

Winter 2018
Vol. 33, No. 4



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

Join us for the Spring Thing!

see page 2



Winter Blue by Jack Bartholmai

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IS THIS YOUR LAST ISSUE? MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS MAY BE DUE!

A Word from the Prez

As we near the end of the year it's a good time to reflect back on how the season went for us and what improvements need to get done before next season. If you still haven't sent in your data results please do so ASAP. We want to have a statewide report in the spring *Wisconsin Bluebird*.

New for the New year: Our group is going to use a website called GroupWorks to share and communicate about BRAW events and activities. GroupWorks provides us with a way to manage our email list and also online sharing. It's a great way for us to keep everyone informed and share photos, videos, ideas and information AND you can renew your BRAW membership. The site is secure and extremely user friendly on both desktops and mobile devices, and the company that provides it is very helpful.

Thousands of activity groups and non-profit associations use GroupWorks for their member management and communications. **With the configuration we have selected, your email is not visible to anyone on the platform including fellow BRAW members.**

We believe this will be a useful and fun platform for our organization, but at the outset we would like to give you the opportunity to decline participation. Shortly after January 1 you will receive an email from me with a link to Sign In and a unique temporary password. Once you do, you will find the shortcut to "BRAW" in the upper left of the



screen. Please note that if at any time you would like to be removed from GroupWorks, you can simply click unsubscribe at the bottom of any email you receive from our group. So make sure our membership chair, Mike Ray has your correct email!

In February BRAW will be at the WPT Garden Expo at the Alliant Center in Madison. We need help at the booth. Please consider signing up for a couple hours to make this a success. Hand out info, work at the table selling items or just talk to visitors about the enjoyment of Bluebirds.

On March 2 BRAW will be co-hosting with the Horicon Marsh Bird Club the Dodge County Nest Box Seminar at the Horicon Marsh Education and Visitor Center. We call it the Spring Thing! See info below and we hope to see you there.

Another new item the BRAW board approved at our last meeting is to offer a paperless version option to members. Printing cost & mailing cost keep going up and printing in color can be costly. We know the full color issue is what members like and it enhances the information we need to share. If you want to get the paperless newsletter version let the Membership Chair, Mike Ray know and he will get it set up. It will be sent to you via an email link by us or a newsletter server we decide to use. This service will start with the Spring *Wisconsin Bluebird*. See page 10 for more info.

Happy Holidayze!!

Patrick Ready
BRAW President

Join Us at the Spring Thing!

On March 2, 2019 BRAW will be at the Horicon Education Center for the Dodge County Nest Box Seminar. We will have our display set up with hand-outs and someone to discuss Bluebirds to visitors. At noon there will be a seminar on Attracting Bluebirds & Other Cavity Nesters. Mark you calendars and plan to join us for this fun and informative event.

SPRING THING! Dodge County Nest Box Seminar

March 2 8:30 AM
Horicon Marsh Education and Visitor Center
N7725 Hwy 28 Horicon.

Coffee and doughnuts available for purchase.
Bluebird boxes and Wood duck boxes will be for sale.

Event Schedule:

- 9 AM Renee Wahleen Tillema
Live Cavity Nesting raptors.
- 10 AM Jeff Bahls
Wood ducks
- 11AM Erinn Kronebusch
Bats , How can we help.
- Noon Patrick Ready, BRAW President
Attracting Bluebirds & Other Cavity Nesters



Send in Your Data Reports for 2018!

By Steve Falon, Data Summary Director

The 2018 season got off to a dismal start with heavy snow hitting the state after mid-April. A year like this is critical for BRAW to get as many data reports for the nesting season so we can document such an event.

To date we don't even have 1/2 the nest box reports that we received for the 2017 season. Our numbers are down due to the lack of reports and that can make it look like the weather alone was the cause. Yes it was a factor but many areas reported a normal nesting season and a few even had better years than before!

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.

Below is the EZ Form. It's also available as a download on the website - www.braw.org. **You can also fill in the form (2018 EZ Form) and submit it directly from our website!!**

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

Email to:
stevefall50@gmail.com or
wisconsinbluebirds@gmail.com

or use the **2018 EZ Form** on our website: www.braw.org

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



Patrick Ready

BRAW EZ Summary Form

Use this card to report your nest box results for the season.
DEADLINE SEPTEMBER 30

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

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

*County _____ Year: _____

*Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

*Phone (_____) - _____

email: _____

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

Comments: _____

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

Thank You!

