

Fall 2017
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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

Send in Your 2017 Data

see page 2



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A Word from the Prez

Fall is approaching fast. I can tell by the cooler temps we are having now that we are into August. My trails are done for the season, an-

other tell-tale sign summer is coming to an end. Now I have to look at my data and get my season summary into BRAW. Please take the time to send in your data for this season so we can tell how the Blues are doing statewide. I'm not expecting a great year due to cold temps in spring and black fly outbreaks in June. I've already heard stories of nest failures. But remember Bluebirds are resilient!! They will make a comeback thanks to all your efforts to maintain boxes and trails for them. Keep up the good work!

Now I will be turning my attention to next year's BRAW Annual Convention. The plan is to have it in the Eau

Claire area where we haven't been for many years. (although Mead Wildlife was somewhat close). It will be held some Saturday in April and by the time the next WB is out in December, I plan to have complete details. The school location was well received this year with adequate space, sound system and screens to view. Additionally, the cafeteria for lunch worked well.

It was great to work with the 4H kids again this summer. Word must have gotten back to the school kids last year that the seminar was worth it. They had to turn away some kids due to class size and wanted me to give a 2nd seminar this year. See more on the back cover regarding this.

Now is a good time to get trails ready for next year. I hope you see lots of migrating bluebirds while "leaf-peeping" this fall.

Hey only 8 months until the next bluebird nesting season!

Patrick Ready

The Prez

Publicity: Well, I tried!

Steve Sample, Publicity Chair

During May, I purchased the data base of all the statewide newspapers and other publication's contacts. I wrote an article about BRAW following a prescribe protocol and included some pictures. As far as I know, there were few or no uses of my endeavor by any publication. This is a huge disappointment for we desperately need to get more people interested so I went to the experts to determine if I wrote the article incorrectly or what!

The organization I regularly seek out for advice is Score Madison (<https://madison.score.org/>). This is a volunteer group of mostly retired business and academic people who will advise profit or non-profit organizations with just about any issue without cost. They assisted BRAW with re-writing our By-Laws and other legal documents required of all non-profit organizations. One SCORE member, Gene Kroupa, a former CEO, has helped our organization significantly over the past three years. I sought his opinion first.

After requesting help, I was informed that most publications are typically not accepting articles about organizations like ours. That strikes me as strange. It is getting difficult for any group like ours to be given copy space, well, unless, of course, we pay for it. And I don't see that happening soon.

One idea that might work is to have local BRAW monitors as part of the article. Instead of statewide, these articles would be given to the appropriate local publications. I need help with this idea for pictures and a descriptor that I can embellish as necessary. I can take care of the contacts.

What next? I wish I had a Hogwort's Wand to work this issue. Our organization is ageing and it is urgent that we start letting people in on what we do. If newspapers are not going to help us, then we must address this issue differently. One idea is to get all the schools in Wisconsin and make a packet about our organization with a poster, DVD (maybe) and distribute it to schools. After the newspaper failure, I'm not confident of any approach other than that we need to try something. If you are interested to help with this, please advise. The BRAW Board will have to be agreeable with an endeavor like this, especially with the cost.

If anyone has any ideas that may help to express BRAW's goals and accomplishments, please let me know.

Please Send in Your 2017 Data!

By Steve Fallon, Data Collection

The BRAW EZ Summary Form is what you need to fill out so we can include your results for this nesting season in our data report. If you keep good records of your monitoring results throughout the season it should only take 5 minutes to fill out the form. Then you decide how you want to submit it. You can mail it, or send the information to the email address at the bottom of the form. **If you choose to email it you will have to type the information into your message.** Make sure you include the required information from the card.

