

TEXAS Blues



Texas Bluebird Society Newsletter May 2017 • Volume 16, Issue 2

Is A Bluebird By Any Other Shade Still Not Beautiful? It's Azure!

By Debbie Bradshaw Park

Last March my husband John and I were birding at Patton's, a popular birding hot spot in Patagonia, AZ. While John was busy photographing a variety of hummingbirds, I came across a flier from the Tucson Audubon Society describing one of the eight subspecies of the Eastern Bluebird, the Azure Bluebird. I didn't know there were subspecies of bluebirds, so of course, I had to investigate. I contacted Tucson Audubon to learn about potential birding spots in the area. Although we searched each recommended spot, no Azures. We returned to Arizona again this year and checked the eBird hotspots for Azures. Finally, after several attempts, success! What a treat to see a different, but still beautiful, bluebird. If you journey to southeast Arizona be sure to take a day and find these little cuties yourself!



Male Azure Bluebird by Lois Manowitz

Besides song and coloration, there is very little difference in the behavior, feeding, and nesting habits between all bluebirds.

When it comes to correctly identifying the Azure Bluebirds, the big things to note here is the extent of the blue on the head (Eastern and Azure have reddish cheeks and Westerns have all blue heads) and the fact that Azure (and Eastern) Bluebirds have white tummies (this is also clear in females) and Western Bluebirds have gray tummies. Also, in the fall Westerns tend to flock and Azures not so much.

The Azure Bluebirds that love the higher meadows and grasslands of southeast Arizona are smaller and paler than their eastern cousins and stay in this habitat year-round instead of migrating.

Tucson Audubon Society Promotes Nestbox Program For Azures

The beautiful and rare Azure (or Mexican) Bluebird is found only in northern Mexico and southeast Arizona. Here they nest primarily in the Patagonia and the Huachuca Mountains, often visiting the grasslands surrounding these Sky Islands. Due to its strict habitat requirements, this major subspecies of the Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis fulva*) is listed by the Arizona Game & Fish as a "Species of Greatest Conservation Need" and "Vulnerable."

The Tucson Audubon Society and the Sonoita Wine Guild are building and installing nestboxes on the vineyards of the Sonoita grasslands in an effort to strengthen the bluebird population. Though breeding in the grasslands is historically documented for Azures, eBird and first-hand accounts reveal that the breeding range and population numbers have decreased. Research states lack of adequate nesting cavities to be the population's limiting factor.

A strong Azure Bluebird population can provide natural insect control for the vineyards while beautifying everyone's experience of the grasslands—one of the many ways welcoming nature into our lives creates a win-win situations for us all.

(reprint from Tucson Audubon Society)



Azure at Patagonia Lake SP. Photo by John Park



Patagonia Lake State Park, AZ. Elevation 3,750 feet.

Calling All Citizen Scientist - It is NestWatch Time!

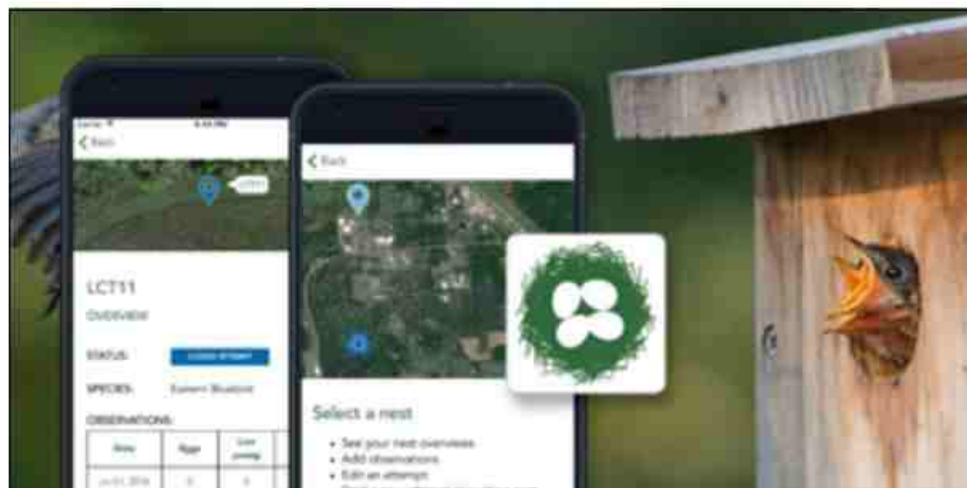
What Is NestWatch?