6-Egg Nests: the New Norm or Is It Bluebirds With Intuition

By Barb Allen

Snowstorm Evelyn, which hit Wisconsin in April 2018, played havoc on the birds in Northern Wisconsin as it dumped record snowfall when bluebirds are normally returning and begin nesting. Talking with other BRAW (Bluebird Restoration of Wisconsin) monitors in Northeastern Wisconsin, our bluebird number counts were unusually lower than normal. It could be the severe storms in southern United States this winter took a dramatic toll in reducing the bluebird population. Our local weather also help doom many bluebirds that were found dead in early spring. I found three male bluebirds in one nestbox dead after snowstorm Evelyn.

With the lower number of bluebirds and the much later than normal nesting start date, I have been amazed at some unusual findings. My bluebirds' nestboxes have a greater than normal egg count with most nests having 5 eggs and I have a record seven bluebird nests of 6 eggs. Three of these are at Parkway Golf Course in Oconto County. Is this unusual phenomenon a freaky year or the new norm; or did the bluebirds know that with the late start and lower survival of returning



winter bluebirds that they needed to lay a greater number of eggs. Was it bluebird intuition or environmental factors that account for the increased number of eggs?

Seven of 29 nestboxes housing bluebirds have 6 eggs, which is extremely rare. I have had 6-egg nests in the past and usually not all eggs are viable or all chicks fledge. I was hopeful that this year's below average bluebird occupied nestboxes would produce more chicks per box and that we would have a higher percentage of second broods to increase our overall fledge numbers.

I also have a record number of white bluebird eggs with three nestboxes having white eggs. One of the 6-egg nests is a white laying hen. This bluebird pair has been in the same nestbox since it was installed in early 2016 at Northbrook Golf Course in Luxemburg, Wisconsin. I looked back at my records and in 2016; the pair had only one batch of 4 eggs with all 4 fledging.

In 2017, they had two broods of 4 chicks fledge. So this year's 6-egg count is higher than normal for this pair.

Unbelievable, but 6 of the 7 nestboxes fledged all 6 chicks. The 7th had a sparrow destroy 2 eggs then one chick, so only three chicks fledged. This pair had a second clutch of 6 eggs making my total number EIGHT 6-egg nests. This time all 6 chicks fledged. What amazing birds these bluebirds are. You just have to love them!!

BRAW welcomes these new and returning members

List to come from Mike Ray soon!

Give the gift of BLUEBIRDS!

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

BRAW Joins Amazon Smiles!

Amazon has become the largest on-line ordering site in the country. It has also developed a way to support non-profit organizations such as BRAW. If you use Amazon, log into "http://smiles.amazon.com" instead of just "amazon.com". You will need to select BRAW as your intended organization that you support by typing Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin in the appropriate line. ALL ORDERS USING THIS LOGIN WILL GENERATE A PORTION OF YOUR PURCHASE TO BRAW! The products purchased will cost you the very same as if you just log into their standard site. However, BRAW will receive 0.5% of your total purchase. It is easy and you will be supporting us without any additional cost to you. If you have any questions, contact me (Steve Sample). We thank you.

Now that we have “restored” the bluebird in Wisconsin, we need to look to restore BRAW!

By Steve Sample, BRAW VP

I can't act surprised. The continued slow decline in our bluebird fledging numbers can be explained in terms of our aging monitors and our subsequent decline in BRAW membership. When I joined Braw a good number of years ago, we had in excess a thousand solid members and greater than 500 trail monitors working to keep bluebirds strong in numbers in Wisconsin. That is what our organization can take credit for and we should be proud that the bluebird population is substantial throughout the state. BRAW did this! People like Kent & Sue Hall and Lief Marking (many others) had a huge impact on our success. Kent and Sue visited schools, developed dozens of trails and assisted others in trail development and improvements. Mark was a researcher, besides maintaining a large trail, and his writing, nesting box research and videos have been and continue to be of great value.

Unfortunately, these three and many other major supporting monitors are unable to continue the work. A crisis is approaching for we see too few volunteers in the generations follow us “baby boomers” stepping up to fill the shoes of these huge contributors. Part of the problem is the rise of technology and the decline of just enjoying nature. Baby boomers were always active in volunteering. It looks as though we may have some hope with the youngest generation, if the protests at high schools is any indication. They're young and it is too early to



Patrick Ready

speculate on the future of their impact. The bottom line is BRAW is seeing a dramatic decline in both memberships and Revenue. We must act!

Our November Board meeting saw yet another retiring Board member. Good bye to a long time effective Board member, Mike Helgren. He has served as treasurer and will continue to be active with the BRAW participating at the Madison Garden Expo in February.