The next page has copies of the EZ Form. It's also available as a download on the website - www.braw.org. **You can also fill in the form and submit it directly from our website!!**

For a paper version, fill it out (one per county) and mail it to: **Data Summary Director**
974 Halcyon Days Ct., Oregon,
WI. 53575

Email to:
wisconsinbluebirds@gmail.com
or use the Easy Fill-in Form on our website: www.braw.org

Please note: If you are reporting data and part of a large trail make sure the data only gets reported to us one time. If you want individual recognition for your trail monitoring effort send BRAW your data report but make sure your trail manager doesn't include your info in his report to BRAW.



BRAW EZ Summary Form

Use this card to report your nest box results for the season.

DEADLINE SEPTEMBER 30

_____ No. of boxes* _____ Boxes used by Bluebirds*
 _____ Bluebird eggs laid _____ Bluebird eggs hatched
 _____ Bluebirds fledged * _____ Tree Swallows fledged
 _____ Chickadees fledged _____ House Wrens fledged

[] "I did not disturb any Chickadee, Tree Swallow or House Wren nests."

*County _____ Year: _____

*Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

*Phone (_____) - _____

email: _____

* = Required data. Please provide any other data or information.

Comments: _____

EZ Summary data can be emailed to wisconsinbluebirds@gmail.com

Thank You!

Weird Nesting Data Explained!

Steve Sample

Many readers did not notice, but a few of you smiled when examining the 2016 data and statistics from the Summer Issue of our BRAW newsletter. The numbers showed that there were more bluebirds fledged than there were eggs hatched. The egg laid count was also in question.

We have been using the simplified form now for a few years and it has been a resounding success. However, we have many of our monitors reporting only the number of bluebirds fledged, and not how many eggs were laid or hatchings. This explains how the fledgling count is higher than the number of birds hatched. The data was missing on about 12 individual reports. This also explains what appears to be an irregular number association or as our former Board member (Leaf Marking) would point out, "Wow! We saw many double yolk eggs!"

What I have done with the data below is to take the data from those who only submitted the number of bluebirds fledged and used the same number for the number of hatchlings and the number of eggs. I suspect that doing this does not match reality. This gives us a little "off" representation in terms of what really happened, but close to what would be expected.

We'll just have to live with it.

Revised 2016 Data:

Totals

Total Trail Boxes	9352
Total Bluebird Fledged	26672
Total Bluebird Boxes Used	5438
Total Bluebird Eggs Laid	32754
Total Bluebirds Hatched	28597
Tree Swallows Reported Fledged	12969
Chickadee Reported Fledged	1559
House Wren Fledged	4153
House Sparrow Reported Issues	764
Total All Species Fledged	45353

Welcome Steve Fallon as new Data Collection Chair

Steve was an industrial scientist/engineer for 32 years, took an early retirement, did a little substitute work as a middle school science teacher and has done some volunteer work for Dane County (prairie burns and seed collecting) and helped the DNR capture fawns for their spring study.

He likes outdoor activities (hunting, fishing, canoeing, kayaking) and hiking. And birding, of course!

He has been on the BRAW Board of Directors for 2 years now and we look forward to his future contributions to BRAW.

County Coordinator News

By Carol McDaniel

In the spring I wrote to the CCs that I had put together a bluebird trail power point program titled; *Bluebirding in Wisconsin; Along the Bluebird Trail*, that they were welcome to use at their County Coordinator workshops. Rick Becker, Ashland CC, was especially happy to have it. If anyone else is interested, just call or drop me an email or card. The program is editable and can be made to fit your specific needs.

Iler Anderson has retired as Burnett County Coordinator as he has moved to Rapid City, SD. Larry Jensen from the Spooner area has taken over Iler's bluebird trail. Thanks to Iler for serving as a CC.

If anyone is interested in being the Burnett County CC, please contact me. My contact information can be found in the newsletter or on the BRAW web site under the list of officers and committee members.

The County Coordinators have been busy monitoring their trails and helping other folks with theirs. Some have reached out to youth in an effort to get them involved. Some of us veteran bluebirders are finding it a challenge to do our weekly trail monitoring due to age related health issues. We need to be thinking about who will take the trails over for us. Educating youth on the importance of bluebird trails and the need for regular monitoring can be the answer to finding a dedicated trail monitor. Reach out to the youth in your area.

