

Summer 2010
Vol. 25, No. 2



Wisconsin Bluebird

Newsletter of the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin, Inc.

BRAW is an affiliate member of the North American Bluebird Society (NABS), founded by Lawrence Zeleny

Annual Convention at Mead Wildlife Center see page 2



Pat Ready

Inside this issue: Annual Convention - 2 • From Bauldry to BRAW - 3 • We've Come a Long Way Baby - 4 • Sunny Side of the Rainbow - 6 • New Members! - 6 • Looking Back - 7 • Deterring Black Flies - 8 • Black Fly in WI - 9 • Save a Chickadee - 9 • BPCA Annual BB Report - 10 • Annual Report Form - 13 • Nest Box Fix - 15 • Got the Blues - 16 •

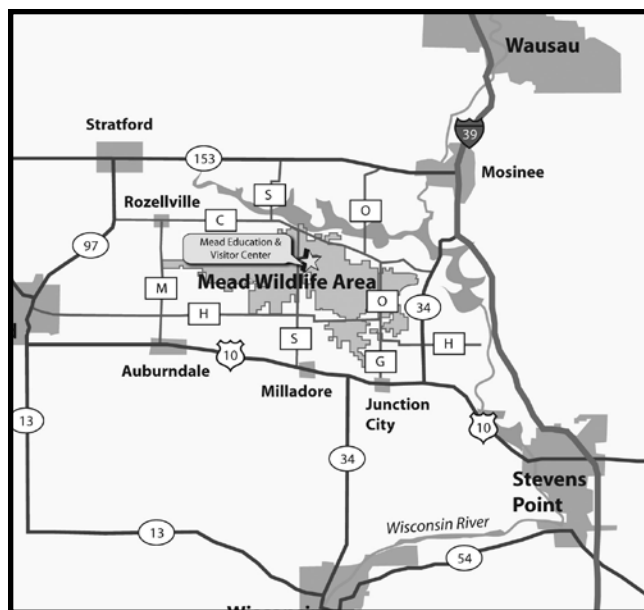
2010 BRAW Convention will be at Mead State Wildlife Center

The BRAW State Convention will be held on September 18, 2010, at the Mead State Wildlife Area on Hwy. S, north of Milladore, WI. The Mead & McMillan State Wildlife Areas have over 30,000 acres of land, making it the largest State Wildlife Area next to Crex Meadows SWA and Sandhill SWA. It is located in the ecological "transition zone, making it the most diverse of the large wildlife areas in the state.

The program is set. There will be a Silent Auction and luncheon. Each of the past two BRAW State Conventions have had record numbers of participants (100+), so we want to see that excellence continued.

Directions:

From the south, take I-39 north of Stevens Point to Hwy. 10 west. Pass through Junction City and Milladore. At the west edge of Milladore, take Hwy. "S" 6.2 miles to the entryway into the Mead SWA Education & Visitor Center (Great Blue Heron sign). Follow the roadway into the Center. From the west, take Hwy. 10 east and follow the directions above. From the east, take Hwy. 10 west into Stevens Point and follow the directions above. From the



north, take I-39 past Mosinee, turn on Hwy. 34 south, then Hwy. C west, then Hwy. S to the Mead Center.

Program for 2010 BRAW State Convention

8:00-9:00: Registration

9:00-9:15: President's Welcome: Joe Schultz; Treasurer's Report: Mike Helgren;
OTS Account Report: Kent Hall

9:15-10:00: Was this the year to hit our goal of 30,000 fledglings? Dr. Kent Hall, BRAW
V-P and Data Collection Coordinator

10:00-10:30: The effects of habitat and food availability on reproductive success in Eastern
Bluebirds: Medhavi Ambardar

10:30-10:45: Break

10:45-11:30: Research with the Wisconsin Northern Saw-whet Owl: Gene Jacobs

11:30-12:00: Engaging high school students in a bluebird monitoring program: Tracy Swedlund

12:00--1:00: Luncheon (menu to be announced)

1:00--1:15: Announcement of Silent Auction winners: Joe Schultz (Auction bidding over at
1:00 p.m.

1:15---End: Monitoring give & take: What works, what doesn't: BRAW Panel (TBA).

ANNUAL MEETING PRE-REGISTRATION FORM

Please indicate the number of catered lunches for your party at \$10 each: _____. Pay upon registering the day of the event.

Name: _____

Return form **ONLY** to:

Kent Hall

200 Pine Bluff Rd.

Stevens Point, WI 54481

Call: 715-344-8081 or email info. to Kent at

kentsue@charter.net by Sept. 1

DON'T FORGET THE SILENT AUCTION

Are you creative with sewing, baking or other crafts? Do you have a garden? Use your imagination for the silent auction. It doesn't need to be bluebird related.

WHITE ELEPHANT ITEMS DO NOT SELL!

Help support BRAW with your donation.

Plan to buy an item and support BRAW bluebird trail development.

From Bauldry to BRAW: Trails Revamped = Success!

By Gene Birr, Oconto County Coordinator & Steve Mayer, Outagamie County Coordinator

During the early spring of 2008 my friend, Steve Mayer and I were building 60 nest boxes for bluebirds in the style we had learned from a local legendary bluebird enthusiast, the late Vince Bauldry from Suamico, Wisconsin. Each of us had attended seminars he gave promoting bluebirds in the mid 1990's. These boxes were 10" deep that had open rooftops covered with a wire - screen mesh and had inch thick baffles over the round entry holes. These features had been designed by Bauldry to encourage bluebirds to nest by providing a secure nesting cavity which was safe from the predation by raccoons.

While we were building I had sent for information to join the statewide bluebird group BRAW, the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin, prompted by an article we had read written by Door County outdoor writer Roy Lukes in the *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. After we had completed our nest boxes we received our *BRAW Information Packet*, which contained many facts about bluebirds that we were not yet aware of, such as where to properly place boxes in good bluebird habitat. Most important and interesting to us, it recommended a much different shaped nest box, i.e. one that is smaller, less deep and is erected on a slender metal pole to deter raccoons.

Statewide, BRA W consists of 850 members including nearly 400 who monitor bluebird trails totaling 8,700 nest boxes. In 2009 they helped produce 28,814 bluebird fledglings as well as more than 11,000 Tree Swallows, 4,095 House Wrens, and 742 Black-Capped Chickadees. Having joined this association we were open to learning new ideas to encourage bluebirds, although we reluctantly accepted their suggestions for nest box design and the weekly monitoring because our previous ideas had been much different. Still, we became active members, eager to establish our new bluebird trails.

In 2008 I began monitoring a trail of 40 nest boxes on and nearby the farm

of my brother Curt in the town of Morgan in southern Oconto County. I had been using Bauldry boxes for several years, many of them still mounted on old wood fence posts and electric poles along country roadsides. That year I fledged only 24 bluebirds in five of my 40 boxes, an average of only .6 BB/box. Tree Swallows used 24 nest boxes and produced 124 fledglings, a 3.1 TS/box average.

In September Dr. Kent Hall, VP of BRAW, contacted me explaining ways I could improve the bluebird production on my trail. He met me and we scoured new areas to locate my trail. We began by contacting the superintendent of the Sandalwood Country Club in Abrams in southern Oconto County which is adjacent to my mother's family farm, now owned by my cousin Greg and his family. I had placed 15 nest boxes there three years earlier. Kent explained that golf courses are excellent habitat for bluebirds as they provide ample areas of short grass in which to feed for insects as well as sparsely located trees where they can perch while hunting. We found 12 sites there and located 20 more along nearby roadsides along a route connecting my home to the golf course and my brother's farm. Kent assured me I could double or triple my birds per box by selecting these locations. Later, Steve and I installed our recently built Bauldry boxes there but we had modified them, making them only 5" deep rather than 10" and we covered the open tops to make solid roofs.

The following spring 2009 I began monitoring this new trail of 55 boxes including these 32 sites as well as the best 23 sites of my old trail. Monitoring them weekly from April



Gene (above) and Steve (below) put the finishing touches on new NABS Style nest boxes they built for their trails.



through August I found my trail fledged 128 bluebirds in 31 of 55 boxes averaging 2.3 BB/box. This was nearly four times the average of my first years monitoring! This trail also fledged 113 Swallows, 16 Wrens, and 3 Chickadees. .

