



howard county
BIRD CLUB
50th ANNIVERSARY • 1972 – 2022

MEMBERS' MEMORIES

Connie Bockstie

My introduction to the Howard County Bird Club many years ago was through a Horned Grebe. It landed in my backyard on a cold, icy day and was unable to “take off” from the icy ground. I identified the bird from my bird book and called a person who belonged to the club. She assured me that it probably was NOT a grebe, but I kept insisting that it fit the picture and description.

She finally came over and had to agree that indeed it was a grebe. We had to find a place with open water and finally took the bird to Greenbridge where we released it and watched as it flew off. What a wonderful way to find out how much I loved birding.

A “bird whisperer” is a title that I would love to have — and one day a stranger driving by called me just that! I was “talking” to a Turkey Vulture who was working on a “delicious” road kill in the middle of the road. I got out of my car and carefully moved the vulture’s dinner to the side of the road to prevent the Turkey Vulture from getting hit by fast moving cars coming around a wide bend in the road. (Unfortunately, this had happened a year before in the same location.) When the man stopped to inquire what I was doing “talking” to the Turkey Vulture, I jokingly said that I was a “bird whisperer.” The man was so impressed that he couldn’t wait to call his wife to report that he had actually met a real “bird whisperer.”

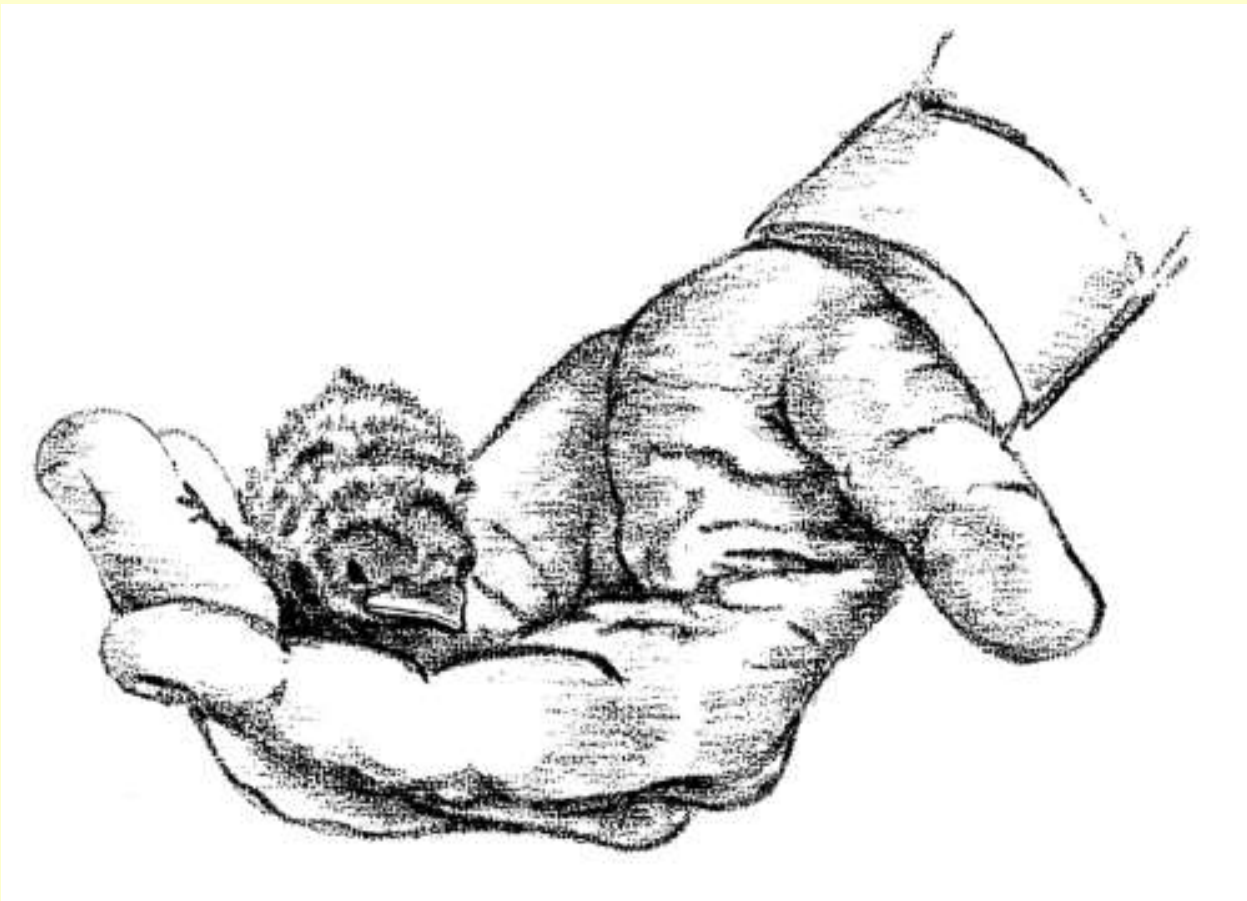
It was always a real pleasure to go birding with (the late) Joe Seuss — and at times, downright hilarious! One day, Joe was teaching me the finer points of being a bluebird box monitor when we came across a nesting box with eight Eastern Bluebird eggs. Soon after, we found another box with none at all. Joe decided we should “divide” the eggs up between the two boxes. Now, I wasn’t too sure about this, but Joe was the boss and I went along with the plan. Joe carefully removed four of the eight eggs and placed them in the empty nest box. Then we hid behind the corner of a nearby garage to see what would happen when the bluebird tenants discovered that the “eggless” box suddenly had a bountiful supply. Soon a male and female bluebird returned and entered the previously empty box. They immediately flew back out of the box and sat on some nearby tree branches. Joe supplied the following conversation:

“Well, Marg, and what have you been up to while I was away on my trip?” Marg replied, “Nothing John. Honest, I’ve been as good as good can be!” But John was not too convinced.

Later that day, Joe and I returned to the aforementioned box and found that all was well. Several weeks later we confirmed that all the eggs had hatched and the babies had fledged successfully in both nest boxes.

It was always a “trip” going birding with Joe Seuss, but never as much fun as that day we took “bird adoption” into our own hands.

See drawing on next page



Drawing by Sue Probst of Joe Suess's hand holding a nestling bluebird. Sue is Connie's daughter