



**GLEN'S**

# Nest Box News



**FALL 2019**

[www.southcarolinabluebirds.org](http://www.southcarolinabluebirds.org)

**Volume 8 Issue 4**

*An Affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society*

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## South Carolina Bluebird Society Contributes Big Data

Cornell University last month bulk-uploaded a whopping 5,864 nest records contributed by the [South Carolina Bluebird Society](http://www.southcarolinabluebirds.org). The data set spanned 6 years (2013-2018) and included 11 species. From Brown-headed Nuthatches to Eastern Bluebirds to Wood Ducks, this massive collection will certainly enrich our

Database for the state of South Carolina. We are especially grateful to [Glen Hendry](#) for shepherding the data sent through the upload process, and for everyone who has submitted data to SCBS individually.



This issue is dedicated to Glen Hendry for all he does for the SCBS. Sometimes it's not always about the birds, sometimes it's about the people behind the effort. Glen is that person! So enjoy the latest Fall issue of **Glen's Nest Box News...**

**PS** most of the photos are his too...



**Terry McGrath, Editor**

**ANNUAL MEETING  
ON NOV.1-2**

**DETAILS ON PG 14**

**DON'T MISS IT!!!**

*"Sometimes you just have to take the leap and build your wings on the way down..."*

**Kobi Yamada**



Check out how to make a bird feeder out of a pumpkin on page 13~





## ***President's Perspective...***

***By Mike DeBruhl***

***Can it really be?? Has Fall finally begun to arrive??*** The cooler temps over the past few days seen to indicate so ... and our feathered friends are frisky. I venture to say that you are seeing a "Flurry" of activity. We are receiving calls inquiring about the increased number of Bluebirds showing up at feeders. Folks are ecstatic about seeing our Blue Friends and watching their antics - - but wonder where did they all come from lately?

Primarily, our birds (who do not migrate from here) are being joined by their Northern cousins to begin wintering over with us as it gets colder up there. Another contributing factor is that a number of these are our 2019 youngsters are staying around with their parents. We will have the final audited figures to you soon. **Best advice - - keep feeders filled and ENJOY!**

**IS YOUR CALANDER MARKED ? OUR ANNUAL MEETING IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER** - - So be sure that you have registered to attend this **November 1 & 2 event.** As you will see, on Friday we have a guided tour of Hitchcock Woods at 2 PM for the first 25 to sign up .... and then a reception at Newberry Hall at 6 PM.

**Then on Saturday our meeting begins with continental breakfast at the Wild Turkey Federation conference center in Edgefield at 9 AM.** During the meeting we will have informative guests speakers, and update on SCBS and NABS activities, our final fledge counts from across the state, a catered lunch, silent auction , SCBS Store items, SCBS awards, plus a chance to meet and interact with fellow Blue birders from all over South Carolina.

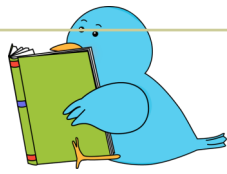
Your Board of Directors is very excited about this event and a great deal of planning has gone into it to make it truly enjoyable and educational for all. So, if you have not done so, please get your registration (**a mere \$20**) for the meeting and **\$5 for the HW Tour** into Terry McGrath ( 168 Sweetbay Drive, Aiken, SC 29803 ) ASAP. We look forward to seeing you and your friends there!!

Just a reminder that our next meetings will be on October 28 and November 18 at the Odell Weeks Center at 7 PM. Enjoy the fall, keep those feeders and bird baths filled, and enjoy our feathered friends.

