

Spring 2012

April 2012

The Fledgling

The official Newsletter of the Missouri Bluebird Society



The Missouri Bluebird Society is an Affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society

A Letter from the President:

MOBS has another wonderful conference for Bluebirders. The speakers at the past MOBS Conferences have educated and entertained us all. This year we will get a chance to again learn from the experts. Years of hands on experience about bluebirds will be shared by David Pitts and a study of migratory birds (along with the Eastern Bluebird) will be shared by Brad Jacobs.

I know all of our past conferences have been a fantastic learning experience and this year is no exception.

We also have lined up for you a talk by Master Gardner Kris Leech. Join us and find out some of the best plants you need in your yard for wildlife.

Rick Stanton has new research on one of Missouri's lost cavity nesters, the Brown-headed Nuthatch.

I look forward to learning with you at this year's conference,

Steve Garr, MOBS President



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A Bluebird Quiz! Based on information from the Book ***Studying Eastern Bluebirds: A Biologist's Report and Reflections*** by T. David Pitts

Don't miss Dr. Pitts' program at our July 2012 Missouri Bluebird Conference! He will have copies of his new book there to sign and sell and he is one of the most informative and enjoyable speakers you will ever have the opportunity to hear.

(Our thanks to our spectacular 2011 conference speaker, Bob Peak, for putting a longer version of this Quiz together and sending it to us!)

1. (True or False) Bluebirds select a mate for life and are always monogamous.

Answer: False. Although bluebirds are *usually* monogamous, there are documented cases of polygamous males having more than one mate at the same time, in the same nesting territory (polygyny).

2. What is the average temperature (in degrees Fahrenheit) of bluebird eggs being incubated by a female bluebird under natural conditions?

Answer: 93 degrees Fahrenheit

3. How hot (in degrees Fahrenheit) can a bluebird egg get without the embryo dying?

Answer: If the egg temperature rises above 105 degrees, the embryo will probably die.

4. During which season (Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter) are healthy bluebirds at their *greatest* weight?

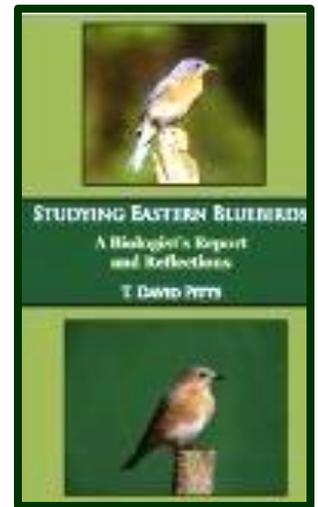
Answer: Winter

5. During its two-week incubation, does a bluebird egg gain weight, lose weight, or stay the same?

Answer: It loses weight.

(An explanation is provided in Dr. Pitts' book.)

Want to learn more?? Register to attend the 2012 Missouri Bluebird Conference and meet David Pitts in person. Register soon!



Attend the 2012 Missouri Bluebird Conference to hear Author David Pitts' program:

"Feathers, Flocks, Flight, Food, and Fat: Winter Ecology of Eastern Bluebirds"

Below: Eastern Bluebird female on nest incubating eggs.



Photo by Steve Garr

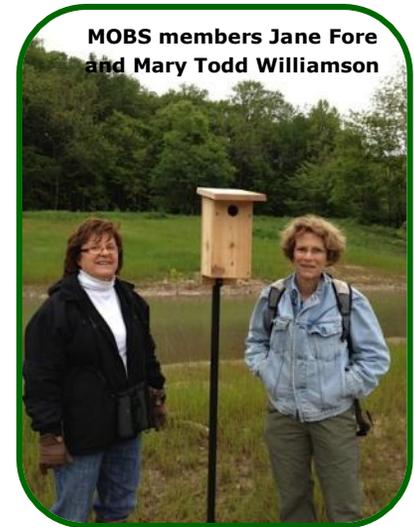
MOBS Nest Box Grant program at work for Missouri Cavity-nesters

