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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.

35 Years of Bluebird Recovery!

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© Mountain Bluebird by Monica Hall



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A Word from The Editor

Wow! BRAW is celebrating 35 years! Thanks to all the bluebird monitors in the past for membership, donations and data reports. We wouldn't be here if it weren't for our dedicated members. Since the beginning it has been our members that have built nest boxes, experimented with various designs, best habitat as well as box spacing and dealt with House Sparrow issues. All for the bird that wears the sky on its back, the Eastern Bluebird.

This is a good start. What? Did he say good start? Yes I did because although we have all done a good job we need the next generation to take over and continue. As we age out of monitoring and trail development, someone has to take over for us. Neglected trails turn over to House Sparrows, House Wrens and field mice. The bluebirds, much like Purple Martins depend on humans in order to keep the population stable or increasing for many more years.

I challenge members to recruit younger folks to take on a small trail. Once they get started it gets them going and they will take off. Much the way all of us did when we began monitoring nest boxes. The future of bluebirds is in their hands!

Soon bluebirds will be returning. Make sure you have boxes cleaned out and ready. Repairs can be made and old boxes replaced. I may have to wait for the snow to melt some before I can go out. Some drifts in Dane Co. are 2-3 feet deep.

Since the pandemic continues and the future for normalcy remains clouded we still can't plan a convention in 2021. It's a wait and see situation still. They are trying to get schools open and restaurants etc. Once we all feel safe, there will be a convention. The site will be Bay Beach Sanctuary in Green Bay.

You may have noticed this column says A Word from the Editor not the President. I decided after 6 years I would resign as president. I am staying on the board of directors.

Think Spring!
Patrick, WB Editor



Celebrating 35 years With BRAW

By Carol McDaniel

Congratulations to all of the bluebirders over the years that have been a part in BRAW's accomplishment of achieving 35 years of successful Eastern Bluebird management.

Bluebirds have been a focus of mine since 1977 when my husband's aunt, Ruth Reinoehl, who was an avid birder, read an article in National Geographic written by Larry Zeleny, founder of the North American Bluebird Society (NABS), titled, "Song of Hope for the Bluebird" and passed it on to me. The article explained the troubles that the Eastern Bluebirds were having with dwindling numbers and told about ways the average citizen could help "bring the bluebird back".

In 1979, I saw my first bluebird at Yellowstone Lake State Park near Blanchardville, WI.

In 1980, I discovered a pair of bluebirds nesting in the box in our backyard with four baby bluebirds. It was a Rubbermaid box that my husband bought for me and was tacked on top of a wooden fence post. I remember the shock of finding the dead parent birds laying on the grass below the box and the four nestlings chirping inside anxious for a meal. Not knowing what to do, I telephoned Larry Zeleny and he explained, "Keep them warm and feed them cutup worms every twenty minutes from dawn to dusk." My family got into the act and we dug worms from the garden and searched trees for tent caterpillars. We cut up the worms and fed them with tweezers. A heating bulb kept the babies warm. We thought water would be good so we gave them drops of water. In a few days, the first baby died, then another, one fledged, and the last was eighteen days old when it died. Discouraged, our teenage daughter Christine wrote a letter to Dr. Zeleny to see if he could tell us what happened. She told him we had given the nestlings drops of water. He wrote back and explained



that little birds get all the water they need from the insects and the water would have gone into their lungs and killed them.

In 1981, Ruth called me again, "If you get some local, interested people together, Carol, I will buy some nest box kits from NABS, and you can give them away at the meeting." I enjoyed seeing birds but knew very little about them, including the Eastern Bluebird. Our children were young and learning about bluebirds sounded like a good nature project to get them involved in, so I agreed and our first meeting was to be held in March of 1981.

Soon, my husband, John, our four children and I invited the community to join us for a meeting aimed at helping the bluebirds. About fifteen people came and we started the Lafayette County Bluebird Society. We handed out 39 nest boxes and they were installed in the rural areas of Darlington. Word spread and more people became involved.

In 1986, I read in a local paper that the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin (BRAW) had formed and was looking for members. I joined and started receiving their newsletter. I read it from front to back and was fascinated with the information. There were few bluebirds fledged in those days and raising them was a challenge. BRAW asked members to report to them about their bluebird trails. I hiked my bluebird trail once a week; often taking my six-year-old daughter, Tammy, with me. She loved seeing the bluebirds fly from the boxes and would peek inside at the little ones.

Soon, I became a BRAW county coordinator for Lafayette County and, eventually, board member and county coordinator chair. Later, I served as BRAW president. I am still checking my boxes once a week during the nesting season and reporting to BRAW.

BRAW has been the go to organization for all bluebirders in Wisconsin for thirty-five years. In the first year, BRAW got funding help from DNR's Bureau of Endangered Resources. After that, they provided printing, mailing and computer help. BER Liaison Mike Mossman helped by

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Data Report for 2020

By Steve Fallon, Data Collections

Greetings! The final numbers for our 2020 bluebird fledglings are in and as a result of the great efforts of our monitors we've seen a pretty decent bounce back, with EAB fledgling numbers roughly 32% greater than 2019. I've plotted the data on maps, as I done for several years, to give a visual representation of where the numbers are coming from.

The first map shows our 2020 Bluebird numbers by county. The number of boxes used by bluebirds, eggs laid and bluebirds ultimately fledged are indicated by the height of the bars in the graph. The next graphed map shows a comparison of the 2019 fledged numbers compared to the 2020 values. In many areas we saw slight improvements, a few areas showed great improvements and a few areas had lower numbers.

The final plot is a pie chart that indicates the relative numbers of bluebirds to the other cavity nesters that share the bluebird boxes. Our total number of all cavity nesters for 2020 was just over 35,500. As is shown, we have a larger proportion of tree swallows in areas around the Great Lakes, the Madison Lake chain and the numerous lakes in the southeastern part of the state.

