conservationists (IBC) officially took wing. This will be a statewide bluebird recovery program similar to Bluebirds Across Nebraska. There was much enthusiasm at this meeting and all volunteer positions were filled. Jerad Getter and June Parks were the driving forces behind the group's organization and were elected to serve as president and vice president, respectively. Other officers and key committee heads of the new organization are: Marilyn Nelson, secretary; Donna Reimers, treasurer; Derry Wolford, membership chair; and Kelly Norris, newsletter chair.

Their next meeting will be held on Sunday, September 28, at 2:00 p.m. at the Indian Creek Historical Center located on just south of Highway 34, 18 miles east of Glenwood. The Indian Creek Museum serves a free-will donation breakfast that starts at 8:30 a.m. and runs until 1:00 p.m. and everyone is welcome. IBC will be taking memberships at this meeting and Floyd VanErt will give a presentation/demonstration on his sparrow trapping systems.

This is a very exciting time for Iowa bluebirders and BAN encourages anyone able to attend.

Anyone wanting more information can contact Jerad Getter at (712) 624-9433 or e-mail at jgetter@hotmail.com or June Parks at (712) 527-3406.

Great recipes available from BAN members

There's more to a BAN meeting than business and "bluebird talk." In addition to trail tips and reports, our members share some of their best recipes at the spring and summer potluck meetings. It was suggested that the newsletter would be a good place to pass along some of those recipes. Pottawattamie County Coordinator Marty Reiser brought this dish to the BAN meeting at Indian Cave State Park and it was delicious.

FRESH VEGGIE PIZZA

2 Packages Crescent Roll Dough, 16 Ounces Cream Cheese, 2/3 Cup Mayonnaise, 1 Package Hidden Valley Ranch Dressing Mix, 1 Teaspoon Dill Weed, Pinch Garlic Salt
I used (but vary to your liking and/or use your imagination): Chopped Cauliflower, Chopped Broccoli, Chopped Tomatoes, Chopped Green Onions, Grated Carrots, Salted Sunflower Seed Hearts, Slivered Almonds, Grated Cheddar Cheese and Grated Italian Blend 5 Cheeses.

Spray jelly roll pan with non-stick coating. Spread crescent rolls in jelly roll pan and press so entire pan is covered. Bake according to directions on package. Cool. Combine cream cheese, mayonnaise, Hidden Valley dressing mix, dill weed, and garlic salt. Spread over cooled crust. Top with veggies, sunflower seeds, and almonds. Finish with grated cheese.

MAKE AHEAD TIPS:

- Cream cheese mixture can be prepared ahead and refrigerated. Warm slightly in microwave to spread easily over crust.
- Veggies can all be chopped ahead of time and refrigerated. Store tomatoes and onions each separately and apart from remaining veggies. Then mix all together just before placing on top of cream cheese.



Above: Connie Conover and Sanford Downs beside the semi load of cedar shorts.



Thumbs Up! BAN box builders Leland Osten (left) and Sanford Downs give big thumbs up to the latest load of cedar. But if you look closely, there's more to the story. Both Leland and Sanford required a trip to the emergency room during box building sessions when their thumbs got in the way of the cedar and PVC they were sawing. However, both of them are now back in action!

Grant results in 9,000 boxes

Thanks to a grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund, BAN was able to purchase a full semi load of cedar "cut-offs" or "shorts" which will be used to build boxes for bluebirds and other cavity nesters. The load consists of 28,000 board feet – enough to make approximately 9,000 boxes. The "shorts" are 23 inches in length and are considered a waste product from the large mills in Washington & British Columbia. Thanks to BAN members Mike & Rich Pleskac who have allowed BAN to store its cedar in their warehouse in north Lincoln for the past five years. Pictured here with the newest load of cedar are box builders Connie Conover (left) and Sanford Downs.

Thumbs Up! BAN box builders Leland Osten (left) and Sanford Downs give big thumbs up to the latest load of cedar. But if you look closely, there's more to the story. Both Leland and Sanford required a trip to the emergency room during box building sessions when their thumbs got in the way of the cedar and PVC they were sawing. However, both of them are now back in action!

