

Fall 2019  
Vol. 34, No. 3



# *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 at the Annual Convention**

See Page 2



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## A Word from the Prez

Here we are at the end of summer and our trail monitoring has come to an end. I hope you had a successful season with many fledged bluebirds. Once again it was a slow start for many of us due to the spring weather but for me it got better as the season progressed.



Unfortunately our year to year numbers keep going down. Somehow we have to make that change direction and back to an upward trend. I am mailing this issue weeks before the normal schedule because some members don't receive their issue for up to a month after it gets mailed here in Madison. The PO says they are having employee shortage issues and mail delivery will be affected. Of the past 3 Wisconsin Bluebird we have mailed, 2 were delivered much later than the norm. One thing I highly recommend to stay on top of events like the Annual Convention is to check our website or GroupWorks. I make sure the information there is current and posted well in advance. Not everyone has a computer so perhaps early mailings may become more the practice when dated events are part of the content.

Many of you know that I also monitor American Kestrel boxes for Madison Audubon. Competition for their boxes come from European Starlings and House Sparrows.

When they show up I insert a Solo cup in the entrance so they leave. Often times a Kestrel moves in after I remove the cup.

The photo here is a from a nest box that didn't get Kestrels this season but in late summer I found a bluebird nest! It amazes me that when a hen bluebird has the room, her nest becomes an artistic tapestry of grasses. She laid 4 eggs total and fledged all 4 in August. I'll take it!



Thanks to all who contributed to this issue. A good variety of information I hope you enjoy reading. There is no County Coordinator column. Carol McDaniel is dealing with cancer so please remember her in your thoughts & prayers.

**Patrick Ready**  
BRAW President

**Save the Date!! September 14**

# BRAW

## Annual Convention at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve

S3661 State Highway 131  
La Farge, Wisconsin 54639

### Chimney Swifts - The Mysterious Bird That Shares our Chimneys

By Sandy Schwab

Sandy Schwab, a Master Naturalist and a long-time volunteer at Dane County Humane Society's Wildlife Center in Madison, will talk about chimney swifts - their fascinating natural history and the challenges they face to survive. Sandy is Chair of the Wisconsin Chimney Swift Working Group, a small but dedicated group of volunteers whose goal is to keep Chimney Swifts common in Wisconsin. Chimney Swifts depend almost entirely on man-made structures for nesting and roosting sites, and their population is in decline. She will talk about this mysterious bird that most people aren't aware of, why they are an important species and what we can do to help them.



### Grouse in the Mist: What's Happened to Ruffed Grouse in the Driftless Region?

By Scott Walter, WIDNR

Ruffed grouse populations have declined precipitously across the Driftless region in the past 30 years. Scott will discuss this decline in light of various potential causes, focusing on long-term changes to the area's forest community. The importance of both species and structural diversity will be discussed, as will opportunities for landowners and land managers to proactively implement activities that support long-term forest diversity and the health of our wildlife community.

Scott Walter: Currently, Large Carnivore Specialist (Bears, Wolves, & Cougars) with the Wisconsin DNR.

Live with my wife Erica and our 5 children on our 7-generation family farm near Viola.

### Falconry Through the Ages

By Abbey Krumrie, River Valley Raptors Inc.

Learn about falconry in medieval times and how falconry has changed throughout time. We will also talk about what it takes to hunt successfully with a bird of prey. Abbey will bring two or three live raptors for her presentation.