Providing nest boxes for bluebirds also makes them available for other cavity nesting songbirds such as Tree Swallows, House Wren, and Black-Capped Chickadees all of which use a similar sized nest site. These songbirds usually arrive and nest later than the earlier arriving bluebird so their competition for the nest box is not severe, especially when it is properly placed in good habitat desired by bluebirds.

The greatest threat to the nesting success of the Eastern Bluebird is the House Sparrow. The Sparrow competes fiercely with songbirds often killing them in the box or destroying their eggs and young. Controlling house sparrows is important to allow bluebirds the opportunity to compete

continued on next page

Bauldry to BRAW . . . continued from page 3

for a nesting site. We often trap and destroy the adults that attempt to claim a nest box or we destroy the entire nest once the female has laid a full clutch of eggs and begins incubating them. This practice often discourages the house sparrow from nesting again, freeing the box for use by bluebirds.

On my 55 box trail in 2009 I contended with House Sparrows in 19 of them. During the season I destroyed 33 adults as well as several nests of eggs and young. In those 19 boxes I later observed and recorded 10 bluebird nests, 9 Tree Swallow nests and two Wren nests. Only four boxes remained empty.

Steve Mayer had similar experience with his trail in Outagamie County during his first year of monitoring in 2009. With the assistance of Kent Hall, he and I helped set up a nest box trail on the Crystal Springs Golf Course near Seymour. Within two weeks of erecting the 30 NABS style boxes on 1/2" conduit, all of which were supplied by BRAW, 17 of them were taken over by House Sparrows. His weekly monitoring and vigorous trapping eliminated 34 Sparrows. The trail fledged 69 bluebirds on the golf course and 19 more on a 10 box trail along a nearby farm for a total of 88 bluebirds in 40 boxes, a 2.2 BB/box average.

We had experienced much difficulty while inspecting our Bauldry deep box houses. Their side-opening doors open from the bottom and swing upward so viewing the nest, eggs and young was often tough to do especially since we had raised the floors to make them less deep. Often this meant that the nest box was erected too high and couldn't be looked into easily. Our efforts to control House Sparrows were also complicated by the bottom opening side door. Installing each Van Ert trap was tedious and time-consuming as it required using a stub-nose screw driver to install screws inside the front of a confined 4"X4" space. Because of our high numbers of sparrows we needed to install these screws into nearly 50 nest boxes! We began to realize that our high numbers

of sparrows may have been a result of our own making. Those 15 boxes on my cousin's farm adjacent to the golf course went largely unmonitored for 3 years except for spring cleaning and a couple visits during nesting season. It [s] likely that the sparrows produced there moved on the golf course and nearby roadside trails. Steve's golf course trail also had several houses placed there years earlier that likely were not monitored and produced sparrows as well.

Having experienced this four month long struggle observing these nest boxes while seeing the success of regular monitoring and properly sized boxes located in ideal habitat, we were inspired to upgrade our inventory of bluebird houses. Last fall I acquired the inch thick, rough-cut white cedar lumber we needed from a local sawmill and Steve purchased an air-nail gun, a Dremel tool and a compound miter saw to improve our next box building abilities. Within three weekends we had completed 122 NABS bluebird nest boxes, including each one with Van Ert Trap screws for trapping sparrows. By late October we had removed all of our Bauldry boxes and replaced them with the new NABS boxes and added 10 boxes to each of our trails.

Meanwhile we had attended the BRAW State Convention in La Farge at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve in September, where we were encouraged by Dr. Hall to share our stories of bluebird trail success despite our troubles with sparrows. Being acknowledged for our efforts there was surpassed in November when we were contacted by BRAW President Joe Schultz and VP Kent Hall. Citing our "interest in continuing to improve our understanding of bluebird production," these BRAW leaders offered each of us the opportunity to become a new County Coordinator for BRAW. Steve in Outagamie County and Gene in Oconto County!

By accepting these positions each of us continues to pursue his experience of helping bluebirds find new homes while they, like us continue traveling down our bluebird trails.

We've Come a Long Way Baby!!!

By Bob Tamm

Like many of you, I sometimes resist change. I mean, if something has been good enough for years and years, why change it? Why build a new mouse trap if the old one works? Why try fixing something that ain't broke? Well, anyway, with the help of these oft-used clichés, I think you get the picture...

And I also believe that every one of you can think up numerous examples of changes that turned out to be GOOD for us – changes that helped us in every conceivable part of our lives. And because of this, we adapt... we change our thinking, we change our way of doing things, because we know it actually IS progress!

In the bluebirding "business", it is no different! Some of you have been around long enough to know that, even in our state, in the last couple decades there have been quite a few changes in nest boxes for instance – and those changes have resulted in ever-increasing numbers of bluebirds!

But, before I get into that, allow me to back up to a little more "ancient" history first. Nesting boxes obviously are not new. I have some books from the late 1800s that show pictures of bluebird boxes! And, right around the turn of the century (1900, that is) a German man by the name of Baron Hans Von Berlepsch created nest boxes that were so successful in Germany that two U.S. companies bought the rights to produce them in this country. And Berlepsch boxes became extremely popular in the very early 1900s. In fact, Ernest Harold Baynes, in his 1915 book, "Wild Bird Guests and How to Entertain Them", said this about the Berlepsch boxes: "*Despite the fact that Berlepsch nest boxes are only just beginning to be known in this country, they already more than hold their own against all the other kinds put together.*" What happened was this: Back then, nest boxes were quite popular in some areas, and people were satisfied with the results. But the German Baron was not. He invented a machine that would hollow out a



Two Bauldry type nest boxes. The one on the left is the Bauldry box and the one on the right is an Olson designed by Verlyn Olson a close friend of Vince Bauldry.

log much the same way that a woodpecker does it! Result? A better mouse trap – er - nest box. I look at the old pictures of the Berlepsch flicker house and Berlepsch bluebird house and think to myself – Hey, these would work today! They look pretty darn good! But, boring out logs can become labor intensive, even if we had one of those Berlepsch boring machines.

So, back to Wisconsin's nestbox history. We all know that some boxes were very popular back in the 1980s and 1990s. The old Hill Lake boxes come to mind. A good idea, with some good reasoning behind its design. After all, a deep deep box should – and does – make it more difficult for a cat or raccoon to grab a quick meal. And the Hill Lake became the most popular box in Wisconsin. You could see them everywhere when you travelled in the state. BRAW endorsed them also, and, along with other boxes, including the controversial Bauldry Box, printed plans for building them – or at least would send you the plans for building them if you so requested.

What happened? Well, back in the mid-nineties, people like Joe O'Halloran began to compile results - results of those monitors who sent in their information at the end of the "season". And the resulting statistics showed that the Hill Lakes were producing a ton of tree swallows, and only a comparative handful of bluebirds. The end of the Hill Lake Era had begun.

Around 1980, another new box had entered the scene. The Bauldry Box - created by Vincent M. Bauldry, a native of Green Bay, Wisconsin, and an avid birder who loved to band bluebirds, nestlings and adults, and devoted much of his life to the betterment of bluebirds. On May 17th, 1975, Vince won the "Silver Passenger

Pigeon" award from the Wis. Society for Ornithology for his many contributions. Vince was recognized for his many achievements on behalf of our bluebirds, but his "invention" of the Bauldry Box was not his crowning glory, as subsequent years would prove. Vince cited many positive results of his box that was basically a Hill Lake box with a 3 inch screened hole in the roof. Almost instantly, it created controversy. There were supporters in the early years. Here is an excerpt from an article in the Nevada Herald, dated Sun. May 2nd, 1982. The article, written by staff writer Debbie Welch, described the plight of the bluebird in Missouri, which uses the Bluebird as its state bird: "Vince Bauldry of Wisconsin designed a unique nesting box which is an adaptation of the natural fencepost cavity that bluebirds most frequently use as nest sites. The Bauldry boxes have an open roof which allows rain water in. The rain water will not harm the bluebird hatchlings, but does discourage house sparrows from nesting. Bauldry's box pattern creates a deeper box which confines nestlings to the box for a longer period. This enables the birds to develop further and therefore be stronger flyers when they leave..."

