



"Bringing back Bluebirds for Future Generations!"

Bluebird News



An Affiliate of NABS

Volume 34 Issue 1

Winter 2024

2024 Bluebird EXPO

Our annual EXPO is coming soon! We hope for a great turnout to hear our terrific guest speakers, check out some new exhibitors' tables, silent auction items and gather with fellow bluebirders. Online registration opened February 1st on our website.

The EXPO will be held on Saturday April 20th in Redwood Falls, MN from 9am-4pm. The venue is the Redwood Area Community Center, 901 E. Cook St., Redwood Falls. If you'd like to make a weekend of it, you can book a discounted rate hotel room at the Redwood Lodge by calling 507-644-5700 and ask for the Bluebird Rate. Or, if you're feeling like testing your luck, you could stay at the Jackpot Junction Casino and Hotel which is just a few minutes from Redwood Falls. Please note that we were not able to get a discounted rate at this hotel. We look forward to seeing you at the EXPO!

To register go to <https://bbrp.org/2024-expo-registration/> OR if you prefer, use the Registration Form found on Page 7 or print one out from the website and mail it in.

Along with our Introduction to Bluebirding presentation we have the following speakers:

Stoney Creek Farms - Regenerative Agriculture

Stoney Creek Farms, owned by Grant and Dawn Breitkreutz, is a 3rd generation commercial red angus farm along the bluff of the Minnesota River near Redwood Falls. The family grazes cows on 465 acres of permanent pasture. They also have some chickens and pigs raised on pasture as much as possible. They manage over 1500 acres of land they own or lease. This includes fields of no-till 3-crop rotation of corn, soybeans, and wheat, along with alfalfa. Cover crops are incorporated where ever possible.

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Grant and Dawn Breitkreutz, owners of Stoney Creek Farms.

They graze all their fenced tillable land. Most of the grazing in the fall and winter is crop residue, but they also inter-seed cover crops into small grains for the cattle to graze after harvest.

By adopting regenerative agriculture practices, farmers can increase profitability by lowering input costs for fertilizer and pesticides, regenerate the soil on their farms, build in resilience to extreme weather, improve water quality, and increase biodiversity.

Many birds, insects, and other wildlife have come back to the lands they manage since they've been using regenerative ag practices.

Starry Skies North - Damaging Effects of Light Pollution & What We Can Do About It

Starry Skies North is the regional chapter of the International Dark Sky Association (IDA). Founded on the shores of Lake Superior, Starry Skies North now serves the entire Minnesota night sky and surrounding regions. Many events, initiatives and partnership are still underway in Duluth, Cook County, and more.

They promote awareness of light pollution and appreciation of the night sky and give guidance in implementing star-friendly outdoor lighting ordinances. Responsible outdoor lighting meets the needs of people to see at night, conserves energy, avoids harmful effects on wildlife, and protects our night sky.

2024 Bluebird EXPO Continued...

Henderson Feathers

Ruby-throated hummingbirds are a common sight at a dedicated Hummingbird Garden in downtown Henderson managed by volunteers in the non-profit group Henderson Feathers. The group's members tend the garden at 209 North Fourth Street, Henderson. Brenda Kotasek will share the history of this garden, hummingbird behavior, and how you can attract them to your yard. Kotasek is one of the organizers of the Hummingbird Hurrah, an annual event in Henderson the third weekend in August.

More than two decades ago, students and staff of the Minnesota

New Country School (a charter school in Henderson), received a grant from the Minnesota DNR for the planting of native grasses and pollinating plants on a levee that serves as a background for the garden area. Receiving the grant was the impetus for starting the garden.

Plans are moving forward for a National Ruby Throated Hummingbird Center in the western Sibley County community. There is a newly formed Hummingbird Trail Association and the soon-to-be-built 8-mile trail along the Scenic Byway (Sibley County Road 6) north of Henderson. The group were



The Henderson Hummingbird Hurrah takes place the third weekend in August.

successful in their application for a \$6,000 planning grant through the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation's Small Town grant process.

Expo Silent Auction

Cynthia Sabinske, the Lyon County coordinator, is handling our Expo silent auction this year. **Member donations are appreciated.** Also, cash donations are welcomed to purchase items for the silent auction. Contact Cynthia at cynthia.sabinske@gmail.com if you have questions or donations. There is a place on the registration form to list auction contributions you plan to bring to the expo as well.



Hummingbird Garden in downtown Henderson, MN. This is managed by volunteers of the non-profit group Henderson Feathers.

Tidbits

Did you know? Bluebirds can spot an insect on the ground from 60 feet away!

From National Geographic Kids website



Photo by Doris Glander

MONITOR NEEDED:

Marlys Shirley, a Dakota County coordinator, is looking for 1 or 2 more people to join a group that is monitoring a trail in southern Dakota County. It is a group effort sharing information on GoogleDocs and would involve checking a trail several times during the season and recording your findings online.

This is a good way to learn about monitoring Bluebird trails if you don't already have one.

Contact Marlys at gshirley@frontiernet.net or 952-469-3510.