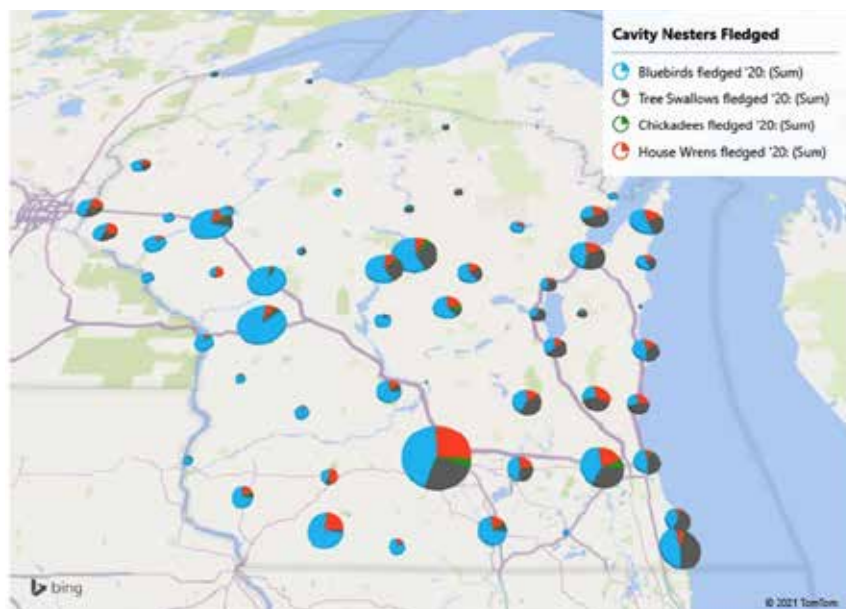
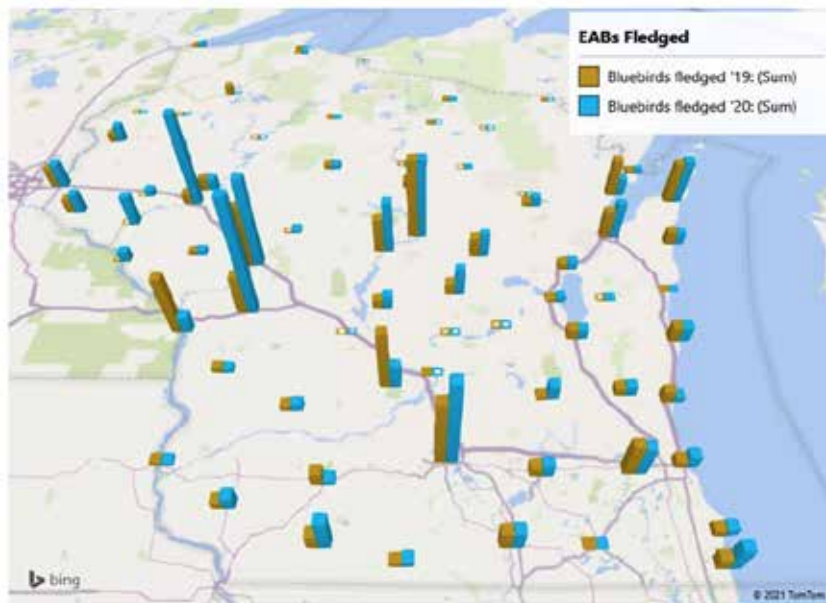
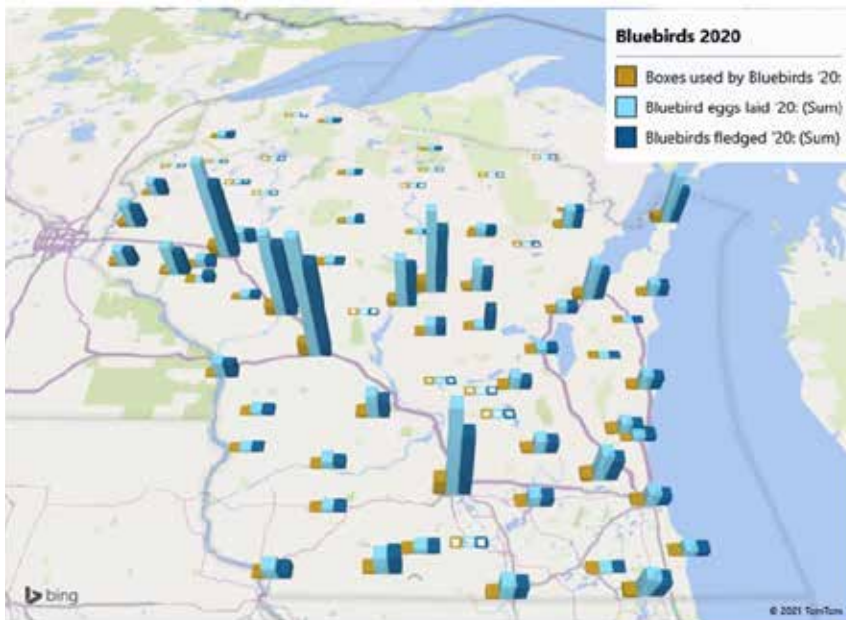
It's also our custom to recognize our monitors for their hard work. We had 320 reports from our monitors the yielded 19,890 Eastern Bluebird Fledglings. We also had a submitted report of 1105 EAB Fledglings from John C. of New Jersey, so it seems that BRAW has some coastal appeal!

The year 2020 was a trying year for some monitors due to COVID, however other monitors reported enjoying getting out of the house as a respite. Regardless, our monitors handled the situation and the increased numbers observed is attributable to their efforts. Congratulations, monitors, on your hard work! As always, please feel free to contact me with corrections or omissions.

See next page for monitors & data.



Wisconsin Bluebird



2020 Fledged Bluebirds

Thanks to all these monitors!

Name	County	Fledged
Myron Byers	Adams	233
Carol Becker	Ashland	32
Bonnie Lumberg	Ashland	8
Kathy Krouse	Brown	45
Jon Beckman	Brown	36
Gerry/Della Clabots	Brown	117
Len Gracyalny	Brown	9
John/Chris Zillmer	Brown	3
Don/Dottie/Rory Joeseeph	Brown	4
Sally Riemer	Brown	20
John Loehlein	Brown	55
Warren & Jukie Schultz	Brown	23
Barbara Basten	Brown	15
Steve Mayer	Brown	67
Stephen Zimmermann	Brown	47
Zoomie Hardtke	Brown	16
Sue Clairmont	Brown	10
Tom Schlueter	Brown	
Barbie Allen	Brown	106
Aaron Vandenbusch	Brown	23
Aaron Vandenbusch	Brown	12
Terry Glanzman	Buffalo	14
Jeff Glanzman	Buffalo	156
Victoria Marquardt	Calumet	12
Charles Zarnoth	Calumet	8
Joan Hoy	Chippewa	5
Debbie Anderson	Chippewa	215
Marilynn/Ken Slezak	Clark	48
Ron and Elaine Hull	Columbia	
Dennis Kirschbaum	Crawford	50
Mark Landmark	Dane	4
David Lucey	Dane	89
Ann E S Wick	Dane	501
Walter Kegler Jr.	Dane	15
James Mand	Dane	6
David Roberts	Dane	10
Jeanne Mawbey	Dane	5
Gene Kroupa	Dane	12
Jack Saltes	Dane	37
Pat Hermsen	Dane	8
Steve Fallon	Dane	12
Donna Garske	Dane	1
Dave Gugger	Dane	21
Valerie Van Winkle	Dane	7
Mary Sobol	Dane	9
Sally Keyel	Dane	35
Sylvia Marek	Dane	41
Patrick Hasburgh	Dane	0
Ruth Smith	Dane	11
Grace/John		
O'Connell/Kessler	Dane	6
Patrick Ready	Dane	54
Anna & Jim Kraft	Price	14
Deb Knudsen	Dane	14
Pam Heilman	Dane	21
Tim Frank	Dane	4
Sandy and Tom Schwab	Dane	55
Marianne Jensen	Dane	46
Gail Smith	Dane	12
Colleen Kleinschmidt	Dane	4
Lynne Haynor	Dane	16
Sue Eagle	Dane	45
Mike Crawford	Dane	21