NestWatch is a nationwide monitoring program designed to track status and trends in the reproductive biology of birds, including when nesting occurs, number of eggs laid, how many eggs hatch, and how many hatchlings survive. Our database is intended to be used to study the current condition of breeding bird populations and how they may be changing over time as a result of climate change, habitat degradation and loss, expansion of urban areas, and the introduction of non-native plants and animals.

Your observations will be added to those of thousands of other NestWatchers in a continually growing database used by researchers to understand and study birds. Simply put, without your help it would be impossible to gather enough information to accurately monitor nesting birds across the country.

How Can You Help?

Participating in NestWatch is easy and just about anyone can do it, although children should always be accompanied by an adult when observing bird nests. Simply follow the directions on their website to **become a certified NestWatcher**. Visit the nest every 3-4 days and record what you see, and then **report this information** on the NestWatch website.



Calling All Birders - New NestWatch App Available

Are you looking for a quicker way to enter NestWatch data? NestWatch is happy to announce that the NestWatch mobile app is live! You can download the app via Google Play or the Apple AppStore.

When you download the app and log in, use the same credentials you have for the NestWatch website. Your data will sync automatically to your phone or tablet.

Please do not add any "test" attempts to the app. Because the app is live, any attempts are recorded as real data.

More Information? Visit www.nestwatch.org to learn more about reporting observations and nesting data for your area.

NestWatch Evolution



Mid '60s citizen scientists mailed nesting activity on index cards to Cornell. Over 300,000 observations submitted thru this program.



By 1997 morphed to the "Birdhouse Network," ailing a "form" with observations, for cavity-nesters only, to Cornell Labs for staff to enter data.

Pilot Season Begins For New Citizen-Scientist Project

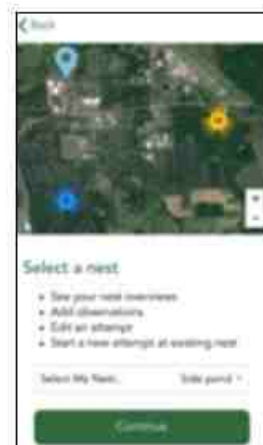


2007 NSF grant for 1.6M expands project to web based entry for nesting activity. Now for all birds.

NEW LOOK • NEW FEATURES



Newest innovation! 2017 Mobile Phone app for direct data entry to NestWatch.



NestWatch Code of Conduct

We are all aware how important our nesting observations are to ornithological research, but NOT at the cost of affecting the birds we are observing! Cornell Lab's NestWatch division has created a Nest Watching Code of Conduct for us to follow to help minimize the risk of accidental harm to a nest, parental desertion or attracting predators to a nest as we gather nesting observations. Talented artist Virginia Greene, a Bartels Science Illustration intern currently working at Cornell Lab, created the drawings to demonstrate the correct observation protocol.



Plan ahead for nest visits

Plan to make observations of nests **every 3-4 days**. Most successful songbird nests last about 30 days, so you may need to visit each nest 7-10 times. Nest visits should last **no longer than 1 minute**.



Do NOT check in the early morning or late evening

Most birds lay their eggs in the early morning, and stay on the nest overnight. Therefore, **don't visit near sunrise or sunset** (the exception would be owls, which typically leave the nest at dusk).



Avoid nests during the first few days of incubation

If possible, observe nests from a distance and approach only when the female leaves the nest.



Do NOT approach nests when young are close to fledging

When the young are disturbed during this stage, they may leave the nest prematurely. Young that fledge prematurely usually do not stay in the nest despite attempts to return them.



Avoid nests during bad weather

If it is cold, damp, or rainy, postpone checking nests until another day.



Don't lead predators to the nest

Avoid leaving tracks that can lead predators to nests (e.g., a flattened trail of vegetation leading straight to the nest). You can **avoid making a dead-end trail of trampled vegetation** by varying your route to the nest.