**See you on the Trails ..... and at the ANNUAL MEETING**

*Mike*

## Insider News!



**The SCBS Conservation series has the first year Bluebirds and the second year Chickadee available for purchase. The set of 4 stamps ( 4"x6") is available for \$20.00 and the prints (Bluebirds 8"x10), Chickadee (9"x11") are available for \$30.00. Buy the set for \$45.00...These gorgeous stamps and prints are also available on our website:**

**[Southcarolinabluebirds.org](http://Southcarolinabluebirds.org)**



**Thanks for your support!**



**DON'T MISS  
THE DEADLINE!**

**Deadlines for contributions to the Nest Box News are: Jan 15, April 15, July 15 and Oct 15 send your pictures, comments or articles to:**

**[mcgrathjtl@atlanticbb.net](mailto:mcgrathjtl@atlanticbb.net)**



**!!!**

**Use **Amazonsmile** for your online shopping!! When you shop, designate SCBS as your non-profit charity of choice and they will donate 0.5% of your purchase total to SCBS .**



***Lifetime Memberships* are available. If you're interested in finding out more, contact Mary Shultz at:**  
**[shultzim@att.net](mailto:shultzim@att.net).**

**join  
now!**

**For information on joining NABS, see <http://nabluebirdsociety.org>**

**For information on bluebirds and other cavity nesting birds in SC, go to <http://southcarolinabluebirds.org>**





## SAVE THE DATE

# 2019

### Member Meetings\*

**7:00 pm at** O'Dell Weeks, Rm.  
#3

**September 23, 2019**

**October 28, 2019**

**November 18, 2019** (week  
before Thanksgiving)

**December *Merry Christmas***

### Board Meetings\*

**5:30 pm at The Reserve**

**November 12, 2019**



## PRESENTATIONS

**Nov 06**— Sun City Bird Club ... Hilton Head

**Nov 18**— Williston GC...Williston, SC

**Feb 6, 2020**—Dogwood Garden Club...Orangeburg

**Apr 22, 2020**—Gay Gardeners GC...Columbia



## TO BE SCHEDULED

Sandy Acres Pine Needle...Jackson, SC

Poinsett GC...Sumter, SC

St. Matthews GC...St. Matthews, SC

Hillside GC...Augusta, GA

Celadon GC...Beaufort, SC

Euchee Creek School...Grovetown, SC



*We can always use your  
help, ideas, photos and  
comments...*



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## **FROM THE ARCHIVES ...**

**Volume 7, Number 4**

**Autumn 1985**



*A new feature in the **Nest Box News** will be featured articles from the first North American Bluebird Society newsletters. Some information remains the same, some has dramatically changed, but the love and dedication the first founders had remains the same--Enjoy!*

**Question Corner**, authored by Lawrence Zeleny, was a popular feature in the Quarterly Journal of the North American Bluebird Society. It seems some topics are still being addressed, even after almost 30 years!

**Q: What is the life span of a bluebird?**

**A.** With good luck bluebirds will probably live as long as 8-10 years. However, the hazards of wild bird life are so great that the average lifespan of bluebirds after safe fledging is probably only about 2 years.



**Q: We have counted over 16 bluebirds in a single flock. Is this kind of concentration unusual?**

**A:** During the fall months family groups of bluebirds will join other groups to form loose flocks which usually remain intact until later winter or early spring. In earlier times these flocks often numbered 100 or more birds, but now they are usually much smaller.



**Editors Note:** *I'm pretty sure Mr. Zeleny's answer today would be more positive for both of these questions...*



**Glen & Gail Hendry Go Camping...to beautiful, and sometimes chilly, New Mexico**



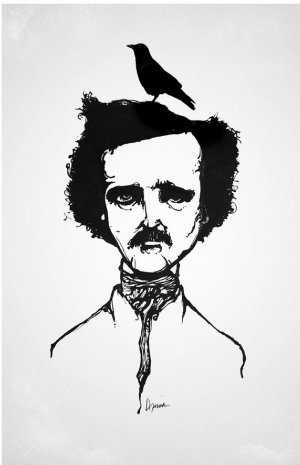
**A beautiful hawk...**



**Male Mountain Bluebird**



**Mountain Bluebird with wind beneath the feathers...**



**Wonder if this Raven is saying, "Nevermore?"**



## Glen & Gail See Some Old & New Friends..



**Mule Deer**



**Red breasted Nuthatch**



**Pinyon pine cone a Scrub Jay is eating**



**Scrub Jay**



**Scrub Jay**

**YOUR PICTURE  
HERE**

*Thanks to Glen & Gail  
Hendry for their awe-  
some photos from New  
Mexico*



**Familiar friend at the campground**



## Tagging Along With The Hendry's...



**Bull elk bugling on Bob Cat Pass, elevation 9820 feet**



**Storm clouds over East Nest Lake, NM**



**Camp site elevation 6800 feet**



**Traffic jam at campsite**



**Mule deer buck**



# Out My Backdoor: Bluebird Migration



Eastern Bluebird

*By Terry W. Johnson*

The eastern bluebird is one of our most beloved birds. One reason for its popularity is that its beauty can be enjoyed without having to gaze at the bird through a pair of binoculars.

