

BAYOU BLUEBIRD NEST NEWS

Volume 22

Evelyn M. Cooper, Editor

September 2007

From The Perch

by Kenny Kleinpeter, pres.

It's August and it's hot! Down here in Baton Rouge, the nesting season is finally over.

No more weekly nest checks; just monthly now, just to make sure the boxes are still standing (especially on the dairy farm). One curiosity is the flying squirrel. I have several boxes that they have tried to use throughout the year. I want to watch and see what they might need if some actually nest in them. My interest in birds leads to my interest in other species that interact with them. Birds have taught me that no species (humans, especially!) live in a vacuum.

LBBS is gearing up for its annual meeting, this year in Baton Rouge. Working with Steve Cardiff at the LSU Museum of Natural Sciences, it should be quite an educational experience for all of us, novice and "expert" alike.

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LBBS 2007 ANNUAL MEETING Foster Hall, LSU Campus LSU Museum of Natural Science Tour

Louisiana Bayou Bluebird Society invites you to its 2007 Annual Meeting on September 15, 2007, between 9:30 AM and 1:00 PM to be held at the LSU Museum of Natural Science, located in Foster Hall on the campus of LSU, Baton Rouge, LA. Registration begins at 9:30 A.M. and at 10:00 A.M. a tour of the museum facilities including behind-the-scenes species preparation and storage areas. One of the largest natural history museums in the country, it holds over 170,000 bird specimens including the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. The business meeting will take place between 11:00 AM and 12 Noon followed by speaking presentations by museum staff and LABird Resource Center. Door prizes will include tickets to that night's LSU football game, a pair of Nikon birding binoculars and complete sets of bluebird nest box systems (including pole and predator guard!). This event is free and open to the public but space is limited and all participants must pre-register by September 7th. For questions or registration, contact Kenny Kleinpeter (225-769-7325 or kpkmajk@cox.net) or Evelyn Cooper (318-878-3210 or emcooper@bayou.com).

Directions to LSU Museum of Natural Science and Foster Hall on page 7. Make reservations now to insure that you have a place for a great Bluebird Day!



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From The Perch (cont. from page 1)

Starting with our meeting next month, we will start providing “complete nesting systems” rather than just a box. That, along with directions for proper placement and habitat development (water, food, and cover), new birders can have a much greater chance of initial success. These systems more than double the cost but it means much more success. I think that has always been what LBBS is about: quality instead of quantity. Some groups around the country brag about producing thousands of nestboxes when most of them end up being raccoon feeders. They end up being cavity nesters’ worst enemies! If we’re going to do it, let’s do it right.

Our membership continues to grow, slowly but surely. On behalf of Evelyn and the rest of the board, thank you for caring about wildlife and the natural world through your support of LBBS.

Please remember to pre-register for the annual meeting before September 7 in order to be eligible to win four tickets to the September 15 Middle Tennessee/LSU football game the evening of the meeting!! We’re doing this door prize early in order to encourage early registration and also, to give the winners time to prepare for the game as part of their trip! The tickets are compliments of our family business, Kleinpeter Farms Dairy, LLC, one of our biggest supporters! See you at LSU!

-Kenny

PREDATOR BAFFLE

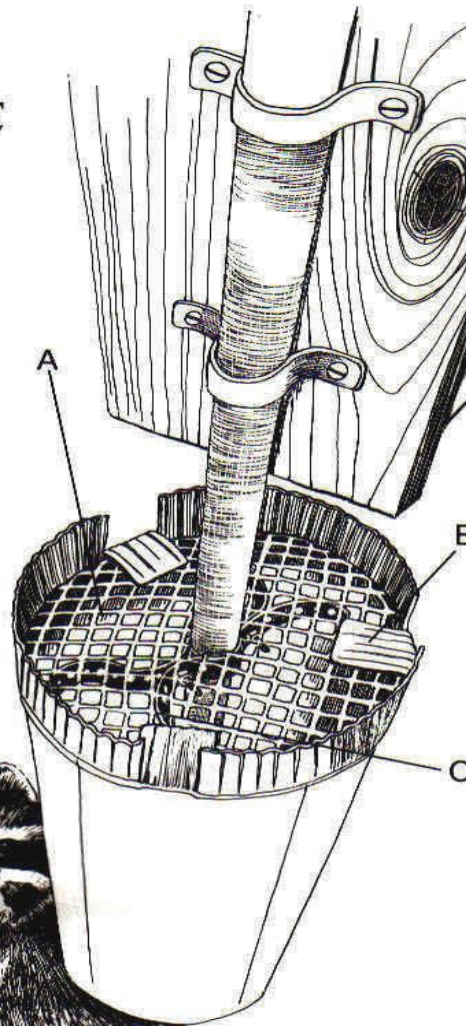
How to Make This Baffle

Materials used: *galvanized pipe 3/4" inside diameter, strapping brackets and weather-proof screws (to mount box to pole), hardware cloth (1/4" mesh), machine screws with nuts, hanger iron (in two 7" strips), galvanized stovepipe (36" x 8").*

With tinsnips, cut the hardware cloth into a circle 8 inches in diameter. Place it over the stovepipe, bending the edges down so that it will fit snugly into the pipe, about an inch down from the top (A). Close any gaps between hardware cloth and stovepipe, otherwise snakes may squeeze through.