Approach nests with care

Before approaching the nest, try to see if a parent is sitting on it. Whenever possible, wait a few minutes to see if the bird leaves on its own. If it does, proceed to check the nest. If the bird is to be flushed, give it time to slip off. Open nest box doors slowly and quietly.



Do NOT force a bird off the nest

If a sitting bird does not leave on its own, do not force it off the nest. Make a note and move away from the nest before recording your visit.



Do NOT handle birds or eggs without a permit

It's against the law and unnecessary for NestWatching. Eggs and nestlings are fragile and can easily be damaged or hurt.

Smile for the Camera! David Shares His Tips For Great Photos

Article and photos by David Kinneer



I love to take pictures of bluebirds and I do take a lot of them. More than a thousand a day on most sunny days, and on important occasions, like fledge days, three or four times that number. My friends say the birds pose for me. I wish it were true. Actually, when you take a lot of pictures, you are bound to get a few good ones. (And usually I only show people the good ones).

Like most wild birds, bluebirds are unpredictable. They pretty much go where they want, when they want. If you go out looking for them, you probably won't get very close but if one happens to light near you and you have your camera ready, you may get a picture. The trick is to get the bird to come nearer to you, to perch where you want him to and to stay there long enough for you to get your shot.



I do that with mealworms. Bluebirds love them. I buy mealworms in bulk and keep them on hand the year 'round. This past Fall and Winter we had more than 30 bluebirds that came by every morning and every afternoon. Now that nesting season is here, the pair that has claimed the nestbox is trying to drive the others away. But as of today I still see more than 20.

I began photographing bluebirds in 2004 when my wife and I bought a home in a new development near Fredericksburg, Virginia. I put up a nest box and a pair of bluebirds were on it as soon as I walked away, and bluebirds have been with us every day since. Our lot is small so I am only able to have bluebirds nest in the one

nest box. It faces our house and I have an unobstructed view of the front of the box from our breakfast nook. Since I am totally retired and at home most of the time, I am able to keep a close eye on the birds.



The bluebird nest box is about 20 feet from our back deck. I keep several meal worm feeders on the deck. At first I took photos of the birds at the feeders but I soon began thinking of ways to create a more natural looking setting.

I noticed that when they flew to the deck the birds tended to land on the highest available perch, so I got a fence post and fastened it against the deck railing with Velcro so that the top of the post was a foot or more higher than the deck railing. When I take a photo of a bird on the post I crop the photo so that only the bird and a few inches of the post below him appear in the photo, and it looks like the bird was perched on a fence post out in the field -- or at least that's what I hope. I use props like that on the deck every day, but from time to time I look for something different.



I have a portable feeder that I can move from place to place in the yard. It is not much more than a bowl mounted on a metal pole with a foot similar to a shepherd's hook. I like to move it around to lure the birds to where I want

them. We have a clematis vine that blooms on a trellis down by the back fence.

Last year, when the clematis was in bloom, I moved the meal worms down there. I then set a nest box against the trellis and managed to get a few shots of a male bluebird perched on the nest box while he waited for his turn at the feeder.



As you might imagine, fledge days are significant events at our house. Like many other back yard bluebird hosts, I have the 17th and 18th days after the birds hatch circled on my calendar and all activity on those days is cleared from my schedule. On the 17th day (and sooner if I see significant early pecking), I move out onto the deck with one camera at my side and usually two additional cameras mounted on tripods aimed at the nest box from different directions. I control the two extra cameras with wireless remotes. I stay out on the deck from dawn to dusk, or until the last bluebird fledges. This has been my routine on every fledge day for more than 10 years. During this time more than 165 bluebirds have fledged from the box in our yard. I have seen all except maybe one or two of them make that first flight and have even gotten a photo of some of them.