# BRAW Annual Convention

## Kickapoo Valley Reserve, LaFarge, WI

The BRAW Annual Convention will be held on Saturday, September 14, 2019 at Kickapoo Valley Reserve, S3661 State Highway 131, La Farge, Wisconsin 54639

### Conference fees:

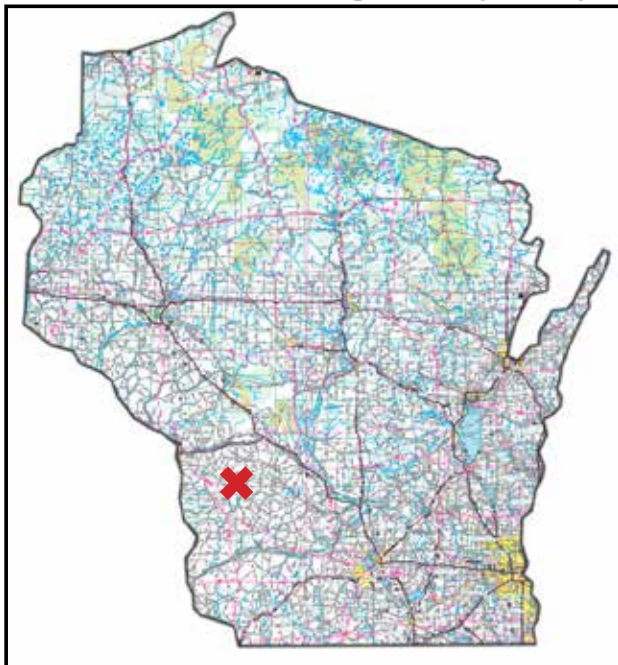
\$6.00: Registration without lunch per person

\$12.00: Includes registration & lunch per person

**Lunch:** choice of ham & cheese or turkey & cheese on whole wheat or white bread (indicate preference); potato salad, dessert bar – cost \$12 prepaid. If registering for more than one person, please indicate food choice for each person. Vegetarian available upon request.

Registration form with lunch choices below.

**Registration is paid in advance.** Please include name and address of each person registering.



### SILENT AUCTION

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

Help support BRAW with your donation or plan to buy an item and support BRAW bluebird trail development.

### Program for 2019 BRAW Annual Convention

8:30-9:30 Registration

8:00-9:00 Registration, Silent Auction & Social Time

9:00-9:15 Welcome: President Pat Ready

Treasurer's Report: Dan Schroeder

9:15- 9:45 - BRAW Awards

9:45-10:00 2019 Season: Steve Falon, Coordinator of Data Collection

10:00-10:15 Break & Social time

10:15-11:15 *Grouse In The Mist*– Steve Betchkal

11:15-Noon Chimney Swifts - Sandy Schwab

Noon Lunch (**Pre-paid only**) Bring your own if desired.

1:00-1:15 Silent Auction winners

1:15-2:15: *Falconry* - Abbey Krumrie

2:15 - 2:45 Ask the Bluebird Experts - Q&A

### ANNUAL CONVENTION PRE-REGISTRATION FORM

Please indicate the number of lunches for your party at \$12 each: \_\_\_\_\_. **Include check for full amount.**

\_\_\_Ham \_\_\_Turkey

\_\_\_white bread \_\_\_wheat bread \_\_\_Gluten Free bread

\_\_\_Vegetarian meal

\_\_\_ registration only (\$6) no lunch

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

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

Return form **with payment by September 8** to:

Pat Ready

815 Sky Ridge Dr.

Madison, WI 53719

# BRAW Oconto County Coordinator

By Gene Birr

My inclination toward any activity involving the love of anything outdoors led me to my active interest in helping bluebirds and other songbirds, ultimately leading me to become the current Oconto County Coordinator for BRAW.

I was raised and still enjoy much time on our family's dairy farm in the town of Morgan in southwest Oconto County, 30 miles north of Green Bay. Most of my favorite activities, even the farm chores, involved those times spent outdoors.

From picking stones in spring, to helping build fences, cutting, raking and baling hay, and picking sweet corn and pickles for early spending money, I found my passion for hard work, fresh air and sunshine that comes from being outdoors on a farm. But despite the long hours and constant duties of rural farm life, I was always able to find some free time to spend on other activities which I learned to enjoy from my parents.

