



"Bringing back Bluebirds for Future Generations!"

Bluebird News



Volume 33 Issue 1

Winter 2023

2023 Bluebird Expo

April 22, Little Falls High School

The BBRP Board has been working hard to put together this year's in-person Expo. It will be on Saturday, April 22, at Little Falls High School, 1001 5th Ave SE. The high school entrance is on the west side of the Little Falls Community School complex off of 9th St. SE. There is plenty of parking, a beautiful cafeteria space, and a large auditorium, all in close proximity.

Things don't always go smoothly. Just when we thought we had the speaker lineup all set we got a message from Dr. Brian Hiller that Bemidji State University is sending him to Australia on the date of the Expo, but he had another person who does bird banding and has worked with bluebirds to recommend, Mike North

We are excited about the guest speakers we have lined up, as well as our own experts on everything you want to learn about bluebirds. The Expo will have presentations for both beginning and experienced bluebirders and nature lovers. Along with displays and experts to answer questions there will be a silent auction, a catered lunch, coffee breaks, and much more.

The catered lunch will include baked chicken or vegetarian lasagna, mashed potatoes, cole slaw, corn, roll, water and coffee.

PAGE 1 & 2
2023 Bluebird Expo

Page 3
Silent Auction
Upcoming Bluebird Classes

Page 4
A little about Ardy

Page 5
Tidbits

Page 6
2022 Bluebirds by County

Page 7
County Coordinators
BBRP Board Members

Page 8
Upcoming Events

A block of rooms at \$125 per night are available at the Country Inn & Suites in Little Falls, 320-632-1000, just mention 2023 Bluebird Expo conference. This reduced rate is available until March 31.

Speaker Profiles

Natasha Bartolotta

Natasha has been the Communications and Outreach Coordinator for the National Loon Center, Crosslake MN since November, 2021. Natasha migrated all the way from the



Northeast to the Midwest to join the National Loon Center staff.

Bartolotta grew up in New York and Connecticut, and has moved about recently while working a handful of seasonal and temporary research-based jobs. Prior to joining the NLC she worked for Audubon Louisiana as a Coastal Bird Technician to promote community stewardship of beach-nesting birds. Natasha has also worked as a Conservation Educator for the Lehigh Valley Zoo in Pennsylvania and as a research assistant for projects on wild chimpanzees and orangutan behavioral ecology in Uganda and Sumatra, respectively. She had been considering becoming a primatologist but realized she wanted to work on conservation issues closer to home.

In the The Pineandlakes Echo Journal (Brainerd) she described the situation that led to her hiring at the loon center as "fate."

"In July, I came to visit a friend of mine in Brainerd - also from Connecticut," Bartolotta said. "We went kayaking and I saw some loons on the lake, and it reminded me of the job boards I had been scouring, where there was a job with the National Loon Center. I had to go back and look up where in the world Crosslake was, but seeing it was only 25 or 30 minutes away (from Brainerd) was the push I needed to apply."

2023 Bluebird Expo, cont.

John Latimer

Minnesota Phenology Network Profile:



As a mail carrier in rural Grand Rapids, Minn., for 35 years, John Latimer put his own stamp on a career that delivered more than letters. Indeed, while driving the hundred-mile round-trip daily route,

he passed the time by observing and recording seasonal changes in nature, learning everything he could about the area's weather, plants and animals, and becoming the go-to guy who could answer customers' questions about what they were seeing in the environment.

The expertise he developed along the way turned him into one of Minnesota's leading phenologists and host of a popular weekly radio show on KAXE, that attracts nature lovers and regular phenology contributors from around the state.

His path was a perfect fit for a nature-loving kid who spent his childhood playing in the woods and the ponds outside Grand Rapids. "I was always observing, but not with the careful eye I have now," he says. His forester dad had taught him about trees, and his farm-girl mom knew a lot of the wildflowers, but Latimer found his own way by following his curiosity—and by meeting an elderly customer on his mail route.