The following reports and photos are from BRAW County Coordinators. Look for your county to see what has been happening along the bluebird trails.

Don Pritzle, Keweenaw County:

Having a good bluebird year! Have 35 first time nests and 16 have nested back a second time. Only a couple have been broken up. Also have 25 tree swallow nests and several wren nests. Didn't have as much sparrow pressure as in the past. I moved several of the boxes so I'm sure that helped.

Bill and Donna Stehling, Sauk County: (Sent in by Larry Liegel, Sauk County Interim Coordinator). On May 19, I spent a couple hours with Bill and Donna Stehling of Sauk City, Wi. at their Bluebird trail which has 67 boxes, located at the former Badger Ammunition Plant NW of Sauk City. This 7000+ acre Army Munitions Factory site has been transferred to, in equal parts, to the Ho Chunk Nation, WI DNR and I believe Federal Forests and Parks. The Stehlings have their trails on the WI-DNR portion. We drove around many old roads and streets and observed Bluebirds, Tree Swallows and many other prairie birds such as Killdeer and Meadow Lark.

The Stehlings belong to a Prairie Restoration Assoc, which has been working for 5-6 years to restore the original prairie lands by burning and removing invasive plant species. They also have a presentation program for 4th grade students from local schools all about bluebirds, houses, nesting, monitoring, etc. They also recently presented to the employees of McFarlane's Manufacturing Plant in Sauk City all about bluebirds.

They are enthusiastic birders/conservationists/educators, and will be an excellent resource for Sauk County Bluebirders as the new BRAW Coordinators for Sauk County.

Lowell Peterson, St. Croix County:

Jim Beix (Pierce CC), Jim Higgins from River Falls, and I coordinated a bluebird presentation at Interstate Park on March 26. Jim Beix reported on this in the last issue of WB.

Other coordinator duties included responding to several queries concerning bluebirds. Most of these were late in the 2017 nesting season. I directed them to the BRAW web site for other information and suggested that they contact me in early 2018 to help set up trails.

I conducted a few bluebird presentations in February and March as part of the BRAW School/ Youth Outreach Program. These are always a highlight for me and I enjoy seeing the happy faces of the children.

Rita Gundry, Eau Claire County:

Last Christmas, my Santa list included

a request for 50 Noel guards-featured in the Fall 2016 of Wisconsin Bluebird newsletter. I had some hesitation about attaching the guards until the box was in use by bluebirds. I didn't get to some of them in time and lost a few clutches of eggs to what I'm assuming were raccoons. I now have Noel guards on half of my boxes and haven't lost eggs or chicks where I have the NG installed. I do use PVC pipe for some of my poles and also use the 2-liter pop bottles, just below the nest box. The racoons around here are able to bypass those and still get the eggs and chicks.

My total bluebirds fledged for this season will be down from last year, not only due to predation, but to lack of some boxes not being used at all by bluebirds this summer. I have five boxes in favorable locations which remained empty. In previous years, these boxes were very dependable, producing 2 nestings each season.

Tree swallows didn't beat the bluebirds to the punch, either. Not sure what the problem was. I witnessed male bluebirds flying around 2 of these boxes early in the spring. Will hope for better luck next year! Our late spring and more than the usual predator damage has me looking forward to spring 2018!

Richard and Carol Becker, Ashland County:

I cannot thank you enough for the use of your Bluebird power point program. We have put it to good use. We first used it to do a program at the local Mellen Library. We had about 12 people there and they seemed to enjoy the presentation. I built two different type houses and





had them mounted on conduit for a little “show and tell”. After the program the librarian asked me if there was some way to have a few of the children, along with a parent, build a bird house. I told her we could work something out. My final plan was to build 10 slot houses and then take them apart. I put the parts for each house in a separate bag along with the screws and I was ready to go. The evening went well as 10 children showed up and we successfully built 10 bird houses.

