

# Bayou Bluebird Nest News

MARCH 2006

Sheryl Cooper Bassi, Editor

Volume 16



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[www.labayoubluebirdsociety.org](http://www.labayoubluebirdsociety.org)

Affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society



## HIGHLAND ROAD PARK BLUEBIRD TRAIL, BATON ROUGE





These are some pictures of the trial on the beautiful grounds of the Highland Road Park Observatory in Baton Rouge, LA. We have a pair of Eastern Bluebirds nesting. Kenny Kleinpeter, Baton Rouge rehabbed the trail and monitors and maintains it. Story follows on page 3.

## HIGHLAND ROAD PARK BLUEBIRD TRAIL

The 2005 season was good for Highland. Highland was a five-box trail that was not monitored soon after it was erected. When I began caring for it in 2004, I found one box with an active starling nest because a squirrel had enlarged the opening. On another box, the predator guard had fallen to the ground and all of the other boxes had wasp nests in them. It was a classic case for proper monitoring. Unmonitored boxes are good for one season, at best!

I spend most of my time monitoring two other trails; one, a 100-boxer at Kleinpeter Dairy and the other, a 50-boxer woods trail, both in St. Helena parish. These are trails on private land. The allure of Highland is that it is a public park. This exposes nestboxes to the general public. Making handout sheets available is a great educational opportunity. All six of the boxes are properly placed, guarded and monitored and serve as a standard for all to see. Evelyn's "trademark" bluebird is painted on the sides to immediately identify the box's purpose to the most casual observer.

After beginning a once-a-week monitoring program, Highland has begun a bluebird turn-around. The numbers for 2005 were 4 nesting attempts with 16 eggs laid and 8 eggs hatching with all 8 young fledging. Two of the four-egg clutches did not hatch. I suspect that one of those clutches failed as a result of abandonment. The only drawback of a public trail is human interference and I've detected this at Highland. I've been tempted to change the door latches to Phillips-head screws but I fear that even worse interference will occur when children become violent trying to open a box or "make the bird come out". Each box has a placard, which lists information about LBBS and a plea not to interfere with the box (under penalty of law).

The area that the trail encompasses seems to accommodate no more than two pairs of bluebirds but the excessive number of boxes serves to give the birds a defensive edge in moving around to avoid interference. The park is used for picnics and much trash is left in receptacles in the park. It's obvious that raccoons visit these bins regularly so the cone-type predator guards are very important. I expect Highland to continue improving its production. I hope that a third cycle can take place and that human interference is reduced. I enjoy being able to tell people in Baton Rouge that if they want to see how a trail should look, that they can visit Highland Road Park.

Kenny Kleinpeter  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President  
Louisiana Bayou Bluebird Society

## SIGNS OF SPRING



Leonard Colvin of West Monroe took a picture of his pair checking out the nestbox he painted the Eastern Bluebird on. Leonard attended a workshop where Evelyn supplied the participants with patterns of the Eastern Bluebird to paint on their boxes. Good job, Leonard!

**SPRING CELEBRATION - WADDILL WILDLIFE REFUGE CENTER  
MAY 6, 2006, 4142 NORTH FLANNERY ROAD, BATON ROUGE  
WORKSHOP 10:00 TO 12:00 - \$15.00 REGISTRATION FEE  
AFTERNOON MEETING - 1:30 TO 5:00 - NANCY NEWFIELD,  
HUMMINGBIRD EXPERT - BOOK SIGNING AT 1:30. LEARN ABOUT  
BLUEBIRDS TOO!**

## 2005 NEST SUMMARY

	# of Boxes	Eggs Laid	Hatched	Fledged
Eastern Bluebird	941	2,503	1,580	1,564
Carolina Chickadee	5	24	23	23
Purple Martin	138	739	591	474
Prothonotary Warbler	8	14	13	12
Carolina Wren				262
Wood Duck	31	543	278	254

Predation and infertile eggs caused low fledging rates.

## NABS 2006 CONVENTION - SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

With the NABS 2006 registration price structure, an NABS member can attend all 5 days of the convention for just \$37.00 - without any bells or whistles. This includes entry into general sessions, break out sessions, and a complimentary breakfast and lunch. (We're relying heavily on underwriting by the Texas Bluebird Society and we plan to find generous sponsors and to receive donated auction items from across the continent.)