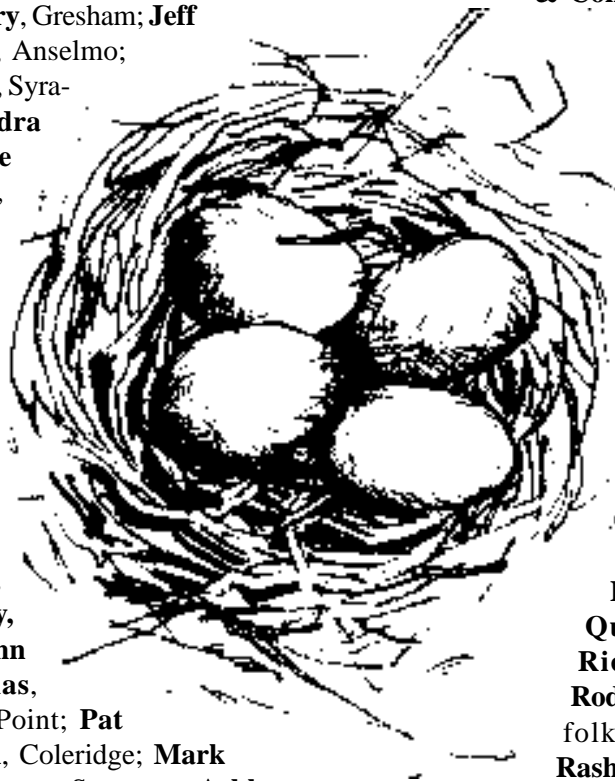
Welcome new members!!!

(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:

Arnold & Twilla Anderson, Hartington; **Brad & Sandy Angle**, Smithville, MO; **Steve Aschoff**, Worthing, SD; **Nancee Krohn**, Albion; **Cindy Avery**, Gresham; **Jeff Barrett**, Unadilla; **Bruce Bartak**, Anselmo; **Joel Bartak**, Merna; **Gerald Beach**, Syracuse; **Joyce Beelaert**, Page; **Sandra Behncke**, Plattsmouth; **Steve Berggren**, Wahoo; **Milo Birkley**, Hubbard; **Dennis Bohlken**, Lincoln; **Bruce Borchers**, Utica; **Jean Bredensteiner**, Shenandoah, IA; **Joe Brott**, Plattsmouth; **Linda Brown**, Glenwood, IA; **Roger Burke**, Stromsburg; **Robert & Sharon Burrows**, Willows, CA; **Susan & Glenn Charczuk**, Bellevue; **Patricia Christen**, Anselmo; **Carl Christensen**, Laurel; **Rhonda Conner**, Murdock; **Randy & Susan Connor & Family**, Hastings; **Lois Dekay**, Belden; **John Dinneen**, Exeter; **Donna Douglas**, Milburn; **Bennie Drucke**, West Point; **Pat Duncan**, Nelson; **Boyd Ebberson**, Coleridge; **Mark Ebmeier**, Laurel; **Delton Eisenhauer**, Syracuse; **Ashley Elwood**, Red Oak, IA; **Helen Embree**, Merna; **Billie Jo Farley**, Syracuse; **Josephine Fritsch**, Lincoln; **John Fusselman**, Syracuse; **Viola Gartner**, Unadilla; **Mike Gauthier**, Brownville; **Elliot Gee**, Palmyra; **Sarah Gutowski**, Blair; **Dean Hackbart**, Seward; **James Hartman**, Berwyn; **Terry Hatcher**, Palmyra; **Todd Haussler**, Palmyra; **Fred Hefner**, Bee; **Fred Heidtbrink**, Gresham; **Mike Hickman**, Unadilla; **R. Merlin Hill**, Syracuse; **Sue Hoffschneider**, Waco; **Tot Holmes**, Gothenberg; **Martin Homan**, Valentine; **Annette Hraban**, Raymond; **Michelle Huber**, Unadilla; **Jim Huhman**, Columbus; **Judy Hull**, Ashland; **Lucille Irland**, Auburn; **Jim & Carol Jasa**, Wahoo; **Connie Jensen**, Essex, IA; **Leah Jensen**, Grand Island; **Jensen Joan**, Winside; **Rose Johanns**, Syracuse; **Wesley Johnson**, Home, KS; **Jim Kastanek**, Syracuse; **Don Kiser**, Columbus; **Larry Torson**, Greeley; **Stephanie**



