



TEXAS BLUES

The Newsletter of the Texas Bluebird Society

Volume 3, Issue 5

October / November 2004

IN THIS NEWSLETTER ...

- *Unveiled!* New TBS Logo
- *Launched!* Nestbox Dedication Plaques
- *Opened Online!* TBS Forum
- *Available!* NABS Membership Deal
- *Announced!* NABS 2006 Convention Slogan; two Board resignations
- *Reviewed!* Bluebird Symposium Auction
- *Great Reading!* Ash-throated Flycatcher

True Blue Friend

Ordering System Launched for
Nestbox Dedication Plaques

Proceeds Support the Bluebirds
Unique 'Year-round Gift!

True Blue Friend ("TBF") Nestbox Dedication Plaques can be ordered just in time for the holidays. See the insert in this newsletter or visit www.texasbluebirdsociety.org/TBF

The notification letter will be mailed to your recipient before Christmas, if the order is received by December 13th.

Kudos to Cheryl Anderson who "dreamed up" the commemorative idea and made it happen for TBS!

UNVEILED: New TBS Logo

The new TBS logo was adopted by the Board of Directors in late September. The work began almost a year earlier when a committee (Cheryl Anderson, Lysle Mockler, and Pauline Tom) began work on the project. The goal was to have a new logo to which TBS has full rights that captures the essence of the organization's slogan, "Bluebirds Across Texas ... one nestbox at a time."

As the project progressed, the committee was advised by various professionals: "design the new logo so that it will be legible if printed on a postage stamp" and "make it float, without a border". Those nuggets set significant boundaries.

Cindy Hanan, a graphic art director who has won hundreds of awards for logos, served as our consultant.

This new logo represents hundreds of hours of work by the committee and various graphic artist volunteers. Rachel, a graphic artist in Wisconsin who has no connection to TBS or bluebirds, created the final product. She donates her time through VolunteerMatch.org. Rachel is employed by a printing company where she works everything from business cards and magazines to posters and forms. This remarkable volunteer has given us full rights to the logo.

It's ours!!! And ... although it cost many hours, it cost us no money!



© 2004 Texas Bluebird Society

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER

Reprinted with permission from Cornell's "The Birdhouse Network"

Physical Description

Compared to its close relative, the Great Crested Flycatcher, the Ash-throated Flycatcher is slightly smaller, and its coloring is more subtle.

Male and female Ash-throated Flycatchers look alike. They are grayish brown on their back and head and have a bushy crest. The throat and breast are pale gray; the belly and undertail coverts are pale yellow. The tail is dusky brown above but rufous and brown on the underside. In juveniles, the rufous coloration extends the entire length of the tail.

Distribution and Breeding Habitat

Ash-throated Flycatchers are fairly common, and in some places quite abundant, throughout most of the western United States and Mexico. The breeding range extends as far north as Oregon and Washington, as far east as central Texas, and as far south as central Mexico.

Ash-throated Flycatchers are generalists when it comes to breeding habitat. They breed in chaparral, mesquite thickets, oak scrub, dry plains spotted with trees or cacti, deserts, and open deciduous and riparian woodlands.

Diet

Like other flycatchers, Ash-throated Flycatchers forage for food by "hawking." From a perch, they make short flights, or sallies, to capture nearby flying insects. They seldom return to the same perch. Ash-throated Flycatchers also glean prey items, such as mites, millipedes, worms, and spiders, from the ground and tree bark, and they occasionally eat small fruits and berries.

Pair Formation and Territoriality

Pair formation and territoriality are not well described in Ash-throated Flycatchers. Birds arrive on the breeding grounds as early as March in Texas and California, April in New Mexico, and May in Washington. It is unknown how soon after they arrive that they begin to breed, but egg dates show that breeding can begin as early as mid-March in southern California and May in Arizona and Texas.

Ash-throated Breeding Range and Nesting Behavior in Texas

How far into Central Texas are Ash-throated Flycatchers nesting in nestboxes? Soon we'll know!

