



Bella Vista Bluebird Society Volunteers Meeting March 5, 2022

The volunteers season kickoff meeting was held from 1:35 to 3:00 PM at Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall, 1880 Forest Hills Blvd, Bella Vista. Snacks were provided by Laura Claggett and Steve and Susan Skaggs.

I. Thirty eight (38) members were in attendance: Autumn Anderson, Adrian Berghamer, Jerry Butler, Marilyn and Steve Brown, Laura Claggett, Elaine Cobb, Kim Eveland, Tim Garton, Randy Hamm, Edward Hinde, Denise Klinger, Ling Ma, Bonnie Martineck, Ray Matkowski, Tami Moore, Nancy Ortman, George Pickell, Susan Pilkerton, Becky Pratt, Jim Richardson, Mark Richardson, Jayne Roth, Buzz Schoenhard, Pat Schrad, Ed and Claudia Shelton, Deb Shoemaker, Steve & Susan Skaggs, Grace Turley, Dirk Webber, Leon Wehmeyer, B. J. and Marcia Westhoff, Brian and Susan Woodruff and Marlene Zimmerman. Guest speaker was Dr. Jen Mortensen.

II. President Laura Claggett opened the meeting with a welcome to those in attendance and advised them to take any books and pamphlets about bluebirds on the table. If not a member of North American Bluebird Society (NABS), the cost is \$15 to become a new member since the BVBBS is an affiliate of NABS. Membership supports NABS education (NABS Factsheets & books) and research.

Mission: Laura stated that our mission is dedicated to increasing and protecting the bluebird population in Bella Vista. Every monitor, trail boss and box builder working together helps us fulfill that mission.

III. What's new with BVBBS:

- Jacqui Stockman will spearhead the 2022 Photo Contest again. Photographers have until September 15, 2022 to submit their photos. Prizes will be awarded and the entry rules are available on the website.
- A Nature Expo is being planned for sometime in September along with the Bella Vista Garden Club, Fly Tyers, Bluebird Shed, NWA Master Naturalists and hopefully other groups. Jacqui Stockman will assist in organizing this event.
- The wood bluebird pudding feeders are being made by Mark Richardson and Steve Skaggs and are available for sale at The Bluebird Shed.
- The \$1,000 Research Grant was awarded to William Kirkpatrick, a 2021 NSF Research Graduate Fellow at the University of Arkansas. For more information, go to whkecology.com. Randy Hamm has been involved with the Research Grant Project.
- Jacqui Stockman and Ray Matkowski are heading two potential new programs – Grants for Arkansas Trails and Adopt a Highway.
- George Pickell has taken on the responsibility for the monitors and will be offering a refresher course on the bluebird eggs, chicks and other birds that use the BVBBS nesting boxes.
- New monitor volunteers are Adrian Berghamer (Edinburgh Trail), Bonnie Bohm (LL Marina), Marilyn and Steve Brown (Scotsdale), Becky Pratt (BVCC), Jim Richardson (Highlands) and Jayne Roth, substitute.
- The new BVBBS treasurer is Mark Richardson as Lorna Sterrett is moving away from Bella Vista.
- We have a new trail at the Highlands Methodist Church.
- We are in need of a trail boss for the Highlands Church and Glasgow Road and a Website Editor. Contact Laura or Steve Skaggs if interested.

IV. Google Sheets for Monitoring:

Laura stated that the monitoring sheets will now be online. A sample sheet can be found on our website under Trails and Boxes.

The benefits of using Google Sheets include:

- shared files online
- good for collaboration with trail boss or substitute monitors
- no longer need to email spreadsheets in Excel/Calc/PDF
- easy to use
- data is saved automatically
- it can be used on your phone

Each monitor will receive their new email link to the monitoring sheets the week of March 6th. The monitors can use the Google Sheets app on their phone for recording data, but it is not required. Laura and George will provide training to the new monitors.

Nest boxes should be monitored weekly and your sheet should be keep up to date weekly. If you unable to monitor your boxes, we don't need to know why, but loss of data is totally preventable using Google Sheets and subs.

We now monitor & maintain 582 nest boxes in Bella Vista. From 1980 - 2021 we helped fledge 51,497 Eastern Bluebirds on our trails.

V. Bluebird Research Project:

Dr. Jen Mortensen gave an update on her University of Arkansas Research Project that was started in November, 2019. They monitored about 100 bluebird boxes at Berksdale Golf Course (fairways 5, 6, 7), Bella Vista Memorial Garden Cemetery, Branchwood Recreation Center, Glasgow Car Trail (boxes 1-10), Loch Lomand Dog Park, Presbyterian Church and St. Bernard Catholic Church. They banded 400 chicks in 2020 and 250 in 2021.

Research objectives are to calculate recruitment into the local population, study winter roosting behavior of adults and non-dispersing Hys (hatch year), establish whether pairs practice assortative mating and to determine what factors influence box occupancy and productivity. Calculating recruitment is to determine if they stay after fledging or leave the area. For winter roosting, each bird has 2 colored bands on each leg that are significant to the study. Some birds stay all year and some stay only in the summer and they learn through the color banding. Assortative mating is to determine if the male and female stay together or have new partners. Calculating recruitment determine if the birds stay in the area. Cooperative breeding is the pattern of the juveniles. Some will leave the area and others will stay in the area with the parent to assist with the next fledglings. In determining box occupancy, she will look at box variables: box age, paired vs not, entrance type, baffle type, entrance orientation, box height, internal dimensions and box legacy. Landscape variables are distance to road, water, nearest structure; openness; vegetation structure within 25 m of box and land-use type. They then model how these variables influence occupancy and productivity and ask whether the pattern is consistent across sites, seasons (i.e. breeding vs overwintering occupancy), and years. They have some students assist with the study, but they need to be trained banders. She asked if anyone in the BVBBS would like to be trained as a bander as not many students are available to assist. They have lots of data and hope to have results this coming fall.

VI. Giving Thanks: Laura gave thanks to:

- Jennifer and Butch for their bluebird research
- The Bluebird Shed for selling our nesting boxes, bluebird pudding feeders and clothing
- T. H. Rogers for providing lumber
- Lowe's for providing supplies
- Bella Vista POA for providing a storage shed for all the lumber and supplies
- BVBBS amazing volunteers.

Respectfully submitted,
Buzz Schoenhard