



"Bringing back Bluebirds for Future Generations"

# Bluebird News



Volume 28 Issue 2

SPRING 2018

**"Mother Nature vs 2018 Annual Expo" By Fern Vesledahl, Expo Committee Member**

April and Spring together means time for BBRP's Annual Expo. It signifies a new nesting season for the Bluebirds, our cherished feathered friends.

A mighty force, Mother Nature, took charge over the 2018 Expo. She was delivering a winter storm the weekend of the Expo. A winter storm warning was issued with significant amounts of snow, sleet, ice and wind that would make travel very hazardous or impossible. The Expo Committee took heed of the warning and surrendered to "The Mighty Force" and canceled the 38th Annual BBRP Expo. The safety of everyone was priority and we regret any inconvenience this may have caused.

The decision to cancel did not come easily and we're very sorry this had to be done. This was a first in the history of Bluebird Recovery Program Annual Expos. Canceling meant giving up many months of planning by organizers, presenters and vendors. Most disappointing of all, not seeing and visiting with fellow bluebirders coming from 28 Minnesota counties and from out of state who look forward to this annual event. Several attendees would have been first time Expo goers, all of whom are interested in getting involved in helping the bluebirds and learning about our BBRP organization and its mission.

A special day it would have been. There was an excellent line-up of keynote speakers with topics on "It's All About Bluebirds", "The Science of Climate Change" and "Weekly Bluebird Monitoring Made Simple, Make Year-end Reporting Even Simpler". The Break-Out Sessions for both morning and afternoon would have been a new feature initiated to cover topics suggested from previous Expo surveys. Registrants were enthusiastic about break-out session topics.

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An afternoon Youth Program was scheduled too with speakers, two of which were youth who each monitor a bluebird trail, "Youth Teaching Youth about Bluebirds". What a fun informative day for everyone to enjoy if not for "The Mighty Force, Mother Nature".

Why was the Expo not rescheduled? It simply was deemed too difficult to reschedule all aspects of the event. Perhaps some of the same speakers and topics will make the Expo program in 2019 even better!

The support of donations received during registration for the purchase of nestboxes for public lands was amazing. Please watch for further information about how to apply for these nestboxes and requirements.

Special thank you to: Speakers who graciously accepted our invitation to present. Cannon Falls School for the wonderful venue for the event. They were very accommodating to work with and supportive of the decision to cancel. Vendors for making their wares available to Expo participants. To the Adlemann's, Joe and JoAnn, builders of PVC nestboxes recommended by BBRP. They always have nestboxes available for the expo and throughout the year. Contact Joe at 612-598-1374. To those giving items for the silent auction. Expo photographer, publicist, and all who were volunteering their time to help with the event. A special thank you to Luann Alderks, Expo Coordinator, who oversaw the layout of the event and to the Expo Committee.

Mother Nature is finally delivering nice weather and warm temperatures, SPRING! The Bluebirds are back, and a new nesting season is starting. Good luck to all of you and may you have many fledglings take flight from your nestboxes this season. HAPPY BLUEBIRDING FOLKS!

**BBRP 40th ANNIVERSARY**

On this 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year for the Bluebird Recovery Program, the BBRP Board would like to share with our bluebirding friends a brief background of how this special mission for bluebirds started forty years ago!

It all began in Minneapolis! Dick and Vi Peterson lived in Brooklyn Center. During the late 1970s Dick learned that Minnesota's bluebird population was in decline. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Breeding Bird Surveys indicated that sightings of the eastern bluebird were uncommon to rare in the upper Midwest. Dick and Vi had maintained a bluebird trail near their home for years. Others sought advice. In 1978 the Petersons worked with the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis, and the Bluebird Recovery Program was initiated, or as we abbreviate it, BBRP!



BBRP began with a pioneer group of eleven volunteer observers, of which Dick was a member. Five pairs of eastern bluebirds were watched that first year, and 22 fledglings were documented. BBRP has documented members' reports every year since the 1978 initial report, and because news of these bluebirders spread by word-of-mouth and newspaper articles, membership has grown to thousands of people across the United States and Canada! The member reports totaled 13,786 bluebirds fledged in 2017!

BBRP publishes a newsletter, Bluebird News, educational materials, and now has a web site, [www.bbrp.org](http://www.bbrp.org), to keep members informed with important articles for success and safety in bluebirding. An annual Bluebird Expo in April attracts hundreds for an exciting day of speakers, breakout sessions, silent auction, coffee breaks to meet and greet, delicious lunch, and vendors to supply information and birding supplies.