You can become part of Cornell's "The BirdHouse Network" (TBN) research efforts by providing detailed nesting records for each of your nestboxes. TBN offers a discount membership for TBS members. Contact us for details.

Our TBS online nesting data collection system will become active during the Holidays. Please plan to enter your 2004 nesting data. That way, in years to come, we will know exactly where small cavity-nesting birds are nesting in Texas and we'll have anecdotal evidence of particular nesting behavior. This system is not only for Eastern Bluebirds. It will collect data for all species that utilize a "bluebird" nestbox - including Ash-throated Flycatchers.

Nesting Behavior

Nest Building: Ash-throated Flycatchers are as indiscriminate about nest sites as they are about breeding habitat. Nests are found 3 to 20 ft (1 to 6 m) off the ground in natural cavities, including tree cavities, hollow stumps, cacti, abandoned woodpecker holes, and behind loose bark. Nests can also be nestled in the dry floral stems of yucca or agave plants and in not-so-natural cavities such as metal fence posts, drain pipes, tin cans, and mailboxes.

The female fills the nest cavity with rootlets, grass, weed stems, and dry cow or horse dung. After forming a cup, she lines it with fine grasses and matted hair or fur. Unlike Great Crested Flycatchers, female Ash-throated Flycatchers seldom add snakeskin to their nests. While the female is building her nest, the male closely follows the female, singing and guarding her from the advances of other males.

Ash-throated Flycatchers aggressively defend their nest sites against conspecifics and other species. They have also been known to usurp freshly excavated cavities from small woodpeckers.

Egg Laying: The average clutch size is usually four to five eggs, but clutches can contain from three to seven eggs which are oval, smooth, and slightly glossy. They have a creamy white to ivory, and sometimes pinkish white background color and are marked with fine or heavy streaks or blotches in browns, purples, and grays. The pattern of marking is similar to that of Great Crested Flycatcher eggs, but the marks are fewer.

Incubation: The incubation period is 15 days, and the female alone incubates the eggs. Females are not "tight sitters" and they often leave the nest for hours at a time, especially during the hottest part of the day.

Nestling Care: For the first few days after hatching, the young are brooded by the female. Both parents care for the nestlings. After 16 to 17 days, the young leave the nest, but the fledglings remain dependent upon the parents for food and protection for another two weeks.

Ash-throated Flycatchers raise only one brood per breeding season. Whether this species produces replacement clutches is unknown.

Winter Movement and Dispersal

Ash-throated Flycatchers migrate at the end of the breeding season to Mexico and as far south as northeastern Costa Rica. In some winters, birds are spotted as far north as southwestern Arizona and southern Nevada.

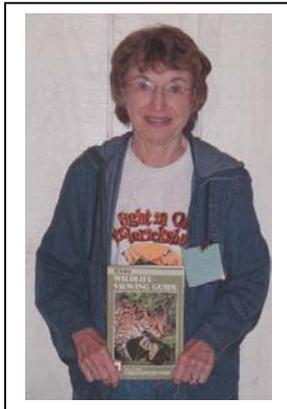
There is no information on dispersal for this species.

Does "Mr. Blue" wear a brilliant new Easter suit of azure blue with a burnt orange vest? Plan to read the article on bluebird molt by Texas ornithologist, John C. Arvin, in Volume 4, issue 1.

2004 Summer Bluebird Symposium Silent Auction Report



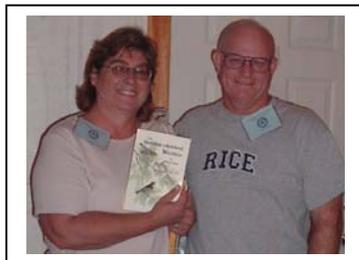
Michelle Rider, Azle (who outbid / outsmarted Pauline)



