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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

## 2017 BRAW Convention Report

see page 3



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## A Word from the Prez

This is one of those newsletter issues that has something for everyone— unusual nesting, planting ideas for bluebirds, a nest box plan, helping Purple Martins (another cavity nester in need), a cavity nester nest guide and even an article on House Sparrows!! Yuk!!

Like the radio program “All Things Considered” this issue does just that! As the editor I hope you enjoy reading all or most of it.

In April we held our Annual Convention in Madison. We tried something new by holding it in a high school— something I picked up from our neighbors to the west — The Minnesota Bluebird folks. I noted in their newsletter they often hold their annual convention in a school. I figured why not give it a try? If you think about it, it makes sense because they have the facility for the programs — a large room with stadium type seating, large projection screens and very good sound system so all could hear. They also have a cafeteria where we had our catered lunch. All in all I believe it was a success and heard many good comments about the venue and the presenters. I’d like to thank all who helped to make it a success by their volunteer efforts. Many hands make work easy!

We have had another strange start to the nesting season. With warm summer-like temps and days of cold and rain on end. What’s a Bluebird monitor to do? Keep your fingers crossed!! Eventually the warm weather will settle in and the Blues will get down to business. Weather set backs are out of our control so we just have to wait it out and pray we don’t have too many losses. I don’t expect a record breaking year. When data reports come in they will reflect a cold wet start. Last year was similar and statewide we fledged almost 21,000 Bluebirds — not too shabby.

Summertime might be a good time to build some new houses and get ready to make repairs on your trail in the fall after the nesting season is over. Our website has several box plans that you can print out and use. If your trail is on your own land, you might want to plant some trees or shrubs that will benefit Bluebirds. The article on page 15 by Darrel can give you some ideas as to what to plant in summer or fall. Many birds will benefit from this and you could enjoy watching them.

At the end of this nesting season it is important to BRAW that we receive your data report. It couldn’t be more easy than the options we now have: print & mail, fill in and email it or go online and use the EZ Fill In form. Submit it with the click of a key stroke.

The BRAW board of directors hope you have a prolific nesting Bluebird season.

Patrick Ready  
BRAW President

PS My back is doing much better! No more limping!! (But don’t tell my wife. She’s still doing my chores!)

## Missed 2016 Bluebird Nesting Results

By Steve Sample VP

It is truly unfortunate when people who work so hard to assist bluebird nesting success are left off the listing of bluebird totals for the season. I’m to blame for many of these omissions and I regret it and hope those involved accept my apology. Steve Fallon will be taking this task over for 2017 and I’m certain he will do a better job.

The following people were either left out of the Spring newsletter or, in a few cases, were unable to submit the data in time.

	Boxes	BBs Fledged
Amy Bachman	16	41
Jim Hess	26	98
Mary Holleback	28	29
Ed & Sandy Miller	18	26
Dave Misterek	29	74
Raymond Pinter	70	79
Therese Wilk	32	43

I was told at the convention in Madison that there were two more results to be submitted that I have not yet seen. It does not matter how many or if your trail failed for whatever reason, your data is important.

### Updated Totals as of April 2017

Total Trail Boxes	9352
Total Bluebird Fledged	26789*
Total Bluebird Boxes Used	5473
Total Bluebird Eggs Laid	32951
Total Bluebirds Hatched	25696*
Tree Swallows Reported Fledged	12782
Chickadee Reported Fledged	1564
House Wren Fledged	4161
House Sparrow Reported Issues	766

**Total All Species Fledged 45296**

\* Not all reports give us number of eggs “hatched” so “fledged totals” reported are higher as a result.



Shari Kastner

**Looking  
for  
Bluebird  
info?**

**www.braw.org**



# BRAW Annual Meeting Kicks Off the New Season

By Claire Romanak, Secretary

The 31<sup>st</sup> annual meeting of the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin was held at the La Follette High School in Madison on April 1, 2017. A total of 81 bluebird fans and various wildlife specialists were in attendance on a beautiful spring day.

President Patrick Ready welcomed participants and opened the convention at 9:00 AM. Pat showed us a picture of an unmonitored nest box that was obviously occupied by House Sparrows and reminded us all of the need to either monitor our boxes or remove them to keep them from becoming House Sparrow producers.

Patrick then introduced our new treasurer, Dan Schroeder who presented the association's financial information. The first report was the Income Statement for the first 2&1/2 months. He explained the three columns on the report - the Annual Budget, the Budget YTD and the Actual YTD, and the various income categories. Dan will continue to monitor our financial health and keep the members informed.

Steve Sample, BRAW Vice President, spoke on several changes within our organization. He will be passing the data collection position on to Director Steve Fallon as he assumes-



BRAW President Ready



BRAW Treasurer Dan Schroeder



Steve Sample talks chickadees.

the Publicity Chair position. He introduced JP LaFouge, our new webmaster. Steve had reported 9,352 boxes which fledged 26,672 Bluebirds, for a total of all birds fledged at 45,053. He

gave an overview of the results compared to 2015 numbers and stating that the report will be on the website and in the summer issue of *Wisconsin Bluebird*. Steve had given a talk at Horicon and was asked why we still monitor Bluebirds since "they are everywhere." His reply is that they are everywhere because BRAW does monitoring and that we should be very proud of that.

President Ready then introduced Carol McDaniel, County Coordinator Chair. Carol explained what being a County Coordinator entails, also stating that there are counties with openings. Carol sees many nest boxes that are still mounted on wooden posts indicating that people need to be educated on correct placement and mounting.

Our first presentation was *Chickadees & More Chickadees* by Steve Sample. Steve showed pictures of all 7 species of Chickadees found in North America along with their ranges. The seven species are Mountain, Grey-headed, Boreal, Mexican, Carolina, Black-capped and Chestnut-backed, which differ in looks, behavior and habitat. There are two of these species found in Wisconsin, the Black-capped and Boreal. They are an interesting cavity nester and will utilize nest boxes, old woodpecker holes or excavate their own cavity.