Carol and I also used the power point to present another program at the Ashland birding festival. This also went well. One of our neighbors built 2 Peterson houses and we displayed them along with our other houses. After the presentation we had a drawing to give away 2 of the houses as door prizes.

All of these adventures went well and I feel we were successful at introducing more adults and children to the wonders of the Bluebird world along with BRAW.



Dale and Doris Moody, Iowa County: We hosted an Iowa Co. bluebird tour/field day June 3 for the Driftless Area Land Conservancy members and friends with about 25 attending.

We have been experiencing serious black fly(turkey knats) predation on our Iowa Co. trail(near the lower Wisconsin River) with about 40% losses in late May and June. This year is the most difficult in our Iowa Co. trail history. Black flies have not been a problem at our Lafayette Co. trail 35 miles south of the river.

We had an albino Bluebird hatch at our winter home in Florida.



Carol McDaniel, Lafayette and Grant Counties: I volunteer at the Bluebird Nest Nature Center in Darlington. I direct visitors to the BRAW sponsored bluebird display that is exhibited there. People watch Leif Marking’s bluebird DVDs, study the BRAW display board, and take BRAW literature with them. NABS style bluebird boxes and wren boxes made by Fred Craig



are on sale there. This is an ongoing BRAW promotion.

The bluebird trails in Lafayette County have done well considering the black flies were a problem and that, in mid July, the heavy rains lifted the rivers and streams. Once the rain started, it seemed like it would never stop and, finally after it did, the rivers and streams started coming up and out of the banks. It flooded the farmer’s corn and soybean fields, covered roads, and destroyed bridges. It took days for the water to go down enough for roads to open up. Then, mud was everywhere made up from the top soil that was carried into the rushing water. Anything that wasn’t fastened down was carried away and either ended up in the fields or in the rivers. Most of the monitors have bluebird trails along or near rivers and streams. Many boxes had bluebird nestlings in them. Bird houses that were installed along the river ways were subject to the force of the current. Jim Barth, who has trails in the Lead Mine/New Diggings area had some boxes nearly tip over and some washed away entirely. Sue Cashman has trails near the Apple River and couldn’t get to some of her boxes to monitor them. According to monitors’ reports, the parent bluebirds somehow managed to take care of their nestlings in most cases. One of the boxes on my trail had six young bluebirds about three days old when the rains started. This box is located along a little stream that came out of its banks, too. Thankfully, the nest stayed dry in the Simple box and the young are doing fine. Where the parent birds found food for the little ones during the downpour of rain is a mystery to me. Jim Barth had one box with its floor almost touching the flood water. The six young are doing fine. Another box was tipped at a

45 degree angle with the hole facing downward; the parent birds took care of the young and they are fine as well.

Debbie Anderson, Chippewa County: In April I emailed all my friends/acquaintances asking who wanted to accompany me when I monitored my bluebird trail consisting of 40 houses from May through August. I had two requirements before they volunteered – first, they had to agree to record the monitoring information and second, they also needed to verbally commit to sharing the information they learned with a neighbor or friend. The response was overwhelming with 15+ people wanting to go! I then created a weekly schedule where the helpers could sign up for a date and time. So, as we traveled the township roads for about 2 hours, I shared bluebird information with the volunteers. I'm happy to report that I've received calls from helpers and strangers wanting my help to locate a bluebird house(s) on their property.

I've had a pair of bluebirds who have laid WHITE eggs which is unique on my trail. Their 5 babies fledged a few weeks ago and 5 more will hopefully be fledging in the weeks ahead.

Mary Holleback, Washington County: The boxes along my trails have pretty much been taken over by tree swallows. A few of their chicks perished before fledging; probably weather related. Our Bird Club was privileged to have Pat Ready present a program on bluebirds and other cavity nesters on May 2nd and 39 people attended.

