

SHENANDOAH AUDUBON/BLANDY BLUEBIRD TRAIL
2009 SEASON REPORT
by Kaycee Lichliter

Forty-two trained trail technicians logged a total 632 volunteer hours during the 2009 breeding season with the Shenandoah Audubon/Blandy Bluebird Trail located at the Virginia State Arboretum. Only one box on the 110-nestbox trail remained empty for the season; all other boxes had at least one nesting attempt by Bluebirds, Tree Swallows or House Wrens. The first Bluebird egg of the season was discovered on April 7 by Mr. Glenn Comer and Mr. Eric Williams.

The trail project provided its sixth year of consistently collected data to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the Virginia Bluebird Society and the USGS Bird Banding Lab. Six-year fledge totals (2004-2009) were: Bluebirds 1,066; Tree Swallows 1,232; House Wrens 1,039; and Carolina Chickadee 9. The overall nesting success for 2009 was: Bluebirds 71.6%; Tree Swallows 73.1%; House Wrens 73.4%. A total 1,117 Bluebirds nestlings have been USGS banded since 2001; 447 of which had color bands applied.

The Virginia Wildlife Magazine published the article and photos of Ms. Marie Majarov (local photographer, writer, trail tech) entitled, "Saving Virginia's Bluebirds," in the May 2009 issue. The article featured the SA/Blandy and Greg Baruffi/Timber Ridge Bluebird Trails.

Ms. Diane Greco, trail tech, and her three-year-old grandson, Eli Fuqua, were featured in a Northern Virginia Daily article written by Ms. Josette Keelor. The August 7, 2009 story highlighted their work with the trail project and attracting birds to your backyard by providing a nestbox.

Ms. Kaycee Lichliter and Mr. Glenn Comer presented, "The Blandy Blues" as part of the Blandy Summer Public Program Series. Ms. Lichliter and Mr. Comer also provided training to the staff and boys at Timber Ridge School for operations on the Greg Baruffi Bluebird Trail located on the school premises.

The 2009 season wrap-up was held in October with a potluck dinner. Ms. Stephanie Fry decorated the Blandy library to create a wonderful atmosphere for the evening. Ms. Marie Majarov gave her presentation, "Bluebirds, Blandy and More." Mr. Edward Crismond shared his guitar and singing talents. The group called three Screech Owls in the nearby conifers.

I would like to extend a big THANK YOU to all the trail participants and to those who support us. Working together is what makes the trail project a successful conservation project. If you are interested in participating with the Shenandoah Audubon/Blandy Bluebird Trail, please contact Kaycee Lichliter, Trail Manager, at kayceelichliter@hotmail.com or call Blandy Experimental Farm at 837-1758. Our workshops begin in March for the 2010 season. Registration is required.