

The Case of the Migrating Nest Box

By Ellen Lafouge

Since being installed 4 years ago, a young tree had sprouted and grown up uncomfortably close to one of my golf course nest boxes, making it easier for predators to access the box. Bluebirds have always favored that box and this season was no different. I had meant to move the nest box at the beginning of the season but unfavorable weather had prevented it before the first nesting cycle. After the first brood fledged I returned with my post pounder to tackle the job. But upon checking the box I found a new bluebird nest with 4 eggs and the female incubating inside. The bluebirds were not dallying waiting for me to move that box and had just gotten on with it.



I hesitated but thought there's no time like the present and decided to move the box as planned, figuring the bluebirds would be able to cope since there were eggs in the nest. While the bluebird couple watched and commented on the operation from a nearby tree, I delicately removed the nest with eggs and placed it in a covered shoebox. Then pulled the old pole and installed a new one and the nest box about 12 feet from its original placement, which would allow the golf course grounds crew to mow comfortably around it. Thanks to the easy Tamm method of nest box installation, the whole procedure took less than 5 minutes.

The nest was gently placed back in the box and we removed ourselves a short distance away to see how long it would be before the bluebirds returned to it. By my watch -- all of a minute and a half! The female and male flew to the little tree first and, discussing it among themselves, pondered the migrating nest box. They then flew together to the newly sited box where the male proclaimed all was well if not normal, and the female, reassured, proceeded to pop inside and resume her incubation meditations. She was sitting on her eggs again in under 7 minutes from start to finish of Operation Nest Box Migration. The second brood went on to fledge successfully, again demonstrating that bluebirds are resilient and amenable to our interventions on their behalf as long as we follow their rules of engagement.

New members

Join BRAW

By Sue Schultz, Membership Chair

Jamie Beebe – New Glarus

Ernest Kramer – Readstown

Daniel Nordhaus – Wild Rose

Ronald Miller – Dane

Harriet Story – Mineral Point – Gift sub from Judith Clayton

Margaret & Gerald Roth – Prairie DuSac

Jan Beaver – Verona

Joe, Sig, Joey & Jacob Carney –

Verona – Gift Sub from Jan Beaver

Amy Bachman – Pewaukee

John Bigham – New Paris, OH

Karen & Bud Gaston – Green Bay

Thomas Gavin - Waukesha

Donations –

\$50 – From Mary Hoeft in Memory of her husband Don Hoeft

Trail of Honor Correction

Rodger Meyer, Polk County, had a Trail of Honor for the 2010 season. His 80 boxes averaged 3.18 bluebirds fledged per box. Sorry for the omission, Rodger.

Fall Check List ✓

- ✓ Complete data Form 21 and send to Kent Hall before Sept. 15
- ✓ Attend BRAW Annual Convention at Schlitz Audubon in Bayside, Sept. 17
- ✓ Clean out nest boxes
- ✓ Repair nest boxes as needed
- ✓ Caulk any gaps to keep out cold wind and rain
- ✓ Put in new nest boxes now while the ground isn't frozen.
- ✓ Tell a friend about bluebirds!!