In the Fall 1996 issue of Wisconsin Bluebird, under LETTERS, one man stated his objections to the liberal use of boxes other than the Bauldry. Here are his comments:

"Why don't you keep it in Wisconsin and not keep pushing those two

Minnesota bluebird boxes, the Peterson and Gilbertson nest boxes? They are the most unsafe bluebird boxes out there. The Peterson box is equal to a coon and cat feeder. The Gilbertson box is equal to a bluebird microwave. I've been bluebirding for over 35 years and had hundreds of bluebirds banded throughout these years. I've been using the open top Bauldry box – the safest and most natural box out there today. You tell me, what box is the closest resemblance to the old hollow cedar fence post, the natural habitat of the bluebird? Yes! The Bauldry Box!

In the past years, I've had so many people tell me that a cat or coon got my birds in my Peterson box.

Are you people trying to save the bluebird in Wisconsin or just feed the cats and coons?

If Minnesota wants to use these houses and decrease the bluebird population, let them, but let's keep them out of Wisconsin. Wake up and smell the roses. Common sense tells you what box is the most natural and safest in the field – the Bauldry Box. I'm talking from 35 years experience.

Signed, D. S., Little Suamico

So, there you are, some early returns favored the Bauldry box. But evidence collected over subsequent years quickly made it obvious that this box was NOT a "better mouse trap". In fact, every major birding organization, including the North American Bluebird Society, soon jumped on the band wagon in non-support of the box. Consequently, you don't see many of them out there today... but they DO show up every once in a while. A few years ago, while putting in a trail at the Tudor Oaks Nursing Home, one of the old boxes I replaced was a small version Bauldry box.

(Bauldry boxes actually had a few different "models"!)

This particular box was sold in stores at one time because I could still see the imprinted logo on the wood. I also recently installed a trail at the Hartford Golf Club. The owner had lamented that her bluebird production wasn't very good, despite her having boxes around the course.

As I found out, there were some obvious reasons for her so-so success. One reason was poor placement of the old boxes. Some were nailed to trees – that wasn't good. But worse were

(continued on page 15)

Sunny Side of the Rainbow

*(Bluebird Restoration)
by Pat Perzynski*

*Open door to the
morning sun*

*Perched upon the
crescent ring of a
white pine board*

*Fostered from the
short grass prairie
on golden sands*

*Flash
bluebell wings
and a pumpkin bottom*

*Restored by man
a trail of homes
of perfect size and dimension*

*A weekly check
to make sure
the bluebirds are
perfectly proportioned*

*Hoping for someday
in this heaven
a bluebird serenade
upon thy shoulders*

*Coming to you soon
on the sunny side of the
rainbow
bluebirds flying.*

New Members Join BRAW

By Sue Schultz
Michele Benesh – Brodhead
Joseph Breiman – Prairie du
Chien
Jeri Derr – Cottage Grove
Kevin Hock – Norwalk
Amy Ihlenfeldt – Madison
Mary Korkor – Hartland
Keith Krause – Berlin
Paul Merkle – Beloit
Jim Mundinger – Durano IL
Mary & Mark Neumann –
Brodhead
Barb Resch – Birnamwood
Carol Stavlund – Rockford, IL
Sue Stowell – Sun Prairie
Tracy Troge – Seymour
Roger Van Groll – Little Chute
Donna Garske – Oregon
**Denise Thornton & Doug
Hansmann** – Madison
Carla Foust – Oshkosh
Judy Ulery – Oconomowoc
Jean Druckenmiller – Madison
Jamie Shorts – West Allis – on
behalf of the neighborhood house
of Milwaukee – Nature Center
Karen Johnson – Milwaukee
Lynn Engebose – Brussels
Richard Gadiant – Sister Bay
Jennifer Wenzel – Racine - New
Life member
Sally Martin – Wildrose – Gift
Sub from Mark Martin
Laura Bishop – Tomah
Judy Conant – Tomah
Carolyn Klein – Sparta
Victoria Labensky – Tomah
Linda Wildes – Tomah
Sarah Freyman – Egg Harbor
Kevin Huck – Fort McCoy
Jerry & Mary Pults – New
Richmond
David Dees – Weston
Chad Weinzelman – Kenosha
Bruce Manly – Ellison Bay
Peter Quirin – Sparta
Greg & Tara Roessler –
Mazomanie
Tina Schimke – Elkhorn
Pat Leverick – Delavan
Rick Thoenes – Lisbon
Dennis Panicucci – Hartford
Lila Kuta – Hartford
Tom & Kathy Mand – Egg Harbor
Lloyd Gerrits – Sister Bay
Dennis & Heather Jensen –

Burlington
Theresa McMahon – Eau Claire –
Gift from Linda Wildes
Dawn & Bruce Abraham – Ellison
Bay
Scott & Tracey Gross – Mount
Horeb
Almond Rod & Gun Club –
Almond – New LIFE members
Jim Hebel – Hobart
Steven & Sandra Hupfer – Green
Bay
Star Prairie Fish & Game, Inc –
Star Prairie – New LIFE members
Peggy Falk – Rockford, MI
Bill Forrest – Sun Prairie
Joshua & Jennifer Reitz –
Scandinavia
Todd Wiegand – Middleton
Duncan Shand – Sturgeon Bay
Chip & Carol Felland –
Waunakee
Laurie Buske – Fish Creek
Bonnie Lumberg – Ashland
Pete Morgan – Wild Rose
Chris Wohlers – Larsen
Alan Kintopf – Sturgeon Bay
Stewart Duckworth – Hancock

Donations –
Karen Johnson – Milwaukee -
\$100 Trail Donation
Sarah Freyman – Egg Harbor -
\$50 donation
Hartford Golf Club – Harford -
\$50 donation

Data Errors for the 2009 Season

By Kent Hall

These errors were made for data
submissions in 2009. Thanks to
all who notified me to get them
changed.

Pat Handrick: Trail of Honor: 3.0
fledglings/ nest box & Dane Co.
monitor

John Liechty: Trail of Honor: 2.2
fledglings/ nest box

John Loehlein: Brown Co. monitor
Frank Villigan: Door Co. monitor

Spelling Errors:

Jack & Holly Bartholmai
Signe Onsrud
Kaylynn Peterson

Looking Back

By Don Bragg, Rhinelander



5 Years Ago, Summer 2005

As an example of a solution being the problem, BRAW director Gary Gaard of Madison wrote, "My first experience using a bluebird house with no ventilation holes was the placement of a Gilwood house. At the same time, I also had Hill Lake (vent holes), Peterson (vent holes) and Herman Olson (vent holes) houses. On hot days in mid-June, I was finding dead baby bluebirds in all of the vented houses. At the same time, I was finding robust, healthy baby bluebirds in the non-vented Gilwood house.

The baby bluebird deaths (in the vented boxes) were not from the sun beating on houses when the temperature was near 100F. Instead, nestling deaths (June nest box mortality) were due to numerous bites by the blood-feeding black fly (*Simulium meridionale*) with the common name "Turkey Gnat (which entered the boxes illuminated within by the vents and other openings)." (Page 4.)

* * * *

"Predators play a major role in decreasing production rates of bluebirds...Predation in the nest box is easier to quantify because the subjects are confined, but occasionally the reason for mortality or disappearance is not obvious and you must search for clues," wrote Leif Marking, BRAW Nest Box Committee chair of Onalaska.

He submitted three cases of nests with dead young bluebirds to the USGS National Wildlife Health Center, Madison, WI, for analysis to determine the possible cause of death. "Since black flies were present in all nests with dead chicks, I can reasonably assume that black flies were the most probable cause of death," Marking concluded. (Pg. 8.)