Next, use tinsnips to cut three tabs (B) in the top of the stovepipe. Bend these over the hardware cloth. Cut a small hole in the middle of the cloth to allow the assemble to slip over the box mounting pipe.

Bolt the two strips of hanger iron (C) securely on either side of the mounting pipe, and bend them to support the hardware cloth. Duct tape wrapped around the pole helps hold the hanger iron in place. Slip the assembled baffle over the hanger iron bracket, just below the nest box. It should wobble a little, which further discourages climbing predators.



Bluebird's-eye-view of a raccoon and the stovepipe baffle mount. The slick metal baffle wobbles on the pole, preventing the raccoon from climbing to the box. The mesh inside the baffle keeps snakes from slithering up the pole.

TOP 10 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT WINDOW STRIKES

By: Bill Thompson - Copied with permission from Birdwatchers Guide

Article Provided by: Birdwatchers Digest

Thump! It's that sickening sound that can only mean another bird has flown into one of your windows. Birds cannot see glass, especially if it is reflecting the nearby habitat or sky. These reflections do not register as such to a bird. This is why millions of birds die or are injured each year in collisions with glass windows in homes and office buildings.

Here are 10 different suggestions for making your windows less deadly for birds.

10. Move your feeders. Many window-killed birds are familiar feeder birds that use our backyards every day. There are two parts to this suggestion. Move the feeders farther away from your windows or move them closer to your windows. The idea here is that you'll disrupt the birds' usual flight path to and from the feeders. Moving the feeders closer to the windows can sometimes help because birds startled off the feeders by a hawk don't build up enough speed to hurt themselves, and being closer to the window, the birds might be able to see that it is not an effective escape route. Remember that moving the feeders will do nothing to prevent non-feeder birds, such as migrant thrushes and warblers, from hitting the glass. So here are some more general suggestions.

9. Branches. Breaking up the reflective ability of a large expanse of glass is key to making it less deadly. A natural way to do this is to suspend tree branches in front of the most-struck windows. Try to do this in a way that will give good coverage to the pane of glass but will not eliminate your view entirely.

8. Plastic food wrap. Another method for breaking up the reflection of glass is to stick large sheets of food wrap across the middle of your windows. Saran wrap and its cousin products can serve this purpose. If you have trouble getting the wrap to stick, spray a light coating of vegetable oil or water on the window before laying down the wrap. The wrap's surface does not reflect the surroundings as the glass does.

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7. Spray-on fake snow/vegetable oil. If you can stand it, a light coating of either of these two products will “deaden” a window’s reflective ability. Just don’t overdo the fake snow or you’ll be dreaming of a white Christmas and not be able to see anything out your window.

6. Commercial stickers. There are a few products available commercially that are designed to reduce or prevent window strikes. One of these is a static-adhering sticker that looks like a spider web; others are various designs meant to scare birds away with predator faces or with bright metallic reflective surfaces.

5. Mylar balloon/Mylar tubes. If you are willing to shell out \$6.99 for a balloon at your local grocery store, make sure you get one of the long-lasting metallic-looking Mylar balloons (often featuring innocuous messages such as “It’s A Boy!” or a well-known cartoon character). These shiny balloons will flap around in the breeze and spook birds from coming too close to your windows. A variation on the theme was published in Bird Watcher’s Digest’s November/December 1999 issue. The author suggested wrapping strips of bright Mylar around cardboard tubes (from paper towel rolls) and suspending these wrapped tubes from strings in front of your problem windows.

4. Hawk/owl/crow silhouettes. The black vinyl flying accipiter silhouettes were the conventional solution for window strikes in the 1970s and many are still in use today. I have also seen owl and crow silhouettes used for the same purpose. The idea is that these shapes of “dangerous” birds are scary enough to prevent small birds from flying toward them, but their effectiveness is debatable. In certain situations they seem to work, at least for a time. The question is, do the birds get used to them and ignore them? If you can’t find these at your local bird store, trace the outline of a hawk, crow, or owl from a picture, enlarge it on a copier, cut it out and trace it onto black paper or vinyl, and stick them onto your windows.

3. Plastic strips/pie pans/ Christmas decorations/ CDs. Another method of scaring birds away from windows is to use something unusual suspended in front of the glass.

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2. Screens or netting on the outside. The old standby solution to window strikes is to stretch some mesh netting (also known as fruit netting or crop netting) across your problem windows. This can take a bit of work, and it doesn't look great, but the benefit is that it is 100 percent effective in preventing birds from hitting your windows. Some bird watchers will tie short pieces of white flagging, rags, or yarn to the netting to alert birds to its presence. An alternative is to get some old window screens (old storm window screens or screen doors work well) and suspend them in front of the windows birds are hitting regularly.

