



# All Volunteers Season Kickoff March 11, 2023

Photo by Mindy King





***We are dedicated to  
increasing & protecting  
the Eastern Bluebird population  
of Bella Vista, Arkansas***

# NABS Factsheet

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## Getting Started with Bluebirds

Over the years, land has been cleared for housing and commercial developments, highways and agriculture, and many old trees have been cut down. Wooden fence posts that provided nesting cavities have been replaced with metal posts.

# NABS Factsheet

## Monitoring Bluebird Nestboxes

### WHY MONITOR YOUR NESTBOX?

It is very important that bluebird nestboxes be actively monitored (checked) at least once a week. Bluebirds are tolerant of humans, and will not abandon a nestbox that is properly monitored. All bluebird boxes should be built so that they can be opened either from the side, front, or top.

A box that is not monitored may do more harm to bluebirds than good. Monitoring increases the chances of success for bluebirds using the box. When good records are kept, it is also valuable for determining population trends.

Monitoring nestboxes will alert you to problems birds may be having with predators and competitors. **House Sparrows** (sometimes called English Sparrows) and **European Starlings** are non-native species introduced from Europe. Their aggressive seizure of cavity nest sites is a primary reason for declines in bluebird populations. Starlings nest in many of the natural nest sites but can be excluded from nestboxes by using 1 1/4 or 1 3/4 inch entrance holes. House Sparrows are smaller, so they can readily enter bluebird nestboxes. They frequently kill adult and nestling bluebirds, destroy their eggs, or drive them from their nests. At no time should they be allowed to successfully nest in bluebird boxes. Doing so will increase the House Sparrow population and further reduce the number of bluebirds. See the NABS factsheet on [House Sparrow Control](#) (available on our website at [www.nabluebirdsociety.org/bluebirdfacts.htm](http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org/bluebirdfacts.htm)).



A **paper wasp** or **mouse** nest will drive nesting birds away from the box, and should be removed. Take appropriate precautions to avoid breathing the dust from a mouse nest.



Knowing what species is using the box is also beneficial. Bluebird societies would like you to monitor and report all species using your nestboxes, not just bluebirds. Tree Swallows, titmice, chickadees, Carolina and House Wrens and nuthatches are all native, beneficial birds. Remember: It is illegal to remove an active nest of any native cavity-nesting bird. Keeping records on a weekly basis, and sending survey forms in at the end of the nesting season increases our knowledge of cavity-nesting birds.

After any nesting effort has ended, either due to nest failure or successful fledging of the young, remove the used nest from the box. When a bluebird nest is successful, re-nesting in the same box may be encouraged if the first nest is removed. This can be done as soon as all chicks have left the nest. Females usually build a new nest.

### WHAT TO MONITOR

When you monitor a box, determine which species is using it by examining nesting material and eggs. Record the date and the number of eggs or young observed. Knowing when the eggs were laid will help you determine if they are infertile, or when they should hatch and when the young would be expected to leave the nest. In the case of most cavity nesters, one egg is laid one each day until the entire clutch is complete. Incubation will then begin. For bluebirds, incubation typically lasts approximately 12-14 days. After hatching, the chicks will remain in the nest for about 17-21 days. Your monitoring should be limited to viewing from a distance after the 12-13th day, or the chicks might jump or fly from the box prematurely.





# Agenda

**1) New Volunteers**

**2) What's New**

**3) Other Birds**

**4) Best Practices**

**Short Cookie Break**

**5) Guest Speakers**

**6) Closing Comments**



# New Monitors

- ★ **Morgan Baumgardner**
- ★ **Dick Washburn (BVCC)**
- ★ **Gayle & Rich Winsor (BVCC)**



# Substitute Monitors

★ **Morgan Baumgardner**

★ **Tami Moore**

★ **Becky Pratt**



# Positions Needed

*Monitor: Dogwood  
Scotsdale*

*Website Editor*

**Position Descriptions on [bvbluebirds.com](http://bvbluebirds.com)**



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# ***Adopt a Highway***

***1 Mile – Rt. 71***

***Lancashire to Trafalgar***

***First outing – October 22***

***17 BVBBS volunteers***



Photo by Jacqui Stockman

***Thank you Jacqui & Becky!***



# ***Adopt a Highway***



***Six in Sixty***  
***Sat, March 25***  
***10 – 1***  
***Pickup along Rt 71***  
***Meet at***  
***Allen's Grocery Store***