Kent Hall; Monroe, Portage, Waupaca and Wood Counties: Our 16th season for the Aldo Leopold Audubon Society Trail is winding down. We had 1,385 nest boxes in 6 counties, monitored by 82 people. This season we have fledged 5,200 bluebirds and 1,500 other songbird species (Tree Swallows, BC Chickadees and House Wrens).

We were active at 5 different schools. We developed nest box trails around each of these schools and taught the teachers how to collect data with their students. We are adding a 6th school

to our list next spring.

In late May, the Audubon Bluebird group hosted a Natural Resources Foundation Field Trip at one of our schools, Roosevelt Elementary School in Plover.



Memuna Khan, Fond Du Lac County: I gave a talk at the Caestecker Library in Green Lake on April 2 (the day after the BRAW conference). It was titled: *Bluebird Stories: Ten years on the Ripon College Bluebird Trail.*

Each year I work with the third graders in Mrs. Pokorny's class at Murray Park Elementary School. I visited in late April and the class learned about bluebird monitoring and we checked three nest boxes at the school. The students discovered two nests and continued to monitor the boxes once a week until school let out. Each week, they entered their observations into a Google form so I could know how things were going. One month later I returned and we measured and banded the young at the successful nest.



The students helped me take measurements and each one got to hold a nestling in cupped hands.

Pat Ready, Dane County: In May I gave my Attracting Bluebirds presentation at the Northwood's Discovery Center in Manitowish Waters as their keynote speaker for their Birding Festival. They banded an Eastern Bluebird caught in one of their nets. I advised them on where to properly



place nest boxes for bluebirds on the property and arranged for them to get 2 new NABS style boxes. One of the activities during the festival was building a nest box.

In June VP Steve Sample and I once again gave a seminar on Bluebirds & Cavity Nesters to 4H kids on the UW Madison campus during 4H week there. I made nest box kits and after Steve gave them a short presentation on bluebirds we had them assemble their own nest box to take home. (See related article on page 12.)

Larry Liegle talks about his trail and shares what he has heard from some of the bluebird trail monitors in Sauk and Eau Claire Counties.

I have trails in Eau Claire and Sauk Counties. My occupancy rate for BBs is down from last year. I have a total of 45 boxes and have fledged 178 blue birds so far, but have had a late season nest-building effort in Sauk County. Hopefully, I will see a few more fledges by the end of August.

In the late spring of 2017, I had the pleasure of conducting a site visit at the Bruce and Ruth Marion Blue Bird Estate. Tucked into the rugged hills of the Driftless Area off County G, in Southwest Sauk County, the natural surroundings is more than just an old farm. With a cute cabin and other well-kept outbuildings, the Marions have transformed their acreage into a picturesque playground for deer, turkey, frogs and toads and of course, our beloved Bluebirds. With Bruce driving the gator and Ruth manning the bluebird stat sheets, we toured their various trails and overall habitat. During the tour I was impressed with how closely the Marion's monitor and manage their boxes, with the history of each box fixed in their memories and how they do not hesitate to move boxes to increase production. Their early season occupancy rate was a testament to their diligence. I sure did learn a thing or two about Blue birding.

To date in 2017, 26 boxes were occupied by bluebirds and they have fledged 202 bluebirds. The Marion's have managed their property for native wild plants and flowers by prescribed burning and cutting, thus controlling invasive species. Their pond was teeming with spring croakers. They have made an extensive effort to re-forest former fields with native oaks, cherry, and other tree species. Bruce quipped he always wanted to be the next Aldo Leopold! Well, he and Ruth are surely close behind their mentor.

What a grand tour it was...and the Leinenkugle tasted pretty darn good too! I'm looking forward to another visit next year and hope I can bring along a couple local bluebirders to learn more. Thanks to Ruth and Bruce for all you do for God's loving crea-

tures and for being great BRAW role models!

