



Bella Vista Bluebird Society
All Volunteers Season Kickoff Meeting
March 9, 2024

The volunteers pot luck and meeting was held from 11:30 to 1:30 at Becker Hall, First United Methodist Church, 30 Boyce Drive, Bella Vista. Special thanks to the United Methodist Church for hosting and to all the volunteers that brought such delicious food that was enjoyed by all.

I. Fifty-six (56) members and guests were in attendance: Darryl Beachy and Penny Bossert, Adrian Berghamer and Tom Maxwell, Roger and Bonnie Bohm, Alan and Deidre Cheney, Elaine and Garold Cobb, Laura Claggett, John and Mary Ann Craig, Helene and Keith Elliot, Kathy Evans, Kim Eveland, Tim Garton, Sue Gustafson, Randy Hamm, Joyce Harp, Judy Jeffrey, Denise and Jim Klinger, Julie Lanshe, Ling Ma, Bonnie Martineck, Ray Matkowski, Terri McClure, Lauren McGrath, Jeff and Tami Moore, Nancy Ortman and guest Buddy Needham, Andy and Susan Pilkerton, Shari Reed, Mark Richardson, Buzz Schoenhard, Pat Schrad, Claudia and Ed Shelton, Steve and Susan Skaggs, Butch Tetzlaff, Gracie and Ross Turley and guest Winona Brackeen, Deb and Dirk Webber, Leon Wehmeyer, Gayle and Rich Winsor, Susan Woodruff and Myrlene Zimmerman.

II. President Laura Claggett opened the meeting stating our mission: We are dedicated to increasing and protecting the Eastern Bluebird population of Bella Vista, Arkansas. Laura welcomed those in attendance and advised them to take any books and pamphlets about bluebirds on the table. If not a member of NABS, the cost is \$15.00 to become a new member.

III. New monitor volunteers are Darryl Beachy (BVCC), Kassi Bradford (St. Bernard Church), Deidre & Alan Cheney (Scotsdale), Keith Elliot (BVCC) and Terri McClure (Glasgow Car Trail). Substitute monitors are Kassi Bradford, Tami Moore and Becky Pratt.

IV. The BVBBS sponsors two grant programs:

- Nest Box Grant is to help start bluebird trails in Arkansas outside of Bella Vista. A new trail might be started at Osage Park in Bentonville.
- Student Research Grant of \$2,000 was awarded to Will Kirkpatrick, PhD candidate, for 'Experimental manipulation of thermal variability and average temperature to determine the thermal drivers of reproductive behavior and offspring phenotypes in Eastern Bluebirds.' The original grant amount of \$1,500 was increased by \$500 due to a generous gift to the BVBBS from the Conservation Committee of the Bentonville Garden Club for helping to promote their mission.

V. New Baffle Project: On the Branchwood trail, taller posts and stovepipe baffles were installed to ward off predators. Butch Tetzlaff, Sue Gustafson and Steve Skaggs installed 16 7ft T-posts and replaced all 6ft T-posts on the Branchwood research boxes. Of those, 8 posts got 28x8 stovepipe baffles. More information is available on the BVBBS webpage.

VI. Adopt A Highway is organized by Jacqui Stockman & Becky Pratt and coordinated with Six in Sixty. Our third year will be held on Saturday March 30, 2024 from 10 to 1. BVBBS volunteers can meet at Trafalgar and 71. Vests, bags and pickers are provided. The BVBBS is responsible for 1 mile on Rt 71 from Lancashire to Trafalgar. At 10, Allen's Grocery is providing hot dogs and Java Dudes is providing coffee.

VII. Problems with Other Birds Using Nest Boxes: House wrens have been a problem and Carolina wrens have also been using the boxes. The Carolina wrens are a protected species and make a messy nest. They have tiny brown speckled eggs. **Never, ever, ever let a House Sparrow fledge chicks 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. More information is available on our website.

VII. 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, contact a sub, your trail box or Laura. We do not need to know why you are unable to monitor your boxes. Loss of data is totally preventable by having someone assist you. Keep your data sheet up to date on a weekly basis.

VIII. Google Sheets for Monitoring

- At desktop Google Sheets is better with Google Chrome, a free download
- Download the Google Sheet app to use on your phone
- 2024 sheets are ready
- Allows collaboration with your Trail Boss & substitute monitors

IX. Google Sheets Tutorial was presented by Randy Hamm. The tutorial has instructions for both handheld (phone, tablet) and desktop and has clear graphics. To access the tutorial, go to the BVBBS website, click on Trails and Boxes, scroll down to Monitor Data Sheet and click to bring up that screen, then click on the Google Sheets Tutorial box. For problems or more information, contact Randy Hamm or Laura Claggett. Buzz Schoenhard suggested that NS for nest started be included in the data collection.

X. Monitor/Trail Boss Communication: TB's need to review the monitor sheets for timely communication about predators/pests, damaged/missing box, bent posts, weeds or other obstacles.

XI. Monitoring on Golf Courses requires good manners – respect golfers.

- Check best time to be out with club house or cart barn.
- Least crowded early morning or late evening
- Steve Skaggs receives an email of maintenance days
- Check Today's Play

IX. Closing Comments:

- The Bluebird Shed, 648 W. Lancashire sells our nest boxes, hats and pudding feeders.
- We monitor and maintain 577 nest boxes in Bella Vista
- From 1980 – 2023 we helped fledge 55,000 Eastern Bluebirds
- We have 50 Monitors, 10 Trail Bosses, 9 Board Members, 6 Resident Installers, 6 Box Builders and 4 Corporate Supporters: The Bluebird Shed – THRogers – Lowes – BVPOA.
- It was a consensus that we hold an October, end of season meeting with a pot luck.

Submitted by Buzz Schoenhard, BVBBS Board Secretary