Kosiba, Syracuse; **Sharron Krentzel**, Oskolousa, KS; **Craig Lamb**, Unadilla; **Dale R Link**, Ravenna; **Harold Linkugel**, Bremen, KS; **Steve Lucas**, Raymond; **Devin Luff**, Unadilla; **Steven Manaer**, Osmond; **Connie & Bob Munguia**, Raymond; **Dorothy Manning**, Broken Bow; **Julie Marshall**, Shenandoah, IA; **Linda Marshall**, Malvern, IA; **Deanna Martensen**, Oakdale; **Rose Mason**, Dixon; **Pat McCauley**, Gretna; **Howard McLain**, Carroll; **Nelva McNeff**, Palmer; **Nancy Meyer**, Pierce; **Wayne Mills**, Broken Bow; **Clarence & Connie Mindrup**, St Edward; **Ray A**

Moeller, Cook; **Cheryl Murphy**, Norfolk; **Bonnie Myers**, Eddyville; **Dorothy Myers**, Eddyville; **Don Netz**, Wausa; **Warren Nicolaus**, Utica; **Janet Nielsen**, Walthill; **Carolyn Oehlerking**, Elmwood; **Bryan Park**, Carroll; **Sharon Paulus**, Shenandoah, IA; **Richard Peach**, Lincoln; **Chad Pester**, Unadilla; **Glen Petersen**, Syracuse; **Normagene Pettersen**, Winona, MN; **Diane Kahnk**, Tecumseh; **Roger Pittard**, Geneva; **Joan Powers**, Elmwood; **Carl Purcell**, Cook; **Karen Quilan**, Swaledale, IA; **Dian Quist-Sulek**, Palmyra; **Clint Richardson**, Superior; **Penny Rodgers**, Unadilla; **Gerald Roker**, Norfolk; **Norman Royal**, Syracuse; **Rashelle Ryan**, Berwyn; **Mike Sadler**, Cook; **Mrs Brent Safranek**, Merna; **Mrs Craig**

Safranek, Merna; **Gilbert Schott**, Norfolk; **Opal Scritsmier**, Broken Bow; **Andy Seelhoff**, Unadilla; **Wayne Sievers**, Norfolk; **Harry Slawnyk**, Utica; **Rita & Roger Smith**, Grand Island; **Alicia Sommerfeld**, Grand Island; **John & Mary Sonderman**, Columbus; **Dorothy Squier**, Broken Bow; **Charles R Stevenson**, Columbus; **Tim Steward**, Palmyra; **Karen Stiles**, Gretna; **Jayne Test**, Battle Creek; **Mike Thatch**, Norfolk; **Kevin Thomas**, Kansas City, MO; **Roland Tiemeyer**, Palmer, KS; **Steve Trew**, Anselmo; **Janet Trout**, Crabb Orchard; **Ray Vandenberg**, Sioux City, IA; **Jim & Rita Velzy**, Yankton, SD; **Karl Vollers**, Central City; **Jerry Werner**, Syracuse; **Rich Wiese**, Lincoln; **Jane Wilson**, Lincoln; **Dan Wolken**, Syracuse; **Julie Wood**, Eagle; **Karen Young**, Douglas; **Elmer S Zach**, Columbus; **Frances Zessin**, Malcolm; **Kathy Zimmer**, Lincoln; **Mike Zimmer**, Syracuse.

If you have access to the Internet, there are numerous websites that provide a great deal of information on bluebirds and bluebird trail management. A great place to launch your search is on BAN's own homepage: **www.bbne.org**. It's an easy-to-remember web address with fast connections to the information presented and links to other bluebird websites that are just one click away. In addition, BAN answers all questions received through the website link or sent to info@bbne.org.

