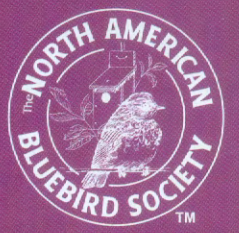


BLUEBIRD



SPRING 2024 VOL. 46 NO. 2



JOURNAL OF THE NORTH AMERICAN BLUEBIRD SOCIETY

Your Editor is a Happy Camper!

I am thrilled to be hearing from more of you, and from all reaches of North America. Our bluebirding brings people together that would never have the chance to meet through any other way. Just like the relationship between native plants, pollinators and bluebirds...we are indeed connected!

In this issue of *Bluebird*, I bring up the topics of pesticides and gardening for pollinators - things that don't harmonize very well together. I want more people to realize how the use of pesticides and herbicides are incompatible with supporting our beloved bluebirds. Please send your feedback in an email to NABSbluebirdeditor@gmail.com. You are very special people.

■ LORI JO JAMIESON



SAVE *the* DATE

VIRGINIA BLUEBIRD SOCIETY'S BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 1 & 2

Friday Evening 6-10pm | Saturday 8am-4pm

Location: Virginia Crossings, Glen Allen, VA

Registration opens early Sept. Contact Valerie Kenyon Gaffney with questions. vbs@virginiabluebirds.org

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:
MYRNA PEARMAN
Biologist, Author & Nature Photographer




www.virginiabluebirds.org



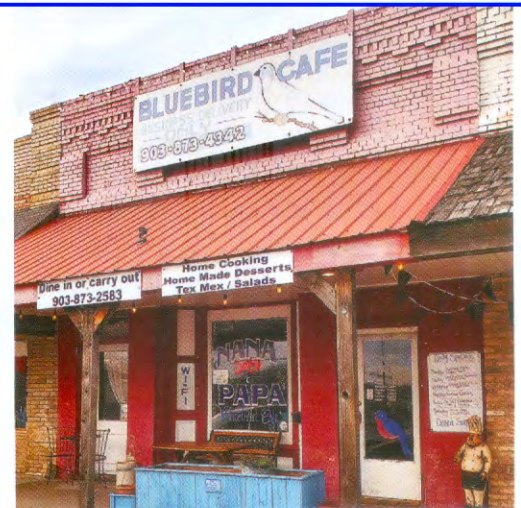
BLUEBIRDS EVERYWHERE

"Bluebirds Everywhere" is a feature that celebrates the widespread and creative uses of bluebird images and the word "bluebird" itself. We invite you to submit what you find! Camera images should be large, please. Send them to: NABSbluebirdEditor@gmail.com. Show us where the bluebirds are!



"My girls gave me this for Christmas!" Sent in by NABS' own Mike DeBruhl

BLUEBIRD DAYS WHISKEY - It's unclear where this term "bluebird day" originated, although it could stem from the typical association of bluebirds with optimism and hope. Skiers and snowboarders use the term "bluebird day" to denote a clear day after a storm when the sun is bright, the sky is blue, the air is still and the slopes glisten with clean, fluffy snow — ideal conditions for winter sports.



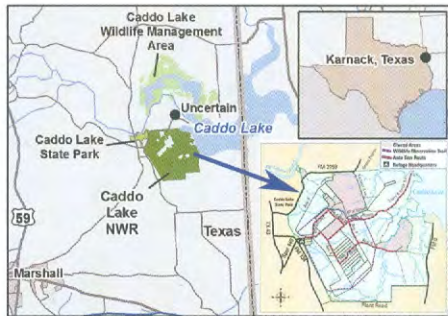
Be sure to read Mike & Thelma Woodruff's article on page 28 about their bluebird trail at the Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge.

BLUEBIRD CAFÉ - The Bluebird Cafe is in Wills Point, Texas, a small town about an hour east of Dallas. Thelma & I have had lunch here before. Submitted by Mike & Thelma Woodruff.

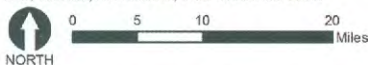
From Bombs to Bluebirds: Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge's Unusual History

MIKE AND THELMA WOODRUFF

A rural area in northeast Texas next to Caddo Lake, near the Louisiana border, is a national wildlife refuge, home to over 973 species of plants and animals, including a healthy population of the Eastern Bluebird.



Sources: US Fish and Wildlife Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Esri, DeLorme, AND, Teie Atlas, First American, UNEP-WCMC and USGS.



The site is located on the shore of Caddo Lake in East Texas, near the Louisiana border.

Between October 1942 & August 1945, this same quiet and pastoral region produced nearly 400 tons of TNT for the army at a cost of about 487 million dollars in today's currency. After being put on 'standby' in 1945 the facility was reactivated in 1952, manufacturing munitions, pyrotechnic devices, and rocket motors during the Korean War and, with the addition of illuminating cartridges, also during the Vietnam war.

The production of military ordnances on an 8,493 acre tract of land eventually transitioning to a conserved forest & wildlife zone, which includes our cherished bluebird, is an interesting & little-known slice of American history.