(AND the importance of "connecting" in conservation)

by Steve Garr photos by Mary Todd Williamson, Harold Williamson and Jane Fore

Just this month I was fortunate to be witness to the good things that can happen when folks with a heart for conservation come together. When I heard about a terrific project in Columbia, Missouri to turn an old water treatment plant into flourishing habitat for wildlife, I knew it sounded like a great place for a nest box trail. With MOBS' Nest Box Grant program, access to boxes and poles to meet the grant "matching" requirements, and a site that would be perfect for many native cavity-nesting birds, there was only one critical element missing: Committed nest box monitors to take a personal interest in the trail and make it their own. Jane Fore and Mary and Harold Williamson **are** those committed trail monitors! When I contacted MOBS members in the local area of this project, these three individuals readily volunteered. They applied and were awarded a MOBS nest box grant of five boxes and poles to match five of their own and now the **3M Urban Ecological Restoration Project** site in Columbia, Missouri will have a well- cared-for ten box trail! Even better news- Jane, Mary and Harold already monitor a trail for their local **Columbia Audubon Society**, and that chapter has a current program affiliation with the 3M project! In fact, several Missouri conservation entities have committed funds and time to this restoration project and some of them met at the site with us the day the first grant box was installed. The Trail is in particularly good habitat for **Tree Swallows** and **Prothonotary warblers**, however, as we were leaving the park area an **Eastern Bluebird** came to thank us! The area is also fine habitat for **Chickadees** and **Tufted titmice** to nest. Mary, Harold, and Jane have already put hard work into this trail and I commend them for their efforts and willingness to take on another trail. Without them a nest box trail on this terrific new site would still be only a good idea instead of a reality. Please take time to check out the information

on this special restoration project doing a search on "**3M Urban Ecological Restoration Project**". You'll see evidence of a terrific, cooperative effort to make a wonderful natural area. By the way, just as a reminder, the Grant Boxes for this trail were donated to MOBS by another wonderful conservation organization.... Bluebirds Across Nebraska. Good things happen when eager volunteers and cooperative conservation organizations **connect!**



MOBS members Jane Fore and Mary Todd Williamson



Above: Harold Williamson & Jane Fore set out to install boxes on a new nest box trail!



MOBS president Steve Garr with a Grant Box.

Do you have something you'll be donating for the 2012 Bluebird Conference Auction/Raffle??

Please give our hard-working Auction chair, Larry Dobson, a "heads-up" on what you are bringing by completing this form and dropping it in the mail to him (or just email the info to him at lldobson@aol.com). Mail to: Larry Dobson / PO Box 347/ Raymore, MO 64083

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ city/state _____ Zip _____

Please Describe Item(s) to be donated: _____

Window Strike Issues (especially important during migration season!) by Steve Garr



During migration birds often hit windows. If the bird is left on the ground in a daze the defenseless bird is subject to predators. If you notice the injured bird right after this happens I recommend that you slowly walk up to the bird and gently pick it up. If it does not try to fly away it may be in shock or dazed due to the collision. You may want to place the bird in a protected area out of the sun. A box with a lid or a paper sack makes a good protected place for the bird. After about 15 minutes you can take the box outside and open it up. If the bird was just stunned it may be ready to fly away. If the bird hasn't recovered yet try it again in about 15 minutes. This does not always work, but it did this time and when I opened the box outside the Prothonotary Warbler flew high up into the tree. **Remember always open the box outside.** And my thanks to the observant UPS driver that noticed this bird on the sidewalk of a neighboring store front and alerted me to the situation.

Of course it is important to try to prevent window strikes in the first place. Remember, anything you place on the window to break up the reflection (such as window decals) is always going to work

much better when placed on the outside of the window. Place decals on a clean window to get them to adhere well. If you have a window that repeatedly receives strikes by birds, it is good advice to go outside during the time of day that this occurs and take a look in your window to see what the birds are seeing. Sometimes, closing drapes or blinds on a window can actually make the reflection worse. In other instances it may help considerably. Just make every effort to be aware of what the birds are seeing and do your best to break up that reflection.



A Word from our Nest Box /Trail Data committee chair by *Janelle Schulte*
jf101spots@aol.com

WANTED: FOLKS TO MONITOR NEST BOXES:

It's once again time to start monitoring our Bluebird boxes, it is not too late to start. Forms are available to print from the MoBS web site. It will be an exciting year since we have had such a mild winter to see how our Bluebirds thrived during residency this winter. When monitoring your boxes, beginning this month, it will be advantageous to fill out the monitor form entirely. It takes all of this information you collect to calculate the end of year summary report.

Use a form for EACH next box you monitor, making notes along the side to refer to at the end of the season when compiling your numbers. There are numerous web sites to assist in FAQ such as Missouri Bluebird Society, North American Bluebird Society, etc. Nothing a "google" search can't find. Or just blog MoBS & answer will follow your question.

From the form for each box the "species" who used the box, the "numbers of broods" or clutches (a group of eggs) (bluebirds may have 2-3 throughout the season). This first column will be used to identify "nest attempts" in which at least one egg was laid.