Karla and Bernie Hoefgen are a monitor couple from Eau Claire (Eau Claire County). They are in their second season of blue birding, managing



and monitoring a trail of about 15 boxes along the Chippewa River Bike Trail (former RR tracks) in SW Eau Claire County. Due to cold weather and a late nesting season, along with fierce competition from TSs, their blue bird production is down compared with last year. Most of us have had the same experience. Last year they fledged 50+ BBs total. This year with 13 boxes on their trail, they have fledged 30 BBs thus far.

Here is Bernie's July 5th trail report: Karla and I made a bluebird house run yesterday. It was a beautiful day and we saw more riders on the trail than the rest of the year combined.

Numbers 1 and 4 had bluebird babies and #4 had bluebird eggs. Numbers 8 and 9 had tree swallow babies. Number 7 had tiny wren babies. Number 2 in the cemetery had English Sparrow eggs and babies so I relocated the entire nest and hatch to the edge of the cemetery. Perhaps the parents will find it there, but there is also the possibility that some predator might find a pleasant surprise. Numbers 4,5,6,11 and 13 were empty. Summary: There will be many less bluebirds this year. The total last year was over fifty but this year it will be

slightly over 30. At this time last year 8 of the houses had bluebirds. The number of empty houses is a puzzle. Last year all the houses had birds of one species or another. This is the first infestation of English sparrows. Oh the vagaries of bluebirding.

My reply to Bernie: Your report has a familiar ring, unfortunately. Almost every B-birder I have talked to this season reports late nesting, fewer eggs in both first and second broods and early season loss due to cold/rainy weather. My occupancy, numbers of eggs, hatchlings, and fledglings are all down about 10 percent in Eau Claire and about 15 percent in Sauk Co. The BBs are trying hard though to make up for losses in early season, as my occupancy rate seems to be slightly higher now, than in May/June. Keep in mind that for all the years U biked on the CRBT, very few BBs fledged in that wonderful habitat. But in three years you have given Mother Nature over 100 little bundles of joy! Thanks for all U do!

Late in July, Evonne Kraemer, Franklin Twnsp, Sauk County, reported that in her second season of blue birding she increased her boxes from 24 to 40. 28 of her 40 boxes were occupied by bluebirds for at least one nesting. Thus far in 2017, she has a 168 egg count with 125 bluebird fledges. Evonne indicated lots of competition from TSs and HWs more so than her first year.

Norm Brickl, Baraboo, is in his first official year of bluebirding with a BRAW membership and attended the Spring 2017 BRAW meeting with his brother, Ray. Ray also has a trail at his farm in Sauk County. Norm has monitored a few BB boxes in previous years on his own, but tells me he has learned a lot through the BRAW website and newsletters, along with tips from fellow birders. Norm has a trail outside Baraboo on private land and also two in Bear Creek Township, on land owned by his son and a neighbor. As of early July, he fledged 24 BBs along with other species. He has begun building NABS boxes for use this late season and in preparation for next year, when he hopes to expand his trails. As of July 30, he had 10 boxes occupied by BBs and a total of 41 BBs fledged.

Don't Let Up on House Sparrows!

By Bob Tamm

I know... it's getting old for a lot of us! I mean, how many times have we heard:

"Don't let house sparrows take over a nest box!"

"Destroy sparrow nests, eggs, young, AND adults!"

"Use Van Ert traps!"

"Good bluebird habitat is NOT good house sparrow habitat" (and vice-versa)

Etc. Etc.

Well, I am here to say it once more... Don't become lethargic or so-so when it comes to getting rid of PASSER DOMESTICUS! They are as big a threat now to our native cavity nesters as they were back in the last century! One may be inclined to say: "Give us something NEW! We've been hearing this sparrow stuff for years and years!" And that would be a true statement. But, as long as the enemy is out there... we must be diligent about eliminating as many HOSPs as possible.