10 Years Ago, Summer 2000

"Since 1996, BRAW has analyzed more than 17,000 box-years of data. In response to the annual findings of that study, each year more of its volunteer bluebird monitors turned away from box pairing; 57% of the state's East Zone boxes were paired in 1996, and only 13% in 1999...(in the meanwhile) geography didn't change. The tree swallow pressure didn't change. Yes, the East Zone singles-box bluebird productivity was about tripled as the trail management style changed to the use of singles boxes," reported Joe O'Halloran of the Data Analysis Committee. (Pgs. 12 & 13.)

15 Years Ago, Summer 1995

An extremely simple sparrow trap design is reported by Bork of Cottage Grove. Bork tacks a small (galvanized chicken-wire) staple vertically above the entrance hole on the inside of the nest box. He then unfolds a small paper clip and shapes it into the letter "V". Next, the clip is

inserted through the staple to hang down over the entire hole. The staple should be driven into the wood until the clip can just move freely. The trap is now set for the sparrow and it will not be able to get back out of the box."

"Bork says "it is important to remember that this trap can only be used with supervision. All birds, including bluebirds, that enter the box will be permanently trapped and the captured bird would starve if not released. When you have trapped the house sparrow, be sure to remove the paper clip wire and leave the box safe for your bluebirds." (Pgs. 5 & 6.)

20 Years Ago, Summer 1990

In a letter addressed to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, BRAW president Dick Nikolai asked if the monitoring of bluebird boxes on a trail during the nesting season could possibly be viewed as a violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA).

Nikolai cited specific actions during monitoring such as cleaning out old nests after a brood has fledged, lowering the height of a nest, and even the close observation of a nest to determine when young birds are ready for banding.

USF&W Service assistant regional director for law enforcement Larry L. Hood replied, "...simply looking in a bluebird box to determine if the nest is alright, is not a violation of the MBTA, since there is no harassment prohibition as there is in the Bald Eagle Protection Act or the Endangered Species Act. I do believe that if a person does visit boxes, great care must be taken to insure that predators, such as raccoons, do not learn to associate the human trail with a nest box full of eggs or young...in the case of nesting material in boxes, our policy is that the material can be removed and destroyed after nesting is completed and the young have fledged from the nest and are no longer using the structure as a night roost...I do think that anyone working with a species nesting in man-made boxes needs to be very sure their action does not jeopardize the species in some way. The best of intentions can sometimes lead to negative results." (Pgs. 1 & 2.)



**Bluebird info –
www.braw.org**

Detering Black Flies

Bet Zimmerman

Black flies (also known as buffalo gnats, turkey or white socks) are biting, blood-sucking, can cause an allergic reaction (welt). swarming insects in the genus *Simulium*. There are about 1800 different species that belong to the Simuliidae family, and at least 254 known species of black flies north of the Mexican border, some of which target specific species.

The ones that are a problem in the nestbox are small (about 1/8 inch [2-5 mm] long), black or gray, with a humped back, short legs, and antennae. Only the female takes a blood meal. They will bite for about three weeks before they die. They can fly up to 15 miles in search of blood. Eggs are laid in fresh, slow running water (rivers, creeks, streams). There is only one generation each year. Saliva injected during biting can cause an allergic reaction (welt).



Purple Martin nestling with welts from black fly bites.” After a few more days of being bitten it died. Photo by Bob Flam.

Black flies are a serious pest, especially in some parts of the midwest. In 2008, Bob Flam indicated that ~240 bluebird nestlings were lost in 300 boxes on nine golf course trails in Iowa. Flam also lost 35 Purple Martin nestlings in his boxes, and his friend lost all of his Purple Martin nestlings (70-80) that same year.

These insects typically live for one month in the spring (especially in areas with a lot of rainfall). They typically die when temperatures exceed 80° F (although Keith Kridler notes that he has seen them in northeast Texas on livestock when it is 115° F.) They prefer to feed on



U.S. Department of Agriculture

warm, sunny, days, windless days. Populations tend to peak from mid-June to July, and adults are active for about 2-3 weeks each year. Thus they are a bigger problem for later broods. BRAW (Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin) has found that nestlings under 5 days old are not bitten and 10 day old nestlings are most susceptible.

CLUES AND IMPACT: Intense, repeated black fly feeding can cause death of nestlings, possibly due to blood loss or an immune response to the saliva injected during feeding, or even from suffocation as birds pile up on top of one another to avoid bites.

Nestlings may have circular red or purple welts/lesions on featherless areas of the body, especially under the wings. Adult flies may be found in ear canals. Black flies may be seen hovering around the nestbox.

DETERRING: Black flies may be attracted to dark colors, carbon dioxide (CO₂) which birds exhale, and the scent of a dirty nest.

- Do not locate boxes near fresh, slow-moving running water.

- When blackflies are active, BRAW recommends spraying the inside of box with Pyrethrin Flys Away II (daily) until nestlings are 12-13 days old. Pyrethrin is a repellent, but has low residual activity.

- Remove or replace dirty nests (with lots of fecal material).

- Minimize access:

- Try nestboxes without ventilation holes, or stuff ventilation holes or slots with Mortite caulk or cotton, or cover with duct tape (on the outside) or fine screen folded on itself. (But note that Kent Hall in Wisconsin found that no nestboxes were immune to blackflies, even with vent holes plugged.)

- Use a nestbox with no vent holes (Gilwood, Simple House, flyGuard boxes) if you are not in a very hot climate (e.g., I suspect this would not

work in Texas).

- Apply Tanglefoot around the exterior edges of all vent holes, but NOT near the nestbox entrance where it could get on birds and kill them.

- Vent CO₂: CO₂ is heavier than air. It will come out the entrance hole of a nestbox before it will go out the vents on the top. Bob Flam suggests the following: drill holes in boxes BELOW the entrance, on the bottom on one side of the box. This will allow the smell and CO₂ to escape. Cover the hole with a piece of window screen, folded double and stapled over the inside of the hole, or stuff screen into the hole. The screen will keep the hole from getting plugged with nesting material, and will also prevent entry by black flies. If you have vents up top, put screens over them too (staple over the outside).

- Try spraying pure vanilla extract (not imitation) in box daily with a mist bottle (expensive, but Flam feels he was able to save ~ 140 Purple Martin nestlings using this and venting).

- Black flies may be attracted to dark colors. Do not use dark colors (e.g., blue, black, brown, purple) on the outside of the nestbox. If you must paint the exterior, use white or yellow. (This is better for reflecting heat anyway.)

- What doesn't work: Getting rid of standing water, fogging with insecticides at night (unlike mosquitoes, black flies do not breed in stagnant water or feed at night), garlic in mesh bags, DEET, Sevin dust, European Hornet trap bottles.

Acknowledgements: Thanks to Ken Holscher, Associate Professor & Extension Entomologist at Iowa State University for information about black flies; Bob Flam of Iowa for his results and photo; and BRAW for reports on unvented nestboxes.

Bet Zimmerman is a Certified Environmental Professional, a life member and NABS Board member, and is on the Woodstock, Connecticut Conservation Commission. She maintains a popular educational website on cavity nesters at www.sialis.org (where this article originally appeared), and monitors several bluebird trails with about 100 boxes.

Reprinted with permission from *Bluebird*, Vol 32, No. 2

Black Fly Not a Major Concern in Wisconsin

By Kent Hall, Data Collection Officer, BRAW

In this publication the topic of black flies gets considerable ink. One could interpret these articles as something that should be of major concern to bluebird monitors across WI. I do not agree. I think the problem is minor and should be of little concern for Wisconsin monitors in general. That does not mean, however, that when it happens to a monitor it is of minimal consequence. On the contrary, someone who experiences black fly deaths of bluebird chicks goes through considerable trauma and should be prepared for the psychological consequences if it happens to them. But it is going to happen to very few WI bluebird monitors.

This conclusion is based on two observations: 1) In the 8 years I have coordinated the Audubon Bluebird Trail for central WI (4,124 nest box years), we had trouble with black flies in only one location in one year: 121 boxes at Ft. McCoy in 2008. 2) I have completed 4 years as data collection coordinator for BRAW. In that time,

I have had data from 29,968 nest box years sent to me. Only in one year, 2008, was there a problem with black flies and it affected only about 300 nest boxes reported to me. My experience tells me that black flies are a problem in only very wet years and only if nest boxes are close enough to the hatching sites in slowly moving rivers.