The column for "PESTS/PREDATORS", available to note problems you encountered during the season. These include snakes, cats, coons, wasps, etc. There is a "NOTE" column to use for narration such as nest removed, box cleaned, trap, etc. More information is better than less when filling out your monitor forms, it makes the summary so much easier.

At the end of the year, when your monitor sheets are reviewed & compiled to transfer to your "nest box summary form", it will be easy to identify (by each species), "NESTING ATTEMPTS" (number of nests that at least one egg was laid), "SUCCESSFUL NESTINGS" (at least one chick had fledged), "# Eggs laid", "# chicks that hatched", "# chicks that fledged". It's not "rocket science," but it sure is FUN to look back on the BB season & see how many babies share your yard.

As always, thank you to the folks that participate in this collection & send in end of year reports you do a great job & your effort is very much appreciated. New folks are WELCOME, wanted & needed to join in the fun of writing down what happens in YOUR nest boxes.

Find Nest Box Monitoring Forms & a Trail Summary Report Form at missouribluebird.org

Order great items from the Missouri Bluebird Society!

Important ordering info: When ordering product from MOBS, please remember to enclose these completed order forms, and **include your NAME, shipping address, and phone number** with your order. *Thank You !*



Our wonderful MOBS Logo mugs by Jim Rathert are dishwasher & microwave safe!

The MOBS Logo Mug

by Jim Rathert Photography

11 ounce white ceramic Mug with blue interior featuring the beautiful Logo of the Missouri Bluebird Society (designed by Jim Rathert).

_____ Mugs @ \$13.00 each = \$ _____

Shipping \$6.00 (for up to 2 mugs)

Shipping \$10.50 (for 3-4 mugs)

Shipping \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

****Please note your mugs will arrive via PRIORITY MAIL**

Please make checks out to :

"MOBS" or the "Missouri Bluebird Society"

(Checks or money orders only– PLEASE do not send cash)

Mail to: **MOBS product sales**

P.O. Box 105830

Jefferson City, MO 65110

Nest Box Signs are \$3.50 each, or buy FIVE, get ONE FREE!

_____ signs x \$3.50 each = _____

_____ 5 Signs get ONE FREE = \$17.50

_____ 10 Signs get TWO FREE = \$35.00

Shipping & Handling _____ + 2.00

TOTAL _____

Make Checks to the MO Bluebird Society

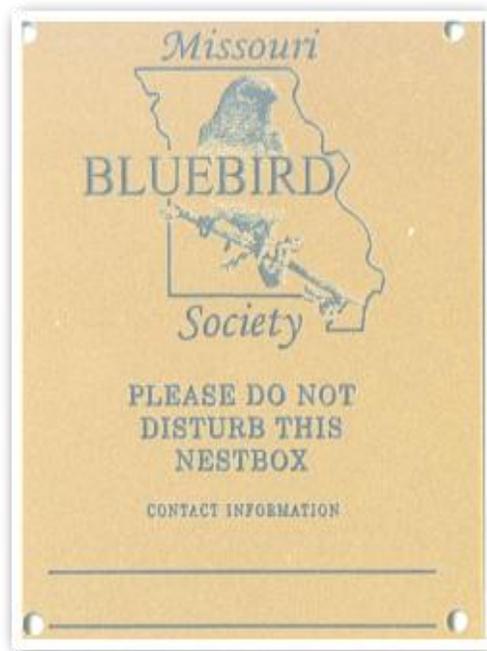
Mail to:

MOBS Nest Box Signs

P.O. BOX 105830

Jefferson City, Mo 65110

Order your MOBS Nest Box Signs
(Order Form left)



2012 Missouri Bluebird Conference Host Hotel

Remember to ask for Special Rates for the Missouri Bluebird Society. A limited number of rooms will be held for us at a rate of \$59.00 for a room with a King bed or Two Queen beds, so make your reservations soon! Special rates are for Friday, July 13th and Saturday July 14th only.



Baymont Inn & Suites

(formerly Hotel DeVille)
319 W. Miller Rd
Jefferson City, MO 65101

573-636-5231

Newly renovated, the Baymont Inn & Suites offers everything you need for a relaxing stay, including spacious guest rooms with refrigerators and microwaves. Enjoy free continental breakfast every morning and unwind after a long day with a cocktail in our on-site lounge. Connect to home or office with free Wi-Fi Internet from the privacy of your room. Stay fit with a workout in our exercise room or go for a

refreshing swim in our heated outdoor pool. **Non-smoking rooms are available, and kids 17 and under stay free with an adult.**

DIRECTIONS:

From the North: Highway 54 West, cross over the Missouri River Bridge then take the Highway 50 East Exit. Follow Highway 50 East to Broadway Street. Take right on Broadway Street and an immediate right on Miller. Hotel is on left hand side.