After a brief break we reconvened for a presentation on Audubon's ClimateWatch Study presented by Brooke Bateman. Audubon is docu-

(continued on next page)







Brooke Bateman from National Audubon gave a presentation on Climate Watch study being done in Wisconsin.



Lifetime Achievement - Ann Wick



Mark Martin and Brand Smith talked about the American Kestrel nest box program being conducted by Madison Audubon.

menting how birds are changing their ranges. Winter ranges are shifting north. There are protocols to follow with 12 survey points per grid, listening for 5 minutes at each point & recording data to ebird. Volunteers are needed and can apply at [bbateman@audubon.org](mailto:bbateman@audubon.org).

Our next speakers were Mark Martin and Brand Smith, who gave a presentation on Madison Audubon Society's American Kestrel Nest Box Program. Mark and Brand showed pictures of

boxes and mounting posts, predator controls, and the apparatus used to monitor the boxes. In 2016 they had 48 occupied boxes with 207 eggs, 188 young, 171 fledged and had banded 93 kestrels from 20 of their boxes.

We then broke for lunch and a chance to socialize with fellow Bluebirders.

Afterward we proceeded to the seventh annual BRAW awards ceremony. The Joe O'Halloran Lifetime Achievement Award went to Ann Wick from Black Earth. She is a long-



Merit Award - Jack Bartholmai



Bluebirders of the Year - Dave & Kelly Marwitz

time BRAW member, has banded 12,129 Bluebirds, and monitors 150 nest boxes.

The BRAW Merit Award went to Jack Bartholmai, a long time BRAW member. who was unable to attend. Jack is an excellent photographer who has generously donated many of his





**Director Emeritus Award - Patricia Heiden**

photos as well as monitors trails in Dodge County where he is the county coordinator and a long time BRAW member.

The Bluebirder of the Year Award went to Dave and Kelly Marwitz. Dave is County Coordinator for Green Lake County. He & Kelly monitor nest boxes in three counties and have fledged close 900 bluebirds in 2016.

The BRAW Director Emeritus Award went to Patricia Heiden, BRAW Secretary for the past 28 years. Patricia has never missed a convention and has been an integral part of the BRAW Board of Directors. We honor her commitment to BRAW and the Bluebirds.

The last presentation was Bald Eagles in Wisconsin by Barb Barzen. In 1963 there were only 487 nests in all 48 states. In 1972, DDT was banned. In 1973 the Endangered Species Act was passed. By 1995 the population had recovered enough so that their status was changed from 'endangered' to 'threatened'. In Wisconsin, by the 1960's eagles were only in the northern third of the state. In the first state survey in 1973 only 108 nests were found. A recovery plan was made in 1986, with a target of 360 nests. That was reached in 1991. They were delisted in 1997. During winter, the Mississippi River is a Bald Eagle super highway. The upper Mississippi River Valley is the most important for Bald Eagles in the Midwest. As many as 300 have been counted in one hour. The second most important wintering



**Barb Barzen from the Ferry Bluff Eagle Council gave a very interesting program on Bald Eagles in Wisconsin and studies being done to learn more about them.**

area is the Sauk City area, followed by the Fox River to Green Bay area. In mild winters, Bald Eagles can be found all over Wisconsin. Bald Eagles continue to be monitored as they are an indicator species.

Since the Marwitz's & Jack were unable to attend they sent their comments in via email.

*We would like to thank Sherm Griffen for providing pine boards left over from building bee hives, and nest boxes that he already had put together when we took over his trail.*

- Dave & Kelly

*It is a real honor to be chosen for this award. The "trophy" is quite beautiful. The waves of blue at the bottom suggest the spread primary feathers of a Bluebird's wing.*

*From the early beginnings in the '80's, setting up and monitoring nest boxes has been an adventure that has led me down a trail of discovery and activities I have enjoyed for many years. Learning the life history of Bluebirds, encountering many other bird and animal species along the way, great outdoor exercise, taking photos along the trail and sharing experiences and lessons learned with others have all been apart of the journey.*

*Please thank the board and membership for considering me for this award.*

*Happy Trails to you . . .*

- Jack



**La Follette High School turned out to be an acceptable venue for the conference. Members thought the sound was good as well as large screens for projections and a cafeteria for lunch.**



# The Oddest Year

By Barb Allen

2016 has to go down in history as my “oddest” year in regards to bluebirding, at least for me. I am so thankful for BRAW and my incredible support team. I have to encourage all monitors to attend the yearly conventions as this is where I have met my great support team who I email and call for advice.

This year I have had many unusual nest changes but one is a history maker. This box is on a dead end street in Green Bay with a farm house at the end and farm fields on both sides. I was happy to find a bluebird nest in this box on April 30<sup>th</sup>. Unfortunately when I returned for my second check on May 8<sup>th</sup>, I found it replaced with a tree swallow nest. My next visit on May 18<sup>th</sup> found 3 tree swallow eggs. To my surprise on May 25<sup>th</sup>, I found 4 bluebird eggs in a new bluebird nest. This year was my first experience where there was another species of bird’s eggs along with a nest that was removed and taken over by a bluebird. I don’t know if another species of bird helped evict the prior tenant or if the bluebird did it. Because of such odd happenings, I decided to check the nest the following day and found a 5<sup>th</sup> bluebird egg.



When I returned on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, I could not believe my eyes. The 5 blue eggs were still present but there were an additional 4 white eggs the exact same size which I knew were bluebird eggs. I have been monitoring for six years now and have had white bluebird eggs in the past. This meant that there were two separate female bluebirds. After the bluebird hen laying blue eggs was finished, it appeared the ‘white-egg’ hen egg-dumped on four separate days. Or did she chase the ‘blue-egg’ hen out of the nest to take over? I sent out a “SOS” text picture message to three coordinators.

Bob Tamm, Coordinator for Waukesha and Milwaukee counties, who had presented at our Annual Convention, immediately responded and encouraged me to make sure I got good pictures of each stage as he felt this was a great [Wisconsin Bluebird](#) article in the making. He recommended I let nature take its course and see what happened. I took his advice and did take more pictures.

