

TN Bluebird Newsletter

A Quarterly Publication for Members of the TN Bluebird Society



A beautiful day and a tremendous turnout for the 2019 TBS Annual Meeting



Don Hazel, TBS President

President's Corner

Welcome to 2020! I have a small challenge for every member of the Tennessee Bluebird Society.

First, check out our new web page, <https://www.tnbluebirdsociety.org/>. Read the short and dynamic mission statement. Mission statements are usually dull and boring, but if you read the TBS mission statement you will see where the challenge is.

I am challenging you, as a TBS member, to help our native cavity nesting birds by getting involved in a bluebird trail. Add one or two nest boxes to an existing trail, or better yet add a new trail. Ask a golf course or public parks administrator if you can add a bluebird trail in their public space. A trail can be 5 boxes or 20 or more. Every golf course, city or county park, college campus, or even state park is a potential bluebird trail. The cost to start small is minimal...a few boxes, a few poles, monitor once a week, and you are on your way. If you need help, we have plenty of experienced bluebirders. Grant money from the Tennessee Bluebird Society may be available to help your project.

So, here is the challenge. Email me at don.hazel@gmail.com with your idea to add nest boxes or start a new trail. I am looking forward to a great bluebird year!

To help you meet the President's Challenge, [Bluebird Factsheets](#) are now available on the [North American Bluebird Society website](#). The one titled [Getting Started with Bluebirds](#) is a great way to familiarize yourself and others with the joy of monitoring bluebirds and promoting healthy habitats for them. Feel free to print off and distribute or share this link with others! Let's spread the word and take our President's challenge seriously!!



Happenings Around TN

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Tips for Winter Feeding

Including the Recipe for Homemade Suet!
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Highlights from the 2019 TBS Annual Meeting



71 members and guests participated in the 2019 TBS Annual Meeting held on November 16, 2019 at the beautiful UT Arboretum in Oak Ridge, TN. Outgoing President, Chuck Cruickshank, reported that TBS had 234 members in 2019. He presented future plans for TBS and thanked the many volunteers who were involved in various aspects of the organization. Bird photographer, Rebecca Boyd, Wild Birds Unlimited of Knoxville, TN, and artist, Nick Farrell, were present at this year's event and brought bluebird-related items to be viewed and purchased. Cruickshank thanked them for their participation and recognized the corporate sponsors, Wild Birds Unlimited and the Wood Thrush Shop.



TBS Board Secretary, Rosemary Chamberlain, gave an informative presentation on "The Miraculous Monarch Butterfly". Chamberlain is a certified Tennessee Naturalist.



John Martin reported on the 2019 trails numbers as well as the data accumulated from the last five years (2015-2019), showing the positive impact monitors have had. He reported a noticeable improvement on the number of babies fledged by adding Noel guards and Kingston guards to prevent predation of boxes. He stated our efforts are having a positive and measurable impact on growing the bluebird population across the state. He noted 2720 bluebirds were fledged from 805 reported boxes in 2019.

Current Board Member and incoming President of the Tennessee Bluebird Society, Don Hazel, gave a very interesting presentation on "Solutions for Nestbox Predators".



Randy Hedgepath, the State of Tennessee Naturalist, informs attendees about "Winter Birds".



TBS Board Member, Michelle Campanis, offered a guided walking tour of the UT Arboretum to Annual Meeting attendees.

Tennessee Bluebird Society Board of Directors

Eastern Region:

Michelle Campanis - Oak Ridge
Chuck Cruickshank - Loudon
Kathy Dooley - Loudon
Peggie Flierl - Crossville
Don Hazel - Crossville
Chuck James - Loudon
John Martin - Crossville
Janet McDonald - Crossville

Central Region:

Rosemary Chamberlain - Dickson
Andy Ecton - Lebanon
Beth Ecton - Lebanon
Rosalind Kurita - Clarksville
Duane Rice - Chapmansboro

Western Region:

Fred Robertson - Collierville
Farrell Roe - Jackson

Scientific Advisor: Dawn Wilkins, PhD,
UT Martin

Email: tnsialia@gmail.com

Website: www.tnbluebirdsociety.org

Facebook: [Tennessee Bluebird Society](https://www.facebook.com/TennesseeBluebirdSociety)

Tennessee Bluebird Society

Honor Roll

(Life Time Members)

Margaret Beasley
Sue Bradley
Stan & Linda Colburn
Shoshanna Cooper
Chuck & Cecelia Cruickshank
Mary Cushman
Kathy Dooley
Raymond Dunavant
Roger Givens
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Mort Massey
Bob & Judy Peak
Farrell & Jane Roe
Jerry & Dianna Rysticken
Donald Turner
Joanne Watson

For only \$150, you could become a Lifetime
Member in the Tennessee Bluebird Society!

For the application, go to:
www.tnbluebirdsociety.org

2019 TBS OFFICERS

President - Don Hazel
Immediate Past Pres. - Chuck Cruickshank
Vice President - Vacant
Treasurer - Kathy Dooley
Secretary - Rosemary Chamberlain

From Around The State

On October 10, 2019 Stephen Lyn Bales spoke to the Valley Chapter of The Tennessee Bluebird Society on Monarch Butterflies at the Tellico Village Yacht Club, Loudon, TN. Lyn is a Tennessee naturalist and native of Gatlinburg. A former educator at Ijams Nature Center, Lyn is regular writer for *The Tennessee Conservationist* and other magazines. Lyn is also the author of three books on nature and natural history: *Natural Histories*, *Ghost Birds* and *Ephemeral by Nature* all published by the University of Tennessee Press.

