



"Bringing back Bluebirds for Future Generations"

Bluebird News



Volume 27 Issue 4

Fall 2017

"Thoughts on the Past Season" by Mary Bailey

As I look back on this bluebird season, some thoughts come to mind and have been echoed by fellow bluebirders. The most striking is the extent of wren predation on nearly all trails of some size. It was so serious that I will leave that topic for further development before the next season starts.

Some of us also had trouble with wasps repeatedly attaching beginning nests on the ceilings of nestboxes, necessitating removal each week. In the meantime, no bird will nest in the box – another good reason to check boxes every week. Imagine the size of the wasp nest if weekly removal were neglected. To control wasps in a nest box, the consensus was to rub the ceiling with petroleum jelly, wax, or a soft bar of soap. This may have to be repeated during the season. At my very last box check this season, for the first time I found a small wasp nest attached to the inside wall of the box about two inches up. Something to watch for next year!

Many bluebirders commented on unhatched eggs,

POINTS OF INTEREST

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a phenomenon that did not occur when I first started my trail twenty-five years ago. This is an unanswered question for now except that our state coordinator has a method of dealing with the eggs. Carrol Johnson prefers to remove the unhatched egg rather than let it stay until the babies fledge. He is very serious when he tells us that to do that you need to go to the Dairy Queen and buy yourself one of their ice cream treats that come with the long-handled red spoon. When you are finished with the treat, save the spoon; and use it to gently extract the unhatched egg. I learned this method in a recent interview with him. I have not tried it, but I have tried the ice cream treats.

I did have a few late fledgers who left the nest a day after the nest mates. Again, this never occurred on my trail before. The only drawback was some anxiety on my part as I worried if that little one was going to fly. I am glad to be able to tell you they each left me with an empty nest to clean out and another baby to count as fledged.

Photo by Julie Eastling



"My Chickadees Would Never Do That!" by Mary Bailey

For some time now I have had trouble with an unknown species of bird pecking the bottom of the next box and creating chips on the floor of the box. Other bluebirders and I suspected a small woodpecker, but without any observation as proof. Two of us experimented with a homemade solution – large can lids placed on the bottom of the boxes that were affected. Not all were. It did not seem to deter nesting at all which was a concern when we first put the can lids in the boxes. The types

of lids we used were tuna cans, chicken cans (fit the best), and wide mouth canning lids (seemed the safest because of their duller edge).



At a recent bluebird picnic, I mentioned this problem and solution only to have my fellow bluebirders insist that it was my beloved chickadees who were the culprits! Is this possible? I must admit that I found the telltale chips in the bottom of a chickadee box on my last trail check. Hmmmmmm

Photo by Doris Glander

"President's Message" by Larry Alderks

Expo is coming! Theme for the Expo is: "An Educational Opportunity". This Expo will have a slightly different format. By integrating breakout sessions, we will expand opportunities for new and experienced members to learn more about Bluebirds. This will provide members the opportunity to attend sessions they are most interested in to expand their knowledge of Bluebirds. During registration, you will be asked to indicate what sessions you are interested in. There will be some flexibility to switch between sessions the day of the expo but by requesting your preferences at registration we can better plan for facility needs.

Since my last communication, our board has had some additional changes. Many of you know JENean Mortenson as one of the first faces you meet at the Expo. JENean has resigned from the board and as Expo Chair. I want to thank JENean for her many years of service. If you or someone you know would like to get involved in helping with the Expo, please contact me at: 507-645-9470.

Many of you have asked for and signed up to receive electronic newsletters. We are still working on that functionality and capability. Please be patient with us as we provide this service to you.