I did decide to call in the expert in Wisconsin, Dr. Kent

Hall. After our conversation, he felt the only thing that could have occurred was the first ‘blue-egg’ hen had been ousted by the ‘white-egg’ hen. He felt that the 5 blue eggs were probably going to be non-viable eggs and suggested I test one or that I could wait the 19 days to be sure.

I opted to wait. I had initially calculated the hatch date to be June 8<sup>th</sup>. I talked to Kent on June 9<sup>th</sup>, but decided to wait until at least a white egg hatched before destroying any of the blue eggs. At 9:00 AM on June 10<sup>th</sup>, I witnessed the first blue egg hatch. I was ecstatic.

I returned at 11:00 AM to find four eggs hatched. By 4:00 PM all 5 blue eggs had hatched and 4 white eggs remained. Gene Birr, Oconto County Coordinator, suggested that if I had 9 chicks, I might want to put a few in another nest but Bob Tamm felt that keeping them together would be best. I decided to supplement with mealworms and see what happened. I was willing to have a larger birdhouse constructed and move the chicks if all 9 hatched.

Unfortunately this did not happen.

I waited until the ‘blue-egg’ chicks had grown, allowing enough time that the white eggs should have hatched. I then checked the white eggs and each one was found to be non-viable. Fortunately the ‘blue-egg’ chicks fledged on June 28<sup>th</sup>. I hoped that there would be a second brood in this house by the same pair so that I would know if it was the ‘blue-egg’ hen or the ‘white-egg’ hen that had raised the first brood. I removed the nest and cleaned out the house to prepare it for a second brood.

I found a bluebird nest in the box on July 5<sup>th</sup>. I was sure it was the same bluebird pair that had made the nest as this was the only bluebird nest I had in this area. On July 11<sup>th</sup>, I found 3 blue eggs with the 4<sup>th</sup> egg present on July 12<sup>th</sup>. I am fairly sure now that indeed a ‘white-egg’ hen egg-dumped the 4 eggs in the ‘blue-egg’ hen’s nest during the first brood. It’s fascinating to think she did this on four separate days!

Although I didn’t see 9 bluebirds in one brood, I was able to see 9 fledglings from my very special nestbox during 2 broods!!



# Bringing Back the Martins

By Sue Cashman, Lafayette County Bluebird Society

The Eastern Bluebirds have returned on schedule. They are fluttering around nest boxes, looking for the perfect place to start nest building. New nest boxes are popping up throughout Wisconsin. Best wishes go to those who have put up boxes for the first time!

Perhaps you have noticed birdhouses on tall poles scattered about your community. Although many today are occupied by house sparrows, they were originally intended as homes for *Progne subis*, the Purple Martin.

Long before Europeans explored and settled in North America, Native Americans noticed that some birds liked to nest in hollowed out gourds that they had hung to dry. They eventually cleaned the gourds and hung them in trees for these birds because they were attracted to deep nesting cavities. Today, east of the Rocky Mountains, Purple



Martins are totally dependent on housing supplied by humans. People who have success attracting martins supply multi-compartment houses or gourd-shaped homes made of PVC. Both styles

of housing need to be on poles and have a system so they can be raised and lowered. The Lafayette County Bluebird Society erected a system of PVC gourd housing near the ranger's office at Yellowstone Lake State Park several years ago. One of the organization's goals is to attract more Purple Martins to Lafayette County.

Purple Martins are the largest members of the swallow family and the only species of martin in North America. Like other songbirds, they have unique qualities that make them desirable backyard residents.

Purple Martins are aerial insectivores. They will only feed on flying insects, which they must catch in flight. They make spectacular aerial displays and are able to change direction in mid-flight as they pursue flying insects. They can reach speeds of 30 MPH. They have been observed splash bathing. They fly low near water, slow their air-speed to a stall, and bounce off the surface, wetting their belly feathers. Then they fly back to their perch and preen. They enjoy rain bathing. During a light rain they have been observed sitting on wires or perches preening and shuffling their feathers. They show their enjoyment by singing exuberantly. Once one starts, the others join in. Because a gentle rain is falling while I am writing this, I can imagine that somewhere near a body of water, Purple Martins are enjoying it too.

The trick, according to longtime Purple Martin landlords, Louis and Carol Lancaster of Argyle, Wisconsin, is to get them into your yard. They are not interested in bird feeders. They will not use a birdbath. Because they need fly space, they do not like to be near tall trees. There should

be a body of water nearby as a source of insects. They will need a tall, multi-compartment home, which can be raised and lowered to check daily. According to Louis Lancaster, the best way to attract Purple Martins to a new colony is to have an established colony within a four mile radius.

Once established, the older birds will return year after year. The younger birds, called sub-adults, arrive later and look for new homes.

Purple Martin migration is one of nature's wonders. The birds spend the non-breeding season in Brazil. They migrate to North America to breed. The Lancasters report that some of the first to arrive in the spring, around early April, are exhausted. Sometimes an individual bird will die upon arrival. They have an incredible sense of navigation, covering 5000 miles in 6 to 16 weeks, returning to the exact spot they left the previous year. Although they live in a community, they return individually. People who study birds call them an aggregation, a group that comes to a breeding site.

Male Purple Martins will battle for a compartment and a desirable mate. Once a pair has bonded, both work to gather nesting materials and build the nest in their chosen compartment. They bring in coarse materials: straw, sticks, roots, and bark mulch. When it is complete, the male lines the nest with green leaves and often packs mud near the opening for protection.

Another unique quality of the Purple Martin is its plumage. Experts call it delayed plumage maturation. It takes two seasons in Brazil before adult males and females acquire their adult color. Adult males have iridescent purple feathers. The females are lighter and less colorful. The young males and females look alike. It takes an experienced landlord to distinguish between the young males and the young females.

Purple Martin landlords earn the title after having successfully monitored their martin housing for two years. The Lancasters have many years of experience and are hoping their birds' offspring will start new colonies nearby. It is important for them to check the nest compartments often. If they find a nest that has been overrun with parasites, they can remove the young birds and replace the nest, while the adult martins wait patiently. They also have found that the birds love crushed eggshells. Before crushing, Carol heats the eggshells to prevent salmonella.