However, a new Board member has joined that will be a major factor in maintaining our organization. It may not be the calvary saving the day idea, but Gene Kroupa is a valuable asset already. A former CEO if a marketing firm, a member of SCORE (<https://madison.score.org/>) which is a volunteer group of retired businessmen working to help profit and non-profits organizations with all aspects to lead to their success. SCORE has helped us with our Corporate Articles and By-law development, and has helped us make certain we have all our “ducks

in a row” with documents, etc. A huge help.

Within two years, Gene has jumped into BRAW by starting with one successful bluebird nesting box to encouraging farmers in Iowa, Sauk and even one in Iowa state to start trails. Gene is a hunter and he is addressing his long time friends who allow him to hunt on their properties to join in bluebird support. He says he has been bit by the bluebird bug, just like us all.

Gene has come up with a marketing plan for BRAW. Marketing plans are what he is really good with his experience. Some of the ideas include develop a plan to encourage businesses, etc to become BRAW partners, developing a decal for windows of firms, doors of golf courses entrances, etc. to inform their participants that their organization does indeed support us either by providing space for a trail or financial support. To offer an icon for businesses, who have publications and web sites, to use these icons to show that they support BRAW and nature projects. These ideas may help encourage more support.

We have offered a certificate to show support and now we will be able to go that step further with these ideas. With the rise of climate concerns, environmental impact of human interferences, you might find more companies and groups more conducive to helping us.

All of us need to go out and get them!!! Our BRAW longevity will require it.

Good Blue-birding.

The BRAW Perpetual Fund

The Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin (BRAW) is solely responsible for the significant increase of bluebird populations in our state. You have been a force in this achievement. BRAW is setting up a program where you can establish your efforts permanently within our organization by making a monetary gift anytime or as part of your will or estate plan. This contribution will have a strong and lasting impact for the Eastern Bluebird in Wisconsin and you will be listed as a member of this fund. This listing will be found in each edition of the Wisconsin Bluebird. Any question can be directed to wisconsinbluebirds@gmail.com or by contacting Pat Ready or Steve Sample who are listed in the newsletter. On-line contributions can be made at our web site (BRAW.ORG) or sent to the BRAW treasurer.



**Got questions about
Bluebirds?
Check out
www.braw.org**

County Coordinator Column

By Carol McDaniel, CC Chair

Passing along the passion of bluebirding is one of the goals of a bluebirder. It is easy to see that the BRAW County Coordinators have been busy doing that during 2018 by getting others involved with bluebirding. Many CCs are generously giving their time and efforts to educate all ages on the skills needed to be successful along the bluebird trail. Most are known in their area as the Bluebird Man or Lady. As you read the following reports, you will see how each demonstrates this dedication. For instance: Darrel Eberhardt works with a local bird club. He takes people on a hayride each fall along his bluebird trail; Gene Birr's report demonstrates how an active County Coordinator can get other folks interested in bluebirding and become members of BRAW; Donna and Bill Stehling talked up bluebirds with a folks they met at a local restaurant; and Jim Beix invited youth to go along with him on his bluebird trail.

We are losing another CC. Bob Tamm, Coordinator for Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties, has stepped down from his role. Bob has been actively encouraging people to set up trails and monitor them for many years and doing a great job with it. His yearly "bluebirder get together" at the Machine Shed has been a big success. I hope he continues to do that. Many thanks to Bob for all he has done as CC in the past. Not long ago, Kent Hall stepped down from his CC position too in Wood, Monroe, Portage and Waupaca. We are in need of CCs for those counties. If you want to get more involved with the "passion of bluebirding" become a BRAW County Coordinator. Some of my most treasured memories are those with fellow bluebirders. There is a list in this issue of counties that do not currently have CCs. Please contact me if you are interested at cjmcd_98@yahoo.com or call 608-922-2473. I would love to hear from you!

Gene Birr, Oconto and Brown

Counties: The number of bluebirds fledged on my trail this summer was

reduced by 25% from last year's total, largely due to the effect of the April blizzard in delaying nesting.

For the first time in 10 years of monitoring, my bluebirds fledged averaged less than 2.0 per nest box. Also, my rate of nest boxes occupied by bluebirds fell to just 38%, when it had always averaged between 50% to 60% previously. These were some of the results of a somewhat disappointing season for bluebirds in Northeast Wisconsin.

What was accomplished this season was the addition of many new parties interested in a bluebird trail whom I assisted in doing so. This spring I supplied two boxes to Dave and Ginny Behrendt, who began a new trail in the town of Morgan in southern Oconto County. I followed up with Steve and Patti Heimerman after helping them set up a 3 box trail in a rural Oconto area last fall. They reported bluebirds nesting twice in their new boxes. Nearby in Little Suamico, Kim Lemeronde placed two boxes on his property and Dave and Carrie Richard erected their first bluebird house and asked me to include it with my trail monitoring. In their box I recorded the latest bluebird egg being laid on any of my trails on July 31 and the latest ever fledging on August 31.

