

Bayou Bluebird Nest News

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An affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society

WINTERIZING NESTBOXES

This is the time to start thinking about winterizing our nestboxes so that they can be used for roosting if the bluebirds find it necessary. Usually, it has to be very cold several days in a row before they find a need to use it. Sometimes, as many as six to eight will huddle together in the nestbox for warmth.

The Cornell University Bluebird List recommends to prepare the nestbox by lining it with foil and putting a layer of grass on top of the foil. You can also use caulking to seal any cracks that have developed. Take some foil and put it under each side of the door to help seal the cracks in the door.

Then, when spring arrives, just take it all out to get ready for the nesting season.



Photo by Margaret Croft

Courtesy of The Monroe News-Star

A newly-hatched bluebird nests in one of Evelyn Cooper's bluebird boxes. Cooper helped form the Louisiana Bayou Bluebird Society to aid efforts for bluebird recovery.



Let's Start Putting Up Nestboxes

Fall is a good time to start putting up new nestboxes. Birds are apt to stay around our area all winter and they do check the nestboxes even in the fall. The first week in January is the latest to have them out to be sure they will come check it out. They start coming the second week in January to check the boxes and most times have started nest building by the middle or third week of February.

Put the boxes about 30 to 40 feet from trees or further, but no further than 100 feet. Make sure they face the trees or something the fledglings can land on as they fly directly to the trees when they fledge. The recommended position is northeast or east, away from the prevailing winds and rain and the evening sun.

★ Make sure you have a good predator guard on the pole! ★

LBBS's FIRST PRESENTATION

On Tuesday, July 9, LBBS made its first public outreach presentation to the Camp Fire Boys and Girls at Camp Ruth Lee in Norwood, La. Dave Cagnolatti of Baton Rouge did the presentation. There were about 100 children, ages 5 to 13 with equal numbers of boys and girls. They were shown the video "Bluebird Basics" by Stokes, which was followed by discussion about bluebirds.

A Peterson nestbox on a pole was displayed, and the children received an explanation of what a monitor does on a bluebird trail. Topics covered included migration and timing of first nests, mating rituals, nest building, egg laying, hatching and incubating, feeding of young bluebirds, parasites, predators, and predator guards.

A field guide to North American Birds was a handy reference to show the kids. The use of a field guide was explained and examples were provided through digital photographs displayed on a television. Matching the photographs to the species in the field guide was educational and fun for the children. Photographs of birds displayed through the digital camera to the TV made for an interesting nature quiz. Each picture was displayed as the children tried to guess what kind of bird it was. The children thoroughly enjoyed the guessing game. There were many photographs of bluebirds to display and discuss, along with their nests, eggs and young. The children had lots of questions, and answering all of them was a challenge.

The kids were very attentive and polite. They appeared to really enjoy the whole thing, which lasted about an hour. The presenter got a standing ovation, which took him quite by surprise.

The camp also had about ten old bluebird boxes scattered about the place. Some were checked, and contained bluebird nests with no eggs--- and there were no bluebirds in sight. This would suggest raccoon or snake predation of eggs. Also, several of the entrance holes had been chewed by squirrels and were too large.



The director of the camp, Erin Curry, would like LBBS to supply them with about a dozen "kits" to build NABS-style bluebird boxes in their craft barn. LBBS member, Shane Marcotte has volunteered to cut the pieces. After the kids have assembled the boxes, Dave will return next spring to help the camp directors and the children place the boxes in good locations and begin the monitoring program. The experience should be great for the kids at the camp, and a few of the will, hopefully, take up bluebirding as a lifelong hobby.

Dave Cagnolatti

From the Perch...



What an exciting summer this has been! The bluebird nesting cycles have been prolific. Our advertising/publicity for our meeting and our newly formed organization has been beyond our expectations. We have watched our membership soar! Our team has worked hard and the results are paying off! We have also accomplished getting our website up. Dave Cagnolatti, one of our board members, has given a wonderful presentation to Baton Rouge Campfire Boys and Girls. Christy LeGuin, Sheryl Bassi and Evelyn Cooper have four presentations scheduled for garden clubs and a bird club to begin shortly.

Let's all make plans to attend our first statewide meeting as it will be a fun time and a learning experience and the joy of getting to meet all the new bluebirders! Let's make our state stop and take notice of what we are doing and are going to do.

A nest summary sheet will be attached to the newsletter and please do fill it out and return it as this is requested of us by NABS. We will publish results later.

See You At The Meeting!!!

Evelyn Cooper
President



**CONSIDER
GIVING
AN
LBBS
MEMBERSHIP
TO
SOMEONE
ON
THAT
NEXT
SPECIAL
OCCASION**

Bluebirds along the bayous...where we lend a helping hand!