Anyone who is interested in learning more about *Progne subis* should look for the DVD by Carol Arcand: The Purple Martin. If you visit the Bluebird Nest Nature Center, 308 Main Street, Darlington, Wisconsin, you can read about Purple Martins and watch the video free of charge.

(See tips for attracting Martins on next page)



Pat Ready photos





## Attracting Purple Martins

**Educate Yourself. Learn everything you can about Purple Martins.** Visit the web site [www.purplemartin.org](http://www.purplemartin.org) of the Purple Martin Conservation Association (PMCA).

**Choose the Right Location.** Martin housing should be in the center of the largest open spot available, about 30-120 feet from human housing.

**Put Up Manageable Housing.** Your chances for success will be better if your housing is easy to manage. Choose a pole that telescopes, or is equipped with a winch or rope & pulley, and housing that has easy access to the compartments.

**Open Housing at the Right Time.** At active sites, the first martins usually return within a week or two of the previous years' arrival dates.

**Increase Your Chances.** Offer a combination of houses and gourds. Play a dawn song recording. Add a Purple Martin decoy or two.

**Don't Close it Too Soon.** Keep your house open until late August, as fledglings will be searching for next year's breeding sites in late summer.

**Protect Your Housing from Predators.** Once you attract Purple Martins, don't assume that because you never see any predators there are none around. So install a pole guard, too. External guards on the housing itself protect against aerial raids by hawks, owls, and crows.

**Conduct Weekly Nest Checks.** Nest checks will not cause martins to abandon their young. Record your data.

## The Weeds of the Sky

By Ray Pinter

The house sparrow, *Passer domesticus*, is one of the most widespread birds in the world with a breeding population estimated to be 540 million. Its native range is Europe and much of Asia but it has been introduced to North and South America, Australia, New Zealand, Africa and numerous islands including Hawaii. It inhabits every U.S. state except Alaska and most Canadian provinces except the far north. In North America it is as invasive to the avian world as garlic mustard or buckthorn is to the plant world.

In her 1962 best selling book, *Silent Spring*, Rachel Carson reports on the misguided efforts of the USDA to eliminate the fire ant with indiscriminate aerial spraying of vast acreages in the South in the late 1950s. The introduction of the new synthetic chemicals, dieldrin and heptachlor, many times more toxic than DDT, were unleashed into the environment in massive doses; one million acres were treated in 1958 alone. There followed an almost complete destruction of wildlife in some areas including birds and mammals. According to Carson, "the only bird surviving in any numbers was the house sparrow, which in other areas too has given some evidence that it may be relatively immune." If this pest can withstand even the most toxic of aerial applications, what can we, as those concerned about native cavity nesting birds, do to control this tenacious menace from devastating our bluebird trails?

The house sparrow is actually not a sparrow at all, but an old world weaver finch. It was imported to the U.S. from England with successive plantings over the course of a 25 year period (1851-1876) to supposedly help reduce crop insect pests, but possibly also for European immigrants to bring back a bird they had nostalgic feelings for. But, if the main reason was for insect control they had it all wrong since the house sparrow is not an insect eating bird.



Pat Ready photo

It is estimated that insects compose only 4% of their diet, mostly during the nesting season to feed their young. Their main diet consists of grain and seeds. Their capacity for reproduction is very high: up to 4 broods per season with an average clutch size of 5-6 eggs (8 maximum). One breeding pair can easily produce 20 offspring per season.

In North America bluebirds, purple martins, tree and cliff swallows, titmice, chickadees, and even house wrens are all in competition for nest sites with this introduced menace. They have a powerful crushing finch beak and use it to attack other birds, both adults and nestlings. They often trap the female bluebird or tree swallow in the box and continually peck its face and skull into a bloody pulp. One does not soon forget opening a nest box to see the unrecognizable head of its victim. The eyes have been pecked out and the bloodied skull devoid of feathers. Many times the house sparrow will build its nest right on top of the dead bird's body.

What can we do to protect our native tenants or at least lessen the impact of this ubiquitous "weed of the skies"? First and foremost, never allow house sparrows to reproduce on your bluebird trail. The native bird population is better off without any man-made nest boxes than having boxes where sparrows may be allowed to reproduce. Location of boxes is a key to lessen house sparrow desirability of a site. House sparrows prefer to be near humans and their structures (thus, their latin name: *domesticus*). In rural areas they are mostly found near barnyards where they eat spilled animal grains. They are more likely to be encountered on bluebird trails adjacent to subdivisions and farmsteads. Bluebird boxes should be



located as far as possible from these areas. If this is not possible, then the responsible landlord must exert some control over the sparrow's usurping of the nest boxes intended for native species. Stopping their reproduction is the ultimate and necessary goal. This control can be passive or active. Passive control is merely removing their nest and/or eggs from the nest box. But, since they are so persistent at reproducing, one will need to do this clean out on a weekly basis, possibly for the entire nesting season. Active control is trapping and eliminating the offending bird. An example of their perseverance and deadly nature occurred in one of my boxes last year: Box # WS 6 Log April 19: a few strands of grass from a tree swallow found in box

May 5: A partial hosp nest built on top of a dead tree swallow; contents removed; attempted to trap; unsuccessful

May 11: full hosp nest removed; trapping unsuccessful

May 17: full hosp nest removed; dead tree swallow on ground below box; trapped both male and female hosp at same time (very lucky)

May 2: 4 tree swallow eggs in beautiful feather lined nest

June 2: 6 tree swallow eggs

July 4: 6 tree swallows had fledged

The tree swallows are very numerous on this trail, and despite two deaths, were still able to successfully reproduce once the sparrows were eliminated. The passive approach would probably not have worked in this instance. The sparrows would have most likely continued their dominance over this box for the whole season, and even though they would not have reproduced, they still would have excluded a native bird from using this box.