In Brown County I gave a bluebird presentation at the Wild Birds Unlimited store in Green Bay, along with Jason from the Barkhausen Waterfowl Preserve. Through that program, WBU employee Chris Percival along with his friend Denise volunteered to become trail monitors overseeing two trails in Howard and Depere, which Steve Mayer and I had previously monitored. And recently, Nancy Paul of that WBU store referred one of her customers to request my help with a trail. In rural Wrightstown, I assisted Aaron Vanden Busch in setting up 4 nest boxes on his rural ledgetop property on a beautiful October Sunday morning. Earlier on August 18, Melissa McNeil had partnered with me in a BRAW booth at the Stone Silo Prairie Plant sale near Depere.

Despite this season of struggles incurred by the bluebirds in less than ideal conditions, the efforts of each of these folks who are interested in pro-

viding nesting habitat for bluebirds will continue to enhance the prospects that bluebird numbers can improve when we are blessed with a season of ideal weather conditions. To that end nearly all of these have chosen to become active monitors and new members of BRAW.

Donna and Bill Stehling, Sauk

County: Bill and I were out in March getting houses looked at and cutting brush. We found 29 BB eggs in seven houses when we checked our bird houses on April 2. We thought this was early and figured this *might* mean three nestings. Only 16 of the 67 houses had nothing in them on April 2. That means houses contained grass, some grass cup nests, twigs, and hopeful males wanting to entice their lovely mates. But we also had houses with eggs! On April 22 we had 82 BB eggs. The first nesting of the monitoring season began with 92 BB eggs and 92 BB hatchlings. Soon along came almost daily rain, heat and then flies! We got two nestings. BB, TS and HW all had dead chicks in June and July. We had 42 of our 67 boxes used by bluebirds. 376 eggs were laid, 215 hatched and 125 bluebirds fledged.

One October Sunday, Bill and I were eating lunch and talking with people at the table. Someone asked if we still did Bluebirds and we said yes. They asked how the birds did this season at the Badger Lands. We told them it was not exactly a great year. The males came early and the females came later – so much later we thought the females were planning to hang out some place south of Wisconsin. We did not have many with three broods. Some only did one. Most did two. We have 70 bird houses.

Wisconsin had late snow which meant water became ice and prairie seeds were covered. We lost one pair of Bluebirds and five hatchlings to the cold. Then we had lots of rain every other week or so. Given that, the birds did all right. But this rain made it difficult for area farmers getting their crops in the field and later out.

Another woman brought a chair over to the end of the table and said she had some questions about feeding Bluebirds in winter. We told her we knew some people fed their wintering Bluebirds mealworms. We

said we heard the Bluebirds actually tap on their kitchen window when they know someone is at the sink. Apparently the birds hang out in the bushes and hedges near the kitchen window.

Another family mixes bread and bird seed with pan drippings and puts this out twice a day. They watch the birds eat and enjoy their calls. This family also offers heated water for bathing and drinking. They learned in winter the Bluebirds like their bird houses near their house, especially near their kitchen window.

We said we feed the birds close to the south side of our home, have an electric bird bath and we watch from our dining room and kitchen windows. We have squirrels and birds all day long. They need food and warm water in the morning, afternoon and late afternoon.

Charlotte Lukes, Door County: Charlotte received 21 bluebird trail reports from folks in her county with a total of 783 bluebirds fledged. BRAW gets each of the reports too. She told me that she sends several reminders each fall to help motivate them. Charlotte fledged 86 bluebirds from 21 boxes on her trail.

Jim Beix, Pierce County Coordinator: I began opening nest boxes for the winter on October 23. Was surprised at how many mice had already taken up residence and had to be turned out. I usually see E. Bluebirds stay around until the first week in November when they head south. I fledged 523 E. bluebirds on my trail this summer in Pierce and St. Croix counties. I took 2 grade school brothers on my rounds twice after a teacher recommended them.

In 2019, I plan to associate with Lowell Peterson and Jim Higgins of St. Croix County for winter presentations on trails and nest boxes for Pierce and St. Croix counties.