We as the BBRP Board in 2018 honor those dedicated pioneers and all those who have since then given their leadership, and we congratulate all of you bluebirders who have spent time in monitoring nest boxes whether two or two hundred! We have together made GREAT progress in our mission to "encourage, inspire, educate, and assist" folks to be successful in helping our jewels of blue bring beauty and joy to everyone. We enthusiastically welcome all to join us for the next 40 years!!

***The 2018 BBRP BOARD MEMBERS***

Mary Bailey, Carrol Johnson, Brianna Frisch, Alec Irwin, Marlys & Glen Shirley, Marilyn Suter, Wally Swanson, Bruce Smisek, and Virginia Windschitl

Article by BBRP Secretary, Marlys Shirley

Credit to Connie Toops, Bluebirds Forever,  
Voyager Press, Inc. 1994

*Top Photo by Carrol Johnson, Bottom Photo by Doris Glander*



***“Weekly Bluebird Monitoring Made Simple, Making Year-end Reporting Even Simpler”  
by David Schmidt***

Weekly monitoring, yes, if we’re going to install bluebird nest boxes whether it’s 1, 2 or 20 we need to commit to checking or monitoring them every week and logging what we observe. You can log your observations in whatever manner works for you to keep track of what you see or don’t see in each nest box. Using a small notebook, a journal or even an Xcel spreadsheet on a computer.

Logging what you find each week provides you with information on what types of birds, how many eggs, and how many fledglings you discover over the summer. All the bluebird information you gather should be reported to BBRP at the end of the season. Additionally, non-bluebird information will help you decide if you need to move or remove some of your boxes. “The Ten Tips for Successful Bluebirding” found on the BBRP.org website is your guide to questions about selecting proper bluebird habitat, nest box placement, dealing with competitor birds and other important issues.

At the end of the bluebirding season, mid to late August, it’s time to review your monitoring notes. Total the number of single nest boxes, paired boxes, bluebird eggs laid, eggs hatched and chicks fledged.

Lastly, let’s look at the options for reporting our season’s bluebird production results. You can request a paper reporting form by contacting Wally Swanson, who manages the BBRP yearly reporting, at 507-380-4106. If you have access to the Internet go to the BBRP website where you can download the reporting form. Better yet, if you’re going to access the BBRP website I strongly encourage you to do your reporting right there. Simply click on “Bluebird Reporting” then “2019 Report Forms”. By using the online website form the data is automatically loaded into the BBRP reporting database which eliminates the need for someone, like Wally, to hand enter the data from the mailed in paper form.

Have a great summer of Bluebirding and don’t forget to report your results in September.

***How to have a successful bluebird trail, by Mike Jersek***

Growing up on the banks of the Mississippi River, Mike has always been an outdoorsman. Upon his retirement from teaching in 2002, Mike started bluebirding experience achieving his goal to become a member of the “100 Club” in 2006. He currently serves as county coordinator for BBRP in Fillmore, Houston, and Winona counties. Here are some main points of the talk he was planning to give at the EXPO.

- 1) Select good sites for your boxes. My goal for my 40 site trail is to produce at least one brood for each site. Last year 38 of my 40 boxes did that.
- 2) Don’t be afraid to move a box if it is not producing for you.
- 3) Monitoring your trail is the cornerstone to being a successful bluebirder. Monitor your trail at least once a week.
- 4) Use the experts. Don’t be afraid to call your county coordinator with your questions.
- 5) Read the BBRP trail guide.
- 6) Know how to deal with problems: sparrows, wrens, gnats, wasps, etc.
- 7) Record your trail results so you can correct any problems.
- 8) Send in your yearly report to BBRP.

Be a good example to fellow bluebirders

- 1) Help other bluebirders if they have problems on their trail.
- 2) Get year-end reports from others. Turn them in to BBRP. One of my goals is to have Fillmore county always fledge over a 1000 bluebirds a year. Fillmore County was 1 of 4 counties that did that in 2017.
- 3) Give some of your trail away to interested bluebirders. After the 2012 season I gave a couple of bluebirders 10 good sites from my trail. Last year one of those individuals had over 200 bluebirds fledge out of his trail he developed.



## Global Warming fact sheet from Audubon



Audubon



### FACT SHEETS

## Global Warming and Birds

Global warming is the greatest threat to birds and other wildlife in human history. The rate of global warming is already impacting birds, their prey, and their habitat. Those impacts will become more severe over the coming decades, leading to the loss of one-quarter to one-third of all species on earth, including many bird species.