We can all learn from the questions of others. Here's a question/answer exchange that resulted from an e-mail inquiry:

Dear Folks:

We live in Sioux City, Iowa and just put up two of your bluebird houses which were a gift from one of your bluebirders, Kenny Baker from Unadilla, NE. We were happy to get a nesting pair a month ago in one of the boxes. . . . I was happy to see 3-4 blue eggs in the nest . . . a couple of weeks ago. . . . However, I checked yesterday and noted that the eggs were gone, there were no cracked shells anywhere and no sign of any nestlings. . . . Can you tell me what happened? We have the box on a skinny PVC pipe and I don't know what could climb that--but I am not an expert. Then today I looked in the same box and noted to my amazement that the nest in the box was half gone..

. . . Finally, the other box which is closer to our yard, is being built in today by two bluebirds. Either this is the same pair and they are moving from one house to the other OR this is a new pair moving in. Can you answer this mystery for us? Thank you very much.

Best regards,

William Kevin Stoos

Dear Kevin:

Sorry to hear about the loss of your bluebird eggs. What probably happened is that a sparrow wanted your box, removed the eggs, and later decided to remove the nesting material from the box. It could have been a wren, but you would have found the eggs at the base of the box where a sparrow will carry them away a greater distance. I doubt very much that it was any type of a predator such as a raccoon. Bluebirds will rarely re-nest in a box where they had a nest failure so they chose your other box. If you find out that it is a sparrow causing your problems, don't let it nest or you could try trapping the sparrow and eliminating it.

Thank you very much--this was a great help. I have moved one box and the birds are already back. I am now going to move the one I had trouble with and see if that helps. I noticed that a wren has moved into the one that was raided. I did not know that sparrows would carry out the eggs.. . . I do have sparrows and wrens all over so I know you are right about this. One more question if I may: Why do the bluebirds not defend their nest more aggressively and why--since there are two of them--

would they ever allow their eggs to be removed without a fight? . . . They apparently allowed 3-4 eggs to simply be removed. I thought the mother always stayed around and sat on the eggs.

You're learning about wrens real quick. You might want to check around the base of your box -- that's probably where you'll find the broken eggs. A bluebird can and will successfully defend its nest from wrens, but wrens usually do the damage when the bluebirds are not around. The clutch was probably not yet complete and not being incubated, so the bluebirds were probably a distance away and not aware of what happened. Apparently there was another box around that the wrens could have used, but it is their general nature to clean out all nests with eggs of other song birds in their territory. I hope your bluebirds have better luck with the second box. Let me know if you have any other questions.

Thank you so much for your time. I wish I had your experience with these things. I used to like wrens but lately--having seen their destruction--I am not a big fan of them. I had two perfectly good bluebird houses started and I thought I had two nesting pairs; however, the wrens are merciless and are cleaning them out. I hate to think that all these beautiful bluebirds are leaving because of these pests.

Best regards,

Kevin Stoos

Wasp problems?

The VICTOR division of Woodstream Corporation of Lititz, PA [the mouse/rat trap company] now manufactures a POISON FREE WASP & HORNET KILLER in an aerosol spray container. The active ingredients are Mint Oil 8.00% and Sodium Lauryl Sulfate 1.00%. Inert ingredients are at 91% including water and CO2. The product is dispensed as a penetrating foam and seems to work well....quick kill. As we approach third nestings and August nestbox

maintenance, the incidence of wasps and hornets on the trail almost always picks up. This product might be just the ticket for your safety but without harm to the environment. Interested? More information can be found at the website: www.victorpest.com Just put "Poison Free Wasp & Hornet Killer" in the search box.

*Submitted by Dean Sheldon, Greenwich, Ohio
-- President, North American Bluebird Society.*

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(785) 744-3245

SOUTH DAKOTA

YANKTON

Ken Henseler***
160 Riverrun Rd.
Yankton, SD 57078
(605) 665-9515

***Welcome our newest
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.

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

Mountain Bluebird Conference

Event to shed light on western Nebraska native bird

Mountain Bluebird Conference
Saturday, September 20
9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Wildcat Hills Nature Center

Big Red has the day off so it's the perfect day to turn your attention to Nebraska's Big Blues -- Mountain Bluebirds.