1. Feather Guard. Perhaps my favorite reader tip of all time was featured as a "My Way" in the September/October 2001 issue of Bird Watcher's Digest. The idea is called FeatherGuard. BWD reader Stiles Thomas of New Jersey created FeatherGuard. His creation consists of bird feathers strung about 8 inches apart on fishing line. These lines of feathers are then strung vertically across regularly struck windows. Birds see the feathers and do not continue to fly into the windows. Do the birds see the feathers as evidence of predation? Do the moving feathers frighten the birds? Nobody knows for sure, but I know from experience that FeatherGuard works! **Buy yourself a FeatherGuard and see how it works for you.**

Learn And Enjoy With A Nest Box Bird Cam

By: Duane Rice, Member Cornell University Bluebird List

Chapmansboro, TN

One of things I have most recently learned, thanks to my nest cam, is how little time the female actually sits in the nest on the eggs. Not including through the night, I timed one female, to see how long she sat, and how long she stayed gone, one afternoon.

Needless to say, there are variables that may or may not apply.

I'm only talking about one particular bird on one particular afternoon.

I was prompted to do this, because I (like you), was concerned that she wasn't spending enough time incubating. Her mate, (whom I dubbed "DbD", for Deadbeat Dad), has been reflection obsessed since he's been around. In fact, I found it surprising, he even left his reflection alone long enough to mate with "Lady Blue". But apparently, she was able to get his attention enough, because she laid four eggs in the box outside my kitchen window, where I had installed my first nest cam, after their first brood fledged. Enough of that, let's get to what I learned.

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It was a hot day, with temps in the upper eighties, mostly sunny, with a slight breeze. She would stay in the box for approximately eight to eleven minutes, leave for about fifteen, then return again to "dance" on the eggs.

I say dance, but what she was doing was turning the eggs with her feet and her beak to regulate their temperature, and making sure each one received the proper amount of attention, so that each stood an equal chance at hatching.

She was never vocal, which I thought was smart, so as not to attract attention to her presence.

She seemed to doze lightly, but would become immediately alert at the slightest provocation.

I never heard or observed DbD come to the box to feed her at all. Hence, he earned his nickname.

I thought his absence was the reason she was leaving so frequently, for what seemed like an eternity to me. I thought there was no way the eggs would hatch on time, if at all, and certainly not all of them. WRONG!

On the morning of day fourteen, I turned on Bluebird TV, and miracle of miracles, four squiggly naked hatchlings lay sleeping side by side!

The next thing I knew, DbD came to the box, chortled "Good Morning!" and off he went in search of food for his little babies.

Since then, everything has been textbook. Both parents come and go frequently. Both have been very vocal since the chicks hatched.

So you see, my concern, was not warranted.

Like you, I even thought something tragic had happened to the ever absent male. However, I felt sure that even if he had been killed, she would probably raise the chicks alone.

I can't say enough about how much I have enjoyed and learned from having the nest cam.

Even my wife, who is only a birder by tolerating my obsession, has become hooked.

The chicks will be one week old tomorrow, and I'm already feeling a little sad about fledge day.

As all of us "experts" know, the more we learn, the less we think we know.

DIRECTIONS TO LSU MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCE

From I-10

- 1. Exit Dalrymple Drive**
- 2. Turn right onto Dalrymple Drive**
- 3. Follow street through 3 stop lights (if you are east bound on I-10) or 4 stop lights if you are west bound on I-10)**
- 4. The last stop light is Highland Road. You are on campus. To get a parking tag, stop at the Visitor's Information Office on the corner of Highland and Dalrymple across from Highland Parade Grounds.**
- 5. On to the Museum: Continue down Dalrymple past the parade Grounds and Tower Drive (on left). Pass Infirmary Road.**
- 6. You will see a row of pine trees on the left side of Dalrymple. A sign for the Greek Theater and the top row of seats are visible to the right. A circular drive drops from behind the pine trees.**
- 7. You may park anywhere along the street, but you must have a parking tag.**
- 8. You are now behind Foster Hall. Walk up the steps at either end of the building and around to the front of building. The Museum entrance is in the middle of Foster Hall on the main level, facing the courtyard.**

**LOUISIANA BAYOU BLUEBIRDSOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM
P.O. Box 983
Delhi, LA 71232**

NAME: _____
 ADDRESS: _____
 CITY: _____
 STATE & Z IP: _____
 E-MAIL & TELEPHONE: _____
 New Membership Renewal

<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$ 7.50
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$ 15.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime	\$250.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Organization	\$ 25.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Small Business	\$ 25.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporation	\$100.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Donation	\$ _____

To save money, receipts are not issued unless specified. Your cancelled check will be your receipt. LBBS is recognized as a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization and contributions are tax deductible as allowed by law.



Louisiana Bayou Bluebird Society
 P.O. Box 983
 Delhi, LA 71232



Affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society