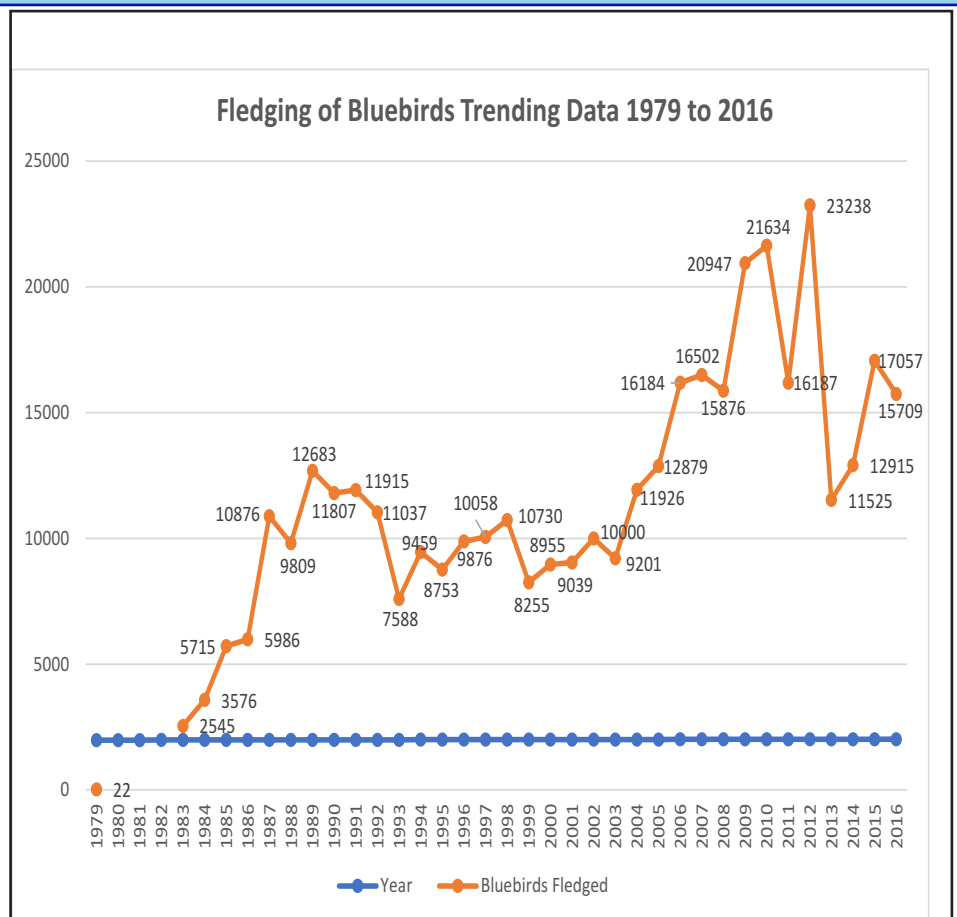
With the cooler October weather, most Bluebirds have headed south for winter. Have you turned in your reports? To encourage you, numbers from last year have been included to help inspire your reporting. Share your joy of bluebirds by reporting how many you provided housing and incubation rooms for in 2017. Use this link to enter your 2017 reports: <http://bbrp.org/2016-report-forms/>

"2016 reporting results and why reporting is important in 2017" by Larry Alderks

Our reporting team led by Board Member Wally Swanson presented a PowerPoint presentation at the Expo in 2017 of 2016 reporting results. Much of the data analysis was done by our intern Leland Swift. There are several important observations for us to reflect on. For those who may not have provided their reports, I hope you will see that every bird reported is important to our mission.

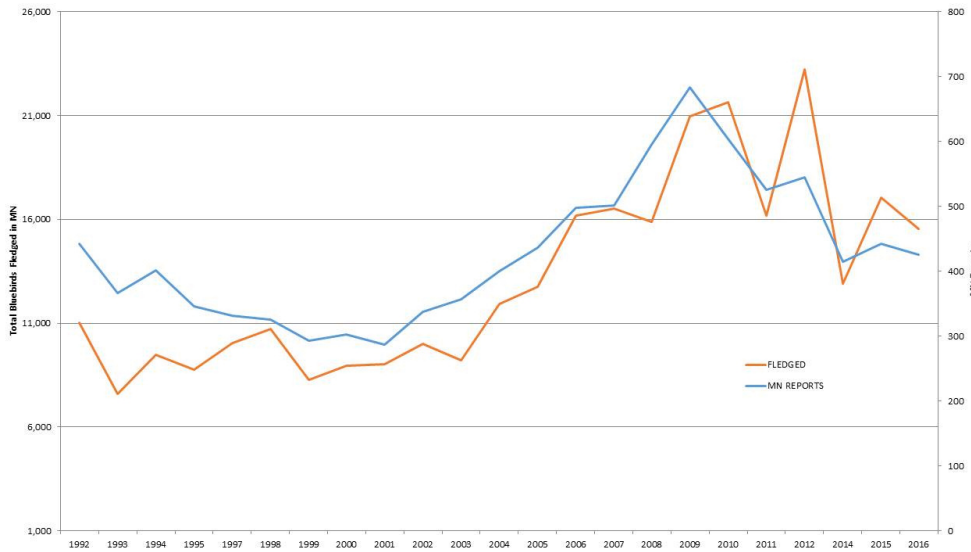
Our peak was in 2012 with 23,238. Then in 2013 we had only 11,525. This low fledging is mostly attributed to the cold, wet weather we had. Since then we have been trending upwards again. **The amount of birds fledged trends up and down with the number of reports submitted.** This is one reason why we need all our members to send in their reports. It is my hope that we will trend up as we engage more members and non-members to consistently report.