From the South: Highway 54 East to the Highway 50 East Exit. Follow Highway 50 East to Broadway Street. Take right on Broadway Street and an immediate right on Miller. Hotel is on left hand side.

Alternate Hotel accommodations include:

- Best Western** 1937 Christy Drive/Jefferson City, MO 65109 573-635-4175
- Truman Hotel** 1510 Jefferson St./ Jefferson City, MO 65101 573-635-7171
- Econo Lodge** 1926 Jefferson St/ Jefferson City, MO 65109 573-636-2797

Area RV/ camp sites include:

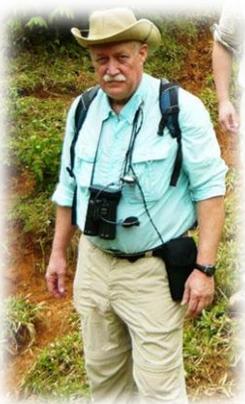
- Mari Osa Delta Campground** Jefferson City 573-455-245
- Osage Campground & More** Jefferson City 573-395-4066

A few of our fabulous Bluebird Conference Speakers!

(Read more about their conference presentations in the conference Brochure)

Brad Jacobs: “Eastern Bluebirds, Nicaragua, and Bird Conservation”

My current position is as ornithologist and Wildlife Ecologist for the Missouri Department of Conservation, USA.



I am a member of the Partners-in-Flight’s Steering Committee and past Steering Committee chair. I serve on the Leadership and Technical Working Groups of the Southern Wings Task Force of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. The Southern wings Program promote USA state fish and wildlife agency involvement in on-going bird conservation projects in Latin America and the Caribbean. Languages: English and Spanish.

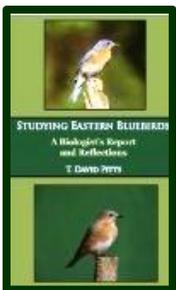
I received a BS from Cornell University and a MA from University of Missouri – Columbia. I was a volunteer in the USA Peace Corps and lived two years in Colombia working in the Serranía de la Macarena and El Tuparro national parks, and one year at the Darwin Research Station, Galapagos Islands, working with seabirds and teaching of bird conservation in the local school system.

I have authored three books: author 1986 *Birding on the Navajo and Hopi Reservations*; co-author -1997 *Missouri Breeding Bird Atlas*; 2001 author - *Birds in Missouri*

T. David Pitts:

“Feathers, Flocks, Flight, Food, and Fat: Winter Ecology of Eastern Bluebirds”

From Regina Garr: David Pitts has been an inspiration to many people for a long time – he has over 40 years of research on Bluebird Biology to his credit. A Biology Professor at the University of Tennessee- Martin, Dr. Pitts has been teacher to many people in and out of the class room. Steve and I include ourselves in that “out of the class room” group. We have been fortunate to hear Dr. Pitts speak on several occasions, and have also had the opportunity to watch him interact with Bluebirders of all skill levels. His capacity to teach AND inspire absolutely shines on every page of his book :*Studying Eastern Bluebirds: A Biologist’s Report and Reflections* . Of course you’ll want to own a copy of your own – however don’t pass up the chance to visit with David in person. Sign up for the conference now!



Rich Stanton:

“Can Missouri support a reintroduced population of Brown-headed Nuthatches?”

I am working with Dr. Dylan Kesler and Dr. Frank Thompson on a multiscale habitat selection study of Brown-headed Nuthatches in Arkansas. I plan to use an occupancy modeling approach to relate patterns of nuthatch presence to variation in key habitat characteristics such as fire regime, snag density, and canopy closure as well as landscape features (patch size and isolation). This approach will be augmented with intensive radio telemetry of nuthatches to determine how space use within home ranges and home range size vary in relation to local resource metrics.



My goals are to inform a potential translocation of the nuthatches to Missouri where they have been extirpated, inform their management in Arkansas and other shortleaf pine communities, and contribute to our general understanding of the factors shaping animal habitat selection, species distributions, and movements. I have an interest in avian species limits, biogeography, and geographic variation in bird vocalizations as well. I also like nuthatches .