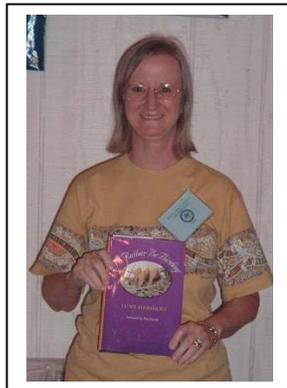
Phyllis Collier, Georgetown



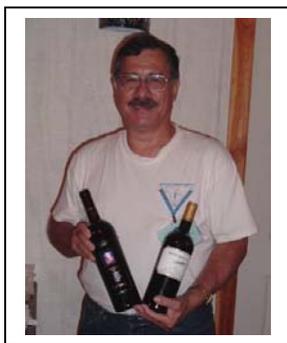
Mindy Mitchell, Azle



Lydia & James Dougherty,
Canyon Lake



Judy Hetherington, Taylor



Ron Tom, Mountain City



Betty Mathis, Sabinal

TBS silent auctions at events are a favorite part of the day! And, they are a major fundraiser. The auction at the Summer Symposium in Concan was fantastic! TBS raised over \$800 and the participants had a great time in the process.

Gratitude goes out to those who made purchases and to the 41 Donors listed below who provided 80 exceptional items:

1. Lodges at Lost Maples – Vanderpool, TX
2. June Osborne – Waco, TX
3. Mike Scarborough – Keller, TX
4. Sylvia Kuyel
5. Jenna Bird – Whiteford, MD
6. Claudine Chalmers
7. UVALCO Supply – Uvalde, TX
8. Nueces Natural Foods – Uvalde, TX
9. Jim Stevenson – Galveston, TX
10. Marsha Gallardo – Concan, TX
11. Texas Parks & Wildlife
12. Mark Klym – Bastrop, TX
13. Linda Campbell – Austin, TX
14. Bat Conservation International – Austin, TX
15. Timberline
16. Neal's Lodges & Café – Concan, TX
17. Sharry Buckner – Vanderpool, TX
18. Concan General Store – Concan, TX
19. Tractor Supply – Uvalde, TX
20. Wal-Mart – Uvalde, TX
21. Personal Touch – Uvalde, TX
22. Hill Country Adventure Tours – Concan, TX
23. The Embroidery Guy – Uvalde, TX
24. Grant Fruit Processing – Pollock, LA
25. Lee & Roberta Hutchins – Sinton, TX
26. Lora B. Garrison – Utopia, TX
27. LeAnn & Anthony Sharp – Utopia, TX
28. Main Street Utopia – Utopia, TX
29. Texas Hill Country River Region – Uvalde County Convention and Visitors Bureau
30. Valtex Nursery – Uvalde, TX
31. Laguna Nursery – Uvalde, TX
32. Julien's Gifts – Uvalde, TX
33. ACE Hardware – Uvalde, TX
34. House Pasture Cattle Co. Restaurant – Concan, TX
35. Lost Maples Café – Utopia, TX
36. Heaven's Landing – Utopia, TX
37. Garden of Eatin' – Utopia, TX
38. Rio Frio Lodging – Rio Frio, TX
39. Ricky Walker – Bandera, TX
40. Doug & Karen Rohde – Highland Village, TX
41. Brian & Judy Hetherington – Taylor, TX

NOTIFICATION TO MEMBERSHIP:

Doug Rohde (Past President) and Lamont Brown (Treasurer) have resigned from the Board of Directors. Their service to the organization during start-up has made a significant impact for the good for TBS – and for bluebirds across Texas.

President's Corner

A big applause to several who put in mega hours working on mega projects: It's my pleasure to serve along side these dedicated bluebirders.

LeAnn Sharp coordinated the successful Bluebird Summer Symposium (3rd Saturday in August) in Concan. Ricky Walker coordinated the Silent Auction.

Cheryl Anderson & Lysle Mockler worked for almost a year on the new logo. This was tedious work ... to say the least.

Cheryl Anderson, assisted by others including Sharon Kersten, Mary Leyendecker and LeAnn Sharp, created the "True Blue Friend" Nestbox Dedication Plaque Program. For Cheryl, the work has only just begun as she will administer the program (mailing notification letters, taking photos of the plaques, shipping plaques, locating TBS bluebirders who will accept plaques for one or more active nestboxes, et. Al.)