More than 35 people enjoyed photos of a minute by minute development from an egg to a Monarch Butterfly along with detail information on their incredible journey.



MANDATORY CUMBERLAND COUNTY BB MONITOR MEETING SET

Bluebird monitors in Cumberland County are urged to come to a monitor kick-off meeting on Thursday, March 12, 2020 from 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm CDT at Fairfield Glade Community Church, located at 521 Snead Dr. in Fairfield Glade. All monitors must attend and all members are invited. At the meeting, attendees will hear about new trails and changes for the year and will also receive additional training. Bring pen and paper for note-taking and \$5 for 2020 dues.

Cumberland County Bluebird Presentations

Sat., 2/15, 10:00 AM - Children's Presentation on Bluebirds, UT Ag Center (could use a few helpers, call Don Hazel 931-459-2140)

Wed., 2/19, 10:00 AM - Don Hazel Presentation on Bluebirds, UT Ag Center (all welcome, bring guests, call Jennifer at UT to RSVP spots 931-484-0034)

Visit these websites for important information and membership applications:

Tennessee Bluebird Society
www.tnbluebirdsociety.org

North American Bluebird Society
www.nabluebirdsociety.org

From Around The State

The Valley Chapter TN Bluebird Society, will continue to support and monitor all the nestboxes trails around East Tennessee. **We're going to expand the programing to include pollinators and plants that attract our native species.** Your help is needed to continue with this conservation work we've been doing for the past 8 years. Throughout the spring and summer months the Valley Chapter of TN Bluebird Society puts on educational programs for both children and adults. With our children programs we feel the best approach to learning is through self-discovery and experiential learning.

The Valley Chapter of the Tennessee Bluebird Society invites all TBS members and guests for a fascinating presentation on honey bees!



Please Join Us

**Saturday, February 1, 2020, 10:00 am EST
Tellico Village Yacht Club, Top Floor
100 Sequoyah Rd., Loudon, TN 37774**

Steve Rains
"Helping Our Tennessee Honey Bees"

Steve believes there are opportunities for each of us to create varying sized "Pollinator Gardens" in our backyards.

Steve Rains is a graduate of Purdue University's School of Pharmacy. He retired after a career in retail pharmacy and pharmaceutical sales. Steve has experience in creating successful business plans and programs, for example, developing a comprehensive Asthma Education Program to improve patient health.

Steve has always had a great interest in nature, flowers and butterflies. Now, he is focused on developing educational programs for the Valley Chapter of the TN Bluebird Society to "Help our Tennessee Honey Bees".

In addition, he wants to explore collaborative activities with groups like the Tennessee Beekeepers Society to educate local organizations about ways to help our pollinators and improve their health.

For More Information Email Chuck James at chuck3185@gmail.com or call (865) 437-9732

Feeding bluebirds in winter by Don Hazel

As you know, bluebirds are insect eaters. They survive the winter by finding insects on warm days, but especially by eating wild fruit like mistletoe, sumac, blueberries, black cherry, tupelo, currants, wild holly, dogwood berries, hackberries, honeysuckle, bay, pokeweed, and juniper berries. Birds have learned to survive winter just fine without our help, but many folks like to see them up close at their feeders.

Bluebirds will come for suet and mealworms in the winter, or even year-round. Just keep in mind that if you are offering lots of supplemental food that the birds might be missing important nutrients that they get from their normal wild diet.

The suet recipe below is great for attracting all kinds of birds, but be sure to add the ingredient, “chick starter”. Chick starter can be found at any feed store and it is used to provide the vitamins and minerals to grow healthy baby chickens. It helps keep bluebirds healthy when they are relying on human provided food instead of their normal diet of insects and fruits.

Likewise, you should dust mealworms in calcium carbonate for your bluebirds. Mealworms by themselves in large quantities, are calcium depleting. You can buy calcium carbonate in feed stores or online. Shake your mealworms in a plastic zip lock bag before placing them outside to give bluebirds important calcium.

Often feeding wildlife can cause more harm than good. Using chick starter and calcium carbonate can keep you winter bird feeding positive for the birds.



Photo Courtesy of Becky Boyd

All Season Suet Recipe

Bluebirds seem to love this suet mix much better than the commercial suets.

1 cup regular or crunchy peanut butter
2 cups quick cook oatmeal
2 cups cornmeal
1-1/2 cups lard (no substitutes here)
1 cup white flour
1/3 cup sugar
1/2 cup of Chick Starter (available at feed stores or Tractor Supply)

Melt peanut butter and lard together, (use very low heat)
Stir remaining ingredients together very well.
Then mix thoroughly with peanut butter and lard.
Pour into freezer containers and refrigerate till solid.
Then cut into size to fit your suet feeder.
Store in fridge or freezer.

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Best Wishes for a
Happy New Year!!



**Blessings to you and
yours**

Love for what you do

Utter happiness

Energy to keep going

Big rewards

Involvement

Respect

Dream big

Here's to a great and productive
2020 Bluebird Season!

Websites

Tennessee Bluebird Society

www.tnbluebirdsociety.org

North American Bluebird Society

www.nabluebirdsociety.org