Name	County	Fledged	Name	County	Fledged
Kristine Vaughn	Dane	57	Darlene Neisner	Jackson	87
Jeannie Druckenmiller	Dane	3	Larry Casper	Jackson	279
Paul Noeldner	Dane	8	Diane and Kevin Cain	Jackson	23
Kathie Brock	Dane	45	Jane Prindle	Jackson	13
Jeffrey Koziol	Dane	6	Kim and Gus Eberhardt	Jackson	91
Deb Rohde	Dane		Bonnie Hamer	Jefferson	27
Robert/Deborah			Jerry Gerndt	Jefferson	74
Lucas/Nicholson	Dane	87	Jerry Gerndt	Jefferson	32
Gail Van Haren	Dane	51	John and Patricia Heiden	Jefferson	46
Gail Van Haren	Dane	52	Anne Moretti	Jefferson	40
Steve Sample	Dane	61	Julie Milligan-Barr	Kenosha	37
Pam Duszynski	Dane	19	Alan Orban	Kenosha	9
Betty Downs	Dane	41	Krerowicz Rosenstiel	Kenosha	42
Betty Downs	Dane	9	Rick Fare	Kenosha	136
Stephen Lang	Dane	46	Sara Fare	Kenosha	81
Jack Bartholmai	Dodge	220	Maureen Kauffmann	Kenosha	15
Jerry Gerndt	Dodge	22	John Meyer	Kenosha	56
Carol Christian	Dodge	5	Deb Zierk	Kenosha	7
James Kronenberg	Dodge	14	Dennis Persinger	Kenosha	47
Carol Ann Osinski	Door		John Krerowicz	Kenosha	26
Rushes Resort	Door	16	Barbie Allen	Kewaunee	41
Ben Teich	Door	118	Don Pritzl	Kewaunee	178
Ken and Signe Onsrud	Door	261	Fred/Mary Craig	LaCrosse	252
Eric Wickstrom	Door	57	Bill LeClaire	LaCrosse	37
Mark and Michaela Holey	Door	17	Carol Mcdaniel	Lafayette	32
Cathy Eckers	Door	1	James Barth	Lafayette	196
Sherry Seubert	Door	9	Sue Cashman	Lafayette	92
Dean Krueger	Door	3	Steve Sheppard	Lafayette	86
Nick Anderson	Door	55	Erickson Wetland	Lafayette	28
Marjorie Andrae	Door	22	Hess	Lafayette	80
Susan Basten	Door	27	Lindell	Lafayette	13
Sandy and Ed Miller	Door	26	Moody	Lafayette	44
Beth Bartoli	Door	10	Schultz	Lafayette	4
Brenda Keys	Door	71	Weckerly	Lafayette	4
Barbie Allen	Door	12	Norman/Elizabeth Dickman	Langlade	30
Sarah Bonovich	Door	9	Karen Koebel	Manitowoc	4
Charles Bergsten	Douglas	62	Jolie Wood	Marathon	9
Terry Glanzman	Dunn	133	Jolie Vilas	Marathon	0
Joanne Madsen	Dunn		Claire Romanak	Marathon	21
Joan Hoy	Eau Claire	9	Joanne DeVetter	Marinette	52
Phyllis LaPine	Eau Claire	26	Tony Sailer	Marinette	28
Bernie Hoefgen	Eau Claire	68	Barbie Allen	Marinette	20
Jim Schwartz	Eau Claire		Patricia Lima	Milwaukee	0
Tom Wirth	Eau Claire		Karen Johnson	Milwaukee	21
Mike Weber	Eau Claire		Ralph Konrath	Milwaukee	54
Paul Savides	Eau Claire		Paul Stencil	Milwaukee	9
Terry Glanzman	Eau Claire	1258	Barb Kellermann	Milwaukee	16
Martina Lindseth	Eau Claire	13	Lynn Crawford	Milwaukee	9
Mavis Hermodson	Eau Claire	14	Shari Kastner	Milwaukee	47
Laurence Liegel	Eau Claire	69	Ellen Lafouge	Milwaukee	62
Rita Gundry	Eau Claire	65	Gordy Weber	Monroe	552
Steve Schleitwiler	Florence		Gordy Weber	Monroe	120
Dorothy Messner	Fond Du Lac		Don Nelson	Monroe	21
Memuna Khan	Fond Du Lac	151	Jeff & Abby Duebler	Monroe	208
Karen Kinziger	Fond Du Lac	22	Jerrilyn Brewer	Monroe	280
Tina Bartholomew	Grant	25	Charles H. Lautermilch	Monroe	302
David Speigle	Grant	204	Cathy Malzacher	Monroe	267
Kathleen Dreikosen	Green	86	Michael and Ellen Helgren	Monroe	181
Ronald Balsiger	Green	9	Jerry Gerndt	Oconto	67
Rodney Courtier	Green	35	Jerry Gerndt	Oconto	30
Gene Kroupa	Iowa	40	Albert Powers	Oconto	8
David Thiel	Iowa	5	Sue Clairmont	Oconto	13
Kim Cates	Iowa	39	Dave Retzlaff	Oconto	5
Darrel Eberhardt	Jackson	802	Don Denor	Oconto	4
Bill Schapfel	Jackson	115	Gene Birr	Oconto	303
Greg Kruger	Jackson	62	Barbie Allen	Oconto	99

Name	County	Fledged	Name	County	Fledged
Don Denor	Oconto	16	Janet & Andy Raddatz	Sheboygan	20
Kristin Laufenberg	Oconto	3	Jim and Dorothy Beix	St Croix	124
Chantel McLeod	Oconto	2	Lowell Peterson	St Croix	85
Don Denor	Oconto	6	Ruth Hilfiker	St Croix	10
Joan Altergott	Oconto	32	Harvey Halversen	St Croix	
Cordula VanDenHeuvel	Oconto		Kathy Fredrickson	St Croix	10
Neveah McLeod	Oconto		Debby Walters	St Croix	26
Kevin & Denise Judy	Oconto	16	Stanley King	St Croix	9
Cordula VanDenHeuvel	Oconto	5	Mark Ritzinger	St Croix	21
Steve Schleitwiler	Outagamie	5	Paul Wenzel	St Croix	64
Steve Mayer	Outagamie	115	Jim Wolf	St Croix	66
Daniel Schultz	Outagamie	11	Lori and Jim Livingston	Taylor	29
Jerry Gerndt	Ozaukee	18	Dwight Offord	Taylor	53
Richard Albert	Ozaukee	16	Fred Craig	Trempealeau	92
Nick Gall	Ozaukee	71	Henry L. Peterson	Vernon	9
Terry Glanzman	Pepin	476	Robert Tamm	Vernon	35
C Anderson	Pepin	20	Michael Everson	Verono	29
Jim and Dorothy Beix	Pierce	157	Robert Butzer	Vilas	29
Carol Forsythe	Pierce	31	Greg Olson	Vilas	0
John Hanson	Pierce	53	Mike and Jean Curran	Walworth	10
Jim Higgins	Pierce	87	Thomas Ganfield	Walworth	10
Rodger Meyer	Polk	160	Madelynn Miezio	Washington	5
David Clausen	Polk	124	Ray Pinter	Washington	114
Sue Hall	Portage	118	Jean Hamilton	Washington	
Diane Mrozinski	Portage		Karla Spaits	Washington	23
Jean Klein	Portage	55	Tim Stoffel	Washington	21
Joe Schultz	Portage	104	Lora Schreiber	Washington	9
David/Patti Becker	Portage	73	Jon Frohling	Waukesha	41
Konrad/Nancy Chojnacki	Portage	84	Robert Tamm	Waukesha	62
Mary Bratz	Portage	136	Jerry Klingbeil	Waukesha	5
Woody and Madge Bishop	Portage	106	Amy Bachman	Waukesha	57
Michael Moore	Portage	76	Jerry Gerndt	Waukesha	9
Jan Ronchetto	Portage	47	John and Patricia Heiden	Waukesha	20
Jim/Darlene Jakusz	Portage	133	Ilene and Paul Kronschnabel	Waukesha	59
Bill and Janice Seybold	Portage	87	Walter Jost	Waukesha	69
Samantha/Wendy Carlson	Portage	115	Walter Jost	Waukesha	69
Sunshine Buchholz	Portage	3	David Thornton	Waukesha	
Lisa Bey	Portage	42	Shari Kastner	Waukesha	39
Karen Dostal	Portage	108	Steve Heimerman	Waukesha	5
Wyleen High	Portage	44	Melissa Bruder	Waukesha	96
Kathy Gabriel	Racine	66	Cathy Daus	Waupaca	35
Dennis and Heather Jensen	Racine	22	Alice Chaney	Waupaca	184
Alan Orban	Racine	5	Mary Naylor	Waupaca	58
Tom and Karen Gavahan	Racine	18	Patrick Enright	Waupaca	42
Christopher Jamieson	Racine	4	Elizabeth Nies	Waupaca	27
Ben Neal	Racine	26	Adam Brandt	Waupaca	51
Paul Klawiter	Richland	120	Mike O'Connell	Waupaca	12
Anita Reese	Richland	6	Len Place	Waushara	76
Nate and Jon Straight	Richland	12	Bob Fox	Waushara	384
William Fruin Jr	Rock	69	David/Christine Misterek	Winnebago	73
Janice Kumlien	Rock	5	Tom Underwood	Winnebago	6
Steve Fallon	Rock	24	Megan Karth	Winnebago	9
Rodney Courtier	Rock	197	Dana Merriman	Winnebago	4
Jim Brase	Rock	4	Kim Marshall	Wood	58
Michael Johnson	Rock	57	Tom Bartelt	Wood	138
Cindy & Jim Schwisow	Rock	10	Mary Dahm	Wood	48
Sharon Stark	Sauk	12	Fred Camacho	Wood	159
Gene Kroupa	Sauk	19	Ruby Thomas	Wood	38
Laurence Liegel	Sauk	197	Karen Haralson	Wood	81
Renee Pierce	Sauk	18	Tom/Amy Reitz	Wood	137
Bruce and Ruth Marion	Sauk	136	Mike Moran	Wood	102
Susan Kenney	Sauk	16	Chelsea Sorbo	Wood	119
Ruthann Meiers	Shawano	174			
Lee Curtiss	Sheboygan	119			
Therese Wilk	Sheboygan	104			
Ellen Klusmeier	Sheboygan	26			
			John Clendingin*	New Jersey	1105
				Sum	19890

Welcome These Members

BRAW welcomes these new and returning members.