In 2008, we collected “freshly killed” chicks of the Eastern Bluebird and personnel at the Wildlife Health Laboratory (WHL) in Madison found black fly specimens in the ear canals of these birds. They concluded that black flies had killed our chicks at Ft. McCoy (we lost nearly 100). These chicks were collected less than 24 hours after being killed. Our first specimens were collected more than 24 hours after death and had deteriorated so badly that they could not be used for analysis. To my knowledge, only one other specimen has been sent to the WHL and it was found to be “black fly negative”. It was a fresh-collected specimen, but a single specimen can not be used to conclude that a trail is not being affected by black flies.

The infestations by black flies in the boxes at Ft. McCoy occurred in un-vented nest boxes. It has been argued that if there are other “leaky” areas in

an un-vented nest box, it can produce enough CO2 flow from the chicks to attract black flies. I won’t argue that point. What I will argue, however, is that it is typical for wooden nest boxes to shrink and to cause “leak sources” within one year of their construction. Few people go to the trouble of caulking their boxes around the tops and sides away from the opening. Even if they do, however, the front/side door is still a problem. I know of no way that doors (front or side) can be caulked and still open the door. Air leaks that allow a flow of air into the box are inevitable.

In summary, I contend that: 1) there is little or no problem with bluebird mortality from black flies in WI bluebird chicks and 2) it is essentially impossible to prevent air flow through wooden boxes because they shrink after being put up outdoors. I conclude that we will have to put up with black fly mortality in the few years and locations that they occur.

Finally, it is still appropriate to minimize ventilation in nest boxes to prevent wind chill for chicks raised in April & May in WI. Also, caulking aging boxes to prevent this wind chill is encouraged. But don’t expect your efforts will eliminate the threat of black flies.

Save a chickadee or 6 or 8

By Pat Ready, WB Editor

Gary Gaard told me once that you can sometimes tell when a chickadee has chosen one of your nest boxes even before she begins bringing nesting material to it. They pick at the bottom of the box removing little chips of wood. On one of my trails I noticed this in a box in late April. So I added a reducer to the front of that box to prevent larger cavity nesters from stealing it from mama chickadee. I cut mine from scrap cedar with a 1-1/8 inch diameter hole to go over the larger hole for bluebirds etc.

In late April or so Tree Swallows will begin nesting and they will take over the chickadee’s nest and push eggs down and nest over it booting the chickadee out. Bluebirds and house sparrows may do the same.

The reducer gives the little chickadee an advantage — with a little help from a friend. The larger birds can’t get into the box with the smaller entrance. After the chickadees fledge (5-8 on average) in mid-late June remove the reducer so swallows or bluebirds can use the box.

Some bird specialty stores sell entrance hole reducer/protectors made from metal that could be used as well.



Above: The beginnings of a chickadee nest.



Left: A completed chickadee nest, lined with animal fur.



Above: A nest box with a reducer added to prevent larger birds from forcing the chickadee out.

Production of Eastern Bluebirds in Monitored Houses

Annual Report - 2009

Brice Prairie Conservation Association

By Leif L. Marking, Project Manager
Production of Eastern Bluebirds in Monitored Houses

Introduction: Bluebirds are cavity-nesting songbirds that are unable to create their own nesting cavities. Natural cavity availability declined significantly when non-native House Sparrows and European Starlings were introduced to this country over 150 years ago because they were victorious competitors for nest cavities and vicious predators of bluebird eggs and young. However, bluebird populations have been increasing since the birth of the North American Bluebird Society (NABS) in 1978 followed by many state chapters such as the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin (BRAW). Our Brice Prairie Conservation Association (BPCA) members have recorded our bluebird production activities since 1992 and annually reported the numbers to the above organizations.

Technical information and instructions for producing bluebirds are available from websites of NABS (www.nabluebirdsociety.org), BRAW (www.BRAW.org), and BPCA (www.briceprairie-conservation.org). The purpose of this report is to summarize the numbers of bluebirds produced by club members this year, recognize increases or decreases over last year, identify problems that influenced production, and evaluate procedures to increase future production.

Procedures: We have selected the NABS-style house to promote bluebird production because the design is practical, they are easy to construct, maintain, and clean, and bluebirds readily occupy them. These cedar houses are mounted on 7-foot steel T-type fence posts that are covered with a 5 ft. section of PVC pipe (1 1/2") for mammalian predator control. The houses are placed 200 yards or more apart to respect the territorial nature of bluebirds and to encourage maximum production of bluebirds. New houses are built without air vents, and vents are covered on existing houses to reduce mortality of eggs and young during sustained cold spells in early nesting and to prevent black fly mortality during second nesting. Site and habitat selection favors bluebird ecology with large, open, grazed or mowed areas where bluebirds can forage for insects. House Sparrow competition was diminished appreciably by avoiding active farm and

livestock feeding operations. Placing houses at least 200 feet from woods and thickets minimized House Wren competition. Weekly observations were recorded in notebooks of choice, and those results were transferred to spreadsheets for calculations, evaluations, and presentations. These spreadsheets accumulate numbers of eggs, numbers hatched, and count of bluebirds and other songbirds fledged. Finally, the numbers are consolidated for each member's totals as well as individual and total production rates for all club members and bluebird affiliates.

Results and Discussion: We monitored 1,019 bluebird boxes this year, an increase of 42 boxes over the previous year. These boxes produced 5,252 bluebird fledglings, an increase of 1,024 compared to the previous year. Our bluebird production rate increased this year to 5.15 fledglings per box, an increase of nearly one fledgling per box over the previous year. Three monitors had bluebird production rates of 6.7 or above suggesting an excellent year for bluebird production. Several below freezing periods in April prevented some of those eggs from hatching; only those eggs under incubation remained safe. Ideal summer

Consolidated Nest Box Summary 2009 Brice Prairie Conservation Association – Individuals

Monitor's Name	Nest Boxes	Bluebirds Fledged	Bluebird Production Rate	Other Species Fledged			Total Other Species	Total Birds Fledged	Overall Production Rate
				TS	CH	WR			
Iler Anderson	112	529	4.72	179	6		185	714	6.38
Steve Anderson	2	4	2.00				0	4	2.00
Bill Balmer	16	80	5.00	4	6		10	90	5.63
Fred Craig	172	1,193	6.94	95		45	140	1,333	7.75
Gail Filzen	10	47	4.70	16			16	63	6.30
Dave Fonger	160	575	3.59	142	9	169	320	895	5.59
Brad Foss	7	25	3.57				0	25	3.57
Jerry Guentz	1	3	3.00				0	3	3.00
Greg Marco	2	9	4.50				0	9	4.50
Dick Marco	15	101	6.73	4			4	105	7.00
Amanda Marco	11	55	5.00	14			14	69	6.27
Leif Marking	191	1,109	5.81	165	10	12	187	1,296	6.79
Ron Page	5	25	5.00	6		12	18	43	8.60
Dick Phillips	7	26	3.71	8			8	34	4.86
Kent Stephan	34	167	4.91	8			8	175	5.15
Pete & Marie Tabor	1	5	5.00		5		5	10	10.00
Leif Tolokken	60	291	4.85	20	4		24	315	5.25
John Wetzel	2	11	5.50			4	4	15	7.50
John Wiggert	22	150	6.82	24			24	174	7.91
Associates	189	847	4.48	163		74	237	1,084	5.74
	1,019	5,252	5.15	848	40	316	1,204	6,456	