Even the simple task of driving cows down to a pasture, every morning and night, allowed me to observe all the birds and wildlife that abounded on our farm. I would notice each songbird along the lane and then learn to identify their names, calls and songs. Most abundant was the waterfowl that frequented the many ponds and potholes scattered around the fields and woods of our nearly 300 acres. At an early age I followed my father into those woods and fields as he taught my brothers and me to hunt---first ruffed grouse, then ducks, geese, pheasants, deer and later wild turkeys. The clear blue skies or thunderstorms of summer were just as enjoyable to me as the crisp, cool air and the sights, sounds and smells of autumn. But one of my most favorite memories occurred while I was in my late twenties when I saw my very first bluebird on the farm. My father and I were baling hay in late August of 1978 in a field just 200 yards north of the barn, when I spied 6 or 8 bluebirds sitting on the wires and fenceposts beneath several elm trees that lined the field along a



ridge we called the High Bank. Dad had always said that he grew up seeing bluebirds nesting in the fenceposts and apple orchard trees, but he hadn't seen any since the early 1950's. I imagine that this small flock had been raised somewhere nearby and was gathering in their family group learning how to hunt for food before the coming fall migration. Ironically, the year 1978 has been considered the low point for bluebird numbers following two years of severe winter weather that along with other troubles had greatly reduced their number to as low as 90% from what has thought to be their peak. This drastic decline inspired Dr. Lawrence Zeleny and others to found the North American Bluebird Society (NABS) that year which later led to the creation of its affiliate here, the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin (BRAW) in 1986.

Throughout my years pursuing a college education in history and communications, which helped open my mind to accepting new ideas, and a 30 year career as a transit bus driver in Green Bay, I continued my enjoyment of the outdoors. Along with the love of the woods and hunting that I learned from my father, I shared an interest in flowers and vegetable gardening and lawn care, which I learned from my mother and her insistence that the farmyard and buildings should look just so. My fascination with birds inspired me to help them by building birdhouses, initially by creating some early ones out of hollow foot-long pieces of firewood we used to heat our farmhouse, cut from the logs from our deer and maple syrup producing hardwoods.

These crude nestboxes gave way eventually to better ones as I improved my woodworking skills taught me by our father as a 4-H leader in my

youth. Since then I have placed many bluebird and Tree Swallow nesting boxes around the property, now being farmed by my youngest brother, Curt. A dozen Wood Duck boxes mounted on PVC pipes, with metal cone baffles which have greatly improved their productivity by keeping out the raccoons, also share the woods.

Until 12 years ago, along with my friend Steve Mayer in Brown County, we had been building the deep-box Bauldry birdhouse. Steve and I learned our early bluebird knowledge from Vince Bauldry from Suamico who created the only nestbox that was familiar to us in Northeast Wisconsin from the 1960's until this century. This box was designed with an open hole in the roof covered with hardware-cloth wire, thinking the added brightness in the cavity would deter House Sparrows from nesting in them. The 11" depth of the box along with the wire top was sure to keep coons from reaching the nest. Most bluebird enthusiasts today now accept the idea that bluebirds greatly prefer a more shallow, dryer nesting cavity and that there are better methods and products to keep out raccoons, cats and sparrows. Thus, in the last few years I have strongly favored the use of the wire-cage Noel predator guards on my boxes, and I have been experimenting with and testing a skylight box covered with plexiglass that I believe will greatly keep them from being used by House Sparrows.

We began to learn these new facts and ideas for improving our bluebird success when Steve and I learned of BRAW from an article written by Door County outdoor writer and CC, Roy Lukes, in the spring of 2008.

We were building 60 Bauldry deep nestboxes when the BRAW Informational Packet and our memberships arrived. Using some of this new knowledge I began my first year with BRAW monitoring 40 boxes, after removing another 20 I had placed around the farm and nearby roadsides just a few years before. In that first year I helped fledge just 24 bluebirds from only five of those 40 boxes. Then I was contacted that fall by Dr. Kent Hall, who was then Vice-President and Data Collector for BRAW.

He gave me many suggestions on

how to improve the bluebird numbers on my trail, then he met with me and helped create a new trail on nearby roadsides and the Sandalwood Country Club, now the Patriot Golf Club in Abrams, Wisconsin.