John Cys has the on-going project of cataloging our electronic photos. Each photo has a description and the name of the photographer.

Yours,

Pauline *Bluebirds Across Texas ... one nestbox at a time*

NABS 2006 Convention

Kerrville, TX April 27 – 30, 2006

"Blues in the Heart of Texas"

Next step: A logo! See TBS Forum

To:

North American Bluebird Society Holiday Gift Membership

The North American Bluebird Society (NABS) has a Holiday Gift Offer! With a \$30 family membership, there's a wrapped gift – the video "Stokes Bluebird Basics" and the booklet "Enjoying Bluebirds More" by Julie Zickefoose.

Just send to NABS the contact information for each recipient (name, address, phone, e-mail). Also include your contact information. (By the way, it's perfectly fine to give this gift to yourself; we have!)

Include a \$30 check or money order for each gift. If you add a gift card for your recipient, NABS will forward it with the wrapped items.

Mail to: NABS Holiday Membership Offer,
P.O. Box 244, Wilmot OH 44689-0244

If you prefer to holiday shop on-line, visit www.nabluebirdsociety.org and click the *Holiday Offer* link.

This special will be available through February 14, 2005.

The Texas Bluebird Society is a NABS affiliate. TBS met certain requirements to receive this special designation. At the present time, NABS receives no financial support from affiliate groups. NABS is supported by membership dues and donations of those who choose to be a part of the continent-wide bluebird restoration effort.

"Texas Blues" is a bi-monthly publication

From:

**The Texas Bluebird Society
P.O. Box 40868
Austin TX 78704**

**www.texasbluebirdsociety.org
info@texasbluebirdsociety.org**

President, Pauline Tom 512.268.5678 (home)
president@texasbluebirdsociety.org
Vice President, LeAnn Sharp 830.966.2134.
leann@texasbluebirdsociety.org
Secretary, Mary Leyendecker 361.844.0396
mary@texasbluebirdsociety.org

TBS Forum - Lines are now open!

Bluebirders with an Internet connection now have a place on the TBS Website to converse and ask questions about what's happening in and around their nestboxes and in and around Texas through the work of our 600+ member organization.

Visit our home page, www.texasbluebirdsociety.org, and select "TBS Forum." Participation requires registration and a password.

STEP 3

If applicable, tell us who will receive a card of remembrance or notification. Later, this person will also receive a photo of the dedicated nestbox as a memento. If you chose Option 2, 3 or 4 in Step 2, a card and photo will also be mailed to you. The initial card will be sent within two weeks and the photo will be mailed within five weeks.

Send Card & Photo to: Honored Person Honored Entity Family of the Deceased "Not Applicable"

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

STEP 4

Would you like your dedication to appear on our website as well?

Yes, please list my dedication on www.texasbluebirdsociety.org

No, please keep my dedication private

**Mail form to:
TBS True Blue Friend
P.O. Box 933
Azle, TX 76098**

STEP 5

Select a method of payment:

Personal check or money order made payable to:

Texas Bluebird Society *(please send payment with this order form)*

If you wish to pay by credit card, please visit our website www.texasbluebirdsociety.org

SAMPLE *(approximate actual size)*

True Blue Friend

SAMPLE

THIS EXAMPLE ILLUSTRATES A PLAQUE

WITH 154 LETTERS AND SPACES.

WITH FEWER LETTERS AND SPACES

THE TYPE WILL BE LARGER;

WITH MORE, THE TYPE WILL BE SMALLER



www.texasbluebirdsociety.org

Your contact information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Thank you for being a True Blue Friend.

President
Texas Bluebird Society
P.O. Box 40868
Austin, TX 78704

True Blue Friend
A Nestbox Dedication Program Benefiting
The Texas Bluebird Society

**This program benefits the Texas Bluebird Society, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Contributions are tax deductible as allowed by law.*