Kaylynn Gazvoda, Madison
 Ryan Walter, Neenah
 Diana Mrozinski, Stevens Point
 Fred Schultz, Medfield, MA
 Patrick McCormick, Sherwood
 Roy & Shannon Ward, Rhinelander
 Dave Kidd, Lyndon Station
 Bruce & Lisa Drummond, Madison
 Gloria Zahn, Waupaca
 David Bishop, Cedarburg
 Craig & Janet Adams, Elmwood
 Janet Bolhous, Monroe
 Tom Zahasky, Dane
 Nadine Krahn, Eden
 Steve & Sara Nickels, Pewaukee
 Brads & Janie Scheiber, Kenosha
 Jeremy & Sara Scheiber, Watertown
 Amy & Brian Beranek, Watertown
 Ben Barrick, Amberg
 Patrick Ready, Life Member
 Hiam Garner & Nancy Deaton, Madison

Donation to BRAW

Deb Knudsen, \$20
 Karen Johnson, \$5
 Suzanne Hall, \$25
 Sharon & Jerome Woelfel, \$500
 Claire Romanek, \$50
 Joan Hoy, \$15
 Cynthia Bishop, \$5
 Craig & Janet Adams, \$15
 Paul Stencil, \$40
 Deb Turski, \$100
 Mary Bard \$30
 Kim Marshall \$15
 Frohling \$10
 Ruthann Meiers, \$100
 Bill Prue, \$25
 Donald Persons, \$100
 Janet Willman, \$25
 Carol Ramage, \$15
 Janice Kumlien, \$10
 Darlene Jakusz, \$10
 Kris Perlberg, \$80
 Timothy Freeman, M.D. \$25
 Rita Gundry, \$ 50
 Richard Albert, \$25
 Claire Leverich, \$75
 Don Pritzl, \$75
 Tom Pierce, \$100
 Walter Jost, \$15
 Todd & Betty Berens, \$25
 Laurence Liegel, \$50
 Jack Saltes, \$25
 Renee Baumgartner, \$5

Bluebirds in Song

By Gene Kroupa

Bluebirds' sweet sounds and gentle demeanor have served as inspiration to songwriters and composers for ages. Whether you are into country western, classical, pop or some other genre, chances are good that there's a tune with the word "Bluebird" in the title.

Let's start with the long-time standard simply titled "Bluebird." My favorite rendition is by Anne Murray. You will find different songs with the same title done by Miranda Lambert, Paul McCartney & Wings, and others.

If you are into folk music, you are sure to appreciate Joan Baez's version of "Glad Bluebird of Happiness." Seeking happiness? Then "Gonna Find Me a Bluebird" by singer/songwriter Marvin Rainwater will certainly lift your spirits.

A heartwarming song for winter is "Bluebird Island" performed by Hank Snow and Anita Carter. Many Bluebird songs had their origins in

country music and were debuted at the Bluebird Café in Nashville.

Ersel Hickey was an American rockabilly singer best known for his hit song "Bluebirds Over the Mountain." Many other recording artists, including the Beach Boys and Robert Plant, covered this song.

"I Heard the Bluebirds Sing" was written by Hod Pharis, and his duet with Anne Little was released in 1952. Later the song received an authentic Bluegrass treatment by Jim & Jesse. Personally, I like the Irish father and daughter duo of Hugh & Maria Doherty's lilting expression of the words.

Not to be left out, those of us who appreciate instrumentals will embrace Chet Atkins' pure pickin' of "Hello



Bluebird." And "Sleeping Beauty Ballet Op. 66, Variation II – The Bluebird and the Princess Florine" offers a more classical inclusion of our ambassador of sweetness.

A nostalgic look back will find Bing Crosby crooning "Still the Bluebird Sings" and "There's a Bluebird Singing in My Heart." And what could be cheerier than Doris Day's upbeat treatment of "Bluebird on Your Windowsill?" Hank & Audrey Williams also recorded this popular piece.

The song was first written as a poem by a Vancouver children's hospital nurse Elizabeth Clarke in 1947. She was inspired by a sparrow perching on the windowsill near a little boy's bed. The recording became the first million copy seller by a Canadian.

These wonderful songs featuring Bluebird in the title are perfect listening to welcome back spring and send winter blahs a packin'. Most can be found doing a web search by title and heard via YouTube.

Black-capped Chickadee

By Sue Cashman

Poecile atricapillus, the Black-capped Chickadee, is often heard first and seen later. A tiny bird with a black bib and cap, white cheeks, soft gray feathers, and buff-colored sides, it is a common visitor to backyard feeders.

Its unique habits make it an interesting bird to learn about. A friend of mine noticed that chickadees at her feeder carry their seeds away. Have you noticed that too? They carry seeds away and place each item in a different place or cache. They can remember thousands of hiding places. In winter, the chickadees' diet is about half plant matter (seeds and berries) and half animal foods (suet, sometimes bits of meat from frozen carcasses.) From spring through fall insects, spiders, and other animal foods make up 80-90 percent of their diet.

Chickadee calls are some of the easiest bird calls to identify. The calls communicate the identity and recognition of other flocks as well as predator alarms. The more "dee"



notes in "chicka-dee-dee-dee" call indicate a higher danger level.

These acrobatic, curious little birds inhabit the northern $\frac{2}{3}$ of the United States and much of Canada. They do not migrate, though every couple of years when populations become high, the birds that were last to hatch spread out and move southward in the fall. The term given to this phenomenon is irrupting.

Chickadees prefer mixed deciduous and coniferous forests. They are also commonly found in rural and suburban areas and have been observed in weedy fields and cattail

marshes. They favor birch and alder trees.

They are cavity nesters and prefer to excavate their own nesting and roosting holes in rotted wood. They will also construct their nests in nest boxes, small natural cavities, or abandoned Downy Woodpecker holes. They are drawn to nest boxes filled with wood shavings and sawdust so they can do their own housekeeping and clear the cavity before the nest is built. The female chooses a site, and both the male and female work together to excavate the cavity. Once the nest chamber is hollowed out, the female builds the cup-shaped nest using moss and other coarse material for the foundation. She lines it with soft material such as rabbit fur or hair.

She has one brood each year and may lay from 1-13 eggs. She incubates the eggs for about two weeks. In about three weeks, the nestlings will fledge. As is common with many birds, the adults continue feeding the young after they fledge. Adult Black-capped Chickadees will feed their young for 3-4 weeks after they have fledged.

In January, Chickadees will sleep



in their own cavities. They conserve energy by lowering their body temperature by 10-15 degrees F at night. Called nocturnal hypothermia, this habit reduces their energy expenditure by as much as ten percent.

Happily, Black-capped Chickadee populations are secure. Because they make cavities in rotted trees, they can suffer if land managers cut too many dead trees out of forests.

Bradford Torrey was an American writer who lived in the 1800s and devoted much time to studying birds, their habits, and traits. In 1889, he referred to the Chickadee as "...the most engaging and characteristic enlivener of our winter woods; who revels in snow and ice, and is never lacking in abundant measure of faith and cheerfulness, enough not only for himself but for any chance wayfarer of our own kind."

If you feed birds, you probably are familiar with the sound and sight of this fascinating and curious little bird. If you have ever put up a simple feeder and filled it with black oil sunflower seeds, chances are good that it will soon come to make your acquaintance. Happy Spring bird watching!

Sue Cashman, a member of the Lafayette County Bluebird Society and BRAW, is the former program director for the Bluebird Nest Nature Center in Darlington, WI. She also serves as an officer on the Chamber-Main Street Board of Directors in Darlington as well as the Bird City Statue Committee. She is a former teacher and has her own bluebird trail with 50+ nest boxes.