I hope you enjoy providing housing for the bluebirds and enjoy sharing the monitoring, hatching, and fledging of a new generation of bluebirds. We know they will fly south to escape our winter months but will return next spring for another nesting season.

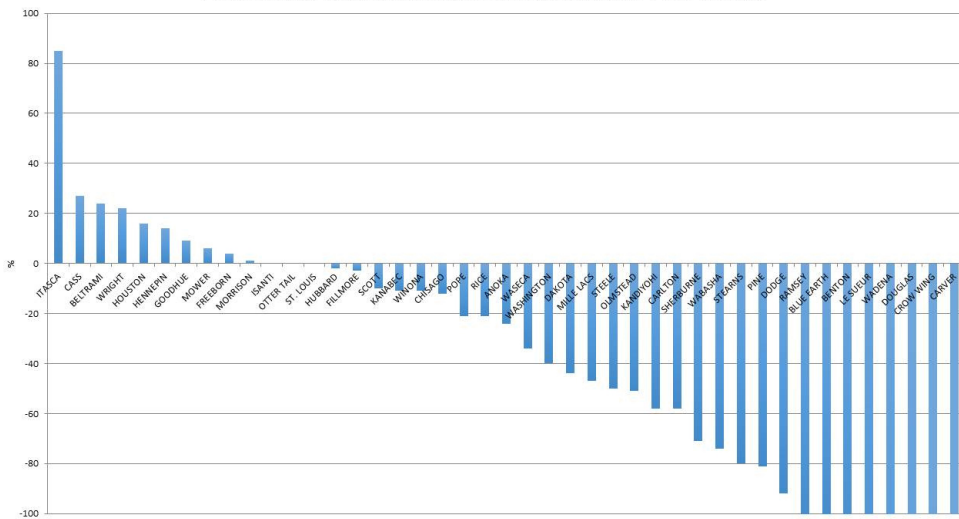


400,446 Bluebirds have fledged in Minnesota during these 37 years.

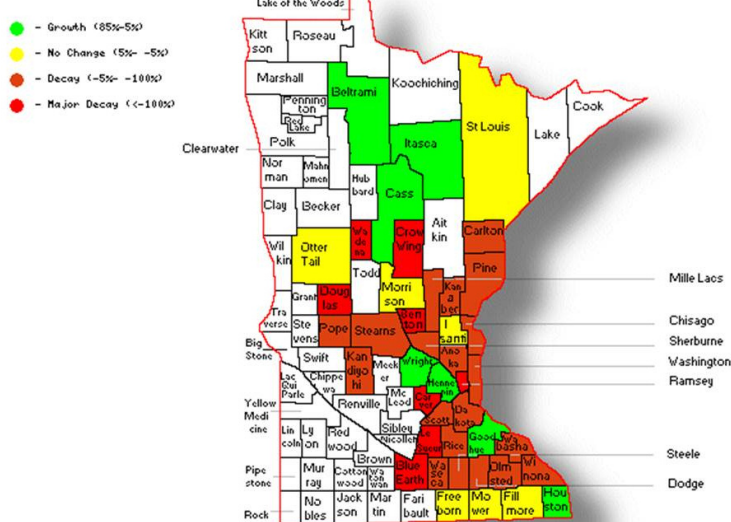
"2016 reporting results and why reporting is important in 2017" by Larry Alderks Pt. 2



Percent change of bluebirds fledged in 2016 (compared to 5 year average)



Percent Change in Bluebirds Fledged in 2016 (five year avg)



Photos by Larry Muehlenbein

"Calling All Women Farmers and Farmland Owners!" by Angela Smith

Are you a woman who is interested in land conservation? (If you have bluebird boxes, I already know the answer to that question!) Do you own a farm or farm land? If so, then you might be interested to learn that you could potentially be able to use your agriculturally-sensitive land specifically for conservation benefits and get paid to do so; that you can have a say in how farm land is managed in your neck of the woods; that you are especially eligible for getting certain kinds of loans; and that specialty crops and food and fiber crops can now be insured against natural disasters at no cost to you.