Learn more about this beautiful native bird that calls the western portion of Nebraska home during its spring and summer nesting season from some true mountain bluebird experts. Bob Niebuhr (president of Mountain Blue-

bird Trails of Montana) and Myrna Pearman of Alberta, Canada (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 share their knowledge and enthusiasm about how you can help Nebraska's mountain bluebirds.

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. Space is limited, so please register early.

There will be a \$10.00 registration fee which will include lunch, a cedar nesting box and a mounting pole.

Share your love of bluebirding

Continued from Page 1

of bluebirds. Invite them to walk your trail and see how delighted they are when they see the babies inside the boxes. Do you remember how you felt the first time you saw a baby bluebird in the nest? It's a great feeling to share with others and a great way to get others involved.

Late summer and fall may signal the end of nesting season and monitoring but it should not signal a let down in our enthusiasm for our beloved bluebirds. The state fair, county fairs and many other festivals will be in full swing in the next few months. These are great opportunities to spread the

bluebird story. Bluebirds Across Nebraska participates in many of these activities with booths, displays and talks. Don't wait for a telephone call. Pick up the phone and call your county coordinator or any officer and volunteer to participate. By spending just two hours talking to people about bluebirds you will feel rewarded and you will have made a difference.

The best tools a grassroots organization like Bluebirds Across Nebraska has are its individual members. With all of us working towards the same goal of increasing the population of bluebirds, the future is bright.

Success in Crete!

I had to e-mail and tell you about our 4-H club's exciting news. We just got the five bluebird houses put up on Sunday that BAN donated for the tree planting/nature project we're doing at the newly constructed Crete Area Medical Center. And last night my daughter, Emily, and I went and checked the houses (they'd only been up 5 days) and we found 3 bluebird nests out of the 5 boxes!! Wow....we were so excited! And bluebirds were everywhere....some sitting on the hospital roof, several in the trees around the boxes, and some flying into the larger trees to the east of the hospital. It was a great site! One male was sitting on the hospital roof doing a wing-wave and singing such a sweet call. Again....many thanks to BAN for the boxes. The 4-H'ers will definitely be excited to follow the developments over the nesting season.

Sincerely,
Leanne Manning
Mini Clover Cookies 4-H Club Leader



Bluebirds Across Nebraska
P.O. Box 67157
Lincoln, NE 68506-7157

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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.

Aug. 17
Aug. 23-27
Sept. 13/14
Sept. 20

Sept. 28
Oct. 1
Nov. 16
Feb. 8, 2004
March 27, 2004
July 7 - 11, 2004
April 2, 2005

Calendar of Events
BAN Summer Business & Potluck Meeting- Maskentine Lake - 1 p.m. (see page 2)
Nebraska State Fair - (see page 3)
Pierce Threshing Bee - BAN Booth - Call Gene Gaddie (402)371-5687 if you want to volunteer
Mountain Bluebird Conference - 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Wildcat Hills Nature Center, Gering, NE (see page 11 for details)
Iowa Bluebird Conservationists Meeting, 2:00 p.m. (see page 7 for more information)
Deadline for Submitting Items for Fall Newsletter
BAN Fall Quarterly Business Meeting - Mahoney State Park, 2:00 p.m.
BAN Winter Quarterly Business Meeting - Mahoney State Park, 2:00 p.m.
BAN's 10th Annual Conference - Mahoney State Park
NABS 27th Annual Convention - Ithaca, New York
BAN's 11th Annual Conference -- Beatrice, Nebraska