In Memoriam: Jack Griffin

by Mary Bailey

Southeast MN mourns the loss of Jack Griffin, a long time supporter of bluebirds in our area. He passed on December 8, 2023, after a long illness.

Well known and beloved in the community, I have known Jack since purchasing the land we now call home in 1992. I talked to Jack, a friend and neighboring construction company owner about putting bluebird nest boxes on his county road land and on his company property. He knew about my fondness for bluebirds, and his response was, "Anything that makes you happy!" I told him the same positive facts as I had told the other landowners, and he repeated, "Anything that makes you happy!" Because some of the boxes were going on the land where his construction business shop was, he then said, "Now, wait a minute. Those bluebirds aren't going to poop

on my equipment are they?"

I assured him with another fact. I said, "Oh, no, Jack! Bluebirds have been scientifically observed taking little rolls of paper towels and little spray bottles of Windex and actually cleaning windshields." (Sometimes I fib a little.) To that bit of fiction, I received a quick, "Well, okay then." Jack was on board as a bluebird landlord.*

Mother Nature consistently rewarded Jack's generosity by granting frequent second nestings in his boxes. His son, Geoff Griffin, actually a Lifetime member of BBRP, never gets quite as many bluebirds in his boxes as Jack.

For his generosity, his high regard in the community, his strong work ethic, and his pleasant nature, Jack will be greatly missed but long remembered. Because of his kindness to bluebirds, the natural world will continue to benefit for



Jack Griffin, a long time supporter of bluebirds in our area, who will be missed.

years to come.

*Parts were excerpted from a previous BB Newsletter article, "Love Those Landowners."

In Memoriam: Carolyn Law

It is with great sadness we are reporting the loss of Carolyn Law, age 71. She was a Franciscan Sister for 43 years. She recently became very involved in bluebirding in Morrison County. In 2022 she attended a bluebird trail monitoring recruiting class at the Scandia



Valley town hall to learn about bluebirding. Subsequently she signed on to help monitor a large trail near lake Alexander in Scandia Valley.

This was just the beginning of her enthusiasm for bluebirding, she connected with Mike Fulford BBRP's county coordinator for Morrison County. With his help she established a trail on the campus of St. Francis Convent, additionally she helped Mike revive and monitor another trail in the Rice area.

When BBRP held the 2023 Bluebird Expo conference in Little Falls Carolyn was there ready to help. She will be long remembered in the Little Falls area for all she gave to the little bluebirds of the north.

We are saddened by the passing of long-time board member Carrol Johnson.

If anyone has memories about Carrol to share for the Spring newsletter email them to edbbnews@outlook.com or mail to:

Virginia Windschitl,
5294 235th St. W,
Farmington, MN 55024



What Do We Do with Trail Reports?

Each fall we receive many comments and questions with the annual Trail Report submissions. We do our best to answer the questions, sending helpful information to those individuals asking a specific questions. Some questions merit more lengthy explanations, one such question was submitted this year asking about the Trail Reporting, how is the data used and who do we share it with? Here is our response to that inquirer.

Annual Trail Report Data has been gathered at year's end from BBRP members and non-members for over 30 years. All the raw data is compiled by county, specifically noting the number of reports submitted, nesting sites, bluebird eggs laid, eggs hatched, and chicks fledged. In the early years BBRP also asked people to report on chickadees, tree swallows and house wrens. Sometime in the 1980's reporting reverted again to only collecting bluebird data. Beginning in 2023 we have again

begun gathering other cavity nesting bird data.

The county numbers along with total year-to-year comparative data are displayed on the BBRP website for all to see. Comparative data covering a ten-to-twenty-year time period is also available. Each new year's data is graphed in several ways for those who enjoy a visual view. In an effort to increase the accuracy of our comparative data we are now comparing year-to-year data on an individual basis. Data from individuals who do not report to us every year is included in the totals, but not in the year-to-year comparisons. It is still reported in the same manner as indicated above, however with this method we believe we get a truer representation from year to year.

In the beginning a paper copy of the data called a 'directory' was created which listed all the report data and the individual reporting, sorted by name and county. About ten years ago the decision was

made to discontinue the directory, not publish individual names, and display the data on our website as can be seen today.

Several years ago, BBRP began recognizing members who fledged more than one hundred chicks each year, which continues today. See who made the 100 Club this past year below.

Finally, the same data we display on our website is shared with the North American Bluebird Society (NABS) and Cornell Labs. Unfortunately, since Cornell created their 'NestWatch' application they prefer to have the individual nest locations by longitude and latitude rather than by city or county. As we are unable to do that without converting all the trail locations to that format our data has become anecdotal. We know that some individuals do collect and submit their data using 'NetWatch' which is helpful to Cornell.

100 Club – 2023 Season

BBRP likes to recognize members who fledge more than one hundred chicks in a given year. Here are the members who made the "100 Club" for 2023.