Rita Gundry, Eau Claire: By the end of June, I was looking forward to spring 2019! Four of my favored boxes through the years, consistently having 2 broods each, did not produce a single bird. No attempts at nest building in these boxes left me dismayed. Was this due to a decrease in adult population for our area? Having found dead males and

females in the boxes in April, supports this. At final count in September, my total bluebirds fledged was 65% of the previous year. Results varied throughout the county. I did purchase a slot box to try this year as I have a perpetual problem with sparrows. That was met with success. I hope next year can rival 2012--that was an outstanding year in my area.



Jack Bartholmai, Dodge County: Jack will be presenting a photo illustrated program entitled "Experiences with Cavity Nesting Owls" at the January 17, 2019 meeting of the Horicon Marsh Bird Club. Meetings are held at the Horicon Marsh Education and Visitor Center and start at 7:00 p.m.



Ten Wood Duck chicks: Last year there were twenty seven Wood Duck eggs, probably due to egg dumping and the hen stayed on the pond for four weeks and then went to the woods for four weeks. After eight weeks the chicks fledged.
- Darrel

Darrel Eberhardt, Jackson County: I gave a talk to the Hatfield Homemakers on October 18th. I talked up bluebirds, Jackson County Bird Club, and BRAW. I enjoyed their meal. I even got a nice applause.

Each year, the Jackson County Bird Club takes a hayride on our property along the bluebird trail. The members maintain bluebird houses and populations along their own trails. This year's total count of bluebirds fledged is 1,540 from 365 bird houses.

Carol McDaniel, Lafayette and Grant Counties: Seventeen bluebird trails reported to me over the nesting season. Most were in Lafayette County. The total bluebirds fledged were 659. I email the compiled results weekly

to over one hundred bluebirders. I encourage each monitor to report to BRAW. The number of fledged bluebirds was up this year from last year's 631...hard to believe with the slow start. 2015 was a big year with 769 fledged. A few trails have been lost or shortened due to aging monitors mostly but some have installed more boxes on their trails. One trail monitor battled house sparrows and eliminated around 60.

Coming up in 2019, I am giving a talk in Grant County at Vesper Farms for the Lancaster Garden Club on March 23. I hope to reach out and get more interest in Grant County and more reporters for BRAW. Fred Borsdorf has property in Grant County. It is in the Federal CRP Pollinator program. He is looking for someone or a club in that area to help him put up boxes and monitor them. The property is near Lancaster, on a dead end road facing east. He feels it would be very good for bluebirds. Anyone interested in helping Fred can contact him at 815-541-8932. I will mention Fred's request at the Lancaster Garden Club talk in March.

Patrick Ready, Dane County: After the nesting season was over I got busy working on a few trails in the county. The Prairie Moraine that I helped redo last spring needed some tweaking after the monitor there reported some wren issues. We moved some boxes more into the open areas and had to replace one damaged by coons. At the Oaks Golf course I helped Dave Roberts (monitor) and John Blaska (owner) move boxes to better bluebird habitat and we taped all the boxes closed to keep House Sparrows out over winter. I took a bad spill on my bike in early October and injured my hip and shoulder pretty bad. Just hit some wet leaves on pavement and the bike slid out from under me. At least I didn't break anything! So that slowed me down some but I plan to do more trail adjustments before the ground freezes.

I'll be giving two Bluebird seminars at the Garden Expo in Madison and 2 at the Wild Birds Unlimited store in March. In spring I am giving two workshops at Olbrich Gardens in Madison, one aimed at kids that will finish by making a bluebird nest box.

County Coordinator List

By Carol McDaniel

Thanks to all these Bluebirders that volunteer to be their County Coordinator and help spread the word about Bluebird conservation. Here is the current list for 2018.