To make reservations call: 1-800-HILTONS

To obtain the brochure, visit [www.NABS2006.com](http://www.NABS2006.com) or send a request to TBS, P O Box 40868, Austin TX 78704. Phone Pauline Tom (512.268.5678) with questions. This will have registration information.

Please consider making this a great vacation for yourself and family or friends.

Many people are adding nestboxes to their trails. This is a great idea because all the young that fledged come back to the area the next nesting season to nest.

Setting the box the correct distance from a tree or bush is very important. It should be no closer than 25 feet from either. To be closer invites competition from other cavity nesters.

Always face the box toward the tree or some building or object that the fledglings can fly to. They fly directly to the trees or such and remain there for about a week being fed by their parents.

Facing the box northeast, east, southeast or south is preferable to western directions. It receives less turbulent wind, rain and sun.

Make sure your nestboxes have drainage holes in the bottom and holes near the roof for ventilation. Eggs and babies have a hard time in the south in the extreme heat we have.

Recommendations for a two-inch overhang on the roof give more protection against rain, sun and wind. Also, caulk any places on the box that let in cold or hot air.

Clean out all nestboxes if you have not already done so. Also, be sure you clean them out after every fledging. Keeping records helps you to know when they will fledge. A flat, dirty nest with fecal droppings on the walls means your birds probably successfully fledged and the nest is ready to clean out.

Do not put the old nest anywhere near the box as it invites predators. They can detect the scent and leads them to the site.

It is best to keep your trail or backyard boxes to the number you can successfully monitor and do a good job. Quality is desired over quantity. If you have the required predator guards, such as the stovepipe or cone guard for climbing predators and the wooden guard over the hole to protect against larger birds and even climbing predators and you also do a good job of monitoring, you can expect a higher fledging rate usually.

Good luck this nesting season,  
Evelyn Cooper, President

## THANK YOU!

Dear Friends,

After Katrina finished with our 63 box Bluebird trail out at Money Hill, there were only about 20 boxes that could be salvaged.

When The Louisiana Bayou Bluebird Society donated 25 boxes to our trail, it was like a dream come true.

Through the generosity of so many members and the efforts of Evelyn Cooper and Kenny Kleinpeter, our trail had a good head start at being re-established.

We are happy to report that the owner of Money Hill, Mr. Dave Goodyear, furnished us with the rest of the boxes, the mounting poles and the predator guards.

We see birds going into the boxes already.

To all of you a big, big THANK YOU.

Olga and Walter Clifton, Abita Spring, LA



Kenny and Walter

**A very special "Thank You" goes to JOHN TIDWELL and JACK HOOVER of Monroe for adding predator guards and cleaning out nestboxes at the Leo Terzia Memorial Bluebird Trail on the grounds of LA. Agriculture & Forestry at Monroe. They are the new project managers of the trail. Also, to KENNY KLEINPETER for checking the Camp Ruth Lee BB Trail at Norwood, cleaning out nestboxes, and making plans to have it monitored correctly. He found the trail had not been monitored and he plans to work with the camp manager to get it going in the right direction. Thanks to these guys for their hard work!**

LOUISIANA BAYOU BLUEBIRD SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

www.labayoubluebirdsociety.org

An organization devoted to conservation of all native cavity-nesting birds

Mail this form with check or money order to

LOUISIANA BAYOU BLUEBIRD SOCIETY

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Delhi, LA. 71232

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New Membership  Renewal

_____ Individual membership	\$ 7.50
_____ Family membership	\$ 15.00
_____ Lifetime membership	\$250.00
_____ Organization	\$ 25.00
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_____ Corporations	\$100.00
_____ Donation	\$ _____

Your cancelled check will be your receipt. To save money, receipts are not issued unless specified. Please ask if your company or your spouse's company has a matching gifts program to augment your contribution. Inquiries for information concerning matching gifts may usually be made at the company's benefits office.

Louisiana Bayou Bluebird Society is recognized as a 501©(3) charitable organization and contributions are tax deductible as allowed by law.