Photos by Patrick Ready.

This article was reprinted from a previous WB.

Managing Nest Boxes for More Bluebirds

By BRAW Directors

Like a well-tended vegetable garden, nest boxes need to be managed to produce more bluebirds. Here are some tools BRAW directors use to increase the number of fledglings.



House Sparrow nest. Time for the Van Ert Trap!

- 1. Monitor for problems.** It's hard to solve a problem if you don't regularly monitor your nest boxes. Check every seven to 10 days during the nesting season. Look for telltale signs, such as nests being abandoned or taken over by other species, dead chicks or adults, abundance of ants, blowflies and black gnats, eggs pushed out, and nests destroyed. Equip all nest boxes with a predator guard and relocate if bothered by house sparrows and wrens when necessary.
- 2. Identify causes.** It is disheartening to find a first nesting attempt to be not successful. Eggs pushed out of the nest onto the ground is usually the handiwork of sparrows or wrens. Sometimes wrens will even build a stick nest atop the grass one. If the eggs and chicks are gone or shells left on the ground, chances are good that a raccoon or squirrel did the deed. Finding a dead bluebird sitting on the nest points to an aggressive house sparrow. An abandoned nest can be caused by the loss of a hen or its mate or some unknown disturbance. Preparing for another nesting attempt by a bluebird pair is a reasonable action to take. Remember, wrens and other

native cavity nesters are protected by law.

- 3. Fill out your data record.** Sometimes our memory fails us and the bluebirds, too. Record what you find when checking each nest box by taking your tally sheet along. Accurate records will help you identify boxes that need attention. And they will make it easy for you to report results for the annual BRAW monitors' report.

- 4. Other management tips.** Consider trying skylight roofs to discourage house sparrows. Learn how to install and use a Van Ert trap to live capture sparrows. Make sure that there is adequate ventilation near the top of box sides to let out summer heat. Install a ½-inch high wire mesh riser on the box bottom to supply air flow under the nest.

You can make them out of the same stiff wire mesh used for Noel predator guards.



Leave nest box doors open in the winter if you want to discourage other species from moving in.

Whether it's gardening or bluebirding, paying more attention to what's going on and taking appropriate actions usually lead to better results. Always feel free to contact a county coordinator or director if you need help.



Place boxes in good bluebird habitat. Short grass areas are food sources.

Gene Kroupa photo

Bluebird Nest Box Placement: A Dilemma or Is It?

By Steve Sample, BRAW President

When BRAW was started back in the mid-1980s, there was no question that the Eastern Bluebird was in trouble with significantly declining populations, not only in Wisconsin, but on the entire North American continent.

The European Starling and the English (House) Sparrow were the key culprits – both being invasive cavity nesting birds. They were very aggressive and competed for the same natural nest sites as the Bluebirds.

In addition, replacement of wooden with steel fence posts just compounded the problem. Woodpecker holes in old fence posts were a favorite nesting site of Bluebirds.

One of these issues was partially resolved by designing and constructing nest boxes that could serve as an artificial cavity conducive to Bluebirds. More importantly, with the 1.5-inch size of the nest box entry, the Starling was eliminated as a competitor.

House Sparrows remain a problem, but there are several approaches to mitigating their impact. An important axiom in science states “You can never do just one thing.” This is particularly true in dealing with House Sparrows.

Monitoring nest boxes regularly is a crucial first step in overcoming the House Sparrow problem. Moving nest boxes that attract House Sparrows and using a Van Ert trap to remove aggressive individual males are good next steps.



By placing Bluebird nest boxes in the environment, we can expect other native cavity nesters to use them as well. More commonly, the Tree Swallow, the Black-capped Chickadee and the House Wren find the boxes inviting. Some people feel they are unwelcomed guests.

Since these species are protected and are declining in numbers, too, we should not disturb their nesting efforts. Veteran monitors will tell you that they do not often see any of these visitors in their Bluebird nest boxes. That’s a clue that there is a way of preventing these species from usurping houses: location, location, location!

Tree Swallows: These birds favor hunting flying insects on the wing over or near water. Placing nest boxes within sight of a pond, lake, stream or other wet area will likely attract Tree

Swallows. Those placed along crop fields or areas with no bodies of water around rarely draw Tree Swallows. Tree Swallow nests are easy to identify by the feathers used to line them.

House Wren: House Wrens like brushy areas and dense woodlots. Placing nest boxes near these habitats, homes and in places where House Wrens have nested before will create a potential problem. Wrens do not favor open fields away from trees and shrubs like Bluebirds prefer. You know you have a House Wren problem when the box is stuffed with twigs.

Black-capped Chickadees: Chickadees do not migrate. They prefer dense deciduous or coniferous forests and are commonly found at the edges of these areas. Placing your Bluebird nest boxes near this habitat type might appeal to Chickadees. Again, rarely if ever, are they found in nest boxes in open areas. However, nest boxes in backyard gardens can sometimes end up with the moss-lined nests typical of these intelligent birds.

Birds are smarter than people often realize. As they adapt to a changing environment to survive, their behavior will change, too. Generations of Bluebirds using nest boxes, being brought up in and fledged from these boxes, might become dependent on the existence of nest boxes. So, it’s important that we recognize our responsibility in assisting Bluebirds.

Mountain Bluebirds!

Last summer a female Mountain Bluebird paired up with a male Eastern Bluebird and nested in Taylor County. A state first! Ruth Smith of Madison contributed two photos at right.

Monica Hall of Lodi photographed a Mountain Bluebird wintering in MN.



Monica Hall



Ruth Smith



During fall migration this Mountain Bluebird showed up at Horicon Marsh for a couple of days. Ruth Smith tracked it down.

County Coordinator News

By Gene Birr

In just a few short weeks from now the daylight hours will be considerably longer, the snow banks will be nearly gone and our beloved bluebirds will be returning to Wisconsin. Their impending return brings hope to us all for a promising season of bountiful bluebirds, beautiful weather and good health that awaits us in this new year, as we look forward to a return to our normal outdoor activities. The following reports from several of our county coordinators show that we are making every effort to resume the seasonal presentations and daily routines that we have become accustomed to, helping educate others how to assist in increasing nesting habitat for bluebird and the other native, cavity-nesting songbirds. My hope is that these accounts will inspire and encourage each of us to increase our individual efforts to establish new bluebird trails, build more nest boxes and learn new ways that will help bluebirds be more successful in their attempts to raise their young this season.

Washington Co., Mary Holleback

We will be holding a bluebird workshop this spring.

Attracting Backyard Birds Workshop at Riveredge Nature Center, Sat. March 13, 2021 from 1:00-2:30 PM

Many spring migrants will soon be returning to our area looking for housing. Join us to learn how to attract a wide variety of cavity-nesting birds to your yard. We will discuss the pros and cons of different nest box styles and cover the basics of where to place them and how to maintain them. This workshop is meant for amateur and experienced bird lovers. We will walk the bluebird trail during the second half of this program so dress for the weather. Facial coverings are required indoors and social distancing must be maintained. Pre-registration required on our website by 3/12/21. <http://riveredgenaturecenter.org/>. Capacity: 12 people. Ages: 10+, Fees: Non-members \$10, Trail Pass members \$5, All Access members free.

We've been monitoring a bluebird trail (of roughly 25 boxes) at Riveredge Nature Center since 1981. In that time 4,395 birds (BB, TS, HW and Chickadees) have fledged from those boxes. Of those birds 1,082 were bluebirds. We hope, in some small way, we've contributed to the success of bluebirds in Wisconsin over the past 35 years.

Kenosha and Racine Counties, Stan Rosenstiel

This past Fall, Rick Fare installed a 6-box BB trail for a local 4-H club at Sanders Park in Racine. This Spring Rick will show them how to monitor the trail.

Also this past Fall, Rick met with representatives of the Seno Center which is a Kenosha/Racine Land Trust. In April of this year he will install a BB trail in one of their conservation subdivisions. Local families will adopt one box and monitor it for the season. This is a good way to get the local community interested and involved with bluebirds.