"One day, must have been in '82 or '83, she mentioned she'd just seen her first robin of the spring, and it turned out we shared an interest," Latimer says. "From then on, one day a week we'd have coffee and talk, and she got me going."

She bought me my first Stokes field guides."

A year or so later, Latimer found an unexpected outlet for his passion. "One morning a week I volunteered at the local public radio station. I'd tear the feed off the wire, make coffee, play music, talk," he says, rattling off his duties as casually as he might recite a roster of local bird species. "And I started talking about what I saw on the mail route. It was immediately popular. People were tuning in to find out what was going on in nature. I couldn't stop; I found it delightful."

Mike North

Mike North is a 25-year employee of the Minnesota DNR, where he has been involved in environmental review, wetlands protection, and wildlife habitat planning, mostly out of the Brainerd office. Prior to that he was a 10-year employee of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Alaska, in research, environmental review and endangered species pre-listing work. He has a Bachelor's degree from Iowa State University and a Master's degree from North Dakota State. He is a Master bird-bander and is partnering in research projects with Bemidji State University, the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, Central Lakes College, the Purple Martin Working Group, the University of Manitoba, and Deep Portage Conservation Reserve. He has been banding birds since 1988 and has banded over 20,000 individuals of some 120 different species. His prize bird is an 11-1/2 year old black-capped chickadee, which holds the record for longest-lived chickadee according to the U.S.'s Bird Banding Lab. His current obnoxious obsession is woodpeckers.



Collage from a past
Bluebird
Expo

Silent Auction Items

Dear BBRP Members,

As you know, our Expo is coming up soon and I would like you all to start thinking about your Silent Auction Items!!! We had a wonderful array of Bluebird and Bluebird related items last year and are all looking forward to an even better one for 2023!!

For organizational ease, I would appreciate it if you could contact me as soon as possible with your item(s) so I can get a list of as many as possible before the Expo. Even if you will be making other arrangements for the items to get to the site, I would sincerely appreciate a call or email, so your item gets listed.

If you wish to send your items directly to me, that's fine and if you don't want to send them, it would be great if I knew when your items will be arriving so I can make the appropriate space for them on the auction tables—some items are larger and need more space than others.

My contact information is:

Joni Welda, Silent Auction Chair

4499 Pfeffer Valley Rd, La Crescent, MN 55947. • Ladyjockey@hotmail.com • 608-797-5101

See you at the Expo!!!!

Upcoming Bluebird Classes

INSTRUCTOR: David Schmidt

Minnesota Bluebird Recovery Program & Minnesota Master Naturalist

COME JOIN ONE OF OUR MONITORING CLASSES:

- If you just want to learn about bluebirds, this class is for you, no commitment beyond learning.
- We'll learn how to check nest boxes, determine who is using the box by nest type.
- Cover the things we as volunteers need to do to keep bluebirds safe during the nesting period.
- We'll talk about competitor bird species and predators – other birds, mammals, and insects.
- How we record what we find each week and reporting it to BBRP at season end.

From April to August bluebirds and their competitors will be nesting in these boxes. To keep bluebirds safe and record their nesting progress, the boxes need to be monitored on a weekly basis.

BECOME A LAKE MARIA or AFTON STATE PARK BLUEBIRD VOLUNTEER

Well-established State Park bluebird trails are looking for new volunteers to monitor and maintain them. Your participation can be as simple as visiting the trail once a month for an hour.

BLUEBIRDING 101 – TRAIL MONITORING IN LAKE MARIA and AFTON STATE PARK

WHEN: Saturday, March 25 @Afton SP and Saturday, April 1 @ Lake Maria SP, both 9:30 - 11am

WHERE: Lake Maria State Park – 11411 Clementa Ave NW, Monticello, MN 55362 or

Afton State Park – 6959 Peller Ave S, Hastings, MN 55033

RSVP: send an email to bluebirdsafe@gmail.com – your name & contact information is all we need.