We also adopted the NABS-style nestbox with an oval entrance hole and downward-opening side door, and replaced all of our deep boxes with new ones in the fall of 2009. After just one year of these improvements I had increased my trail to 55 boxes, resulting in 128 bluebirds fledged and 2.3 BBs fledged per box. Acknowledging these accomplishments I was encouraged to become the Oconto County Coordinator for BRAW.

During the ten years since becoming active in BRAW I have increased my trails' nestbox number each year from those initial 40 to a total of 110 boxes, which I now have had for four years. In that decade my trail's nestboxes have helped to fledge more than 2500 bluebirds as well as 2600 other native songbirds. Besides my 18 box trail at the Patriot Golf Club, I have trails at the Oconto Falls High School campus, nearly 50 boxes along rural roadsides in Abrams and Morgan, in many friends and relatives yards, on two cemeteries and 15 boxes on my brother's farm. I now have placed Noel Guards on 90% of my boxes after adding one each time a bluebird chooses to nest in one. This alone has decreased the bluebird mortality by one-third on my trail. Last year I tested the skylight box that I learned of from Dr. Dean Rust, President of the Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania. Based on the idea that the extra light inside the box would keep out sparrows which seem to prefer a darker nesting cavity, I used them to replace boxes in my 3 worst affected areas. Having removed 13 sparrows from those boxes during the last three years, I was pleasantly surprised to find that I had bluebirds, Tree Swallows and House Wrens using the boxes now and never saw or had to trap a sparrow in them. Now I am conducting a larger field study, along with Dr. Kent Hall, testing how effective they are in deterring sparrows from nesting in them and whether the other songbirds use them frequently or are adverse to them as well.

Beyond working with these new prac-

tices on my own trails, I work closely with the many other fellow monitors in NE Wisconsin, several who have joined me in this field test. Most important has been Steve Mayer, a friend who serves as the CC in Brown and Outagamie counties. Together we build 50 to 100 NABS boxes each winter and have supplied nearly 600 of them to monitors in our three counties. We have helped install trails with others on many golf courses, especially with Barb Allen from Green Bay, who monitors 250 boxes on 4 courses and in 5 counties, and was named BRAW's Bluebirder of the Year in 2018. She often keeps me busy providing her with nestboxes, mounting poles, Noel guards and any other replacement parts she may need. Eight years ago I also began working closely with Cordula Van Den Heuvel in setting up trails for her and eight monitors as part of Bird City Oconto. We also monitor several Purple Martin colonies and Wood Duck boxes in the parks of Oconto, along with the bluebirds. Each April, I also participate in the International Crane Foundation's crane count, coordinated locally by Cordula's daughter, Amber. I have given bluebird presentations to garden clubs, 4-H clubs, Cub Scouts, at nature festivals and prairie garden sales events, and annually at the local Wild Birds Unlimited store, often with the help of Cordula, Steve, John Loehlein, Terri Sprout and Melissa McNeil, each one an active local bluebird trail monitor in their own right.

While working with others in putting up boxes and trails, Steve and I often comment that the greatest pleasure in all of our bluebirding endeavors is when we find a new area to establish a trail, but especially when someone else steps up and eagerly agrees to monitor it faithfully. The reward of setting up a new trail is especially gratifying when I look back across a property and can notice the way each new nest box stands out across the field or against the skyline. And each time I walk the golf course or other property monitoring my own bluebird trail---and take the time to notice the sun, wind, rain, and the fresh warm air of summer---I am reminded of the same joy and excitement I felt when I was rewarded with seeing those first bluebirds on the farm of my youth.

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## BRAW welcomes these members

Kevin & Barb King - Shawano  
Dennis Pawlak - Fall Creek  
Karen Dostal - Custer  
Krista Topolski - Onalaska  
Val Van Winkle - Madison  
Gene Kroupa - Madison  
Teresa Goetz - Monroe  
Ruth Smith - Madison



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### BRAW Joins Amazon Smile!