Keith Radel – Rice
Ann Wick – Dane (WI)
Ron Guck – Dakota
Wally Siewert / FSP Association – Goodhue
Loren Murphy – Rice
Mike Jeresek – Filmore
Ron Jensen – Hubbard
Vincent & Laura Mangan – Mower
William & Mary Bailey – Olmstead
Brianna Frisch – Winona
Mason Hjelle – Kanabec
Mary Roen – St.Croix (WI)
Fern Vesledahl – Rice
Donald Johnson – Filmore
Larry Buhr – Rice
Terry Taylor – Mower
Bart Anderson – Hennepin

Ben Bartusek – Rice
Quintin Lohse – Olmstead
Jim Newport – Rice
James Taylor – Dakota
Steven Malecha – Goodhue
Don Glassing – Dakota
Darrell Isebrand – Dakota
Brad Lewis – Olmstead
Jeanne Olsen – Pine
Stacy & Mike Shuda – Rice



Photos by Doris Glander

2023 County Totals

County	Fledged	Reports
Anoka	238	9
Becker	13	1
Benton	122	4
Carlton	8	1
Carver	181	5
Chippewa	0	1
Chisago	48	3
Clearwater	27	1
Crow Wing	51	3
Dakota	1394	33
Dodge	52	1
Douglas	36	3
Fillmore	882	45
Freeborn	2	1
Goodhue	630	8
Hennepin	1186	39
Houston	334	8
Hubbard	234	1
Isanti	3	1
Itasca	3	1
Kanabec	238	2
Kandiyohi	33	1
LeSueur	8	1
Lyon	4	3
Morrison	174	4
Mower	382	2
Olmsted	787	19
Pennington	0	1
Pine	185	6
Ramsey	332	13
Rice	2614	54
Scott	104	5
Sherburne	116	7
St louis	32	3
Stearns	199	6
Steele	44	4
Wabasha	115	4
Wadena	12	1
Waseca	5	1
Washington	384	13
Winona	205	2
Wright	214	9
Yellow Medicine	5	1

In 2023 there were 331 reports filed which listed:

Sites - 4,108
Eggs - 14,050
Hatched - 12,125
Fledged - 11,636

Previous Fledged Totals:

2022 - 9,110
2021 - 7,269
2020 - 13,844
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



Photos by Doris Glander



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, email us at info@bbrp.org for more information.

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2024 Bluebird Expo Registration

I am (we are) coming. Please print name tags as: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email _____

Phone: _____

Tables are available for vendors wishing to sell nature, bird, or animal related merchandise. Please describe your merchandise _____ complete this application and submit photos of what you wish to sell. We'll review your application, if selected there will be a \$25 fee. ***(WE WILL CONTACT YOU, PLEASE DO NOT SUBMIT THE FEE WITH THIS APPLICATION.)***

Tables for non-profit organizations are also available. Please provide your organizations name _____ complete this application and we'll contact you. No fee is required.

Do you have an item to donate for the silent auction? If so, please provide a description of the item for the auction ticket _____

Lunch— Chicken Breast, (vegetarian option - Mac & Cheese) Au Gratin Potatoes, Green Beans, Summer Pasta Salad, roll & cookie

(BBRP County Coordinators are admitted free) Number of registrations ____ @ \$17.00 \$ _____

Please indicate number of Vegetarian lunches ____ Total lunch reservations ____ @ \$18.00 \$ _____

WE WILL NOT ACCEPT LUNCH RESERVATIONS AFTER APRIL 6th.

Cash donations are welcome to purchase items for the silent auction

\$ _____

Donations are tax deductible

Total Enclosed \$ _____

(The Redwood Lodge has a block of rooms for us at \$104.18 plus tax for Friday & Sat, 1382 East Bridge Street 507-644-5700 - just mention 2024 Bluebird Expo conference.)

Questions: call or text 'Expo Question' to 612-327-6434 or email:

info@bbrp.org

(DO NOT send Mail-in registration after 4/12 to insure receipt by 4/17)

Registration form and check should be made out to Bluebird Recovery

Program of Minnesota and sent to:

Nancy Engel, Bluebird Recovery Program, 2609 133rd Street West, Rosemount, MN 55068.

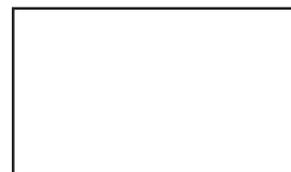
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edbbnews@outlook.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 9, 2024

Rice County Garden Day

St. Olaf College | 8:30 am - 3:00 pm

BBRP will have a booth in the lobby of Buntrock Commons.

To attend educational sessions & lunch, you must pre-register:

<https://extension.umn.edu/event/rice-county-garden-day>

April 6, 2024

Dodge Nature Center Bluebird Nestbox Monitoring Class

Shepherd Farm, Cottage Grove, MN

For info email bluebirdsafe@gmail.com

April 20, 2024

Bluebird Expo

Redwood Falls, MN

May 17-19

Detroit Lakes Festival of Birds

and Gathering Partners Conference

Fair Hills Resort in Detroit Lakes, 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 Ardy Murphy

Thank you to everyone who wrote articles or provided photographs for this publication of the Bluebird News.