Consolidated Nest Box Summary 2009 Leif Marking Associate Bluebirders

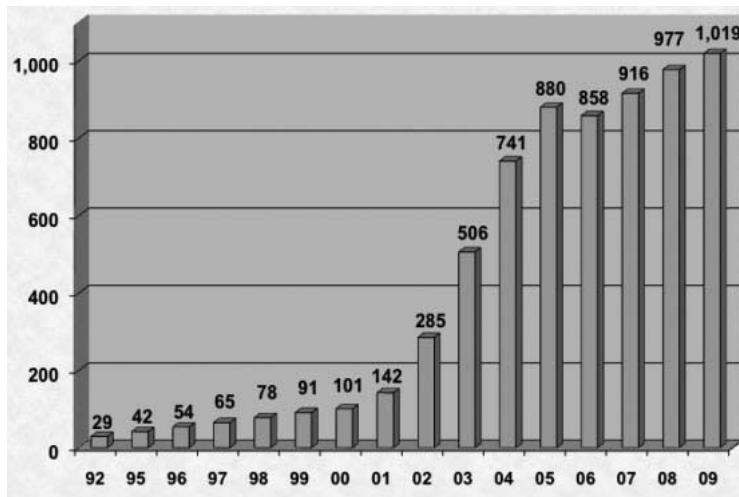
Associate's Name	Nest Boxes	Bluebirds Fledged	Bluebird Production Rate	Other Species Fledged			Total Other Species	Total Birds Fledged	Overall Production Rate
				TS	CH	WR			
Jan Brady	11	63	5.73	19			19	82	7.45
Daniel Bruemmer	13	32	2.46	5			5	37	2.85
Harry & Ellen Caulum	23	149	6.48			4	4	153	6.65
Verdel Dawson	12	67	5.58				0	67	5.58
Jack & Joyce Ebert	18	21	1.17	34		18	52	73	4.06
Lloyd Hoff	8	21	2.63				0	21	2.63
Shel Hyatt	13	89	6.85	11		5	16	105	8.08
Morgan Jostad	14	74	5.29	10		7	17	91	6.50
Tim Knudson	13	62	4.77	5			5	67	5.15
John Leary	7	28	4.00	14			14	42	6.00
Gordon Romskog	23	104	4.52	15		40	55	159	6.91
Jean Ruhser	9	42	4.67	17			17	59	6.56
Charles Ustby	25	95	3.80	33			33	128	5.12
	189	847	4.48	163	0	74	237	1,084	5.74

Key: TS = Tree Swallow, CH = Black-capped Chickadee, HW = House Wren

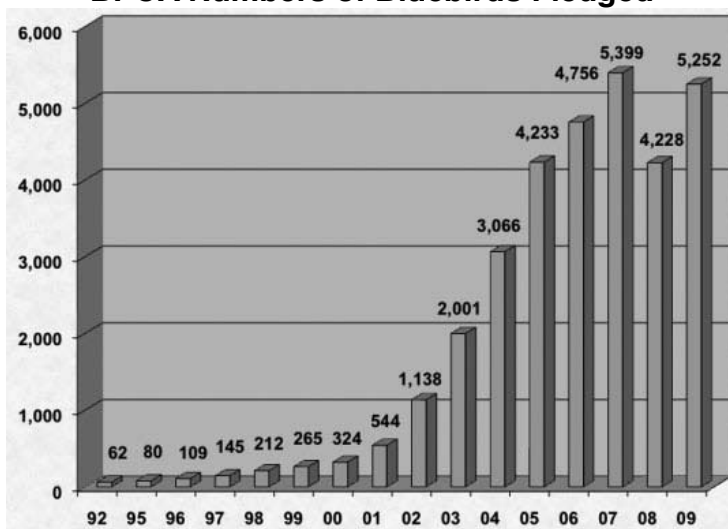
Bluebird Production in Houses of Different Types By Members of Brice Prairie Conservation

Year	Number		Production Rate	Predominant House Type
	Houses	Fledged		
1992	29	62	2.1	Hill Lake
1995	42	80	1.9	Hill Lake
1996	54	109	2.0	Tree Branch
1997	65	145	2.2	Tree Branch
1998	78	212	2.7	Tree Branch
1999	91	265	2.9	Herman Olson
2000	101	324	3.2	Herman Olson
2001	142	544	3.8	NABS
2002	285	1,138	4.0	NABS
2003	506	2,001	4.0	NABS
2004	741	3,066	4.1	NABS
2005	880	4,233	4.8	NABS
2006	858	4,756	5.5	NABS
2007	916	5,399	5.9	NABS
2008	977	4,228	4.3	NABS
2009	1,019	5,252	5.2	NABS
	Total	31,814		

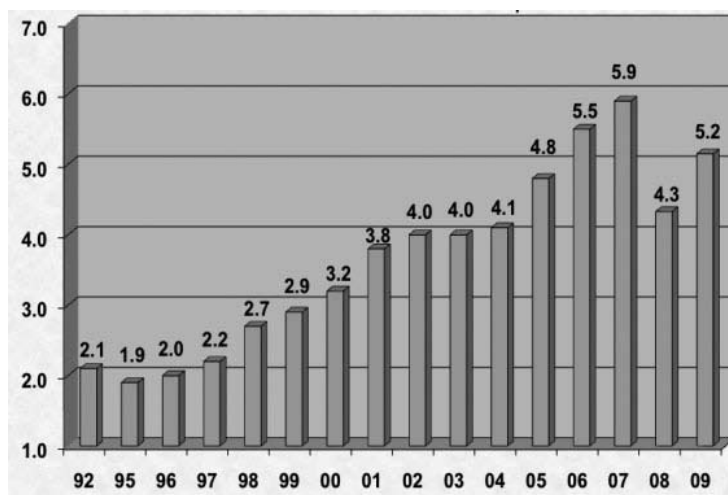
BPCA Numbers of Bluebird Houses



BPCA Numbers of Bluebirds Fledged



BPCA Bluebird Production Rate



temperatures promoted excellent second nesting numbers and even a few successful third nesters. There were no extreme heat cycles during the later nesting periods, and there was no known mortality due to heat in our non-vented NABS-style boxes.

We also produced 848 Tree Swallows, 316 House Wrens, and 40 Black Capped Chickadees. These cavity nesting species readily occupy the bluebird boxes, especially if they are located on the edge of bluebird territory habitat. We have found that Tree Swallows may dominate boxes placed near the Black River, La Crosse River, smaller streams and ponds, and adjoining wetlands in those areas, so we get some relief for the bluebirds by avoiding those areas. The bluebirds prefer diversified agriculture, mowed, or grazed areas, and if the boxes are properly located and spaced the bluebirds will occupy them before the swallows are capable of nesting. Tree swallows are serious competitors for nesting cavities.

My 13 bluebird associates produced 847 bluebird fledglings, 163 Tree Swallows, and 74 wrens as identified in the second table. These folks are not members of BPCA, but they like bluebirds and our technology for producing them, and they are willing to monitor and contribute to our efforts. Of course they realize their efforts also benefit the bluebird population so we are thankful. This associate concept encourages more people to get involved in serious monitoring and keeping good records. Two of the associates had bluebird production rates of 6.5 or above. We attribute our success for producing bluebirds to providing a box with a cavity size and shape that appeals to them, selection of ideal habitat for box location, spacing the boxes at least 200 yards, providing predator prevention for every box, moving boxes that fail to attract bluebirds one year, and monitoring weekly to ensure the cavities are available to bluebirds that are searching for a home. House Sparrows interfered with bluebird nesting in limited locations, but wrens again were the most impor-

tant predator and competitor on our bluebird trails. Our technology for bluebird production is effective, and we feel satisfied and rewarded with the bluebird responses to our efforts and look forward to their return next spring.