Capturing a bluebird in flight is always a challenge. It helps to be 20 feet or more away from the bird and to have a

telephoto lens on your camera. If you are closer it is near impossible to stop the movement of his wings, no matter how fast your shutter clicks. I usually have my camera set on automatic and the shutter set to 1/5000sec. or so, always hoping to capture one in flight. I will typically focus on a bird I think is about to fly, and hold down the trigger until he flies. Sometimes I am lucky and he flies in the direction I hoped he would. More often he heads the other way or simply stays put and I wind up with a lot of photos of him just sitting there. But that's one of the best things about digital. You can just delete those extras.



A friend of mine, who is a professional photographer, was recently asked what it takes to get good bird photos. He answered, "time, observation, patience and luck -- plus a good camera and knowing how to use it."

I think he covered it pretty well. I especially agree about the patience and the luck.



About David ...

"I am 79 years old, a retired Marine Corps major, the father of three daughters, 11 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. I have several cameras and a number of telephoto lenses. Most often I shoot with the Canon EOS 1DX, and the Canon 300mm f/2.8L IS lens. I am a member of NABS and the Virginia Bluebird Society. I am honored to also be a member of Texas Bluebird Society."

Parallel Journeys

By *Kate Moran*

Perhaps the reason why bluebirds are so beloved is because they remind us so much of our own lives like no other bird. Sure, that characteristic sweet tweet makes them so loveable, and they're such a beauty to behold. But, it took a little hardiness and willpower for that little bird to grace our presence. When you think about their journey, it's easy to see the parallels.

My own family knows "migration" all too well. Since my birth, I've now lived in 10 different states and 2 different countries. You learn and adapt to feel comfortable with calling anything home. The other day, I was helping my mom do some gardening and she exclaimed "I'm glad you're close to home now." First of all, home for us means "close to family." And, secondly, it was a funny moment to think about bluebirds, but I did. How many of those birds eventually "come home?" Fun statistic as reported by the New York Times: the typical American lives only 18 miles from mom on average. I didn't always live close by due to work and school, but I eventually "came home." Bluebirds typically do the same—flying to their wintering grounds and then returning to the area where they were born, more or less.

Over the past weekend, I was also noticing my fellow bluebird fanatics' Facebook posts of frigid northern weather and their bluebirds fluffed up trying to find food and fresh water. I kept thinking "how do these creatures even put up with all that cold?" Many of those bluebirds huddle up together for warmth to beat out the cold. Some don't make it. Yet, they're hardy creatures ready to face what Mother Nature brings them, and they develop a sense of camaraderie to help each other survive. Sound familiar with any other species you know? Like humans, they adapt and become accustomed to their surroundings. My same friends would probably comment about how they can't imagine those Texas bluebirds trying to care for their nestlings in 100+ degree weather and marvel at them not

melting to death. Our Texas birds know how to handle the heat! And, I too hope to adapt.

Of course, migration trends sometimes "change with the wind." Since bluebirds winter over so much of their breeding range, spring migration is not easily tracked. With climate changes, you can see an ebb and flow to how far north they nest during summer and how far south they retreat during winter. But if the food source is plentiful, the threats of predators are low, and the weather is consistently warm-ish enough to start a family, you may notice that the bluebird stays in your area as a permanent resident. Houston (hopefully) will make a permanent resident out of me: nice community, nice schools, safe neighborhood, and means for providing for my family. Makes sense for both our bluebird and us friends!

Next time you look at your local bluebird, you just have to smile that you were lucky enough to cross paths. When work gets you down or you have some other frustration in your personal life, remember that the little bluebird you're looking at probably evaded a hawk or flew around a hurricane to get to your area. When you worry about empty nest syndrome and getting to see your kids frequently, think about the little bluebird who was probably stressed rearing another clutch (even if the fledglings from the first clutch help out a little) and how successful the parents must feel at bringing more bluebird life into the world yet willing to let life run its course with their offspring evading predators and starting their own journey. And when you start to feel hungry, thank goodness for grocery stores so we don't have to hunt for our food anymore (or at least, primarily hunt for our food) as those little bluebirds are scouring the countryside for seeds, berries, and insects. Sorry, I'm always thinking about food. But on a serious note, our own journey through life as well as the bluebird's journey can be both beautiful and harsh. We don't always end up where we started. Knowing our journey is what makes our friends appreciate us as much as we appreciate our bluebirds. We're lucky to have each other, and we welcome them home this spring!