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

Bluebirds Across Nebraska Board of Directors - 2003

President	Sandy Seibert	2115 S. 114th Street, Omaha, NE 68144	(402) 334-8691
Vice President	Denny Cradick	1201 E Street, Utica, NE 68456	(402) 534-2045
Secretary	Sharon Holliday	1044 West "P" Street, Lincoln, NE 68528	(402) 475-5360
Treasurer	Elva Osten	6151 Yankee Hill Rd., Lincoln, NE 68516	(402) 423-8678
Exec. Director	Steve Eno	2500 West James Dr., Raymond, NE 68428	(402) 783-3011
Past President	Bill Seibert	2115 S. 114th Street, Omaha, NE 68144	(402) 334-8691
COMMITTEE CHAIRS:			
Bluebird Box Production	Connie Conover & Sanford Downs	4100 N. 44th St., Lincoln, NE 68504	(402) 464-7890
	Chuck Finley	1301 N. 38th St., Lincoln, NE 68503	(402) 464-7627
County Coordinator Program	Vicky Scoville & Mary Zimmerman	6732 K Rd., Nebraska City, NE 68410	(402) 873-7550
Education	Steve Eno	12639 "N" St., Omaha, NE 68137	(402) 895-2536
	Bill Seibert	12505 N.W. 27th Street, Raymond, NE 68428	(402) 783-2733
Fundraising	Cheryl Eno	2500 West James Dr., Raymond, NE 68428	(402) 783-3011
Membership & Statewide Directory	*** A chair is needed for this very important committee. Please call Sandy Seibert if you can help. ***	2115 S. 114th Street, Omaha, NE 68144	(402) 334-8691
Newsletter	Charles Gardner	2500 West James Dr., Raymond, NE 68428	(402) 783-3011
Publicity	Ardie Hopp & Mary Teten	5835 Meadowbrook Ln., Lincoln, NE 68510	(402) 489-1410
Research	Derry & Phyllis Wolford	P. O. Box 42, Unadilla, NE 68454	(402) 828-4665
Statewide Conference		R. R. 1, Box 26, Talmage, NE 68448	(402) 264-4205
		705 9th Avenue, Shenandoah, IA 51601	(712) 246-3318
NABS Liaison			

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

Wildlife Rescue - In Lincoln - 473-1951

Annual Bluebird Report Form - Bluebirds Across Nebraska (BAN)

P.O. Box 67157 Lincoln NE 68506-7157

Note: If you had boxes in more than one county, please submit a separate form for each county.

(Please Print Clearly)

Last Name First Name Address

City / Town Nebraska County (if in NE) State Zip Code

Telephone: () NE County bluebird boxes located: _____

Year Monitored: _____ Are you a BAN member? _____ Would you like a BAN brochure? _____

Approximately how often did you check your trail(s)? _____
(i.e. once a week, every other week, every day, etc.)

How many bluebird boxes did you monitor? _____

How many nesting attempts did bluebirds have? _____
(count all attempts whether successful, abandoned, destroyed by predators, etc.)

How many successful broods of bluebirds? _____
(a single nesting where one or more bluebirds fledged)

Total number of bluebird eggs? _____

Total number of bluebird eggs hatched? _____

Total number of bluebirds fledged? _____
(bluebirds that successfully left the nest)

Note: Please indicate if the birds fledged were mountain bluebirds which are generally found in the western part of Nebraska.

How many bluebird boxes did wrens: Try to use? _____ Successfully use? _____

How many bluebird boxes did house sparrows: Try to use? _____ Successfully use? _____





How many bluebird boxes did tree swallows: Try to use? _____ Successfully use? _____

How many tree swallows successfully fledged from your bluebird boxes? _____

Were the bluebird boxes used by tree swallows placed in pairs (*10 ft to 25 ft apart*)? Yes _____ No _____

What other birds successfully used your bluebird boxes? _____

Please document any special comments, concerns, or problems on the back of this form.

<p>Enter the total number of boxes you monitor on the left.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↻ _____ / _____ ↻</p> <p>Enter the number of these that had at least one successful bluebird nest fledge on the right.</p>	 Peterson _____ / _____ <small>(monitored/used)</small>	 NABS _____ / _____ <small>(monitored/used)</small>	 Troyer _____ / _____ <small>(monitored/used)</small>	 Gilbertson PVC _____ / _____ <small>(monitored/used)</small>	Specify Other _____ _____ / _____ <small>(monitored/used)</small>
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Please return to BAN (address at top) no later than October 15th