BRAW ELECTED & APPOINTED OFFICERS

President Joe Schultz, 5221 Cheryl's Dr., Plover, WI 54467 • 715/341-5521 joeschultz54@charter.net (term to 12/11)
Vice President Dr. Kent Hall, 200 Pine Bluff Rd., Stevens Point, WI 54481 • 715/344-8081 kentsue@charter.net (term to 12/11)
Secretary Patricia Heiden, W399 S5484 Hwy Z, Dousman, WI 53118 • 262/495-8595 brdbndr@centurytel.net. (term to 12/10)
Treasurer, Mike Helgren, 1013 Georgetown Circle, Beaver Dam, WI 53916 • 920/885-4050 mhelgren@charter.net (term to 12/11)
Director Fred Craig, 807 Judith Ct. Holmen, WI 54636 • 608/526-2221 fm266@centurytel.net (term to 12/11)
Director, Sue Hall, 200 Pine Bluff Rd., Stevens Point, WI 54481 • 715/344-8081, kentsue@charter.net (term to 12/11)
Director Ellen Lafouge, 9154 N. Fielding Rd., Bayside, WI 53127 • 414/352-6697; wibluebird@gmail.com (term to 12/10)
Director Leif Marking, W7917 Co. Hwy. ZB, Onalaska, WI 54650 • 608/781-0323 • lcmarking@gmail.com (term to 12/11)
Director Patrick Ready, 1210 Oakwood Ct., Stoughton, WI 53589 • 608/873-1703 • readyworks@mac.com (term to 12/11)
Director Claire Romanak, 7175 Nehrbass Rd.; Athens, WI 54411 • 715/257-1905 • ribriver2@wildblue.net (Term to 12/10):
Director, Jerry Schoen, 682 Foxglove Lane, Whitewater, WI 53190 • 262/473-7189 • basketsandbirds@charter.net (term to 12/10)
Director, David Pray, 4925 Barbara's LN Stevens Point, WI 54481 • 715/344-0051 • dwpray@charter.net (12/10)

APPOINTED OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS:

Data Collection Coordinator: Dr. Kent D. Hall, 200 Pine Bluff Rd., Stevens Point 54481 • 715/344-8081 kentsue@charter.net;
Data Analysis Coordinator: Dr. Peter Dunn, Associate Professor, Dept. of Biology, UW-Milwaukee, P.O. Box 413, Milwaukee 53201 • 414/229-2253 • pdunn@uwm.edu
County Coordinator Chair: Joe Schultz (see above)
Funding: Mike Helgren (see above)
WI Bluebird Editor: Patrick Ready, (see above)
Membership: Sue Schultz, 5221 Cheryl's Dr., Plover, WI 54467 • 715/341-5521 • sueschultz59@charter.net
Nest Box Designs: Leif Marking, (see above)
Public Relations: Ellen Lafouge, (see above)
Student and Youth Outreach Committee:
Co-Chairpersons: Lowell Peterson, 1860 45th St., Somerset, WI 54025 • 715/247-3243; and, **Mary Holleback**, 720 Madison St., West Bend, WI 53095-4136 • 262/335-9843
Ornithological Consultants (Volunteers) Dr. Peter Dunn, Biology Dept., UM-Milwaukee, P.O. Box 413, Milwaukee, WI 53201 • 414/229-2253 pdunn@uwm.edu and **Dr. Linda Whittingham**, Biology Dept., UM-Milwaukee, P.O. Box 413, Milwaukee, WI 53201 • 414/229-2252 whitting@uwm.edu

BRAW LIAISONS:

Bur. Of Endangered Res. Liaison: Sumner Matteson, DNR, 101 S. Webster St. PO Box 7921, Madison, WI 53701 • 608/266-1571
WSO Liaison: William P. Mueller, 1242 S. 45 St. Milwaukee, WI 53214 • 414/643-7279 • iltlawas@earthlink.net

Wisconsin Bluebird Subscription and BRAW, Inc. Membership

Yes! I would like to renew my membership with the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin, Inc. and receive its newsletter *Wisconsin Bluebird*. Enclosed is my check/money order (do not send cash) made out to BRAW, Inc. for the following:

Subscription/Membership contribution:

- \$15 individual
- \$25 Family Annual
- \$300 Life Membership
- \$100 Corporate Annual

- \$15 to nest box construction with post & predator guard
- \$100 for nest box trail
- \$_____for educational research (Master's thesis)
- In addition to my membership contribution, I wish to contribute: \$_____

(Contributions to BRAW are tax deductible)

Check appropriate boxes:

- This is a renewal.
- This is a new subscription
- This is a GIFT subscription.

Enclosed please find my check \$ _____

Print clearly

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Email Address: _____

Telephone: () _____

County of residence: _____

Mail this membership/subscription request to:
BRAW, Inc.
c/o Sue Schultz
5221 Cheryl's Dr.
Plover, WI 54467

Please note: This form appears in this newsletter as a convenience for all who wish to obtain membership. Membership renewals are due as of January 1 each year. The BRAW, Inc. bylaws stipulate that the winter issue (December issue) of Wisconsin Bluebird newsletter of the new year will be the last issue sent if your membership is not renewed before the Spring issue is printed.

ANNUAL BIRD NESTING SURVEY SUMMARY

For two years the BRAW Form 21 has been modified to attempt to eliminate problems related to recording data, but 10% of the reports are still being turned in with mistakes. We are therefore altering the form once again to attempt to eliminate these mistakes. We are asking that you record all eggs laid and chicks hatched that resulted in the first successful set of fledglings in Column 1 (includes eggs laid but not hatched and eggs hatched but not fledged) and only then move on to Column 2. In column 2 put all eggs laid and chicks hatched that resulted in a second set of fledglings (includes eggs laid but not hatched and eggs hatched but not fledged) and only then move on to Column 3. In column 3 put all eggs laid and chicks hatched that resulted in a third set of fledglings (includes eggs laid but not hatched and eggs hatched but not fledged). *A worksheet example is found on the reverse side of this sheet. We ask that you provide complete data (including eggs and hatchlings). Moreover, BRAW monitors are expected to collect data from each of the songbirds below and to protect their nests. Data sheets with incomplete information on either bluebirds or other songbirds will not be included in the BRAW Annual Report.

Please return this completed form by September 15 to BRAW, Inc., c/o Dr. Kent Hall, 200 Pine Bluff Rd., Stevens Point, WI 54481.

Any reports received after Oct. 10 will not be included in the Annual Report.

Name _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone (_____) - _____

Email Address: _____

County where boxes are located? _____

Use a separate Survey Summary form for Each County.

Total Boxes Presented: _____
(Sum of used & unused)

IMPORTANT: Number of boxes with no nests during the current season: _____

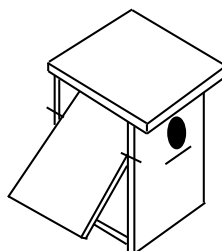
Number of boxes with at least one bluebird egg laid in them: _____

Number of boxes in with a House Sparrow Nest: _____

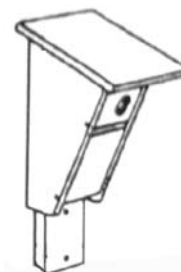
Species	Successful Bluebird Nesting Attempts			Tree Swallow	House Wren	Black-capped Chickadee
	All 1st Fledged Nests of Chicks	All 2nd Fledged Nests of Chicks	All 3rd Fledged Nests of Chicks			
All Nest Attempts: Number of nests in which at least one egg was laid.						
Egg Count: Total number of eggs laid for all nests, including those that don't hatch.						
Hatchlings: Total number of eggs hatched for all nests.						
Fledglings: Number of young birds that fledged from all nests.						
Successful Nest Attempts: Number of nests in which at least one young bird fledged from a nest (Often is less than all nest attempts)						

* First nesting attempt in all boxes----are not to be entered.

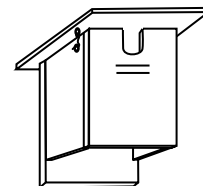
Many box types are being used by Wisconsin bluebirders. But only the following box types had averages above the 3.5 bluebird fledglings per box for the 2006 season: NABS-Style, Peterson and K-box.



NABS style



Peterson



K-box

Type of mounting system used: _____ T-shaped fence post _____ U-shaped fence post _____ Conduit/Rebar

Do you use predator protection for your mounting system? _____ PVC _____ Aluminum _____ Other _____ None

_____ The U.S.F.W.S. guidelines for active nests were followed while monitoring the nests of all songbird species during my /our study.