Although some amount of change is inevitable, we can still take steps to prevent the most dangerous impacts of global warming and begin to stabilize the climate again. In the meantime, conservation, especially of larger areas with migratory corridors and buffer zones; better control of invasive species; and adaptive management are critical to stem the loss of bird and wildlife species. This loss will impact agriculture, forestry, public health, recreation, and hunting. The financial impact will be many billions of dollars annually.

### WHY DOES GLOBAL WARMING MATTER FOR BIRDS?

Global warming impacts birds and wildlife in many ways. Birds and other wildlife will face habitat loss due to sea level rise, more frequent and severe wildfires, flooding and droughts, invasive species, changes in vegetation and precipitation, and loss of snow and ice, among others. Birds, like most species, are highly adapted to particular vegetation and habitat types. To compensate for the warmer temperatures, the ranges of these habitats may move closer to the poles or higher elevations. Habitat types that cannot colonize new areas may rapidly decline or cease to exist. New pests, invasive species, and diseases will create additional risks. The timing of birds' migration, reproduction, breeding, nesting, and hatching are all highly adapted to match specific local conditions, such as the availability of suitable habitat and adequate food sources. Since climate change will affect different species differently, bird behavior may no longer be in sync with their food sources and other habitat needs. For example, robins in the Rocky Mountains arrive an average of two weeks earlier in spring than they did a few decades ago, but the worms and other food that they eat are not yet available for their newly hatched offspring.

Photos top, left to right: the Snowy Plover's beach habitat is at risk from rising sea levels; the Rufous Hummingbird's range is shifting north; Kittlitz's Murrelet is on Audubon's Top Ten Most Endangered Birds List and is one of the species scientists think may be losing ground because of its dependence on feeding grounds where glaciers meet saltwater.

### Help Protect Birds from Global Warming

Strong federal legislation is needed to combat global warming pollution. It's *your voice* that will make the difference. Ask your lawmakers to support:

- Strong federal cap-and-trade legislation that would decrease emissions by 80% by 2050.
- A federal renewable energy standard.
- Higher energy efficiency standards
- Higher transportation and vehicle efficiency

### Individual Actions Add Up!

Federal leadership is important in the effort to curb global warming pollution, but we can all make choices that will help reduce our carbon output.

- Drive less by taking public transportation, walking, bicycling, or carpooling. Drive a more energy-efficient vehicle.
- Switch from conventional incandescent light bulbs to energy-efficient compact fluorescents. The next time you buy a major or minor appliance, look for the Energy Star label to be sure you're getting a high efficiency model.
- Reduce, reuse, recycle. Buy local produce and other goods.
- Reduce emissions and help the birds; keep your lawn mower tuned, use native plants, reduce watering, skip the pesticides.



**Global Warming fact sheet from Audubon (Continued)****IS GLOBAL WARMING ALREADY AFFECTING BIRDS?**

Scientists are already seeing alarming impacts of global warming on birds. More than 80% of plant and animal species studied have shown changes in the timing of migration or reproduction, shifts in habitat or migratory routes, or other changes associated with climate change. Some of the observed impacts on birds include:

- Several North American warbler species have shifted northward more than 65 miles. The Golden-winged Warbler's range has moved nearly 100 miles north just in the past two decades.
- Between 1971 and 1995, many British bird species began laying their eggs an average of nine days earlier each year. A dozen species in Great Britain have shifted their ranges an average of 12 miles northward in the past 20 years.
- On Michigan's Upper Peninsula, 15 species—including the Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Black-throated Blue Warbler—are arriving up to 21 days earlier than in the 1960s.
- Adelie Penguins are taking longer routes to find food in the ocean as icebergs break off the Ross Ice Shelf.

**WILL SOME SPECIES OR HABITAT TYPES BE MORE VULNERABLE THAN OTHERS?**

Birds that already live at high altitudes or latitudes may not be able to move with the changing climate. Endangered species with limited habitat or small gene pools may also not be able to adapt quickly enough to avoid extinction. Coastal and polar species will be vulnerable as coastlines advance inland and ice melts. Sea level rise and erosion will jeopardize the threatened Western Snowy Plover and other shorebirds. More frequent and severe droughts in the central U.S. are likely to cause prairie pothole wetlands to dry up, jeopardizing millions of waterfowl during breeding season. The projected loss of neotropical migrant songbirds is very high: 53% in the Great Lakes region, 45% loss in the Mid-Atlantic, 44% loss in the northern Great Plains, and 32% fewer in the Pacific Northwest.