Photos by David Kinneer.



Virginia Creeper, *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*

By Linda Crum

Texas Master Gardener, Texas Master Naturalist

Virginia creeper is a woody, deciduous perennial vine that can climb any structure – your house, fences, trees or rocks. It does so by means of tendrils that end with adhesive-like tips. These tips do no damage to fences or brick the way some vines do that have penetrating rootlets. Virginia creeper is native to Eastern and Central United States from Canada into Mexico. It tolerates just about any soil type and thus has a wide native range.



Photo by Joseph A. Marcus

Tiny, insignificant blooms adorn the vine in spring and give way to bluish-black fruit in late summer. The fruit is highly toxic to humans and may be fatal if eaten, but relished by birds, including robins, bluebirds, thrushes, catbirds, cardinals, starlings, Wild Turkey, vireos, warblers, Pileated Woodpecker, many others. In fact, 30 species of birds eat the berries of Virginia creeper. The leaves also provide cover and nesting places for birds. The plant is a larval host to four different species of sphinx moths.



Photo by Julie Maken

The leaves are compound, containing five leaflets which helps distinguish it from poison ivy, a look-alike vine.

Poison ivy has three leaflets and white berries. "Leaves of three, let it be; leaves of five, let it thrive" is a good rhyme to remember.



Virginia creeper contains raphides (calcium oxalate crystals) which can irritate the skin of some people. Leaves of Virginia creeper displays beautiful fall colors of red, maroon and purple. Fall color will be less intense in shade than sun.

Virginia creeper can be used as a ground cover to control soil

erosion on slopes. It covers an ugly fence and can be used on walls, trellises or arbors.



Photo by Sally and Andy Wasowski

I have a love-hate relationship with Virginia creeper. It is a beautiful plant and great for wildlife. It has no serious pests and is native and fast-growing. Fast-growing—that is also part of my hate relationship. I continually clear a lot of it out of my landscape but also leave quite a bit for the birds.

Propagation is by seed, usually dispersed by birds. It deserves a place in any landscape that caters to birds.

The Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center is a great resource for wildflower information. Check out their website for photos and details before you make your final choice!
www.wildflower.org

We Can All Chip In To Help The Bluebird Population

By Greg Grant

Reprint from the *Tyler Morning Telegraph* on 2/17/2017.

Thanks to their beauty, pleasant disposition, and sweet warbling notes, bluebirds have been beloved since humans first laid eyes and ears on them.

In his 1871 classic, "Wake Robin," famous naturalist and birder John Burroughs wrote, "The bluebird is a bird without fault. In my bird heaven the bluebird shall occupy the nearest porch and shall always comfort me with his gentleness and composure. I should tire of the Old-World lark and the nightingale as hourly companions; they are too sharp and vociferous; but the bluebird is as soothing as the blue sky itself." I feel the same way. After all, the bluebird is considered "the songbird of happiness" and is the state bird of Idaho, Missouri, Nevada, and New York.

Texas is fortunate to be home to three species of bluebirds - the mountain, the western and the eastern bluebird. The male mountain bluebird is all blue and is found only in the mountains of far West Texas. The male western bluebird is blue with chestnut breasts, sides, flanks and a bit on his shoulders and back. The western bluebird can be found sporadically throughout West Texas. The eastern bluebird is the common species from Central Texas through East Texas. The male eastern bluebird is blue with a rusty red breast and white belly, while the female has the same colors but with a faded grayish blue. Although Wills Point is officially the bluebird capital of Texas, I'm pretty sure that the heaviest concentration of Eastern bluebirds is in Deep East Texas. As a matter of fact, there's hardly a moment of the day that I don't see or hear them at my farm.

Unfortunately, bluebird numbers declined dramatically in the early 1900s - so much that many feared their impending extinction. Bluebirds are secondary cavity dwellers. This means that they naturally nest in cavities in trees, especially those created by woodpeckers, which are primary cavity dwellers. Therefore, in nature, bluebirds need to have old, dying and dead trees with either natural cavities in them or cavities excavated by woodpeckers. Remember this the next time you decide to cut down a dead tree.