Amazon has developed a way to support non-profit organizations such as BRAW. If you use Amazon, log into "http://smile.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.

## 2018 Data Corrections

Dear Monitors-

You are truly the life blood of our organization and are the reason that bluebirds have recovered in Wisconsin. I very much appreciate your efforts. Unfortunately, with the hundreds of reports I receive, errors, oversights and fatigue happen, despite my best efforts. Below is a list of corrections for the year 2018. All of our monitors are important and I know that all are doing their best to help the birds. If there are additional corrections, please let me know and we'll do our best to rectify them. These additions bring our state totals up to nearly 20,000 bluebirds fledged!!

Thanks and regards,  
Steve Fallon

Name	County	Bluebirds Fledged
Steve Mayer	Outagamie	69
Bob Bennicoff	Dane	7
Susan Clairmont	Oconto	2
Rodney Courtier	Green	22
Barbie Allen	Oconto	87
Barbie Allen	Kewanee	46
James Higgins	Pierce	20
Gail Van Haren	Iowa	46
Cordula VanDenHeuvel	Oconto	19
Amber VanDenHeuvel	Oconto	
Chanetl McLeod	Oconto	6
Joe Watt	Oconto	
Don Denor	Oconto	10
Marsha Present	Oconto	
Joan Altergott	Oconto	44
Kevin and Denise Judy	Oconto	17
Kristen Laufenberg	Oconto	2
Fred and Mary Craig	LaCrosse	298
Bruce Marion	Sauk	122
Gene Kroupa	Iowa	14
Gene Kroupa	Sauk	12
Gene Kroupa	Dane	4
Steve Sample	Dane	55
Carol Forsythe	Pierce	26
<b>Total EAB Fledged (updated)</b>		<b>19,653</b>

## Please Send in Your 2019 Data!

By Steve Fallon, Data Collection

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

**DEADLINE: September 30.**

The next page has copies of the EZ Form. It's also available as a download on the website - [www.braw.org](http://www.braw.org). **You can also fill in the form (2019 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:

[wisconsinbluebirds@gmail.com](mailto:wisconsinbluebirds@gmail.com)

or use the **2019 EZ Form** on our website:  
[www.braw.org](http://www.braw.org)

**If you've noticed any errors or omissions in the data, please let me know as soon as possible. We'll print corrections in a subsequent issue.**

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



## BRAW EZ Summary Form

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

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

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

\*County \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\*Phone ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) - \_\_\_\_\_

email: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Thank You!

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\_\_\_\_\_ No. of boxes\* \_\_\_\_\_ Boxes used by Bluebirds\*  
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\_\_\_\_\_ Bluebirds fledged \* \_\_\_\_\_ Tree Swallows fledged  
\_\_\_\_\_ Chickadees fledged \_\_\_\_\_ House Wrens fledged

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

\*County \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\*Phone ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) - \_\_\_\_\_

email: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Thank You!

## Movin' On Season

By Gene Kroupa, Director

Autumn is the movin' on season for me. 2019 was a pretty good year for my nest boxes. More than one-half hosted bluebird pairs, and many of those produced fledglings.

Yet, I could have done some things that would have improved the results.



First, I should have anticipated problems.

Putting some fresh nest boxes too close to undergrowth attracted wrens. One bluebird nest lost a couple eggs to the little pests.

Three boxes on a new property drew a blank despite high hopes. Two more boxes that were too near together attracted only one nesting bluebird pair.

While boxes without nests send mixed messages, a jumble of sticks usually means it's time to move on. Then there were the black gnats, flies and ants that reminded me of the importance of checking boxes every 7 to 10 days.

Second, leaving a predator guard off another box proved fatal to the fledglings. And there was the garden box that remained barren, because I didn't trap the male sparrow that set up camp.

Next year, I'd like to get up to three-fourths of my boxes attracting mates that lay eggs. Hopefully, many of those clutches will each send 3 to 5 healthy hatchlings out the entrance as feathered fledglings.