However, the eastern bluebird's stunning beauty belies the fact the species' migratory behavior is truly perplexing.

Bluebirds can be commonly seen in the Peach State throughout the year. Consequently, one would think bluebirds do not migrate. However, the truth is some do and some don't. For that reason, ornithologists call them partial migrants. If you think the bluebird's migratory behavior is a bit odd, you are not alone. Even the men and women who study bluebirds are having difficulty unraveling the mysteries swirling about the migratory behavior of this beautiful bird.

For example, biologists have been unable to identify the routes used by bluebirds during migration. Similarly, they have yet to figure out why some bluebirds migrate and others stay at home throughout the winter months. Likewise, we do not understand why some southbound migrants fly past their traditional wintering grounds in the South and wing their way to Bermuda and Cuba.

Here are some of the things we do know. For some unknown reason, some bluebirds hatched in the south and central United States don't migrate at all, preferring to remain on their breeding territories throughout the winter. Others migrate only a few miles.

As a rule though, practically all of the birds raised in southern Canada and the Northeast migrate. The vast majority of these bluebirds spend the winter in the Southeast.

Thousands of eastern bluebirds winter in Georgia each year. Here they intermingle with our resident bluebirds. Consequently, our bluebird population swells significantly during the winter. A study conducted in Florida found that once the northern migrants arrived the local bluebird population within their study area increased 100 percent.

Unlike most of our songbirds, bluebirds migrate during the daytime. Male bluebirds usually arrive on their wintering grounds before females; however, in some years they both arrive about the same time. In spite of this migration pattern, other bluebirds migrate as family groups, and winter together before flying back north as a family.

The departure dates of northern bluebirds vary widely. For example, Minnesota birds leave their breeding grounds anywhere from September to late November or early December. The peak of the fall migration takes place in October. It is thought that the timing of migration may be triggered by changes in the weather, such as the onset of freezing rain and snow.

Bluebirds migrate in flocks. These can number several hundred individuals, though usually the flocks are much smaller. Juvenile bluebirds migrate together, although females and males most often fly south separately. These migratory flocks often stay together throughout the time they remain on their wintering grounds.

As eastern bluebirds move south, the birds tend to fly along the edges of forests and fields. Upon reaching the places where they will spend the winter, the birds can be found scattered across suburban yards, pastures, orchards, brushy fencerows and even in mature hardwood forests.

Most migratory bluebirds leave their breeding grounds in late winter. For that reason, the first bluebirds of the year might arrive home as early as late February, although the arrival of spring migrants peaks in mid-May. Half a continent away, in Massachusetts, folks expect to see their first bluebirds anywhere from late February to March.

When eastern bluebirds return to their summer home, they don't randomly scatter across the countryside. Banding studies have found that from 30–50 percent of the birds return to the same place where they nested the previous year.

*Terry W. Johnson is a former Nongame program manager with the Wildlife Resources Division and executive director of The Environmental Resources Network, or TERN, friends group of the division's Nongame Conservation Section. ([Permission is required](#) to reprint this column.) Learn more about [TERN](#), see a previous ["Out My Backdoor"](#) column, read Terry's [Backyard Wildlife Connection](#) blog and check out his latest book, ["A Journey of Discovery: Monroe County Outdoors."](#)*

Permission has been granted to reprint this article by the GADNR per email dated 10/3/2019

Did you  
know?



**Hummingbird** migration is triggered by the amount of daylight, not the amount of food. It's best to leave your feeders up for at least 2 weeks after seeing your last hummingbird.

