

Do You Live Near a Golf Course?

By Kent Hall

The BRAW Board has set the goal of 30,000 fledged bluebirds reported from its members by the 2011 season (Operation Top State). After this season, one can see (Hall: The Perfect Storm) that there are real challenges to doing this.

But the OTS goal for 2011 will become more achievable if we add new trails to our BRAW bluebird system. In the 2009 season, it is expected that the efforts I directed this fall and next spring and which were/will be supported by countless monitors throughout WI, will add or upgrade trails with nearly 1000 nest boxes (also 858 in '07 & 732 in '08). This is the approach needed to achieve our 30,000 goal for 2011!

One of the quickest ways to increase bluebird numbers in the state is to develop trails on golf courses. These trails can be put in quickly, monitored quickly and easily, and production on the average golf course is also above that of the state average (studies have shown pesticide use on golf courses do not interfere with the health/ reproduction in bluebirds).

This fall we have helped develop new nest box trails at 11 golf courses:

- Sandalwood CC (Oconto Co.);
- Lake Breeze GC (Winnebago Co.);
- Hawthorne Hills GC (Ozaukee Co.); Edgewood & Morning Star
- GC's (Waukesha Co.), Bristol Oaks
- & South Hills GC's (Kenosha Co.);
- Krueger-Haskill GC (Rock Co.); and
- Coachman's (installed by Pat Ready),
- Door Creek (spring installation) & Sun
- Prairie GC's (Dane Co.).

My goal is to put in 20 new 25-30 nest box trails on golf courses for the 2010 season. We already have permission to put in trails at Crystal Springs Golf Course at Seymour and the Thornberry Creek Golf Course in Oneida Co., but we have no monitors for these trails. If anyone lives near these courses and might be interested in monitoring a trail there, please contact me.

If you have a golf course near you that I have not mentioned and you can spend 2-3 hours/week (mid-April to mid-August) monitoring a trail there, contact me and we will discuss details. If, after our discussion, you still seem interested in monitoring a trail there, I will then contact the Superintendent to get permission to put in the trail. If permission is granted, I will ask you to help me put in the trail at the earliest possible time. Put simply, we need more monitors for more nest boxes. Anyone currently monitoring nest boxes can also expand their trails as an option (BRAW can help with funding). Or, if you are not currently a monitor and would like to consider developing your own trail, I can help you do that and BRAW can partially or completely fund the trail, depending on circumstances. Contact me to discuss these options.

Above all, the conservation of bluebirds and other cavity nesting songbirds depends on the motivation of concerned citizens. Won't you consider beginning or expanding your conservation efforts to benefit these special birds?

If you are not currently monitoring nest boxes, consider developing a trail for the '09 or '10 season. A golf course trail is an ideal type to begin with, but if you are not near a golf course, I can usually help you locate habitat near your home that will successfully rear bluebirds. If interested, contact me at: kentsue@charter.net , (715) 344-8081 or 200 Pine Bluff Rd., Stevens Point 54481