East Texas was originally home to nine species of woodpeckers. Sadly, when the eastern forests were completely harvested in the early 1900s, this eliminated potential cavities for both woodpeckers and the many secondary cavity dwellers. When these mature forests were replaced by new forests that are harvested on a short rotation cycle, cavity dwellers suffered for it. It's no wonder that the Ivory billed woodpecker and Carolina parakeet (another cavity dweller) are now extinct, with the red cockaded woodpecker being an endangered species. In nature, dead trees are equally as important as live trees.

Luckily, those who loved bluebirds came to their rescue by creating nest boxes that mimicked natural woodpecker cavities. These nest boxes have holes that are 1 1/2 inches in diameter, which are the perfect size for bluebirds. As a

lifetime member of the Texas Bluebird Society, I've done my part by erecting well over 100 bluebird houses on family property in the rural countryside. Projects with numerous nest boxes like this are called bluebird trails. Thanks to bluebird nest boxes being placed all over the country, the bluebird numbers have now increased and stabilized. Purple martins have enjoyed the same success story, thanks to caring bird lovers across the land.

It takes more than nest boxes and dead trees to attract and raise bluebirds, however. Like all wild animals, bluebirds need food, water and shelter. Before getting carried away, it's important to know that bluebirds are country birds, not city dwellers. They prefer wide open spaces like pastures, golf courses, parks and cemeteries. You can also put the bird seed away, because bluebirds are insect and berry eaters, not seed eaters. This means you need to lay off the insecticides and let the birds do the work for you. The adults, as well as their young, all feed on insects during the growing season, supplemented by small fruits and berries during the winter. Some of the best berried plants for attracting bluebirds are hollies, dogwoods, elderberry, Virginia creeper, pokeweed, snailseed, red cedar, wax myrtle, smilax, rattan vine, blueberries and huckleberries.

Because of information they've read from the North, many are under the impression that bluebirds are migrants here, returning each spring from winters abroad. Although true for the North, it certainly isn't true here. Bluebirds are year round residents in East Texas, which means they need food, shelter and water year round. They have the potential to raise up to three broods a year here, too.

One reason East Texas has so many bluebirds is there are both open areas for foraging and nesting, and forested areas full of insects and berries.

If you have a choice when placing a bluebird nesting box, always choose the most open area you can find. Bluebirds like clean houses. Nest boxes are best erected before Valentine's Day, but anytime is better than not at all, as they are always in search of new homes.



For more information about bluebirds in Texas and high-quality nest boxes, go to the Texas Bluebird Society website: texasbluebirdsociety.org.

Photo by Betty Hickman (not used in original article)

Greg Grant is the Smith County horticulturist for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. You can follow him on Facebook at [Greg Grant Gardens](https://www.facebook.com/GregGrantGardens), read his "Greg's Ramblings" blog at arborgate.com or read his "In Greg's Garden" in each issue of *Texas Gardener* magazine (texasgardener.com). For more information on local educational programming, go to smith.agrilife.org.

Members Share Experiences On Facebook



Meg Elizabeth shares the first eight days of her new bluebird family. Take note, if you miss the first egg hatching this is a way to guess the age of your babies.



Debra Ann
Yippee Yahoo!! We put up our Texas Bluebird Society Nest Box February 26th; had a nest in 10 days; and this weekend; 4 days later... 3 EGGS!! I'll check again in a couple of days to see if there are any more eggs!

💙 Lou & I are so Egg-cited!! 💙

Papa looks down at us from a wire above... He actually watched as we put up the house; obviously thinking "Hmmm Nice Accomodations!"



Gordon Henry captures another beautiful bluebird moment.



Betty Hickman
I took this photo yesterday (8-26-2016) of our three little Bluebird Siblings from the third brood. They fledged on 7-11-16. They come several times a day to eat dried meal worms in our yard. They are in the dead part of an Iron Wood Tree pecking around like they were looking for bugs. I took many photos of them. They were so cute and stayed in this hollowed out dead part of the tree for several minutes. I love my Bluebirds. Polk Co., TX.