Rick's reflections on Hoy Audubon's involvement with bluebirds: In the Fall of 2006 with the help of Kent Hall, 4 trails were established with a total of 60 boxes. He had never monitored a BB trail before. It didn't take long before he got hooked and became passionate about bluebirds. Over the years he has enjoyed sharing his knowledge and passion with many others and setting up new trails for them to monitor. Fifteen years later Hoy Audubon now has close to 350 boxes on 30 trails. This has been a really gratifying experience producing many birds and memories.

Eau Claire Co., Rita Gundry

Here goes, a bit short, but not too much happening. Take care and stay well. Rita Gundry

Six weeks from now, our beloved bluebirds will be on the wing, ready to delight us for another season. Fellow bluebirder and brother, Larry Liegel, and I presented *Bluebird Happiness* to a group of Eau Claire Area Master Gardeners on January 18, via ZOOM. We will repeat this program to the **Chippewa Valley Learning in Retirement** group on March 3, 2021. Highlights of the pro-

gram include setting up a predator proof nest box in a suitable location, monitoring throughout the nesting season, showing a variety of bluebird nest boxes and tips on nest identification.

When weather allows in early March, we will assist a new BRAW member, Rachel Urban, in starting a bluebird trail in Pinehurst Park in Eau Claire. I have prepared a packet of bluebird reading material for her perusal, which I will be giving to her before we meet in March.

Tiny crabapples, sumac clusters and leftover bittersweet berries in my yard will greet our cherished songbirds as they arrive this spring.

Pierce County, Jim Beix

Lowell Peterson (St. Croix Co.) and I (Pierce Co.) usually join Jim Higgins for Spring presentations at Prescott and St. Croix Falls. With the pandemic, I don't know if we will be able to promote a gathering. Haven't met the new Dunn county coordinator in Menomonie yet but he asked to join us last Fall. We talked on the phone, etc.

Outagamie Co., Steve Mayer

Early this spring I will join Gene Birr in assisting Wendy Bekx to refresh her trails at Lions Park in Greenville and the golf course in Hortonville. We'll be replacing most of her nest boxes that have been troubled by House Sparrows, with skylight boxes or new roofs.

Brown Co., Steve Mayer & Gene Birr

In late October 2020, Della and Gerry Clabots of Suamico, accompanied Gene Birr in setting up a new 4-box trail along the Mountain Bay Trail, in the Town of Pittsfield. These boxes were added to the open areas that were available for suitable bluebird habitat, while other boxes that were already there were removed or some allowed to remain in the more wooded parts of the trail. We also walked the trail at the grounds of the Pittsfield Town Hall Park and inspected the 5 boxes that were placed there several years ago by an Eagle Scout troop. We hope to replace those that do not open easily with new NABS-style houses in spring.

continued next page

Dunn Co., Chris Leubner

I am pleased to report that we have a new coordinator for Dunn County. Jim Beix reports: *The Dunn Co. coordinator is Chris Leubner, 715-308-7240. I have not met with him at all due to the pandemic causing all local bird presentations to be shut down. We talked at least 3 different times on the phone. I informed him of working with Lowell Peterson, Jim Higgins and I doing Spring programs in Pierce/St. Croix counties. Invited him to accompany us.*

Oconto Co., Gene Birr

I have received several inquiries about my success using skylight boxes to discourage House Sparrows and interest in learning how to make them. I've included those details in another article in this newsletter. I also made 8 nestboxes for a BRAW member from Fond du lac. Four of those boxes were skylights.

Iowa Co., Doris Moody

We were fortunate to be able to acquire rural property in SW WI. in the 90's and my brother Russ and one of his friends decided to build some BB houses out of scrap lumber. That got us started! Sometime in the late 90's or 2000, we heard about BRAW, joined and got serious about

BBs. From BRAW, we learned about spacing houses, orientation (face opening SE), proximity to brush, and protection from predators.

We had baby bluebirds dying one summer, thought it was the HEAT, and painted 90 plus houses white. No help! Upon closer examination, we discovered a black fly (turkey gnat) problem-confirmed by Gary Guard(former BRAW member) and Phil Pellitteri(UW Entomologist). We learned that the vent holes in our BB houses were part of the problem and covered them. We also learned that carefully applying Permethrin to the young would save them.

Other memorable events over the years would include:

- A bear tear down 3 houses with young or eggs in them. (2020)
- Having 2 female BB's share a BB box, lay 10 eggs and successfully hatch them all! As the young got larger, space was a serious issue, so we replaced the BB house with a wood duck house (with a BB house door, with the smaller opening, over the larger opening) and we had a happy ending (2013).
- When expanding a BB trail, we installed a new house, went further down the trail, and when coming

back along the trail within 30 minutes, there was a BB perched on the 1st house!

- We have hosted several BB "Walks" with the Wisconsin Natural Resources Foundation field trips and the Driftless Area Land Conservancy members and guests and enjoy sharing our knowledge and insights with others.
- We designed a new house called a "mini Moody" which is the same design as a Peterson but uses nominal 1 x 4 in. cedar for the top, back, and bottom vs the 2 x 4's in a Peterson. The inside dimensions are the same as a Peterson but the houses are much smaller and lighter and can be installed on a lighter duty pole.

We have enjoyed our trips to to monitor our BB's as has our dog Cassy who joins us and we take family & friends along every chance we get.

Dane Co., Patrick Ready

I gave a couple virtual presentation to garden clubs last fall. I have another scheduled for April.

Eagle Scout Patrick Monahan delivered 10 nest boxes to me in November. They will replace some old boxes on my trails.

Spring Nest Box Offer for New Members



Now is a great time to put up nest boxes for returning bluebirds. Would your local park director, golf course superintendent, or cemetery manager be interested if you donated a BRAW membership for them which included 2 to 5 new nest boxes with predator guards?

Perhaps a farmer friend or rural property owner you know would welcome a membership and the nest boxes from you. And just maybe one of your relatives or a neighbor would like to get started supporting bluebirds. Here's how BRAW can help.

Anyone in Wisconsin not currently a member who joins the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin before June 1st of this year at the \$25 annual level will get FREE:

- 2 to 5 new nest boxes with predator guards & clamps (number is their choice),
- An instructional booklet on how to locate and put up boxes,

- A mailed four-issue subscription to the *Wisconsin Bluebird* newsletter, and
- Advice from an experienced bluebird trailer as needed.

BRAW will ship the nest boxes and predator guards at no cost to a Wisconsin address. However, a donation to help defray shipping charges would be greatly appreciated. Another option is to pick up the boxes and guards at two locations in Madison.

New members getting this deal would have to agree to monitor the nest boxes and fill out the data reporting form at the end of the 2021 season. Reporting data is easy and critical to the success of BRAW's Trail Builder Program.

Payment can be made directly via the www.braw.org website. A printable membership form is also available for folks who want to send a check in to BRAW, PO Box 628492, Middleton, WI 53562. Before submitting payment, please contact Val Van Winkle, Membership Coordinator, ripvws@gmail.com or phone 847-302-5684. She will confirm eligibility and make arrangements for receipt of the nest boxes.

Tips On Skylight Boxes and How to Make Them

By Gene Birr, Oconto CC

Since I first presented the idea of a Skylight box that would help deter House Sparrows from nesting in birdhouses intended for bluebirds at the Fall 2019 BRAW convention, I have received much interest by others trying to achieve the same goal. I later shared the results of a 3 year study of these boxes in the Spring 2020 edition of our newsletter, *Wisconsin Bluebird*. These results and several other mentions of the Skylight box in recent articles have prompted several members to ask about how to make them and how effective they are in keeping the sparrows out.

I first learned about them from the gentleman who has been their greatest promoter, Dr. Dean Rust, current president of the Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania. He is also the author of a recent book extolling the virtues of "The Charismatic and Beloved Bluebird." On his website www.bluebirdconservation.com, he shares his advice on several worthy topics like predator control and a sparrow resistant bluebird box with how-to-make-them videos. He himself first read about them in an article in *Birds and Blooms* magazine about 5 years ago and has successfully used them since. I highly recommend viewing the video on this website for his instructional tips on how to make them.