It seems that individual sparrows have different personalities. Some are much more aggressive than others. Some will ignore other birds, some will harass other birds, and some will kill other birds. Occasionally, the passive approach to their control does work and the sparrow gives up after only 2 or 3 weeks of nest removal. The male rogue sparrows with a more defined killing instinct are the ones that need to be eliminated.

Any sparrow that has killed a native songbird should be marked for elimination by trapping because, more likely than not, this sparrow will kill again and again.

House sparrows are monogamous but males are more closely bonded to their chosen nest box than they are to their mate. If the female dies the male will remain at the nest site and try to attract another female. So trapping and removing the female from a nest box doesn't do much good. The male sparrow is the real culprit that needs to be eradicated to free up the box for native species.

Many Wisconsin blue birders encountered an increase in attempted house sparrow occupancy of their nest boxes last nesting season. House sparrow nesting was attempted in 25% of my boxes last year, more than double the normal rate on my trails. I think one reason for this increase may be because the winter of 2015-16 was so mild. House sparrows don't build up fat reserves in winter so their population can decline somewhat during a cold and snowy winter. Their population would probably drop even greater during winters with deep and lasting snow cover if it wasn't for the popularity of back yard bird feeders. Being ground feeders, they need a relatively bare ground to find their main staple, seed and grain. House sparrow disturbances at bluebird trails may only get worse this coming nesting season after another mild and relatively snowless winter. The more harsh climate may also be why they have not spread to the far northern latitudes of North America. So, for a more sparrow free nesting season in your boxes, hope for a colder and more snowy winter in 2017-18

I do not hate house sparrows. I actually admire their tenacity and can see why the 19th century human immigrants from the birds' native regions may have wanted to bring them over, maybe as a reminder of their own effort and resolve in making a better life for themselves in their new country.

The chemical revolution of the mid 20th century was a failed attempt at bolstering agricultural productivity by killing insects with dire consequences for the environment as depicted in

Silent Spring. One century earlier, the unleashing of the invasive house sparrow (to supposedly control insects) was also a most harmful act with grave consequences for the ecology of America's native cavity nesting birds. In the distant future when environmental conditions on this planet become unsustainable for most life forms, I believe the house sparrow could still be hanging on, possibly representing the last of the avian community on earth. Above all else, it is a determined survivor. They will never be eliminated from America, but they must be controlled on our bluebird trails.

## New (and returning) Members Join BRAW

Jon Beckman  
 Norman Brickl  
 Carol Christian  
 Sue & Phil Clairmont  
 Mary Cullen  
 Jim Dapkus  
 Steve Fallon  
 Rich Hall-Repen  
 Kathryn Hardtke  
 Tammi Hasselquist  
 Kathleen & Charlie Hawkins  
 Kris Houck  
 Charles Jones  
 Floyd and Johanna Kimme  
 Nancy Lally  
 Dennis Loeffler  
 Robert & Dorothy Messner  
 Lynne & Chuck Oehmcke  
 Robert Peterson  
 David L. Roberts  
 Allan L. Rogge  
 Janet Seiler  
 Todd J. Shumate  
 Bill & Donna Stehling  
 Ann Vandenberg  
 Thomas Walz  
 Tribute Golf Course



100 DOLLARS OR MORE:

Kathleen & Charlie Hawkins  
 Harold Ramon Cram, Jr. Bluebird Restoration Fund

LIFE:  
 Tribute Golf Course

# Nest Guide to Cavity Nesters

by Patrick Ready/BRAW

## Eastern Bluebird

Fine or coarse grasses, pine needles, lined with fine grasses.



Wisconsin Bluebird

## Tree Swallow

Similar to bluebirds, coarser grasses & straw, lined with feathers when eggs are laid.



10

## Black-capped Chickadee

Moss, fine grass, lined with animal hair.



Summer 2017



## House Wren

Sticks and twigs jammed in tight. Lined with a small amount of fine grass and hair. Often builds dummy nest with a few sticks but without lined cup.



## House Sparrow

grass, straw, feathers, paper, plastic, etc. and they usually swirl the grass upward to fill the box, then tunnel down in. Sometimes when a nest is first started it may be hard to tell what species is nesting. Wait a day or two to see how the nest develops. Feathers and wrappers early on with some grass pieces are definite signs of House Sparrows.



Above: Peterson box filled with straw, grass, and garbage indicate a House Sparrow nest.

Middle: Eggs-white or grey with brown specs

Left: Beginning nest. Similar to bluebird and tree swallow but note chicken feathers and debris = signs of a House Sparrow nest.

## Species Identification of cavity nesters

Male & female Eastern Bluebird



Female & male Tree Swallow.



Fledgling Eastern Bluebird



Black-capped Chickadee, sexes similar.



House Wren, sexes similar.

©Patrick Ready

## County Coordinator News

By Carol McDaniel

By now, everyone is busy monitoring bluebird boxes. If you need help, our County Coordinators are available to answer questions and many of them offer hands-on help with trails. You can find their contact information on BRAW's website. It was also published in the last issue of Wisconsin Bluebird. **Dave Misterek** was left off of the County Coordinator list in that issue. Dave is CC of **Winnebago County** and has been for several years. You can reach him at: 5114 David Drive, Oshkosh 54904. Phone: 920-233-6770 or [dmisterek@gmail.com](mailto:dmisterek@gmail.com) My apology to Dave for the omission.

New CCs are Donna and Bill Stehling. They are taking over the Sauk County position from Larry Liegel. Their contact info is: 503 Monroe St., Sauk City, 53583 608-643-0824 [donnamstehling@gmail.com](mailto:donnamstehling@gmail.com)

Several of the CCs were at the BRAW Spring Convention. Thanks for attending.