Enjoy the many photos and stories from our members and be sure to add your own!

2017 Bluebird Season Kick Off



143 Attendees (including 16 New Members, 31 Renewal Members)



Another Great Silent Auction FUNdraiser earns **\$5,113.**



Networking: New friends, new ideas, new information, FUN!

Lisa and Kenny Munoz Receive Good Egg Award



Congrats to **KENNETH (KENNY) MUNOZ** AND **LISA MUNOZ** on their recognition with 2017 Good Egg Award recipients. He joined TBS when he was 11 years old, when Linda Crum provided the introduction. He and his mom have worked tirelessly in advance of our events and at our events ever since. What a difference they make to our successes. (Mom too busy for photo.)



KEITH KRIDLER, our favorite event speaker, shares his expertise and experiences. Other featured speakers were **ALEC WYATT** and **DAVID KINNEER**. **LONNIE CASLEMAN** and **LINDA CRUM** also presented with **PAUL NELSON** as emcee. Photos by **KEITH SCHINDLER**.

2018 Season Kick Off
Brazos County Convention Center
February 24th in Bryan

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Our trademark backdrop for every event!

And yes, our volunteers build it each and every time. Then nestboxes are repacked in the truck for their final destination - one of our storage units.

So how many volunteers does it take to build the nestbox pyramid? We could use your help!

Thanks For Your Financial \$upport!

Mark Arneson

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Welcome New Members!

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• Jodie Reiser

• Glenda Robbins
• Andrea L Rogers
• Gayle Ryan
• Stephanie Schaefer
• Laura Scott
• Ruth Scott
• Marianne Simmons
• Patricia Spenla
• Sandra Spurlock
• Celia Stirling
• Danny & Brenda Tarver
• Margaret Kirby Taylor
• Nathan Taylor
• Ken Thames
• James & Barbara Tilton
• Monty Upton
• Mickey Vogel
• Jimmy E. & Polly Willey
• Kathleen Wood
• Hunter Yarbrough
• Carrie Yarbrough

**New members who give us
permission to print their names*

+ an additional 48 new members

IHB5650 Might Have Died But New Bills Are In The Works

In the last issue of Texas Blues we shared information about HB5650, a bill introduced in 2016 allocating 1.3 Billion to benefit endangered species, and how it died at the end of the legislative term.

"Recovering America's Wildlife Act of 2016 This bill amends the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act to direct the Department of the Treasury to transfer, beginning in FY2016, revenues from energy and mineral development on federal lands totaling \$1.3 billion to the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Subaccount of the Federal Aid to Wildlife Restoration Fund, to be available without further appropriation. The purpose of the subaccount is to fund state wildlife conservation and restoration programs for managing fish and wildlife species of the greatest conservation need as determined by a state fish and wildlife agency." (<https://legiscan.com/US/bill/HB5650/2015>)

For many it was with great disappointment to hear of the bill's demise.

Great news! Two members of the House of Representatives have committed to the [Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies \(AFWA\)](#) their sponsorship of a bill with similar intent as that of HB5650. Similar to HB5650 the new bill will call for allocation revenues from energy and mineral development on federal lands to be directed to the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration sub-account for the purpose of funding state wildlife conservation programs for managing fish and wildlife [species of greatest conservation need \(SGCN\)](#).

That's not all, though. The new House Bill is expected to be introduced in the next couple of months with a companion Senate bill's introduction later this year. That's a **One-Two punch** in the battle to protect our wildlife.

Absolutely awesome! Nature has taken a toll from humans and human development, it's time that more efforts are put into place to protect our native neighbors.

Around the time that the bill is introduced it's expected that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies will introduce a new campaign name, log, and priorities for state coalitions, such as True to Texas Coalition.

So, keep your eyes and ears open for more news. As things begin to solidify, please make a point to identify your elected officials and share your support for these two pieces of legislature.

By Keith Schindler

Federal law protects all cavity nesting birds! • Do not disturb birds or nest. • Monitor and report activity to NestWatch.



Photo by Meg Scamman



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Debbie Bradshaw Park, Editor
Send stories/photos to editor@txblues.org



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