# ***\$1000 Research Grant***



Photo by Michael Smith

***Shannon Kitchen & Jennifer Mortensen  
Dept of Biological Sciences  
University of Arkansas***

***Winter Roosting Behaviors  
in Eastern Bluebirds***



# Stovepipe Baffle

- ***Tested in 2022***
- ***Let Steve Skaggs know:***
  - ***If you would like to volunteer to make them***
  - ***If nest boxes on your trail needs them***





# Refresher for Monitors

**Bella Vista Bluebird Society** Dedicated to increasing & protecting the bluebird population of Bella Vista, AR

[About Us](#) [About Bluebirds](#) [BVBBS Business](#) [Support Us](#) [Trails & Boxes](#) [Photos](#) [Other Sites](#)

[BVBBS Bylaws](#)  
[BVBBS Position Descriptions](#)  
**[BVBBS Procedures](#)**  
[Volunteer Meetings](#)  
[Administrative Login](#)

## BVBBS Procedures

All BVBBS procedures updated in May 2023

[Procedure 1 - Monitoring Bluebird Nest Boxes](#)

[Procedure 2 - Trail Boss Duties](#)

[Procedure 3 - Nest Box Pests - House Sparrows, Insects & Other Predators](#)

[Procedure 4 - The Bluebird Shed & Installing Neighborhood Boxes](#)

[Procedure 5 - Monitoring Your Home Bluebird Nest Box](#)

See [Eggs](#), [Chicks](#), [Birds](#), for information on the timing of bluebird eggs, bluebird chicks, and the birds that use bluebird nest boxes.




Photo courtesy of Marion Ball

## Latest News:

- [Time to Check Your Nest Boxes](#)  
Feb 28, 2023  
Nesting season is almost here, so now is a good time to check your nest boxes to make
- [2022 Statistics](#)  
Oct 13, 2022  
The count for this season's bluebirds have been compiled and can be viewed

<https://bvbluebirds.com/index.php?id=local-bvbbs-procedures>



# *Refresher for Monitors*



## Bella Vista Bluebird Society

Bluebird Eggs, Bluebird Chicks &  
Birds That Use Bluebird Nest Boxes



Tony Pratt



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# *Other Birds That Use Bluebird Nest Boxes*



Adam Kúmiszcza



J.M. Garg



# *Other Birds – Carolina Wren*

- *Uncommon, but have started seeing them in our nest boxes*
- *Protected species*
- *Really messy nest*
- *Tiny speckled eggs*



# *Other Birds – House Sparrow*

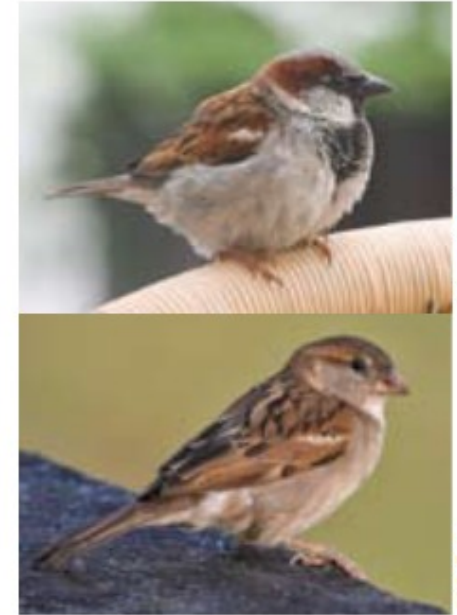
**Never let a House Sparrow nest in a bluebird box. They are destructive, non-native species that will destroy eggs and kill baby & adult bluebirds. Remove House Sparrow nests after eggs are laid.**