Women represent a growing segment of farmers and farmland owners in Minnesota and Wisconsin. There is a web of resources built around farming and land management but much of the information about those resources has historically not focused on catching the ear or meeting the needs of women. That's where the organization I work for, Renewing the Countryside, comes in. We are working to build relationships among women producers and farmland owners and their local USDA Farm Services Agency (FSA) offices, helping them to identify which programs are right for them and walking them through the process of meeting eligibility requirements and applying for programs.

Specifically, we hope to let women know about the following opportunities:

1) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP): CRP is a voluntary program that contracts with farmers so that environmentally sensitive agricultural land is used for conservation benefits. Participants establish long-term, resource-conserving vegetative species, such as approved grasses, flowers, or trees to control soil erosion, improve water quality, and enhance wildlife habitat. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. *(Three years ago, I signed six acres of my land up for CRP and with cost-share assistance seeded a native tallgrass prairie. Since then, the number of birds, insects, and other wildlife making use of the land – land that was once six acres of a single non-native grass species – has increased dramatically. The prairie really took off this past summer. I wonder if it is a coincidence that we had three broods of bluebirds in our prairie box this summer? Probably not!)*

2) FSA County Committees: We want to encourage more women to run for these positions. FSA County Committees are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA and allow grassroots input and local administration of federal farm programs. Right now, nationally less than 20% of FSA County Committee members are women, so there is a need and opportunity for more women to run. There are appointed (no elections involved!) committee advisory positions available, too.

3) Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP): NAP provides financial assistance to producers of noninsurable crops to protect against natural disasters (weather, diseases, insects, etc.) that result in lower yields or crop losses, or prevents crop planting. Eligible crops include specialty crops, crops grown for food, and crops grown for fiber. It is **free** for women farmers to participate.

4) Organic certification cost-share program (OCCSP): Once certified, a producer can apply for reimbursement of eligible costs related to certification. Reimbursement can be up to 75 percent of certification costs each year, up to a maximum of \$750 per certification scope—crops, livestock, wild crops, handling and state program fees.

5) Microloans: Microloans offer more flexible access to credit and serve as an attractive loan alternative for smaller farming operations, like specialty crop producers, mid-sized family farms, and operators of community supported agriculture (CSA).

6) Farm Ownership loans: A variety of loans are available through local FSA offices with the goal of supporting family farmers in agricultural economies to start, purchase, and/or expand their farming operation, as well as ultimately graduate to commercial credit. From farm ownership loans to youth loans and emergency loans, there is a diversity of opportunities available with different eligibility requirements, rates, and terms. Loans specifically for women help remove barriers that prevent their full participation in FSA's loan programs.

"Calling All Women Farmers and Farmland Owners!" by Angela Smith Pt. 2

If you would like more information on any of these programs, you can head to our website:

http://www.renewingthecountryside.org/fsa_outreach.

And you can get in touch with me, too, by phone at (507) 722-0679 or by email at angelsmithrtc@gmail.com.

I would be more than happy to talk to you and help you start the process of signing up for any of these great programs.

New Members

Gina & Andy Franklin-----Northfield, MN	Daniel Hawkins-----Minneapolis, MN
Donna May -----Northfield, MN	Mark Ahle-----Rochester, MN
Chris Nesit -----Dudas, MN	David Pope-----Janesville, MN
Lawrence & LaVonne Schmitt-----Shakopee, MN	Jennifer Janasie -----St. Cloud, MN

Thank You!

BBRP is very grateful for generous monetary contributions from Peggy Boike (Lindstrom MN) and Bill Jarner (Elk River MN).

Editor's Note: In the Summer Newsletter a line in the article on "BBRP Awards List" could be misinterpreted. When we said "No organized records were kept" we should have said "No records were transferred to the current board." Lance Krog was given the group's records that had been faithfully kept for many years when he became BBRP chair. After his untimely death in 2011, those records and old newsletters were not passed on to any subsequent or current board member.

Virginia Windschitl, BBRP News Editor, edbbbpnews@outlook.com

Bluebird parents scratching heads!!!



Photo by Dorene Scriven



Photos by Doris Glander



BLUEBIRD RECOVERY PROGRAM MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT & RENEWAL

Enrollment in the Bluebird Recovery Program includes: initial Information Packet containing a full color Trail Guide, Top Ten Tips including colored Nest Guide, Record Keeping booklet, Pole Assembly instruction sheet, yearly Report Form & quarterly Newsletter. There are also annual informational meetings and a yearly Bluebird Expo. Consultation and advice are available by phone, e-mail, correspondence or in the field.