Let me give you two reasons for my writing this article.

Firstly – an incident that took place only a few days ago. I have a bluebird trail at Muskego Cty. Park. It is a trail that is not very productive lately because of more and more construction going on near the park. (Some say that is progress – I have another word for it) Nevertheless, I do get SOME bluebirds to fledge every year, but this year? In a word... BAD! So I WAS happy to see an adult female flying



out of box #1 as I approached it. When I opened the box, the good news was that there was a nest with five eggs. The bad news was that the female's mate was dead in the front corner of the box – its head badly mutilated. House sparrows had struck again. Judging from how the nest was built to the side of the dead male bluebird, this male was killed prior to egg-laying as it tried to defend its box from the sparrow intruder. Amazingly, the female bluebird appears to have built the nest around her dead mate – and laid five eggs to boot! (see pic.) I removed the dead male, and am keeping my fingers crossed that Mrs. Bluebird can successfully hatch and raise the young to fledging. We shall see.

Secondly – I was perusing a very nice magazine – *Our Wisconsin* – excellent in most every way, and one that I believe some of our readers also enjoy. Every issue is packed with beautiful photos and stories of the great state of Wisconsin!

Having said that... I was disappointed and disturbed that in the last issue it published a picture (On the "Window On Wisconsin" page) of a female house sparrow feeding its young as they stuck their necks out through the

entrance hole – Followed by a caption about the Milwaukee man that commented that these sparrows always prefer his old bird house when raising a family.

Cute – real cute. Wisconsin has such a rich diversity of native birds that would make great pictures. And what do they feature??? A photo of a female house sparrow feeding a bunch of chicks!



Bottom line folks... It may sound old... but we have a job to do. Firstly, continue to be vigilant in house sparrow destruction!

And secondly, and I think just as important, EDUCATE THE PUBLIC! Those little 'chirpies', that are more than happy to occupy any box that an unsuspecting or ignorant person sets up, are just as destructive to our native birds now as they ever were.

The sooner everyone knows this, the better it'll be for all, including our bluebirds.

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Local Audubon Chapter inspires young people with their cavity nesting program

Sue Hall, Portage Co.

The Aldo Leopold Audubon Society has been helping to preserve cavity nesting song birds in Central Wisconsin for the past 16 years. Presently, they have 82 monitors who record data for 1,385 nest boxes in Clark, Marathon, Monroe, Portage, Waupaca and Wood counties each week starting late March through August. One of the highlights has been involving the younger generation in both monitoring with their parents as well as being a part of a school group. Each spring, Audubon member Kent Hall visits schools and introduces students to the importance of preserving cavity nesting birds. He shows them the different nests and eggs that each of the species produces and provides each of the students with data sheets so they can become school monitors and record the type of nest, number of eggs in the nest, date of hatch, and when they fledge.

Portage County has three elementary schools in the Audubon program. Roosevelt School has been involving youth for the past 8 years when Faye Miller helped coordinate the 4th grade classes with Hall. Sherry Thompson has assumed this role the past two years with 60 students participating this season. Here are comments from Mrs. Thompson's students at a recent monitoring session. The students held their clip boards with their data sheets and toured the Roosevelt school grounds to see which species was in



their boxes. They were delighted that they had all four of the cavity nesting birds to observe. Abigail exclaimed, "Holding the baby bluebird and Black-capped Chickadee was one of the best experiences that I ever had. It was a once in a lifetime experience that I will never forget," Even commented that "The Eastern Bluebird felt a lot like jello, it was really soft," Jazmine liked the young bluebirds because their tummies are red and blue and it is weird, but that is what happens when you are a baby bluebird," Alivia liked holding the Black-capped Chickadees, but remarked "they were bigger than I thought because their eggs are so small". Katie was curious about the "poop sacks". She remarked "it is neat how the mother bird takes out the sacks to keep the nest clean". Maddox's favorite part was "when the birds were "gaping". That's when they

want to get fed and they open their mouths really wide". Winston thought it was interesting that "the chicks are born with their eyes shut. The mom comes in to take out the poop sacks, it's like taking out the trash".