County	Coordinator	Phone	Email
Adams	Beyers, Myron	608-586-4833	
Ashland	Becker, Rich & Carol	715-274-3200	richfstop@gmail.com
Brown	Mayer, Steve	920-434-9885	mayersj511@aol.com
Chippewa	Anderson, Debbie	715-382-4639	jradma@centurytel.net
Columbia	Foote-Martin, Sue	608-333-9645	goosep@chorus.net
Dane	Ready, Patrick	608-239-0791	birdsready@gmail.com
Dodge	Bartholmai, Jack	920-887-1505	jack@bartholmai.com
Door	Lukes, Charlotte	920-823-2478	Rnclukes@mwwb.net
Douglas	Bergsten, Charles	715-364-2679	charles477@centurytel.net
Eau Claire	Gundry, Rita	715-579-5523	gundryrk@uwec.edu
Florence	Kowalski, Ed	715-732-8803	n/a
Fond du Lac	Memuna Khan	920-312-8142	khanm@ripn.edu
Grant	McDaniel, Carol	608-922-2473	cjmcd_98@yahoo.com
Green	Dreikosen, Kathleen	608-325-5562	kddd@tds.net
Green Lake	Marwitz, David	920-291-6001	dfmarwitz@centurytel.net
Iowa	Moody, Dale & Doris	608-846-5024	drydog93@yahoo.com
Jackson	Eberhardt, Darrell	715-963-4775	n/a
Kenosha	Rosenstiel, Stan	n/a	mrstanmr@yahoo.com
Kewaunee	Pritzl, Don	920-845-2436	n/a
Lacrosse	Marking, Leif	608-779-1794	lcmarking@gmail.com
Lafayette	McDaniel, Carol	608-922-2473	cjmcd_98@yahoo.com
Marathon	Romanak, Claire	715-257-1905	ribriver2@wildblue.net
Marinette	Kowalski, Ed	715-732-8803	n/a
Milwaukee	NO APPOINTEE		
Monroe	NO APPOINTEE		
Oconto	Birr, Gene	920-826-7552	gbbird22@gmail.com
Outagamie	Mayer, Steve	920-434-9885	mayersj511@aol.com
Ozaukee	Holleback, Mary	262-335-9843	mholleback@gmail.com
Pierce	Beix, Jim	715-425-6981	jbeix@dishup.us
Portage	NO APPOINTEE		
Racine	Rosenstiel,	n/a	mrstanmr@yahoo.com
Rock	Courtier, Rod	608-882-5859	racourtier@charter.net
Sauk	Stehling, Donna and Bill	608-643-0824	donnamstehling@gmail.com
Sawyer	Chambers, Diane	715-699-0356	zippydi@centurytel.net
Shawano	Meiers, Ruthann	715-758-2463	alstaxidermy@granitewave.com
Sheboygan	Curtis, Lee	920-838-2193	n/a
St. Croix	Peterson, Lowell	715-247-3243	n/a
Trempealeau	Craig, Fred	608-783-2225	266marycraig@gmail.com
Vilas	Butzer, Bob	715-356-2215	n/a
Washington	Holleback, Mary	262-335-9843	mholleback@gmail.com
Waukesha	NO APPOINTEE		
Waupaca	NO APPOINTEE		
Winnebago	Misterek, Dave	920-233-6770	dmisterek47@gmail.com
Wood	NO APPOINTEE		



BRAW Needs Help at the Garden Expo

By Pat Ready, BRAW President

Every February Wisconsin Public Television holds the Garden Expo at the Dane County Expo Center. For the past several years BRAW has had a double booth there to promote the word about bluebirds. We have hundreds of attendees stop by to talk to us about attracting Eastern Bluebirds. It's incredible. Everyone wants bluebirds!

You don't need to be an expert or have a large trail. Just talk to folks about what you do and what to expect when trying to attract bluebirds to a yard or natural area. We also need help at the table taking money for box sales etc.

BRAW will pay for your ticket to get in and you will have ample time to go about wandering the show to enjoy the many vendors that display there. The Expo holds seminars all day long on a variety of topics and is well worth attending especially in the dead of winter here in Wisconsin. If you are interested in helping or want more information call or email Mike Helgren. He's trying to get a volunteer schedule set up as soon as possible. The Expo times are Friday February 9, Noon - 8, Saturday 9-6, Sunday 10-4. I'm sure we can work you into a shift on either day.

Contact Mike Helgren at 920/885-4050 or email him at: mhelgren@charter.net to volunteer for this important event.

Winter's To Do List

By Gene Kroupa, BRAW Director

As I prepare for my second year of trailing, my "to do" list seems to keep growing like a ravenous bluebird chick. Here's what's on it for starters.

At the top of the list is relocating poorly performing boxes. These are boxes that seem to attract mostly wrens. Location is usually the main problem.

Moving boxes away from wooded and brushy areas into more open spots helps. Sometimes spacing is an issue; so, I want to aim ideally for their being 100 yards apart.

Next up is identifying promising places to erect new houses. Winter is a good time to get permission and build relations with landowners.

I plan to bring along some copies of the BRAW newsletter to leave behind. Then I will sign-up the landowner for

a complimentary subscription to this newsletter.

I'll be sure to follow-up with a "thank you" note and put up the new boxes when weather permits. Let the landowner know where you've placed boxes and mention your plans for monitoring visits.

Driving new posts shouldn't be a problem in early winter. Sometimes it's easier than trying to penetrate deeply frozen ground in the spring.

On some places you'll find old boxes that are in need of repair or replacement. Find out if someone is actively checking and maintaining the boxes or if it's okay for you to take over these duties.

