

## BIOCORE BLUEBIRD TRAIL — REVIEW FOR MONITORS

### Checklist

- Use the checklist provided to track weekly activity. Download the it from the website at <https://www.friendslakeshorepreserve.com/bluebird20.html>
- Report weekly results to Gisela for online posting (send photo of your checklist)
- Example of completed checklist

Box	Species	Nest	Eggs	Nestling	Fledged	Comments
BB2	-					Empty
BB7	-					empty
BB8		Y				PARTIAL GRASS
BB12 Hill	TS	Y	2			
BB13	BB	Y	4			
BB14	-					Empty
BB15	-					Empty
BB16	TS	Y				
BB Total			4			
TS total	2		2			
HW Total	-					

### Target Species for the project

- All native songbird species are protected along with their active nests, eggs, and young.
- The BRAW guidelines, with Preserve protocol observed, indicate what is permitted.
- The boxes are designed to benefit breeding success of Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, House Wrens, and Black-capped Chickadees. All need our help, even though Bluebirds are our major goal.
- Box location and surrounding habitat are the primary ways the project focuses on Bluebirds.
  - Any location and habitat can sometimes attract any of the target native species. That's OK.
  - Box locations are adjusted from time to time to help improve Bluebird success.
- Non-native House Sparrow nests, eggs, and young can be removed and disposed at any stage.

### Monitoring kits to have along

- The BRAW manual is a great resource for info and pictures to help ID birds, nests, eggs, young.
- Checklist form to enter weekly data, and the trail map if not familiar with box locations.
- A copy of the prior week monitoring form, or a look at website to help interpret progress you see.
- Screwdriver or small wrench (if boxes use a screw or if a nail is too tight to remove by hand).
- Small scraper and plastic bag (to clean out boxes, for example, after removing HS nest).
- Phone to take photo of nest, or dental mirror (another way to peek without disturbing birds).

## **Weekly monitoring**

- Weekly monitoring days are chosen to ensure fairly consistent records on a weekly basis.
- If you will be unable to monitor for a planned week, contact a substitute monitor from the list and arrange for backup.
- You have the option to invite another monitor, and to show others what you are doing, as education
  - Observers other than co-monitors should be asked to stay back unless invited to peek.
- Listen and observe before approaching each box. What birds are nearby? On the box? Record these.
- Flush any adult birds before opening the box (clap on approach, tap back of the box).
- Open box carefully to avoid accidental spill of an egg or chick. Keep screw or nail in safe place.
- Determine nest type (see pics in BRAW manual) and whether there is a formed cup. Note on checklist.
- Remove nest, if House Sparrow, and clean out box. Bag in plastic bag to dispose away from the area.
  - With weekly monitoring this is normally just nests, but remove at any stage.
- It is OK to remove a native species nest if unused (dummy nest) or no cup for several weeks.
  - House Wrens often build dummy nests (box is full of sticks). They can be removed the first week if there is no cup, per BRAW instructions.
  - Removing a nest that is unused for several weeks helps successful use by another bird.
  - Contact the primary monitor who knows the situation best, if you have any questions.
- If box shows signs of predation, a wet nest, parasites, etc., contact the primary monitor
  - The Preserve protocol precludes any handling of birds by monitors.
- Count any eggs you can see and note type (see pics in BRAW manual, take photo)
- Count any chicks you can see and note type.
- If you have any questions, take a photo to help document the data and follow up.
- From reviewing the prior week record (on the website), note if any chicks have fledged.
- If all chicks have fledged, based on prior week report, remove the nest and clean out the box.
  - We assume fledged, if chick is gone from the box, unless signs of predation are noted.
- Close the box securely with the fastening screw or nail latch.
- Make sure the box is oriented toward sun and away from prevailing winds (point toward southeast).
  - If necessary, correct box orientation and tighten the pole strap screws
- If maintenance is needed, make a note on the form and contact primary monitor.
- On to the next box!

## **Reporting**

- Send a digital photo of your weekly monitoring sheet and any photo of nests and birds to Gisela.
- She will post the weekly data on the Friends Bluebird monitoring website.
- At the end of each season (usually April 1 to September. 1), the data is totaled for each species and reported to BRAW and to the Preserve (Laura Wyatt) by the primary monitor.

**Thank you!!**

**Thank you for being a Biocore Bluebird Trail Monitor for the Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve!**