Male hummers leave first, followed by females and juveniles.

A hummingbird's fall journey south takes approximately 2 weeks.

A hummingbird's flight across the Gulf of Mexico involves between 18-24 hours of nonstop flying.

Hummingbirds who encounter cold weather, have an amazing ability to adapt by dropping their body temperature by up to 50 degrees and slowing their heartbeats to almost nothing. This is called "torpor" and as the weather warms, they "wake up" and continue the migration.

Fall is a great time to clean out those feeders! Clean feeders with hot water and Dawn dish soap, then rinse in a solution of 9 parts water to 1 part bleach. Let dry completely before filling. Spread the seed and droppings *under* the feeders to help with decomposition. And don't forget the birdbaths also—they can be cleaned the same way as the feeders.

Grab a mug of hot chocolate, curl up in your chair and enjoy the show...

***Have a Great Fall!!***

*Have you checked the [South Carolina Bluebird Society](#) out on Facebook yet? We are up to 470+ members and this is truly a fun group of people! The information, questions and photos we all share is so refreshing from the gloom and doom of the world today. [Nancy Moseley](#), the site administrator, does a fantastic job! Go to [www.facebook.com/groups/SouthCarolinaBluebirdSociety/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/SouthCarolinaBluebirdSociety/) and read all about it!*





***Ask  
Your  
Friends***



## **Why Do Birds Space Themselves Out On Overhead Wires?**

**A couple of thoughts come to mind...it may be a matter of “personal” space. Like when you’re in a crowded room, and the person behind you is so close you can feel their breath on your neck. You’d get a little grumpy. Which may be another reason for the spacing...if the birds are farther apart, it’s harder to pester or peck your neighbor. My favorite reason is that if the birds are wing to wing close on that wire and a predator attacks, the birds would run into each other in their haste to get away! No matter how you spin it, it may be just because they DO!**





Halloween, harvest festivals, and general autumnal celebrations lead to an abundance of everyone's fall favorite: pumpkins. While you partake in pumpkin spice lattes and jack-o-lantern carvings, why not share some gourd indulgences with the birds? This bird feeder is the perfect use of an extra or post-trick-or-treat pumpkin.

#### Materials:

- Small to medium sized pumpkin, up to 10 pounds
- Small sticks
- Twine or rope
- Birdseed

#### Steps:

1. Cut the pumpkin in half.
2. Scoop out the seeds, leaving a hollow inside with 1/2-inch thick shell wall.
3. Insert two sticks across the open pumpkin to create perches for the birds.
4. Knot two lengths of rope together at the center and tack the knot to the bottom of the pumpkin feeder. Hang the other ends of the rope in your chosen feeder location.
5. Fill with birdseed.



<https://www.audubon.org/news/pumpkin-bird-feeder-makes-happy-harvest-birds>



**Courtesy of: Audubon** Go to the below address for a 1 minute video tutorial

<https://www.audubon.org/news/pumpkin-bird-feeder-makes-happy-harvest-birds>

## **1st Annual Meeting**



**Join the South Carolina Bluebird Society for a 2 day event on Friday, Nov. 1st and Saturday, Nov. 2nd. Friday afternoon we'll have a guided walk in Hitchcock Woods, (\$5.00 donation to the Woods) and in the evening will have a Social at Newberry Hall, compliments of SCBS. On Saturday, we'll meet up at the National Wild Turkey Foundation from 9 am until 4 pm. The day will be filled with a silent auction, guest speakers, a catered lunch and tour of the museum. The cost is \$20.00 per adult, \$10.00 for children under 12.**

**More info can be found by visiting our website at:**

**[www.southcarolinabluebirds.org](http://www.southcarolinabluebirds.org)**

***Hope to see you all here!***

**Last day for registration is October 20, 2019.**



Like us on Facebook! For answers to your questions and membership information to the South Carolina Bluebird Society and the North American Bluebird Society go to:

<http://www.southcarolinabluebirds.org>

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**South Carolina Bluebird Society**

**P.O. Box 5151**

**Aiken, SC 29804-5151**



**TO:**