Repairing and upgrading boxes falls into two categories: fixer-uppers and junkers. Tightening pole clamps, resetting posts and driving anchor nails into posts are simple

maintenance steps.

At times it's easier to cover rather than replace weak sides, roofs, fronts and backs of fixer-upper boxes. Or you might choose to scrap deteriorated junkers and erect more modern houses.

Replacing a viewing door lock screw with a two-headed nail is a worthwhile upgrade. Anything that makes a box more habitable for the bluebirds, keeps away pests, and is easier to check should be considered.

And remember to leave the viewing door open on all boxes. This action helps keep uninvited guests, such as mice, from moving in.

One other "to do" item that I hope to get to this winter is letting my friends, young folks and others know how important it is to help cavity nesters like bluebirds survive and thrive.

From a Different Perspective

By Sue Cashman, Lafayette County Bluebird Society

You may have noticed *Sitta carolinensis*, the White breasted Nuthatch heading upside down to reach the sunflower seeds in your feeder. An active, agile little cavity nester, it does not migrate. Though small, it has a relatively large head, very small neck, short tail, and a long, narrow bill, which is straight or slightly upturned.

The male and female are similar. The male has a gray blue back and frosty white face. He has a black cap and neck, which frame his face and resemble a hood. The lower belly and area under his tail is chestnut brown. The female has a gray cap and has duller coloring than the male.

The name comes from their habit of jamming large nuts and acorns into cracks in tree bark and then hammering them with their sharp bills to "hatch" out the seed from inside. In summer they feed on insects, including gypsy moths and tent caterpillars. They have an appetite for meaty seeds and are attracted to feeders with sunflower seeds, peanuts, peanut butter, and suet.

They can be seen creeping along

trunks and large tree branches probing under the edges of the bark with their pointed bills. They often turn sideways or upside down on vertical surfaces as they forage for food. If you notice them making many trips to and from your feeder, they may be wedging seeds into cracks in the tree bark to store until later in the winter. During the cold months, they join small, foraging flocks of chickadees, titmice, and woodpeckers. This behavior may be for protection from predators or to make food easier to locate.

Sitta carolinensis prefer mature deciduous forests, edges of woodlands, or open areas with large trees such as parks, wooded suburbs, or yards.

The pair will choose a natural tree cavity or an abandoned woodpecker hole as a site for the nest. The female first lines the cavity with fur, bark, or clumps of dirt. Then, she makes a neat cup of fine grass, shredded bark, and feathers. The same cavity will often be used in subsequent years. Because the hole they use can be quite large, they may compete with squirrels and are in danger of predation by snakes, owls, and hawks. White breasted Nuthatches have been known to use nest boxes.

The female lays one brood of 5-9 eggs a year and incubates the eggs for about two weeks. The male helps feed the young, which fledged in about a



month.

This little bird is widespread and not considered to be in danger. However, like all birds that nest in holes in trees, they depend on the availability of dead or partially dead trees left standing in their habitat. Too much pruning or cutting dead wood, along with the intrusion and competition of non-native species can reduce their nesting opportunities.

I have had little nuthatches visiting my feeders, looking at the seeds from their perspectives, and I hope you have too!

Membership Renewal Information

By Mike Ray, membership services

It may be time to renew your annual membership to the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin (BRAW), so that we can update our mailing list with the least cost and effort.

Most BRAW memberships are on a calendar year basis, which means that regular memberships expire on December 31, **except for Life Members.**

Look at the address label on your newsletter. The number group following your name indicates the month and year of expiration. If your label reads WINTER 18 your membership will expire with this issue.

You will also be able to join as an Online Paperless member and get the newsletter by email. We will send you the issue with a link. This will save us money! Reduce printing cost and conserve paper. You can print it if you desire.

Fill out the membership renewal form below and send it with your check or money order to BRAW Membership, c/o Mike Ray, 1120 N. Pleasant View Rd. Apt 204, Middleton, WI 53562.

If we do not receive your renewal by February 1, 2019, your membership will begin with the Summer issue of the *Wisconsin Bluebird*. We will no longer mail out back issues and back date memberships.

The basic \$25 Individual / Family membership covers the cost of printing and mailing the quarterly *Wisconsin Bluebird* newsletter.

The next issue of the *Wisconsin Bluebird* goes into production in February and is mailed to arrive to you the first week in March. I need time to process membership renewals and prepare the mailing list so the sooner I receive your renewal the better.

Consider a onetime \$300 Life Membership in BRAW. **Life members do not have to renew.**

Please complete the membership renewal form provided here and return it to BRAW as soon as possible. **Now you can renew your membership at www.braw.org and use PayPal or a credit card and you don't need to mail anything in.**

By renewing now you will receive all four issues of the 2018 Wisconsin Bluebird newsletter.