What makes them effective in reducing the number of sparrows that choose to nest in them is the additional daylight that the Skylight allows into the nesting cavity. House Sparrows simply do not like a bright cavity, rather they prefer one that is darker. My study and the use of them for 4 years has shown that they keep out sparrows at least 90% of the time. Thus they are referred to as sparrow-resistant boxes, not totally sparrow-proof.

Recently, several BRAW members have written to me interested in making them and with questions on how to do it. First, any nest box style can be made into a skylight box simply

by making a hole in the existing roof or replacing the roof with a skylight hole. The brighter the cavity the better, so a 3" round or square hole is better than a 2 1/2" hole that was first recommended.

The hole should be centered directly above the nesting cavity of the box, and since most bird houses are only about 4" X 4" wide that 3" of daylight really brightens it up.

When constructing the Skylight box remember first to cut the 3" hole in the roof, then attach the roof to the box with screws. Then the plexi-glass material can be added on top of the roof with 4 half-inch lath screws which have a built-in washer, after pre-drilling holes. A twin-walled polycarbonate, sometimes called Lexan, is the most preferred poly material because it is a corrugated material that is believed to deflect more heat. But I most often use a 1/8" thick, clear plexi-glass which is much less expensive and can easily be cut with a circular saw. Any concerns that the extra sunlight might cause the box to heat up too much can be relieved by a 1/4" gap at the top of the sides or drilling two 3/4" holes on the sides directly under the roof. I have never experienced any problem with too much heat inside the box. Some people just cover the 3" hole with a 4" square of poly to cover the hole, but I prefer to nearly cover the entire roof with a 7" X 10" piece. In addition, I extend the piece a 1/4" beyond the back of the roof and then caulk that seam with clear silicone to limit the moisture that might get under it and into the box through the hole.

A few folks who have tried these boxes say that bluebirds seem a little less likely to choose them to nest in and prefer a solid wood roof, but that has not been my experience. On my



Pat Ready photo

trail at the Oconto Falls High School campus last year I replaced all 9 of my boxes with skylights, and still had bluebirds choose to nest in 6 of them; the same number as usual, with no sparrows whatsoever when I normally had them bothering 4 or 5 of the boxes. The very first time I tried them in 2017, I used them on 3 boxes where I had removed 13 sparrows in the previous 3 years. That year I had no problems, never had to set a Van Ert trap, and each box produced a brood of swallows, wrens or bluebirds.

I appreciate the input of several other monitors who have used them and shared their results and successes with me. I also thank those of you who have recently shared your interest in using them and learning how to build them. We are always learning of new and different practices that can help bluebirds to more easily raise their young safely. If we can use a passive method like this that doesn't require actively removing sparrows, then we have found a way to provide additional nesting opportunities for bluebirds in areas that otherwise would be limited by the presence of sparrows. I encourage other monitors to give them a try.

Editor's Note: Gene Birr received the BRAW Lifetime Achievement Award in 2020.

Continued from page 2

developing a list of bluebirders and organizing the first meeting. The title of the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin (BRAW) was decided on. Mike pointed out that *braw* is an acronym for the Scottish term and variant of “brave” meaning; “fine, well-dressed, excellent.” In the first issue of Wisconsin Bluebird dated June 1986, he wrote, “The effects of this program will be far reaching, not only by increasing bluebird populations, but by better acquainting Wisconsin with the ‘gem of blue’ and with the creatures and landscapes that are encountered in the process...”

BRAW accomplished this in many ways. One was by providing an excellent newsletter and regularly revised information packet filled with detailed information on everything one needs to know to have a successful bluebird trail. Published in the newsletter were studies and research projects that BRAW was undertaking, such as: recommended methods to combat black flies; box pairing studies that concluded placing boxes farther apart than 100 yards increased bluebird production; and a deep vs. shallow box study resulted in recommending the shallow box. As a result of these methods, the Eastern Bluebird numbers have gradually increased and have, in recent years, fledged young in Wisconsin in the tens of thousands.

The Annual Meetings were attended by bluebirders from all counties of Wisconsin, as well as, members from outside of the state, allowing us to get acquainted with other bluebirders. Each meeting showcased speakers on the topic of bluebirds and other nature subjects of the day. Expert information was given by experienced members at the Bluebird Roundtable. The meetings were well attended and enjoyed by everyone.

For several years, BRAW has had a booth at the Garden Expo in Madison where folks can take information home with them about how to have a successful bluebird trail. This has been another way to get to know budding and experienced bluebirders throughout

the state and get them started in the organization.

The county coordinator program has been active since BRAW's early days. Nearly every county in Wisconsin has had a volunteer county coordinator who has been there to answer questions and promote BRAW. Many exciting and fun stories have been told by county coordinators as they encountered experiences and challenges from other bluebirders.

Many wonderful, dedicated people have taken the challenge to run and promote the BRAW organization. Some that stand out in my mind are: Don Bragg, BRAW's first newsletter editor and photographer for many years; Mary Rather, first County Coordinator Chair who was known to say when meetings got testy, “Don't let your undies get in a bundle;” Delores Wendt, BRAW's first treasurer, who lobbied Governor Earl to proclaim Wisconsin's first Bluebird Week; Fred Craig, a board member who built countless NABS style boxes for BRAW members; Joe O'Halloran who lead the way in nest box pairing research and was the designer of the Simple nest box; Andrew Nelson, Verlyn Olson, Herman Olson, Vince Bauldry, and Del Parkinson who were among the many nest box designers; Joe Schultz, past president of BRAW; Lowell Peterson and Mary Hollebeck, working together to get our youth involved with bluebirds; Leif Marking, who's excellent bluebird trail monitoring is an inspiration to all of us; Patrick Ready, past BRAW president and newsletter editor who has enhanced many issues with his own excellent bluebird photos.

It pleases me to think back and reminisce about what has been accomplished in the BRAW organization since its beginning in 1986 and to recall the fine people who became friends of mine and my husband's. We can all be proud to say we have rubbed shoulders with Wisconsin bluebirders.

Fisherman Gets Hooked on Bluebirds!

By Joe Schultz, former BRAW president

In the spring of 1986 a friend of mine from Eagle River was at my house where I still live in the town of Plover. We were getting ready to go walleye fishing. He happened to see a bluebird through the kitchen window and said I should put a house up for it. I thought bluebirds were almost extinct but I went to Fleet Farm and picked up a garden magazine that had bluebird box building instructions in it. I built a box and stuck it on an old barbed wire fence post out back by the garden. It had no predator guard and no door. I had bluebirds checking it out the next day and thought it was a miracle. Not long after that a friend of mine's wife gave me a copy of a *Wisconsin Bluebird* newsletter and the rest is history. I became vice president of BRAW in 1991 and stayed on for eleven years under presidents Del Parkinson from Prentice, Tom Whalley of Hancock, and Carol McDaniel of Darlington. I served on the board as president for eleven years after that.

I never met a birder I didn't like. All the BRAW people were helpful and amazing to work with no matter what part of the state they came from and all helping the production of the Eastern Bluebird and other cavity nesters.

I am currently on the board of directors as secretary for the local Aldo Leopold Audubon Society in Stevens Point.

Help Us Celebrate 35 Years

Have you been a long time member of BRAW? Did you once serve on the board? Have you made nest boxes and written articles for the newsletter? We want to hear from you! Send the editor your story, old photos or just a short blurb telling us why you got interested in bluebirds. Are you still monitoring? Do you share your knowledge with others?

Email or snail mail.
Patrick Ready, WB Editor
815 Sky Ridge Dr., Madison 53719
email: birdsready@gmail.com

SHOW US YOUR BLUEBIRDS!

Enter our member photo contest.



Show Us Your Bluebirds!

Enter the BRAW 2021 Photo Contest for a Chance to Win a **\$50 Amazon Gift Card** and MORE!

The contest is open to all BRAW members. Photos of bluebirds are preferred but photos of other cavity nesters are also accepted. There will be first, second and third place winners.