Worksheet Example of Form 21

For two years the BRAW Form 21 has been modified to attempt to eliminate problems related to recording data, but 10% of the reports are still being turned in with mistakes. We are therefore altering the form once again to attempt to eliminate these mistakes. We are asking that you record all eggs laid and chicks hatched that resulted in the first successful set of fledglings in Column 1 (includes eggs laid but not hatched and eggs hatched but not fledged) and only then move on to Column 2. In column 2 put all eggs laid and chicks hatched that resulted in a second set of fledglings (includes eggs laid but not hatched and eggs hatched but not fledged) and only then move on to Column 3. In column 3 put all eggs laid and chicks hatched that resulted in a third set of fledglings (includes eggs laid but not hatched and eggs hatched but not fledged). We ask that you provide complete data (including eggs and hatchlings).

Moreover, BRAW monitors are expected to collect data from each of the songbirds and to protect their nests. Data sheets with incomplete information on either bluebirds or other songbirds will not be included in the BRAW Annual Report.

Species	Successful Bluebird Nesting Attempts			Tree Swallow	House Wren	Black-capped Chickadee
	All 1st Fledged Nests of Chicks	All 2nd Fledged Nests of Chicks	All 3rd Fledged Nests of Chicks			
All Nest Attempts: Number of nests in which at least one egg was laid.	Box #1: 1 Box #2: 1 Box #3: 1 Box #4: 1 Box #5: 1 Total: 5 (put on front page)	Boxes #1, #2 and #3 have no data for this column Box #4: 1 Box #5: 1 Total: 2 (put on front page)	Boxes #1, #2, #3 and #4 have no data for this column Box #5: 1 Total: 1 (put on front page)	Box #3: 1		
Egg Count: Total number of eggs laid for all nests, including those that don't hatch.	Box #1: 4,4,4,4 = 16 Box #2: 4,4,4 = 12 Box #3: 3 Box #4: 5 Box #5: 5 Total: 42 (put on front page)	Box #4: 6 Box #5: 5 Total: 10 (put on front page)	Box #4: 4 Total: 4 (put on front page)	Box #3: 6		
Hatchlings: Total number of eggs hatched for all nests.	Box #1: 4 Box #2: 4,4,4 = 12 Box #3: 3 Box #4: 5 Box #5: 0 Total: 24 (put on front page)	Box #4: 5 Box #5: 0 Total: 24 (put on front page)	Box #4: 3 Total: 3 (put on front page)	Box #3: 6		
Fledglings: Number of young birds that fledged from all nests.	Box #1: 4 Box #2: 4 Box #3: 3 Box #4: 5 Box #5: 0 Total: 16 (put on front page)	Box #4: 5 Box #5: 0 Total: 5 (put on front page)	Box #4: 2 Total: 2 (put on front page)	Box #3: 5		
Successful Nest Attempts: Number of nests in which at least one young bird fledged from a nest (Often is less than all nest attempts)	Box #1: 1 Box #2: 1 Box #3: 1 Box #4: 1 Box #5: 0 Total: 4 (put on front page)	Box #4: 1 Total: 4 (put on front page)	Box #4: 1 Total: 1 (put on front page)	Box #3: 1		

Box #1: Bluebird: 4 eggs failed; 4 eggs failed; 4 eggs failed; 4 eggs hatched & fledged

Box #2: Bluebird: Clutch of 4 eggs hatch but 4 chicks die; clutch of 4 eggs hatch but 4 chicks die; clutch of 4 eggs hatch and a brood of 4 chicks fledge

Box #3: Tree Swallow: 6 eggs, 6 chicks, 5 fledglings; Bluebird: 3 Eggs; 3 chicks; 3 fledged (monitors often put this information under the 2nd column, but it is the first bluebird nest in the box and goes in column #1)

Box #4: Bluebird: 6 eggs, 5 chicks, 5 fledglings; 5 eggs, 5 chicks & 5 fledglings; 4 eggs, 3 chicks & 2 fledglings

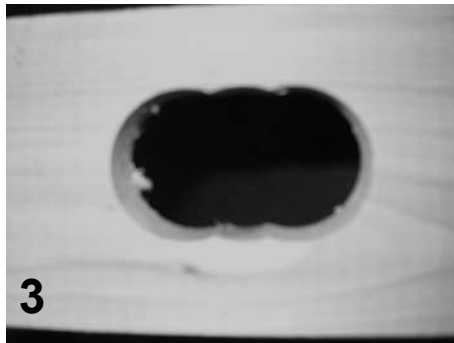
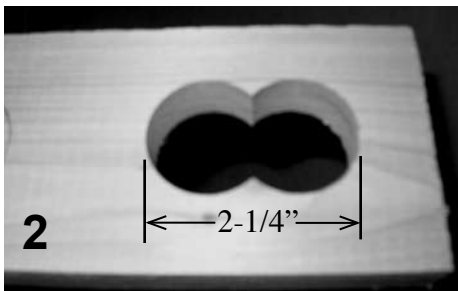
Box #5: Bluebird: 5 eggs only; this was not a successful nest, as no fledglings were recorded.

Nest Box Quick Fix

By Pat Ready



When a squirrel or woodpecker enlarges the entrance of your nest box don't despair. Here's a simple solution. Take a scrap piece of wood and cut a proper oval hole. I use a 1-1/8" Forster's drill bit in my drill press (#1). Cut 2 holes offset so the top and bottom are 2-1/4". This will give you an "8" shape (#2). Center the oval under the bit and drill out the excess



from the middle (#3). File the sides smooth (#4) and mount it to the front of your damaged box. (See pic below)

This will prevent cowbirds and starlings from using the box.



We've come a long way . . .
continued from page 5

were some of the boxes used. One was an original Bauldry box with the very deep style of a Hill Lake, along with the trademark 3 inch screened roof opening and a thick "predator guard" attached to the entrance hole. (See photo, page 5.)

Well, in contemplating where we've come from and where we want to go... I have to admit, change has been good for us bluebirders here in Wisconsin. In a relatively short amount of time, we have taken the steps necessary to increase our bluebird population to - I'm again predicting - 30,000 bluebirds in 2010.

Whether those changes have been in our thinking relative to habitat, or nestbox design, or spacing, or box-pairing (NOT!!!), or mounting systems, or food supply, or whatever - the real winners are our beloved bluebirds. We'll see new ideas, new points and counterpoints, agreements and disagreements. But if the end result is a better "mouse trap", I'm all for it.



*"Nature always wears
the colors of the spirit."*

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Wisconsin Bluebird • Volume 25, Number 2 • Summer 2010

Published by the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin, Inc.

Editor, Designer, Photographer

Patrick Ready, 1210 Oakwood Ct., Stoughton, WI 53589

608-873-1703 • pready@tds.net

Wisconsin Bluebird is published quarterly by the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin, Inc. (BRAW) 1210 Oakwood Ct., Stoughton, WI 53589. Subscription price is included in membership dues. Subscriptions, renewals and address changes should be sent to Sue Schultz, 5221 Cheryl's Dr., Plover, WI 54467. **Issues are dated Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter. Deadlines for submissions to the editor are due the 15th of January, April, July, and October.**

Contact the *Wisconsin Bluebird* newsletter editor for reprint permission of any material printed in the *Wisconsin Bluebird*. Patrick Ready: 608-873-1703 • pready@tds.net

The mission and purpose of the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin, Inc. is to monitor and increase the production of Eastern Bluebirds and other native cavity nesters through a coordinated statewide nest box construction and monitoring program.

Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin

Sue Schultz, Membership Chair
5221 Cheryl's Dr.,
Plover, WI 54467
www.braw.org



NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 1027
MADISON, WI

**BRAW Annual
Convention to be held at
Mead Wildlife. See p. 2**



Got the Blues? Send them to BRAW



A favorite past time of many bluebirders is to feed their bluebirds meal worms. Tara and Greg Roesler from Mazzomanie took this photo of a male bluebird that came to their meal worm dish.

Are you handy with a camera? Submit your bluebird photos for consideration for a cover of the *WI Bluebird* or for the **BRAW Calendar** we produce every year. Photos should be in JPG format and sharp focus. The subject should be large in the image and 300 dpi for best reproduction quality. Send images to the editor. Address information is on page 15.