Enrollment contributions are **tax deductible**.

_____ New Member Renewal _____

Membership periods are:

_____ 2 years \$23.00 _____ 5 years \$55.00 _____ Lifetime \$150.00

_____ * Gift Membership * - indicate amount & period of gift _____



*Brianna back Bluebirds
for Future Generations!*

Member Name _____ E-mail _____

Address _____ County _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

* If giving a Gift Membership, please provide your name so that the recipient can be informed of your generosity. _____

Send to:

Bluebird Recovery Program, c/o Brianna Frisch
395 Williams Street• Lewiston, MN 55952

"15th Annual South Central Bluebird Picnic" By Loren and Ardy Murphy

The 15th Annual South Central Bluebird Picnic was held Saturday, September 23rd at the Riverbend Nature Center in Faribault, MN.

The picnic was well attended and all enjoyed the furnished BBQ's. Mary and Bill Bailey, Chatfield, MN, also brought BBQ's. The side dishes and desserts that were contributed by the attending Bluebirders were delicious, as always.

A thank you goes to these businesses for contributing donations to our annual picnic: The State Bank of Faribault donated the hamburger for our BBQ's, Fareway of Faribault donated all the hamburger buns and the ice for the water and juice and Hy Vee of Faribault gave a 15% discount on other items needed.

The Bluebirders had a chance to give a report on the events or concerns dealt with during their Bluebirding season this year. The 100 bars were given out to those present who fledged 100 or more Bluebirds and many door prizes were given out during the evening.

A donation was collected from the attendees to give to the Riverbend Nature Center in thanks for the use of their facility. Thanks everyone for a great evening.



Back row L to R:

Joe Adelman (100 Bar), Chuck Smalley, Diana Hering, Dave Hering, Paul Schwab, Ron Guck (100 Bar), Glen Shirley, Ben Bartusek (100 Bar), Bill Bailey, Mary Bailey (100 Bar), Larry Buhr (100 Bar), Carrol Johnson (100 Bar), Lori Wobschall, Dick Wobschall, Winnie Johnson, Sandy Muehlenbein, Larry Muehlenbein, Jo Ann Schulz (100 Bar), Ray Schulz, Mark Zenter, Mary Zenter, Denise Smalley, Kathy Bode, Howard Bode, Maggie Dudley, Marilyn Suter (100 Bar).

Middle row L to R:

Ardy Murphy, Fern Vesledahl, Ken Vesledahl, Judy Schwab, Marlys Shirley, JoAnn Adelman (100 Bar), Jean Bartusek, Steve Scherer, Loren Murphy (100 Bar)

Front Row L to R: Mary Sue Hagerty, Steve Malecha (100 Bar)

"Did You Know?" By Marilyn Suter

Tree swallows are good birds also. They only nest once per season. The parent swallows remove the fecal sacs of the young until they are about 12 to 13 days old. After that the nestlings become too big and accidentally break the sacs, and at that point the parents give up that duty.

I had the privilege of having a pair in a nest box in my back yard. I happened to be out on my deck the afternoon when they decided to fledge. Something very interesting to me is when the baby tree swallow decides to come out of the box it immediately flies up in the air with the parents and the rest of the brood. In comparison, our baby bluebirds fly up to 300 feet to the nearest tree. The bluebird fledglings stay there for a week while mom and

dad feed them. Meanwhile they are practicing using their wings moving about in the tree. The miracle of the baby tree swallow is that they have not exercised their wings in the nest box (no room) and yet they fly up into the air.

The baby swallows fledged until about 8:30 p.m. that evening. I thought they were all gone so I took down the box and there was one little guy in the bottom of the box. He stayed there all night and one of the parents stayed around until the next morning when the sun came up. To me it was a real treat to see the group come back and fly around the house until the last baby came out of the box. Up, up and away. I was truly blessed to be able to witness it all. I have a new respect and love for the tree swallow.

Bluebird Gathering in Bloomington



Front Row, sitting on floor: Ivona Domnisoru, Heidi Hermes, Angie Begosh Sandy Aken, Lisa McIntire, Gael Zembal, Jill Schmidt, and Jack Hauser.