**WHY CAN'T BIRDS ADAPT TO GLOBAL WARMING?**

In the past, species and ecosystems were able to respond to global temperature shifts in part because average global temperatures changed slowly. As they did, habitat patterns

changed gradually and wildlife could either follow their preferred habitat to new locations or adapt to new conditions. Now, though, the change is simply too fast for many species to adapt. The rate of temperature increase over the next century will be ten times faster than the rate of increase since the last Ice Age.

In addition, species that could otherwise move or adapt are now limited by urban and industrial development, large-scale agriculture, and adjacent habitat fragmentation and destruction. For instance, the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker in the southeastern U.S. depends on mature pine forest, a habitat type that cannot spread to new areas quickly or at all.

**WHY IS LOSS OF BIRD SPECIES IMPORTANT FOR PEOPLE?**

Birds have great economic and personal value to people. One-third of all human food comes from plants that are pollinated by birds, butterflies, and other wild pollinators. Birds also disperse seeds and help to control rodents, insects, and other pests that would otherwise devastate crops, forests, and ecosystems. In the western U.S., Savannah Sparrows, Sage Thrashers, egrets, and other birds help control grasshopper populations that would otherwise destroy many crops. In the eastern U.S., nesting wood warblers consume 84% of the eastern spruce budworm that would otherwise decimate forests.

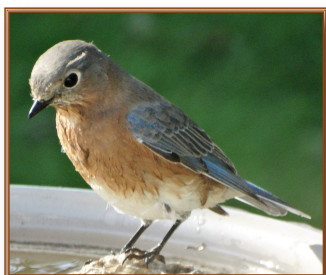
Birds are loved for their aesthetic value, playing an essential role in the U.S. economy and improving the quality of life for many Americans. More than 80 million Americans observe, fish, hunt, and otherwise enjoy birds and other wildlife. Together, they support more than 2.6 million jobs in the U.S. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, America's 46 million birders spend \$32 billion annually, generating \$85 billion in overall economic output and \$13 billion in state and federal income taxes.

Birds are also important state symbols. Yet many states in the U.S. risk losing their state birds as the birds become extirpated or as their ranges shift because of climate change. These species include the Brown Thrasher in Georgia, the American Goldfinch in Iowa and Washington, the Baltimore Oriole in Maryland, the Black-capped Chickadee in Massachusetts, the Purple Finch in New Hampshire, and the California Quail in California.

Join Audubon's Action Network [www.audubonaction.org](http://www.audubonaction.org)



Photos by Doris Glander



## ***Tidbits***

### **Editor's Notes**

The 2 pages on "Global Warming and Birds" were meant to be a handout in conjunction with the Expo speaker on climate change, produced by our parent organization, the National Audubon Society.

#### ***Thank You to the following for donations for nestboxes on public lands:***

Paul Anderson, Rochester; Alan Hale, Rochester; Diane Hammes, Jordan; Jim Humeniuk, Bemidji; Joy Knopp, St. Paul; Vincent Mangan, Spring Valley; Mike O'Brien, Burnsville; Janet Oistad, Farmington; Eugene Ollila, Minneapolis; Jerry Olson, Rochester; Burt Pekerman, Shakopee; Wally Swanson, Waterville, Jim Taylor, Inver Grove Heights; Jon and Glenda Tollefson, Mantorville.

The board is in the process of developing guidelines and an application form for dispersing Public Land Nestboxes (PLN). Do you know someone who has shown an interest in bluebirds but does not own property with the proper habitat for bluebird nesting? My suggestion is to have them shadow you as you monitor a trail this bluebird season to see what it takes to have a successful bluebird trail. Then they can apply for PLN to receive nest boxes and with help from their county coordinator to set up a trail in a nearby park, school grounds, community cemetery or other public land next year.

Because of the Expo cancellation, the plaque for the Bluebirder of the Year for the 2017 season was mailed to the winner, Peggy Boike of Lindstrom, who had an average of 6.7 last year. Congratulations!

We are still trying to fill in gaps in our Dick Peterson Award and Bluebirder of the Year lists. If you have old newsletters, maybe you can find the answers for us. On the Dick Peterson Awards we are not sure of the dates when it was awarded to Jan and Dave Ahlgren, Marlys and Dick Hjort, Jackie and Peter Meyer, and Keith Radel. We also need to know who was the Bluebirder of the Year for 2004, 2005, and 2006. Contact our secretary, Marlys Shirley, at [gshirley@frontiernet.net](mailto:gshirley@frontiernet.net) if you have the answer to any of these questions.