After the attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941, Texas senator & future president, Lyndon B. Johnson persuaded Johnson's father-in-law, Thomas J. Taylor, a prominent local

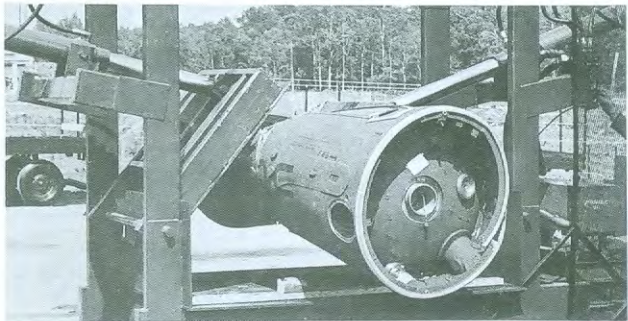
citizen, to sell a large portion of his property to the U.S. government. Mr. Taylor then helped convince some of his neighbors to sell what remaining land was needed.

The army's contract to establish the Longhorn Ordinance Works was approved December 22, 1941. The first flakes of During its existence, the plant was a major employer in East Texas. It was an enormously complex and successful operation with employees sometimes numbering nearly 3000.

On September 8, 1988, the destruction of the Pershing missile as part of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty with Russia occurred at the same site which is now called the Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge. The location choice was emblematic. That day, two missiles, the Pershing IA & II, were bound in harnesses, burned up, then crushed.

This formal event was attended by a Russian delegation, representatives from several NATO countries and American dignitaries led by Vice President George H. W. Bush. Although it attracted worldwide media attention, perhaps local journalist, Tom Kelley, best anticipated what would happen in the future when he wrote,

"But the dignitaries and the press were not the only observers. High on a utility wire perched two or three dozen bluebirds. When the engine roared to life the little birds vanished, but



PERSHING II - - After the rocket motor had cooled down and could be handled, the Pershing II rocket motor casing was crushed.

PERSHING MISSILES WERE DRY FIRED & DESTROYED FOLLOWING THE INF TREATY WITH RUSSIA. REMNANTS WERE PASSED OUT AS SOUVENIRS TO ATTENDEES OF THE CEREMONY.

as quiet returned to the tall pines surrounding the ceremonial grounds, so did the flock of bluebirds, which returned to the wire. The missiles and manufacturing activities are all gone now. The bluebirds remain, harbingers of Longhorn's future."

By the early 1990s, the army began looking at options to relinquish the land and contacted the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS). The non-profit Caddo Lake Institute (CLI) played a significant part in the transition from munitions to managed wildlife. They and the Greater Caddo Lake Association of Texas had the foresight to envision a refuge for plants & wildlife.

With those organizations help, among others, in 1993, the Ramsaur Convention approved Caddo Lake and portions of the refuge to be designated as "wetlands of international significance." The CLI leased about 900 acres in 1997. The remaining acreage was acquired by the FWS, issuing its refuge designation on October 19, 2000.

After an extensive effort of removing the nearly 450 buildings, few

vestiges of any structures remain - remnants of a memory now being replaced by nature as quiet tranquility reclaims the land. The refuge opened to the public in September of 2009.

Vanessa Neace, a Texas Parks & Wildlife biologist & TMN sponsor who works at the nearby Wildlife Management Area explains about refuge conservation, “*We maintain the underbrush with control burns and make selective cuttings in the forest, often leaving tall snags which are utilized by wildlife.*”

Every day, from sunrise to sunset, the public can enjoy hiking, biking, picnicking & the quiet beauty of nature. Although it’s a forest area, there are several well organized paved roads, remnants of the refuge’s past life.

With help from the public sector, Longhorn Ordinance Works and its various iterations was an extraordinarily efficient & very skilled endeavor by our government & various corporations. The Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge is proving itself to being a successful and equally necessary project as state & national agencies work with volunteers towards the common goal of preserving our precious natural resources. ■

Related Links:

<https://www.caddofriends.com/>

<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/caddo-lake>

<https://txmn.org/cypress/members-area/bluebird-information/>

<https://www.ramsar.org/>



THE CYPRESS BASIN CHAPTER OF THE TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS, A CITIZEN SCIENTIST VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION, CONTRIBUTES TO THE UPKEEP AND MAINTENANCE OF THE REFUGE. THEY MONITOR SEVERAL NUMBERED BOXES IN THE REFUGE AND GATHER INFORMATION AS TO WHICH ARE MOST USED AND WHEN SUCCESSFUL FLEDGING OCCURS.

Wings over the Rockies

NATURE FESTIVAL
MAY 6-12, 2024



Music Concert
Over the Moon
Friday, May 10, 2024



Gala Dinner
Keynote Speaker
Bob McDonald
Saturday, May 11, 2024

100+ events
Online Auction
Online Events Calendar
Preview begins
Thursday, March 28
10am MDT
Online Ticket Sales begin
Tuesday, April 9
10am MDT

www.wingsovertherockies.org