Bet Zimmerman



Bet Zimmerman



Adam Kumiszczka

J.M. Garg



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# Monitoring Best Practices

- ***Monitor your boxes the same day of the week every week***
- ***Check your sheet for previous week's findings so you know what to expect before you open each box***
- ***Record findings while standing by the box***
- ***If female is on the nest, step back until she flies out***
- ***If nest 21 days in the box and never used, remove (AB)***
- ***If eggs are in the nest 21 days, from day the last egg was laid, remove them & the nest (AB)***



# If You Are Unable to Monitor Your Boxes after 9 Days

- ***Stuff Happens – Life Happens***
- ***We don't need to know why***
- ***Contact a sub or your Trail Boss or Laura***
- ***Loss of data is **TOTALLY PREVENTABLE** using Google Sheets & a sub***

***~ Keep data sheet up-to-date weekly ~***



# Google Sheets for Monitoring

- *At desktop better with Google Chrome*
- *Download the Google Sheet app to use on your phone*
- *2023 sheets are ready*
- *Allows collaboraton with your Trail Boss & substitute monitors*



# Google Sheets



## *Better with Google Chrome*

### Google Chrome

A screenshot of the Google Sheets interface running in Google Chrome. The menu bar includes File, Edit, View, Insert, Format, Data, Tools, and Help. The status bar shows "Last edit was seconds ago". The toolbar contains various icons for undo, redo, print, copy, paste, zoom (100%), currency, percentage, decimal places, text color, font family (Arial), font size (10), bold, italic, strikethrough, text background color, fill color, border, text wrap, text alignment, bullet points, indent, and zoom in. The spreadsheet grid is visible below the toolbar.

### Firefox

A screenshot of the Google Sheets interface running in Firefox. The menu bar includes File, Edit, View, Insert, Format, Data, Tools, and Help. The status bar shows "Last edit was 4 minutes ago". The toolbar contains various icons for undo, redo, print, copy, paste, zoom (100%), currency, percentage, text color, font family (Arial), font size (10), bold, italic, strikethrough, text background color, fill color, border, text wrap, text alignment, bullet points, indent, and zoom in. The spreadsheet grid is visible below the toolbar.



# Trail Boss Best Practices

- ***Get to know your monitors***
- ***Inspect and repair, or replace boxes/posts/baffles as needed***
- ***Install additional predator guards if needed***
- ***Add twin box if tree swallows regularly use a box***
- ***Relocate boxes if needed***
- ***Contact Steve with any questions/issues***





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## **Short Cookie Break**

- 5) Guest Speakers
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***Banded BV female  
3 years old this  
summer***



Photo by Bobbie Bohm



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# Dr. Jennifer Mortensen

*Jen is a conservation ecologist in the Dept of Biological Sciences at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.*

*She moved to Fayetteville 6 years ago (for PhD), before that she was in Philadelphia (for MS), and before that she was in Wisconsin (for BS).*

*Most of her research has been on birds (in the Caribbean, Kentucky, and now Arkansas), but she has also worked on snakes, sea lions, and plants. She loves all birds.*

# Shannon Kitchen

*Shannon is graduate student at the UofA, Fayetteville.*

*She is originally from Virginia and got her undergraduate degree from George Washington University (DC).*

*She worked as a research assistant for several years and attended 1 year of veterinary school (PA), before moving to the UofA for her graduate program.*

*Most of her previous research has been with rodents and infectious diseases like intestinal parasites and viruses.*



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# ***The Bluebird Shed***

## ***648 W. Lancashire***





**We now monitor & maintain**  
**581**  
**nest boxes in Bella Vista**

**From 1980 - 2022 we helped fledge**  
**53,000**  
**Eastern Bluebirds**





**We have:**

**47 Monitors**

**12 Trail Bosses**

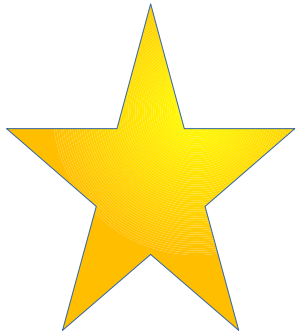
**9 Board Members**

**8 Resident Installers**

**5 Box Builders**

**4 Corporate Supporters**

**1 Cookie Baker**



**Thank You**



***Our Amazing Volunteers***

***The Bluebird Shed***



***T.H. Rogers***



***Lowes***



***Bella Vista POA***