RULES:

Open to BRAW Members only.

Original photography please.

Up to 3 submissions (photos) per person.

Photos do not need to be from the current year.

Photos will be judged on composition, image quality and subject matter. *Judges will not be affiliated with BRAW.*

FIRST PLACE

A \$50 Amazon Gift Card

Your photo on the cover of the *Wisconsin Bluebird* Newsletter - Winter Issue.

A free, one-year subscription to the newsletter for yourself, a friend or family member.

SECOND PLACE

A \$25 Amazon Gift Card

A free, one-year subscription to the newsletter for yourself, a friend or family member.

THIRD PLACE

A free, one-year subscription to the newsletter for yourself, a friend or family member.

Submission deadline is September 1st.

Please email your photographs (JPEG file) with **your name, location and any other information** that you think others will find interesting to:

Patrick Ready at birdsready@gmail.com.

Subject line: BRAW Bluebird Contest

No mail in photos please.

BRAW 2020 Financial Report

By Dan Schroeder, Treasurer

Greetings Bluebirders and Friends!

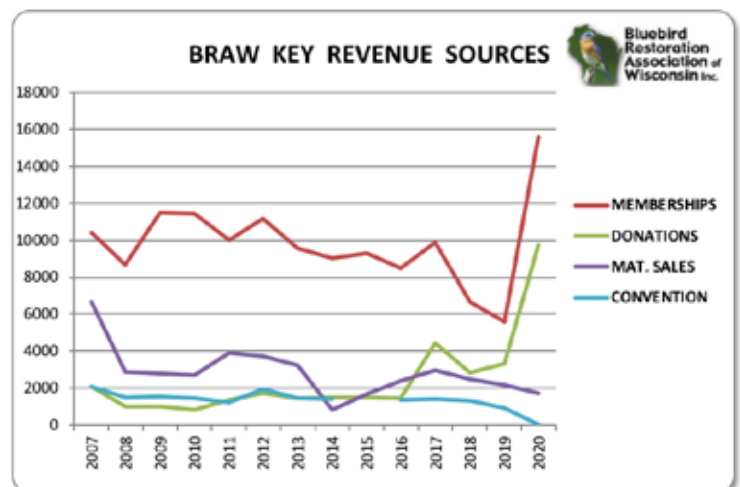
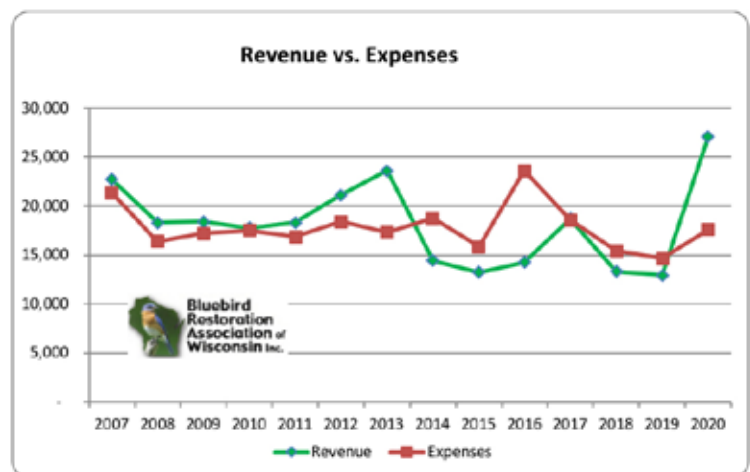
The year 2020 was certainly unusual, and impacted many things – especially what we’ve been doing here in the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin!

Although many of our expenses were still with us in 2020, we were very fortunate to have a surge in revenues. As you can see from the green line on the first chart, our revenues jumped to an all-time high over the last 14-year period. This was largely due to programs we conducted in 2020 to increase membership (which had been declining in recent years), and asking for donations to support the bluebird population. Response was terrific!

Revenue surpassed our expenses for the first time in seven years. And the best part is that there was a positive impact on the bluebird population!

The second chart shows the four major sources of our revenue. After a decline in membership over a number of years, 2020 saw a huge upper bump. Along with this, donations increased significantly as well. The pandemic adversely impacted our material sales (nest boxes and accessories), and of course, the Annual Convention was not held either.

We hope that 2021 brings an end to the pandemic and allows us to meet once again in the autumn as a group. In the meantime, we will continue our work with your help. Many thanks to you all!



Membership Renewal Information

By Valerie Van Winkle, Membership Services

If the address label of your Wisconsin Bluebird newsletter reads Spring 2021 next to your name, then your membership expires this month and you need to renew immediately. If you are an online member, you won't see this clue so please consider marking the expiration date on your calendar when you sign up. We don't want you to miss a single newsletter!

The next issue of the Wisconsin Bluebird goes into production in May and will be mailed in June. Memberships received after May 15 may not be processed in time to receive the Spring newsletter. Consider an extended or one-time \$300 Life Membership.

Please fill out the membership renewal form on this page and send it with your check or money order to: BRAW, Inc., Valerie Van Winkle, PO Box 628492, Middleton, WI 53562

You can also renew your membership at www.braw.org and use PayPal or a credit card.

BRAW, Inc. Membership and Wisconsin Bluebird Subscription

Yes! I would like to join or renew as a member with the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin, Inc. (BRAW) and receive its quarterly newsletter Wisconsin Bluebird.

Enclosed is my check/money order (do not send cash) made out to BRAW, Inc. for the following:

- \$10 Gift Annual Membership (Online subscription)
- \$15 Student/Teacher Annual Membership (Online subscription)
- \$20 Online Annual Membership
- \$40 Extended Online Annual Membership for 2 years
- \$60 Extended Online Annual Membership for 3 years
- \$25 Individual or Family Annual Membership (Printed copy mailed)

- \$75 Extended Individual or Family Annual Membership for 3 years (Printed copy mailed)
- \$100 Corporate Annual Membership
- \$300 Life Membership

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

*Email Address: _____

Telephone: () _____

County of residence: _____

*BRAW sends out nest box deal promotions and "time to renew" reminders via email.

Donation (optional)

- \$15 to nest box construction with post & predator guard
 - \$100 for nest box trail
 - \$_____ for bluebird research
 - 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 membership
- This is a GIFT membership

Enclosed please find my check \$ _____

Mail this membership request to:

BRAW, Inc.
Valerie Van Winkle
PO Box 628492
Middleton, WI 53562

We do not share or sell BRAW's membership list.

If you have any questions, please contact Valerie at 847-302-5684 or ripvws@gmail.com.

**A BRAW
membership makes
a great Anytime gift!**
\$10 includes Online Newsletter
Give the gift of Bluebirds!

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President Steve Sample, 422 Shepard Ter., Madison, WI 53705 • 708/606-8070 • ssample@gmail.com (term to 12/22)

Secretary Gene Kroupa, 1010 Tumalo Trail, Madison, WI 53711 • 608/238-3571 • gkroupa@tds.net (term to 12/22)

Treasurer Dan Schroeder, N4028 Morgan Drive, Waupaca, WI 54981 • 920-475-8525 • brdanjoe@gmail.com (term to 12/22)

Director Steve Fallon, • 974 Halcyon Days Ct., Oregon, WI 53575 • steve-fall50@gmail.com (term to 12/21)

Director Dave Lucey, Cross Plains, WI • 53528 • dklucy@chorus.net(term to 12/22)

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The mission and purpose of the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin, Inc. is to broaden the base of state residents to help Eastern Bluebirds and native cavity nesters by erecting, maintaining and monitoring nest boxes.

Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin

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BRAW Celebrates 35 Years!

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Life Cycle of the Tree Swallow (*Iridoprocne bicolor*)

Photos by Pat Ready & Jack Bartholmai.



Once they pair up, a nest site is picked. Tree Swallows will use a natural cavity as well.



Within a few weeks, 4-6 white eggs usually appear in the feather lined nest.



Males stand guard while the female incubates the eggs.



After 13-16 days of incubation, the chicks hatch.



After 18-24 days old, the chicks fledge the nest.

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The chicks grow quickly, being fed by both parents.