Our CCs have been busy reaching out to the folks in their counties and spreading the word about bluebirds. Here are reports I have received from the CCs:

**Donna and Bill Stehling, Sauk:** The previous coordinator, Larry Liegel, will mentor us this season. We have a 65-house trail in the Badger Lands ( the Badger Army Ammunition Plant). We also set up three trails in the community: Culver's Franchising, Bridges Elementary School and Sauk Prairie Memorial Hospital and trained a monitor. The hospital wants more houses and we want to get a camera that can broadcast to our communities - both Bird Cities. The Great Sauk State Trail is coming through the villages of Sauk City and Prairie du Sac this spring/summer and should be used soon. In fall, Sauk County parks and Highway department will remove vegetation from the rail easement inside the the former munitions plant. Then the ground will rest over winter and be paved in spring. WDNR needs to find a way to get land to connect to Devil's Lake State Park from in the Town of Merrimac. This trail will connect to a trail in Baraboo along the Baraboo River and then eventually to

the trail in Reedsburg and to the 10th best trail and the first Rails to Trails.

Our BB trail is adjacent to a Baraboo Bluff, the Wisconsin River. Riverland Conservancy is close to where the trail will come out along STH 113. The former Munitions Plant and Riverlands plus the land that will connect the trail to the state park are all prairie grasslands. Bird and prairie scientists claim this is the best habitat for BB, TS and other threatened, endangered and just plain birds.

We will be working with the Dairy Forage Ecologist and putting up more houses with plexiglas sides so those visitors using her trail will be able to see what is happening inside the houses.

**Jim Beix, River Falls :** **Lowell Peterson, St. Croix CC** and Jim Higgins and I gave a bluebird program on March 26 at the Interstate Park in St. Croix Falls. About 40 adults and children constructed 20 predrilled NABS style boxes. Lots of enthusiasm. Colleen Tolliver, Natural Resource Educator of WI DNR organized the afternoon. Lowell presented slides and info. BRAW President Pat Ready sent brochures and membership materials. Jim and I added support, advice, artifacts, and nest box types.

**Gene Birr, Oconto County:** Things are really looking up for bluebirds around here this spring. I have now seen bluebirds in 3 different areas along my trails as of today (March 28). So far, no Tree Swallows, but I'm expecting them any day now.

In mid-March I sat in on a bluebird event held in adjoining Shawano County, sponsored by the local True Value hardware store in Shawano. It was presented by Tim Milson, director of the nearby Navarino Nature Center, on behalf of **Shawano county coordinator Ruthann Meiers**, who supplied the bluebird information from BRAW and handouts from the NABS website. When I entered the room that night, I nearly expected to see Kent Hall or Pat Ready giving the presentation, as amazingly I counted more than 120 people in attendance! What a fantastic turnout for this very enjoyable and informational bluebird gathering.

Since presenting a bluebird talk with

**Steve Mayer, Brown County CC**, to 20 attendees at Wild Birds Unlimited in Green Bay in March, I have been busy answering calls and helping 3 new monitors site trails on their properties in both Oconto and Brown counties, as well as one in Manitowoc County, which has no coordinator. I also have cited a trail of 14 nest boxes at Pulaski High School and placed them with the help of Steve. There they will be monitored by two freshmen girls, Kayla and Loren, who have agreed to watch over them for their entire four- year stay and continue during their summer vacations. They will be supervised by their Ag teacher, Mr. Kaleb Santy, who also had helped me establish a 10 box trail three years earlier at Oconto Falls High School, where he had taught previously.

On April 22, we will have manned an information booth and display for BRAW at the Apple Creek YMCA for Earth Day, where the Fox River Academy environmental school is helping establish a new Bird City chapter in Appleton, in Outagamie County. Meanwhile, Dick Nickolai, a past-president of BRAW, is assisting their efforts and will offer a presentation on helping Purple Martins in an afternoon event that same day at nearby Fox Valley Technical Institute, which Steve and I will also attend.

On June 3, I will be working a BRAW booth at Copper Culture State Park in Oconto, in conjunction with their Bird City Nature Festival, organized by Cordula Van Den Heuvel, who also is a BRAW monitor.

I also was honored to have my article about Noel Guards reducing raccoon predation published by the North American Bluebird Society in their last issue of their magazine "Bluebird". It is rewarding to be acknowledged for my research and writing by others as it was when BRAW's editor chose to include it in a recent issue of "Wisconsin Bluebird".

**Charlotte Lukes, Door County:** I presented my program on starting and monitoring a bluebird trail at the annual nest box building workshop at The Ridges Sanctuary on Sat. March 18<sup>th</sup>. It began at 10 am at the Cook-Fuller Center in Baileys Harbor. I wrote a story for our local paper



about bluebirds, *Helping Bluebirds*, and it was printed in the March 10<sup>th</sup> edition. Then a week later I presented the same program at Newport State Park's nature center on March 25<sup>th</sup>.

I have just sent a letter to those Door County people who I expect will monitor their boxes. There are 30 email addresses in the group. I will try to correspond with them every few weeks.

**Don Pritzl, Kewaunee:** I gave a presentation to the Kewaunee Garden Club in January and plan to have a booth at the Algoma Bird Celebration on April 8. During the winter I built 10 NABS boxes for a neighbor.

**Kent Hall; Monroe, Portage, Wau-paca and Wood:** (Taken from Kent's 2<sup>nd</sup> report to the 81 monitors on the Audubon Bluebird Trail). As of April 23, the occupancy on the ABT trail is 3.9% ahead of last season with the number of boxes is almost identical. The report is color coded to denote percentage of occupancy. One trail at Ft. McCoy reported by Guthmiller/ Reyna and Lautermilch/Kmieciak has 90% bluebird occupancy! Tree Swallows are at about half the occupancy rate of last year at this time. He anticipates a possibility of 2,000 or more BB eggs laid along the ABT trail for the coming week. His report details what monitors need to be aware of when checking the boxes in regard to other cavity nesters. He points out the importance of removing inactive BB nests (ones that have not shown activity for a three week period of monitoring). He says that nests invaded by House Sparrows should be removed as this BB nest is abandoned. He reported that boxes were stolen from two routes. At the end of each report, he awards a Dr. Demento Award to the most uncommon thing that happen along the ABT.

**Darrel Eberhardt, Jackson:** In 2016, 11 monitors from Jackson county reported to BRAW with a total of 2067 bluebirds fledged. (See Darrel's article on planting for bluebirds in this issue.)