Sitting: Bob Nelson, Ginny Nemec, Clara Bleak, Pat Laybourn, Michele Mabry, Rosalie Eckhoff, Carrol Cummins, Marcie Maak, Candi Davison, and Eileen Donegan

Standing: Larry Nemec, Cristi Domnisoru, Tim Hermes, Tyler Mabry, Jim Egge, Mark Chevalier, Marsha Chevalier, Lisa Christianson, Kevin Maak, Jane Ostergaard, Ingrid Welty, Keith Davison, Marshall Johnson, and Les Fordahl.

Jack Hauser sent us information about a small group of bluebirders who gathered in Bloomington on October 7th. "Our Small Group Bluebirder of the year was Jill & David Schmidt who fledged 48 bluebirds in 10 single boxes. Our Small Group fledged over 700 Bluebirds in 2017."

12th Annual SE MN Bluebirders' Picnic

On September 16, 2017, about 20 people and one certified service dog (also a bluebirder) gathered at the Chatfield United Methodist Church for the 12th Annual Southeastern Minnesota Bluebirders' Picnic. We enjoyed a very tasty potluck lunch and shared stories of the past season on our bluebird trails. The main topic was wren predation which all agreed is an issue we need to address.

Angela Smith of the Fillmore County Farm Service Agency spoke of a state-wide program for women rural landowners, one which could help them enhance their land. (See related article by Angela Smith.)

We had drawings for door prizes provided by BBRP, Barb and Joel Mielke, Bill and Mary Bailey, Maxine Sheldon, and Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center. The following bluebirders received 2017 year bars for fledging 100 baby bluebirds or more: Mike Jeresek, Quint Lohse, Don Johnson, Terry Curtis, Vince and Laura Mangan, Carrol Johnson, and Bill and Mary Bailey.

We especially appreciated the hospitality of Rev. Deb Collum, a fellow bluebirder and pastor of the Chatfield United Methodist Church, for so graciously letting us use the church hall. We no longer have to be concerned about weather for our picnic and it is a lovely venue to meet in.



100 Patchers present:
Vince & Laura Mangan, Mary & Bill Bailey, Mike Jeresek, Terry Curtis, Carrol Johnson

Row 1: Maxine Sheldon and Service Dog Chai
Row 2: Marilyn Allen, Laura Mangan, Mary Bailey, Carol Crane, Loren Murphy, Carrol Johnson
Row 3: Winnie Johnson, Vince Mangan, Bill Bailey, Mike Jeresek, Terry Curtis, Bill Crane



**Bluebird Recovery Program
Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis**



**P.O. Box 984
Faribault, MN 55021**

"Raising our Bluebirds for Future Generations!"

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edbbnews@outlook.com

Photo by Doris Glander

**THE NEXT BLUEBIRD EXPO
WILL BE HELD IN
CANNON FALLS
ON APRIL 14, 2018.**

Upcoming Events

Jan 20th, 2018-Saturday, 9 AM

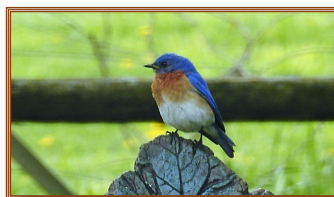
Annual Bluebird Coffee

Hy Vee's private room in back of their restaurant in Faribault, MN.

April 14, 2018-Saturday

Annual BBRP Expo

Cannon Falls



September 15, 2018

Trail Reports for the 2018 Nesting Season Due

September 15, 2018 – Saturday

13th Annual Southeastern Minnesota Bluebirders' Picnic
Chatfield

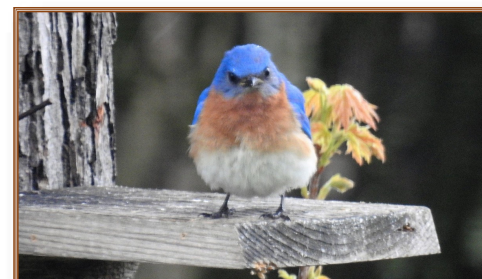
September 22, 2018 – Saturday

16th Annual South Central Bluebirders' Picnic

Riverbend Nature Center, Faribault MN



*Our Mission:
"To encourage, inspire, educate and
assist individuals and organizations to
become actively involved in the
restoration and preservation efforts to
sustain a healthy and expanding
population of bluebirds and other
native cavity nesters."*



Photos by Doris Glander

Thank you to everyone who wrote articles, provided photographs or helped with the mailing of this publication of the Bluebird News.