All I can do now is learn from this year's experiences and move on – lit-

erally. The poorly positioned nest boxes will be relocated. Entrances will be protected with predator guards. Cleaning and spraying will be more timely. And the Van Ert trap will be deployed sooner rather than later next nesting season.



**Regular nest box monitoring is key to success.**

*Photo: Laurel Holgerson, Madison, WI*

## Your Suggestions Needed

By Steve Sample, VP and Gene Kroupa, Director

What can BRAW do to get our "brand" out into the public and to entice the business community to help support our organization? This task is daunting and we keep running into road blocks, notably financial, but also with getting people interested in our endeavor of saving bluebirds and other cavity nesters.

It seems the younger generations are just not enthused about working to save bluebird populations. Perhaps many people and potential supporters are not aware of our existence, let alone our monitoring or financial needs. To add to this problem, many other organizations are also pressuring grant providing foundations for similar support, and many foundations are overwhelmed with requests.

I have tried to solicit foundations, such as the one Home Depot supports, but because of the flood of requests, they are focusing on a narrow group to which to lend their financial support. In Home Depot's case, it's supporting veterans related projects.

This seems to be the rule with many foundations. It also does not help that we focus on one bird species; we're not like Audubon which focuses on all birds. We have to get our name out there and state our cause clearly.

I'm writing this article to ask our members if they know of some avenues we can try to promote our cause. Some current suggestions include:

**Purchasing lapel pins** as we sported some years ago (\$300). We have to purchase a certain quantity. We will offer these to our speakers, volunteers, etc. We would give them away rather than charge if we receive outside support to pay for them.

**Developing both a translucent and opaque decal**, plus a web accessible icon, to give to stores and organizations to post either online, use in their publications, or place on their entry doors. This would entail about \$300. Design cost is the biggest expense.

**Making a poster** for use in schools, at campuses, etc. is a larger cost, especially if we mail some of them to certain groups, schools, etc. The cost depends upon how many we produce and what we are able to do to get them out. Estimated minimum cost is about \$2,000.

We can recognize donors as requested, e.g. listing them in our publications, on our website, etc.

The goal is plainly to get our name out there and maintain a presence to build support. If you have any suggestions or advice, please email them to me at [ssample@gmail.com](mailto:ssample@gmail.com) or call me 708.606.8080. Thank you.



# The Littlest Falcon

By Sue Cashman

*Falco sparverius*, the American Kestrel, is one of our most colorful raptors and is about the size and shape of a mourning dove.

They are pale when viewed from below and a warm rusty brown spotted with black when viewed from above. Their tails have a black band near the tip. The female's wings, back, and tail are a warm reddish color. Both male and female have a pair of black vertical stripes on the sides of their faces, sometimes referred to as a mustache or sideburns.

The male *Falco sparverius* begins its nesting process by finding a suitable hole and showing it to the female, who makes the final decision. They do not use nesting materials. If a cavity floor has loose materials, she clears a shallow depression and lays 1 to 2 broods of 4-5 eggs. The eggs are incubated for 26-32 days and remain in the nest for 28-31 days before fledging.

These little predators have a fierce intensity packed into their small bodies. They can be seen perching on wires or poles or hovering as they face into the wind. They are graceful fliers, yet small enough to get tossed around in a strong wind. Kestrel monitor Jim Hess contributes that their nickname is Prairie Lightning.

Life can be a challenge. Not only are nesting cavities becoming harder to find, but kestrels can end up as prey for Red-tailed hawks, Barn Owls, crows, Cooper's Hawks, rats, and

Adult male: Pat Ready



snakes. They are forced to compete for a limited number of nesting cavities, sometimes fighting off and evicting bluebirds, squirrels, and other cavity nesters.

American Kestrels usually hunt by day and catch prey by pouncing, seizing it with their feet, eating it on the spot, or carrying it back to their perch. A unique hunting characteristic is the ability to see ultra-violet light. This enables them to follow the urine trails left by voles, very much like neon signs that light the way to a meal. Their diet also consists of insects and other invertebrates, small animals, birds, spiders, and frogs. Surplus kills are hidden in clumps of grass, tree roots, bushes, fence posts, tree limbs, and cavities.