QUESTIONS: email questions to bluebirdsafe@gmail.com

INSTRUCTOR: David Schmidt- - Minnesota Bluebird Recovery Program & Minnesota Master Naturalist

A little about Ardy, by Loren "Murph" Murphy

[Editor's note: Loren "Murph" Murphy is a longtime bluebirder, BBRP member and Expo presenter from Faribault. As newsletter editor I appreciate all Ardy and her crew do to get the newsletter ready for the mail.]

Along with teaching CPR all these years, and hearing and vision checks for the Vo-tech, schools and groups, Ardy would take the time to be nurse to my sick baby Bluebirds! She would help with anything I needed on my trail, from helping with the 1st ten point handout, to taking pictures at expos and set-ups & take downs. She would organize and find donations for the Bluebird Picnics - Every Year! Ardy works on the labeling and mailing of our newsletters, also mailing out the 100+ Bars & Patches for the Bluebird Club. From big jobs down to the small jobs - She is an absolute Dear - Just ask anyone who knows her.
P.S. Ardy also keeps house, raised two girls and puts up with me!



Nursing and Raising Baby Birds

In 2010 it rained 7 days straight, I had a lot of 10 day old bluebirds that the mom & dad fed angle worms (easy picking) to hungry chicks. Good food but bad for fecal sacks - they would break and smear the nest and other chicks - what a mess. I found many dead. Some were alive, cold and covered in poop. I gave 57 baby bluebirds like that to Ardy. She cleaned, dried, fed and kept them alive - It was a job! With my records, we did put them into other nests and they all fledged.



Picnic

The Nature Center was a good place, at no cost to us, to have the End of Year Picnic. We had to do it in the late afternoon & evenings. Ardy would go around and ask for donations from local grocery stores, banks and others. She was always there for set-up and clean-up afterwards. Our last picnic in 2021 did not cost too much to do, it is very expensive to rent the same location now. We had no picnic in 2022 due to expenses.

My Records

Ardy has kept my trail records from day one. I do not add other people's birds to my trail totals. Ardy will look up the addresses and report in their name. Some people think I have added these other totals onto mine, but Ardy has taken and kept precise records for all on the trails. We also have all of the Bluebird Newsletters and Directories from 1995 - current date.



2016 Faribault, Unsung Hero

Photos by Doris Glander



Tidbits

On the evening of July 13, 2023, there will be a Prairie Walk at the Pin Oak Prairie Scientific and Natural Area in Jordan Township near Chatfield, MN. For more information, call Tim Gossman at (507) 867-3129 or Aaren Mathison at (507) 765-3878 x 109.

The 2023 Fillmore County Forestry Field Day will be held July 26, 2023, at the home of Bill & Mary Bailey in rural Chatfield. Titled "Wildlife, Woodlands, Wetlands," it will feature the creation of a wildlife sanctuary which includes the establishment of a bluebird trail, the creation of wetlands, trails, and biodiversity. For more information, call Mary Bailey at (507) 867-9118 or Aaren Mathison at the Fillmore County Soil and Water Conservation District Office at (507) 765-3878 extension 109.

Jack Hauser, a BBRP Hennepin County Coordinator, was named the winner of the "Volunteer of the Year" Award for 2022 at the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union's 2022 Paper Session on December 3rd. Congratulations to Jack!

The board is seeking an enthusiastic 'Bluebirder' to join the team as a "Community Outreach manager". Annually BBRP presents educational bluebird information sessions at community events and celebrations, libraries, nature centers and State Parks – wherever there is an opportunity to spread the word about Bluebirding. The person filling this position will work with other board members, county coordinators and community planners to find the best places and events for BBRP to participant in. Send an inquiry email to info@bbrp.org to express your interest and we will share all the key information with you.



Photographs were taken in Rice County on 1/28/23 by Tim Conroy of TBC Wildlife Photography.