**Website for mealworm feeder plans:** <https://feltmagnet.com/crafts/bluebird-feeder>

**Good information on feeding mealworms:** <http://www.sialis.org/feeder.htm>

**Wanted:** If you know a group that would be interested in a talk about bluebirds contact the BBRP board. We can provide speakers to talk to groups to about how people can help bluebirds.

### **Have you had a change of address?**

If you have moved, changed from a box number to a street address, or have your mail forwarded for several months, please let us know. If you are a snowbird let us know the dates when you leave and return. Under bulk mailing restrictions, the Postal Service does not forward newsletters, but returns them to BBRP with postage due. If the return notice has a new address, BBRP then sends your newsletter to the correct address with the additional required postage.

Please contact Membership Chair, Brianna Frisch, 507-459-4829 or email us at [membership@bbrpmn.org](mailto:membership@bbrpmn.org) if this applies to you. Your help in keeping our costs down is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

### **New Members**

Jeanne Zlonis (St Paul, MN) • James Edlund (Cannon Falls, MN) • Eileen Stombaugh (Elk River, MN)  
John Jarvis (Faribault, MN) • Kathy Sullivan & Mark Frederickson (Rochester, MN) • Evelyn McAdams (Mantorville, MN)



## Need help or have suggestions? Call your County Coordinator!

If you are an active bluebirder, and would like to donate some of your time to help others help the bluebirds, the BBRP is looking for more county coordinators. If interested, contact Carrol Johnson, State Coordinator, at 507-664-9433 or mnbluebirder@hotmail.com for more information.

"Ringing back Bluebirds for Future Generations!"

<b>AITKIN</b> Steve Gilbertson Aitkin 218-927-1953	<b>CROW WING</b> Mary Kalinowski Baxter 218-829-5297	Bob Hursh Edina 952-334-5084  Pete Meyer Mound 952-472-7449	<b>LAKE</b> Beth Urban Ely 218-365-5047	<b>PENNINGTON</b> Dave & Diane Peterson Thief River Falls 218-681-7614	<b>SWIFT</b> Bill Hoberg Benson 320-843-3988
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<b>CASS</b> Vacant	<b>HENNEPIN</b> John Hauser Bloomington 952-831-8132	<b>KANDIYOHI</b> Ronald A. Erpelding Willmar 320-235-0788	<b>OLMSTED</b> Mary Bailey Chatfield 507-867-9118	<b>ST. LOUIS</b> (N. ST. LOUIS) Beth Urban Ely 218-365-5047	<b>WRIGHT</b> Dorene Scriven Minneapolis 612-922-4586
<b>CHISAGO</b> Robert Walz North Branch 651-307-4679				<b>STEARNS</b> Vacant	

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*"Raising our Bluebirds for Future Generations!"*

Volume 28 Issue 2    Spring 2018

Non Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage Paid  
**Permit No. 93**  
Faribault, MN

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Bluebird News is published quarterly by the  
Bluebird Recovery Program, a committee of:  
Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis,  
P.O. Box 984  
Faribault, MN 55021  
Membership qualifies as a tax-deductible donation.  
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[edbbnews@outlook.com](mailto:edbbnews@outlook.com)

Photo by Doris Glander

***Upcoming Events***

**June 16th, 2018 - Saturday**

**BBRP Ed. Booth**

Peterson Gammel Dag Fest

**September 8, 2018 - Saturday**

**BBRP Ed. Booth Taste of the Trail**

Peterson MN

**September 15, 2018**

**Trail Reports for the 2018 Nesting Season Due**

**September 15, 2018 – Saturday**

**13th Annual Southeastern Minnesota Bluebirders' Picnic**

Chatfield

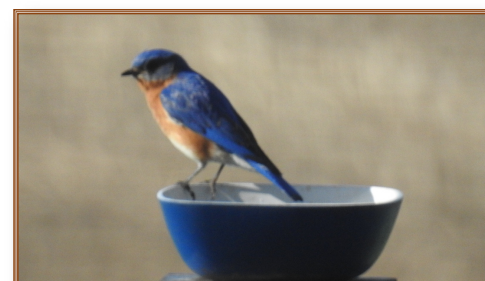
**September 22, 2018 – Saturday**

**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.*