

Maryland Bluebird Society

Bluebird Chatter

Winter 2009

Vol. II, Issue 1



The Maryland Bluebird Society

Officers and Board of Directors/2008

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The Officers and Board of Directors of MBS encourage members to join our efforts and become active in the future development of our society. Please contact us if you are interested in helping The Maryland Bluebird Society by serving as a director, county coordinator or possibly in another capacity. Board members can be contacted by visiting our web site at www.mdbluebirdsociety.org.

Michael L. Smith Wins Contest

Celebrated wildlife photographer and MBS Director, Michael L. Smith was recognized recently by the National Wildlife Federation. Michael's photograph, The Mad Bluebird's Grandson, was selected as 1st place winner in the NWF's recent photography contest. Congratulations, Michael!!!

To view Michael's winning photograph, visit the following site:
www.nwf.org/NationalWildlife/article.cfm?issueID=126&articleID=1662

President's Perch

Bluebirds did very well this year, in spite of getting a slow start in early spring. Some of the bluebirds on my trail in Montgomery County started nesting in the last week of March, and these eventually fledged. Unfortunately, a cold, wet spell in May resulted in the loss of two nests of young, which is always disappointing. Thereafter, nesting and fledging for the bluebirds went on with only minor glitches, resulting in a successful season.

This year, I used paired boxes for the first time and this did reduce competition with tree swallows. My limited observation is that bluebirds will nest if they are the first arrivals to a pair of boxes, and they will accept tree swallows nesting later in the 2nd box. However, if tree swallows start nesting first in a pair of boxes, the bluebirds will not nest at that site. This coming nesting season (2009), I will watch carefully to see if this behavior repeats itself.

As County Coordinator for Montgomery County, I can report that at 16 parks in the upper county area, 670 bluebirds were fledged from 244 boxes under the care of 30 monitors. It's been a good year for the bluebirds--and also for bluebird monitors to enjoy the great outdoors while caring for the beautiful bluebirds.

Ed Escalante, President, MBS

County Coordinators Needed

The Maryland Bluebird Society is looking for a few good members willing to serve as coordinators for their respective counties. As this program is developed, duties may include the following : 1) facilitating conservation efforts for bluebirds, 2) attempting to contact, unite and organize bluebirders within your county, 3) compiling a list of known trails and monitors within your county, 4) serving as liaison between your county and MBS. Though this program is in the early stages of development, MBS is optimistic that it will become a valuable tool and resource for bluebirders throughout Maryland.



Bluebird club members watch as Ed Escalante demonstrates the pole driver to install a metal pole.

MY VISIT TO YELLOW SPRINGS

By: Ed Escalante

What is special about Frederick, Maryland? Well, it is the home of Yellow Springs Elementary School, where a group of dedicated 4th and 5th grade students have formed a Bluebird Club under the able guidance and instruction of their teacher, Kathy Kremnitzer. At the invitation of the club, I attended one of their meetings. On my arrival at the school, I found several club members, along with Mrs. K, intently watching a mealworm feeder and the bluebirds that were feeding there. I counted at least a dozen bluebirds in the immediate area! I soon realized that my box-building demonstration would be before a group of seasoned bluebirders!

During the meeting, I demonstrated how to build a NABS bluebird box under the critical view of 20 students! Admittedly, I had assembled the box beforehand at home and disassembled it prior to the presentation. To add interest, I drilled the 1 ½ inch entrance hole and also demonstrated driving a steel pole into the ground using a pole driver. I was delighted to find that these activities held the interest of all of the children and I thoroughly enjoyed my visit.

LEARN MORE

To learn more about bluebirds, visit:
www.nabluebirdsociety.org or
www.sialis.org

To learn more about bluebirds and bluebirders in our area, visit the Maryland Bluebird Society at:
www.mdbluebirdsociety.org

A Bluebirder's Winter Calendar

Winter time is a relatively peaceful period for bluebird monitors. It is a time to rest and reflect on the successes and, yes, failures of last year's nesting season. Though nestboxes are not currently being used for nesting, many serve as roosting boxes for over-wintering birds such as bluebirds, chickadees, titmice and various other birds. Consequently, care should be taken to keep boxes in good repair. Though nestboxes do not require weekly monitoring, as they do during nesting season, they should still be checked periodically so that damaged equipment can be repaired or replaced as quickly as possible.

Bluebird monitors may also wisely use the cold months of winter to restock bluebird monitoring equipment and kits and to submit nesting data to various organizations.

Many bird lovers relish this time of year as they seek to entice over-wintering birds to backyard feeders. Bluebirds love mealworms, (as do many other birds) but can also be tempted with various types of suet. The following recipe was contributed by MBS Treasurer E. Diane Seward.

Bluebird Banquet

4 cups yellow corn meal

1 cup flour (whole wheat or unbleached)

1 cup peanut butter (smooth or chunky)

Blend the flour and corn meal. Mix in the peanut butter.

Add:

2/3 cup Zante currants

1 cup sunflower hearts

1 cup ground peanuts

Finally, add slowly 7/8 to 1 cup melted suet or lard and mix well. Mixture stores well in refrigerator and can also be frozen.

If you have a recipe you'd like to share with our members, we'd love to feature it in a future edition.