Kestrels that spend the summer in northern areas migrate. Although some travel to central America, many spend the winter in our southern states.

They are at home in many habitats, from deserts and grasslands to Alpine Meadows. They favor open areas with short ground vegetation and sparse trees. When breeding, they need to access trees or structures that provide nesting cavities. They will nest in man made nest boxes, which are placed 10-30 feet above ground.

Jim Hess, one of Lafayette County's premier prairie restorers, has been placing an increasing number of kestrel nesting boxes since 2013. I have included Jim's American Kestrel Nesting Box Results. He notes: "Kestrels are quite territorial and the boxes need to be 1/2 mile apart, and if the nesting attempt fails, they do not try again." He uses a camera on a stick to view inside his boxes. Jim writes: "The kestrel is experiencing a population decline



Adult female: Ruth Smith

in North America. In Wisconsin, we are seeing a 6.3% annual decline. The cause of the decline is unknown due to the lack of data. This underscores the need and importance for monitoring. Kestrels are cavity nesting birds, so the lack of habitat is one probable cause, competition from common starlings for nesting spots is another, and the use of pesticides in agricultural areas, and potential exposure to the West Nile virus add to the list of hazards for kestrels."

Let's hope that people can help restore the kestrel, as they have the bluebirds.

Credit for the information presented in this article goes to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Jim Hess.



Fledged female: Pat Ready

Year	# of Boxes	Nests	Eggs	Young	Fledged	Fledged per box
2013	1	0	0	0	0	0
2014	3	2	10	9	9	3
2015	8	5	26	7	7	.9
2016	9	7	36	30	26	2.9
2017	9	8	40	24	23	2.6
2018	9	8	39	32	26	2.9

# 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 Summer 19 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 via an online 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 did not receive your renewal when due, your membership will begin with the next issue after payment is received. *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 August and is mailed to arrive the first week in September. I need time to process membership renewals and prepare the mailing list so the sooner I receive your renewal the better. Please renew because we want you!

Consider a one time \$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](http://www.braw.org) and use PayPal or a credit card and you don't need to mail anything in.**

**All renewals/New Memberships received now will begin with the Fall issue.**

New members use the form below to join BRAW.



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## Wisconsin Bluebird Subscription and BRAW, Inc. Membership

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

Subscription/Membership contribution:

- \$15 Student (email link - online)
- \$20 Online paperless issue via email link -NEW!**
- \$25 Individual or Family Annual (hard copy mailed)
- \$100 Corporate Annual
- \$300 Life Membership       Perpetual Fund

- \$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)

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

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

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

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

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

Telephone: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

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

Check appropriate boxes:

- This is a renewal.
- This is a new subscription/membership
- 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 • ssample@gmail.com (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)

**Director Gene Kroupa**, 1010 Tumalo Trail, Madison, WI 53711 • 608/238-3571 • gkroupa@tds.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 • cjmc\_d\_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



*Female wing-waving at the Lakeshore Nature Preserve.*

## The Bluebird "Wing Wave"

By Ruth Smith

This female bluebird reminded me of John Travolta doing his dance moves in **Saturday Night Fever!** These gestures are called wing-waves. The male will lift one of both of his wings to attract the female's attention during courtship, as if to convince the female that his nest box is a great place to raise a family. Females do it too, perhaps to say "Hi there!", "I'm still here!" or "Hurry up with that grub!" These gestures can occur year-round, especially when they are working as team, defending their nest or food.

The next time you are checking on a box, watch out for wing waves and enjoy the bluebird boogie!

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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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**Annual Convention!**  
**September 14**  
**Kickapoo Valley Reserve.**

## Shop the BRAW Online Store!

By Julie Milligan-Barr, Store Manager  
Get your Bluebird Swag on!  
Give the gift of Bluebirds!

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

Items can be ordered online at [www.cafepress.com/braw](http://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!

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