**Carol McDaniel; Lafayette and Grant:** On March 15, I presented *Blue-*

*birding In Wisconsin Along the Bluebird Trail* slide program at the Bluebird Nest Nature Center in Darlington. My husband, John, and I are installing six boxes on a new bluebird trail on the edge of Darlington for a fellow. I monitor a twenty box trail at Yellowstone State Park near Blanchardville, several boxes on our property in rural Gratiot and some on a trail between Darlington and Mineral Point. The Lafayette County Bluebird Society has members who monitor their trails and report the results to me weekly. For the last four years, I have compiled the information and emailed the weekly report to 160 email members. I answer monitoring questions that I receive from them. One of our members, Sue Cashman, manages the Facebook account for the Bluebird Nest Nature Center, a project of the Lafayette County Bluebird Society.

In a recent issue of WB in the Lafayette County report, I mentioned a possible Blue Grosbeak nesting in a bluebird box was reported to me with photos. I contacted Pat Ready to see what he thought of the discovery. Pat Ready sent the photos of the bird, fledgling in tree and nestlings to Atlas workers; Tom Presby, Ryan Brady and Nick Anich. They all concluded the chicks in the nest were Tree Swallows and the bird on the post was an Indigo Bunting not a Blue Grosbeak, as is the fledgling in the tree. Their reasoning is the beak size is all wrong for a grosbeak. They have large conical beaks, a black mask and bright chestnut wing bars. They also mentioned Blue Grosbeaks do not use nest boxes. They build their nest in bushes along fence rows and edges of woods. As do Indigo Buntings.

**Pat Ready, Dane County;** Spring has been very busy with having the BRAW Annual Convention in April. I gave my Bluebird program in Madison, Newberg and Manitowish Waters. Sold Info Packs, nest boxes and Van Ert traps to attendees. In June VP Sample and I will once again be doing a Bluebird session at the 4-H Summer Program on the UW Madison campus. Steve will give a brief presentation on Bluebirds and then I will help the kids build a NABS Style nest box they can take home.

## Helping Bluebirds

By Roy & Charlotte Lukes

One of our most favorite signs of spring laced the air in our woods early on a recent morning. A male cardinal, perched near the very tip of a tall basswood tree sang his heart out—"CHEERrr -- CHEERrr -- WHITcheer -- WHITcheer," trying to impress his lady love nearby. A few days earlier a male white-breasted nuthatch delicately fed his partner a few hulled sunflower seeds at our large platform feeder, perhaps indicating to her what a faithful mate and provider he will be.

We bought our present property, consisting of mostly young mixed hardwood trees with a small number of conifers, in December 1977. Our hopes were that eastern bluebirds would nest in the several boxes we put up along the western edge of the property the following spring. All that accepted the boxes were tree swallows, an excellent species but not the bluebirds we were hoping for.

It wasn't until 1982 when we were able to begin building our new home and, much to our great joy, the electric power lines which were brought in to the building site soon also attracted some bluebirds. Finally, in the early spring of 1983, a few of our nest boxes were taken over and used by the bluebirds. Mown areas adjacent to the boxes were important, enabling the birds to perch on the power lines above, scan the ground below for insects and fly down to catch them.

Bluebirds need two to three acres of land per nest box to find enough food for raising their young. All their food is obtained on the ground unlike tree swallows which get their food in the air. The swallows can fly as much as four miles from their nest sites to find food. Placing nest boxes too close to each will deter bluebirds but the swallows don't mind.

Our own bluebird trail increased modestly through the first 20 years we lived where we now are. Gradually we asked nearby property owners if we could place some of our nest boxes on their property. The boxes nearly always are set along a road and fence line close to where the

continued on next page



**The revised K-style nest box has a side opening for easy cleaning and a top opening for easy monitoring.**

roadside mowers or the land owners kept the grass and weeds cut quite short, in nearly all cases beneath overhead power lines. The boxes are set up often close to open fields and within around 50 feet, more or less, of trees to which the fledgling bluebirds can fly after leaving the nest box, on their "maiden flights." If the baby bluebirds land on the ground after leaving their nest box they are doomed. They must fly to a nearby tree where the adults will continue to feed them for the next week while they strengthen their flying muscles and learn how to get their own food. Agreement with our project has become highly favorable with the owners. Within a few years we had erected and were monitoring weekly 48 boxes, all within a three-mile radius of our home.

We drive around the countryside and see so many bluebird boxes that have been improperly erected on wooden posts which are open invitations to climbing predators including raccoons, opossums, house cats, squirrels, snakes and others that will eat the eggs and/

or young bluebirds in the nests. Mounting nest boxes on wooden posts is simply a terrible mistake. Far better, in order to give the bluebirds greater chances of successfully raising their young is to use metal electric conduit posts, PVC pipes or strong metal baffles on the posts.

Several years ago Dr. Kent Hall came from his home in Stevens Point to Sturgeon Bay to present a bluebird nest box program. It was well-received and brought more members to BRAW and gave encouragement to many people to start their own bluebird trails. Having attended several state annual meetings of the BRAW group, Charlotte and I became aware of their hard work and dedication toward increasing the bluebird population in our state. We decided to become the Door County coordinators for the group and have been eager to help individuals and groups learn more about maintaining a bluebird trail and especially the highly important job of monitoring the boxes weekly and keeping good records.

Several different kinds of bluebird nest boxes have been used in our state and county with the NABS (North American Bluebird Society) plan, having a side opening for both

monitoring and cleaning, being the most widely used. The plan Charlotte and I, along with quite a few other Door County bluebirders, have found to be very good is the K-style (Kentucky) box. The original plan called for only a top opening which is ideal for monitoring but difficult for cleaning at the end of each clutch of birds. I improved the plan by making both a top opening for monitoring and a side opening for easy cleaning, quite simple to do.

Should you be interested in joining BRAW, the annual dues are \$20 per person or a family membership. As a member you will receive four excellent newsletters that are filled with valuable information on how you can improve your nest boxes and trails. Their web address is [www.braw.org](http://www.braw.org). The Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin (BRAW) provides helpful information to attract bluebirds to your nest boxes. They tell you how to learn to think like a bluebird.