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 Online paperless issue via email link -NEW!

\$25 individual or Family Annual

\$100 Corporate Annual

\$300 Life Membership Perpetual Fund

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 \$ _____

Mail this membership/subscription request to:
BRAW, Inc.
Mike Ray
1120 N. Pleasant View Rd. Apt 204
Middleton, WI 53562

Please note: This form appears in this newsletter as a convenience for all who wish to obtain membership. Most membership renewals (Life members excluded) are due as of January 1 each year. If you renew or join during the year you will be on a quarterly membership and will not receive back issues.

BRAW ELECTED & APPOINTED OFFICERS

President Patrick Ready, 815 Sky Ridge DR., Madison, WI 53719 • 608/239-0791 • birdsready@gmail.com (term to 12/19)

Vice President Steve Sample, 422 Shepard Ter. Madison, WI 53705 • 708/606-8070 (term to 12/19)

Secretary Claire Romanak, 7175 Nehrbass Rd.; Athens, WI 54411 • 715/257-1905 • ribriver2@wildblue.net (Term to 12/19)

Treasurer Dan Schroeder, N4028 Morgan Drive, Waupaca, WI 54981 • 920-475-8525 • brdanjoe@gmail.com (term to 12/19)

Director Fred Craig, 3308 Nathan Lane, Holmen WI 54636 • 608/783-2225 266marycraig@gmail.com (term to 12/21)

Director, Steve Fallon, Oregon, WI • 974 Halcyon Days Ct., Oregon, WI. 53575 • stevefall50@gmail.com (term to 12/21)

Director, Dave Lucey, Cross Plains, WI • 53528 • dklucey@chorus.net (term to 12/19)

APPOINTED OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS:

Data Collection Officer, Steve Fallon (see above)

County Coordinator Chair: Carol McDaniel, 9320 Wicks Rd., Gratiot, WI 53541 • cjmcd_98@yahoo.com • 608-922-2473

Funding: Dan Schroeder (see above)

WI Bluebird Editor: Patrick Ready, (see above)

Membership: Mike Ray, 1120 N. Pleasant View Rd. Apt. 4 Middleton, WI 53562 Email: mike.joseph.ray@gmail.com

Nest Box Designs: Fred Craig, (see above)

Student and Youth Outreach Committee:

Co-Chairpersons: Lowell Peterson, 1860 45th St., Somerset, WI 54025 • 715/247-3243; and,

Mary Holleback, 720 Madison St., West Bend, WI 53095-4136 • 262/335-9843

Website: Mike Ray, 1120 N. Pleasant View Rd. Apt. 4 Middleton, WI 53562 Email: mike.joseph.ray@gmail.com

BRAW LIAISONS:

Bureau Of Endangered Res. Liaison: Sumner Matteson, DNR, 101 S. Webster St. PO Box 7921, Madison, WI 53701 • 608/266-1571

WSO Liaison: Jennifer Wenzel, miloloki@wi.rr.com, 262-488-8077

Use the Van Ert Trap to solve Your House Sparrow Problems



Figure 1-- Installation is quick and simple provided there is a screw intact.

Figure 2-- The visible red bulls eye invariably suggests a trapped sparrow.



Order traps online from Van Ert Enterprises at vanerttraps.com \$9.50 + Shipping

Install the trap and set it per instructions. Watch to see if you catch a House Sparrow or return to the box after a short time to check to see if the trap was sprung. You don't want to trap a bluebird and leave it trapped. To check caught bird use a large, clear plastic bag over the box and slightly open the side. The trapped bird will fly to the top of the bag for you to see what you have. Release bluebirds and remove House Sparrows.

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608-239-0791 • birdsready@gmail.com

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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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Spring Thing!
set for April 2, 2019
See p. 2

Is this your last issue?
MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL!
See p. 10

Shop the BRAW Online Store for the holiday!

By Julie Milligan-Barr, Store Manager

Give the gift of Bluebirds!

Check out the store for T-shirts, tank tops, sweatshirts, hats, mugs, aprons, bumper stickers, and lots more all with bluebirds on them.

Items can be ordered online at www.cafepress.com/braw or by calling toll free at 1-877-809-1659 Monday through Saturday from 8am-8pm CST. As always, a portion of the purchase price of items goes directly to BRAW to help fund bluebird conservation programs.



Check out the wide variety of sweatshirts and T-shirts in sizes from kids to adults. Pets too!

Cards now available in packages of 10 or 20.

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