Bluebird Recovery Program of MN

Bluebird Recovery Program Membership Enrollment in the Bluebird 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 and quarterly Newsletter. There are also annual 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

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ County _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Please indicate how you'd like to receive the BBRP quarterly Newsletter ___ via email or ___ via USPS

If giving a membership as a gift please enter your name below so the recipient can be aware of your generosity:

Please mail form and payment to:
BBRP c/o Brianna Frisch, 11018 Taylor Hill Road Minnieska, MN 55910

2022 Bluebirds by County

County	Reports	Eggs	Hatched	Fledged
Anoka	7	237	218	208
Becker	1	6	5	5
Beltrami	1	10	10	10
Benton	2	92	81	81
Blue Earth	1	10	10	9
Carlton	1	19	11	10
Carver	3	224	186	183
Chippewa	1	0	0	0
Chisago	3	184	156	130
Clearwater	1	12	12	12
Crow Wing	3	29	29	29
Dakota	31	1316	1081	1062
Dodge	1	45	42	42
Douglas	3	22	17	17
Fillmore	44	791	705	676
Goodhue	5	487	463	422
Hennepin	29	1194	1083	1017
Houston	8	401	317	284
Hubbard	1	146	144	138
Isanti	1	20	15	15
Itasca	1	6	0	0
Kanabec	2	179	160	160
Kandiyohi	1	23	21	21
LeSueur	1	13	10	10
Lyon	1	10	8	6
Mille Lacs	1	5	4	4
Morrison	4	169	151	151
Mower	2	342	306	295
Olmsted	17	740	590	557
Pennington	1	0	0	0
Pine	6	141	138	124
Ramsey	10	125	113	111
Rice	59	2725	2371	2297
Scott	5	169	146	143
Sherburne	4	105	92	92
St Louis	3	12	7	7
Stearns	5	191	157	146
Steele	3	32	32	32
Wabasha	1	0	0	0
Wadena	1	5	5	5
Washington	8	198	179	174
Winona	2	221	218	211
Wright	8	250	229	214
43 Counties	293	10897	9513	9110

2022 – 9,110

Previous Totals

2021 – 7,269

2020 – 13,932

2019 – 10,113

2018 – 11,969

2017 – 14,061

2016 – 16,102

2015 – 17,057

2014 – 12,412

2013 - 12,396

2012 – 23,138

2011 – 16,187

2010 – 21,634





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.

<p>AITKIN Steve Gilbertson Aitkin 218-927-1953</p>	<p>DAKOTA David Schmidt Inver Grove Heights 651-457-9195 schmidt_dw@yahoo.com</p>	<p>Pete Meyer Mound 952-472-7449 pjdmeyer@gmail.com</p>	<p>LYON Paul Rasmussen Russell 507-823-4731</p>	<p>RICE Carrol Johnson 507-664-9433 mnbluebirder@hotmail.com</p>	<p>WADENA Paul Sailer Wadena 218-631-4401 lodenbks@gmail.com</p>
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<p>CROW WING Mary Kalinowski Baxter 218-829-5297 marydee@brainerd.net</p>	<p>Bob Hursh Edina 952-334-5084 bobhursh@hotmail.com</p>	<p>LAKE Beth Urban Ely 218-365-5047</p>	<p>RAMSEY George Brown White Bear Lk 651-245-2435 g.r-b.jr@comcast.net</p>	<p>WABASHA Carol & Dale Nibbe Lake City 651-345-2410 ccnlc@hotmail.com</p>	<p>WRIGHT Mary A Swenson Monticello 763-516-1074 maranswen@aol.com</p>
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Photo by Doris Glander

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Editor BB News: Virginia Windschitl,
edbbnews@outlook.com

Photo by Doris Glander

Upcoming Events

March 4, 2023 - April 8, 2023

Nebraska Crane Season

Audubon Rowe Sanctuary Gibbon, NE

April 22, 2023 - BBRP Expo - Little Falls

April 22, 2023 @ 5:00 pm - 7:30 pm

**Dinner on the Bluff: "A Farm, a Forest, a Little Blue Bird,
and the Future"**

Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center, Lanesboro, MN

May 18, 2023 - May 20, 2023

26th Annual Detroit Lakes Festival of Birds

May 19-21, 2023

Gathering Partners Conference

At Bell Museum and the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum

<https://gatheringpartners.umn.edu>

*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."*



Photo by Doris Glander

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