**A mated pair of eastern bluebirds sits atop one of the nest boxes.**



## Planting for Bluebirds!

By Darrel Eberhardt

Here are some shrubs and trees that help berry eating songbirds during the summer, fall and winter in west central Wisconsin. By planting the right scrubs and trees, it helps supplement your bird feeder and draw in a larger variety of songbirds.



**Red Osier Dogwood**

### Shrubs

**Red Osier Dogwood** White or purple berries that ripen in late summer or fall. I have seen bluebirds and cardinals eat the fruit. Must be slightly pruned. 9-10 feet tall (excellent).

**Sargent Crab** The only apple tree shrub. White flowers and dark fruit. Most nurseries do not advertise it but may have it on hand. A couple years ago a flock of fifteen to twenty robins came migrating through in the fall. They stayed for a week and a half until every berry was gone. 9-10 feet tall (excellent)

**Silky Dogwood** White blossoms followed by purple fall berries and are a major food source for migrating birds. 9-10 feet tall (very good)

**Arrowwood Viburnum** White flowers that develop into blue-black berries. This is an excellent shrub for wet soils. 9-10 feet tall (very good)

**Blue Muffin Viburnum** New compact form of Arrowwood Viburnum. This selection grows 5-7 feet tall (very good)

**Winterberry** Red fruit that persists into the winter unless eaten by the birds. Both male and female plants are necessary to ensure fruit set. This shrub prefers a moist loam soil that is on the acidic side but will do well in most well-drained soils. 6-8 feet tall (good)



**American Highbush Cranberry**

**American Highbush Cranberry** White flowers with showy red berries. Used by birds for emergency winter food. If a mild winter, berries will be left on bush. Two years ago, three bluebirds wintered over between Christmas and New Years. They lived on American Highbush Cranberries. (good)

**Nanking Bush Cherry** White flowers and red berries. Easily grown, resists drought. Mice and rabbits like the sweet bark. (average)

**Virginia Creeper** I planted three plants next to a metal corn crib. Within three years the crib was covered. In fall after berries ripen, I walked by the crib and a flock of songbirds flew out. Some varieties of Virginian Creeper are invasive. (good)

**Kay Gray Grape** Sweet, hardy grapes. I planted for the birds, but birds do not like them much. For human consumption, they are great! (average)

### Trees

Trees are easier to grow but are more expensive and take longer to bear fruit.



**Apple Serviceberry**

**Apple Serviceberry (Autumn Brilliance)** White flowers and small blue-black fruits that are favored by birds. Excellent orangey to red fall color. 20 feet tall (excellent)

**Red Jade Crabapple** This weeping

crabapple is unique, it matures as a large umbrella shaped tree. White to light pink flowers with red fruit to feed birds well into winter. 7-11 feet tall (excellent)

**Red Splendor Crabapple** Pink flowers and bright red berries. Foliage is glossy reddish-green, turning reddish-purple in fall. 20 feet tall (very good)

**Red Jewel Crabapple** White flowers and red fruit. After freezing the fruit shrivels darker but hangs on the tree until February or March providing food for birds. 15 feet tall (very good)

**Showy Mountain Ash** More compact in habit. This is the hardiest and most disease resistant of the Mountain Ashes. It has white flowers and red fruit. 20 feet tall (good)

**Nannyberry Tree** White flowers and blue-black fruit. 20 feet tall (good)

**Russian Mountain Ash (Ivans Beauty and Ivans Belle)** Pinkish white flowers and red and purple fruit. Although self-fruitful, planting two varieties produces more fruit. 15-20 feet tall (very good)

**Pagoda Dogwood Tree** Slow growing and needs good soil. 10 feet tall (average)

**Hackberry Tree** Hard to get, the last tree to bud out in the spring. Takes a long time to get berries. (average)

**Gray Dogwood Tree** Slow growing and needs good soil. 15 feet tall (average)

**Amur Choke Cherry tree** Expensive trees that look good but never had fruit. Nursery did not have an answer. (Do not recommend)

After purchasing a shrub or tree they should be watered once a week for the summer. Fertilize them a little every year to keep stress free. Remember they are producing fruit for you and the birds. Also they should be slightly pruned so they live longer. If you have deer, build a fence around the shrubs and trees or deer will prune them for you. Fence does not have to go all the way to ground. Trunk Savers should be used on trees and shrubs with large trunks during the winter so mice and rabbit do not eat the sweet bark. Make sure to take trunk cover off during the summer. Take care of mature trees, because if they become stressed Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers will drill holes in the trunk.







Pat Ready photos

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.

### 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:
  - \$20 individual or Family
  - \$25 Contributing Annual
  - \$100 Corporate Annual
  - \$300 Life Membership

Print clearly

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

County of residence: \_\_\_\_\_

- \$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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Membership, renewal request 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](http://www.braw.org)

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





## 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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EZ Summary data can be emailed to [wisconsinbluebirds@gmail.com](mailto:wisconsinbluebirds@gmail.com)

Thank You!

### We need Your 2017 Data!

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.

Above is a copy of the EZ Form. It's also available as a download on the website - [www.braw.org](http://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**  
 74 Halcyon Days Ct., Oregon, WI.  
 53575

**Email data to: [wisconsinbluebirds@gmail.com](mailto:wisconsinbluebirds@gmail.com)**  
**or use the Easy Fill-in Form on our website: [www.braw.org](http://www.braw.org)**

This form will also be printed in the next *Wisconsin Bluebird*.

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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**

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**Guide to  
Cavity Nesters**  
See pages 10 & 11

**Life cycle of the Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*)** by Patrick Ready.



Pair select box and female builds the nest.



Within a week or two  
3-5 eggs are usually  
laid in the nest.



The male stands guard.



After 13-14 days of  
incubation the  
eggs hatch.



After 16-22 days old the chicks  
are ready to fledge.



The chicks grow  
quickly being fed  
by both parents.