The other two schools that have been involved in the program are McKinley School with 6th grade teacher, Dean Hodsdon as coordinator the past 9 years. This year, he had 20 students and parents who helped monitor the boxes with his Bird Club. The newest school to participate is Madison School with Grant Martell, coordinator for the past 3 years. This year he had 30 students participate. Hall reports that a lot of the members of the environmental groups to which he belongs have an older generation and it is important to inspire the youth of tomorrow to become involved in nature.

BRAW welcomes these new and returning members

James F. Mand - Madison, WI
Linda Drexler - Stratford, WI
Nick Snyder - Appleton, WI
Gregory L. Olson - West Salem, WI
Ron & Connie Brake - Watertown, WI

Donor above 100\$: Steve Pearsons - La Crosse, WI

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A gift subscription to BRAW is a wonderful way to get friends into bluebirds and share your enjoyment with others.

Use this form for membership, gift membership or to renew your membership. Life members do not need to renew each year. Please notify us of address change.

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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:

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- \$25 Contributing Annual
- \$100 Corporate Annual
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- Legacy

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- \$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.
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Enclosed please find my check \$ _____

Membership/subscription go to:
BRAW.org

You can also use PayPal or a credit card to renew your membership or make a contribution on the the BRAW website at www.braw.org

If you join during the year you will be on a quarterly membership and *will not* receive back issues.



Pat Ready photos

In Recognition & Appreciation



Bluebird
Restoration
Association of
Wisconsin

The Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin
extends its appreciation for providing habitat
to support the conservation of
Wisconsin's Eastern Bluebirds to

(Your Location Here)

Patrick Ready

Patrick Ready, President, BRAW, Inc.

(Your name here,) Trail Monitor

2017 Season

Appreciation Certificates Available

I would like to make trail monitors aware that BRAW Certificates of Appreciation are available at no cost to our members. If you monitor a trail on a golf course, cemetery, church or other location that you would like to recognize for their support of your trail, we will provide you with a certificate suitable for framing. Just send me the location name and how you would like your name to appear and we will mail one to you. You can email me the information at ssample@gmail.com or for regular mail – Steve Sample, BRAW Publicity Chair, 422 Shepard Ter. Madison, WI 53705.

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Editor, Designer, Photographer
Patrick Ready, 815 Sky Ridge Dr., Madison WI 53719
608-239-0791 • birdsready@gmail.com

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Go to BRAW.org

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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

Patrick Ready
815 Sky Ridge Dr.
Madison, WI 53719
www.braw.org



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The Last Page . . .

4H Kids Learn About Bluebirds!

Patrick Ready, BRAW President

We all know the future of bluebirds passes on to the next generation so we need to reach out and inform them of the important work we do as nest box monitors. Giving a Bluebird Nest Box seminar to 4H kids is an excellent way to accomplish this goal. Each year in late June the UW in Madison holds 4H week. We were invited last year and the kids were thrilled to make a nest box to take home and put up for bluebirds. (They hoped) This year Steve Sample & I did the seminar again and were better prepared because we knew what to expect. Some of these kids never built anything with their own hands before. Using tools was a learning experience. Making a nest box was a rewarding & something they were proud of. Let's hope we reached a few kids that will become Bluebirders for years to come.



Surprise!



Else Karlsen was photographing bluebirds at Gov. Nelson State Park in late summer when she captured this female with a small frog in its beak. She said it took the frog to the nest box to feed to her brood. Let's hope they didn't "croak"!! LOL

Seeing Double!



Shari Kastner was photographing bluebirds when she captured this pair near her home. At first it looks like just one bluebird because they are so close together.

Got a good Bluebird photo? Send it in to the WB editor. See page 11 for info.