



High School Students Involved in Bluebird Project

Dr. Kent Hall from UWSP, coordinator of data collection for the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin (BRAW, Inc.) project, came to Lincoln High School this year to help educate our students and assist in the installation of bluebird nesting boxes, which he supplied.

To give a little background, in the late 70's and early 80's the Eastern Bluebird was disappearing throughout its range east of the Rocky Mountains, including from Wisconsin. In an effort to reverse this trend, the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin was started in 1986. This organization grew to about 800 members, and they monitor 9,500 nest boxes each year.

In the past 11 years, Wisconsin set four national records for production, with the top production year in 2012 with 35,000 birds. The Eastern Bluebird is now in the best population condition it has been in for the past 50 years. In fact, the recovery of the Eastern Bluebird is the most successful recovery of a songbird in Wisconsin conservation history. This is an example of how a species can recover, if people put their concerns into action.

In 2002, Dr. Hall began a bluebird trail funded by the Aldo Leopold Audubon Society in Stevens Point. First starting with 89 boxes, only 188 bluebirds were produced. When compared to 2015, a total of 1,425 nest boxes have been placed, producing 6,453 bluebirds. In the 14 years that a bluebird trail has been in existence, a total of 68,102 songbirds have been produced of which 52,010 were Eastern Bluebirds.

The students in teacher Jeremy Radtke's agriculture class have placed eight nest boxes in the woods east of Lincoln High School. They now become part of the largest and most productive bluebird trail in Wisconsin (6 years) and North America (3 years). They join the trails of elementary students in Stevens Point (Madison, McKinley, and Roosevelt), Wisconsin Rapids (Washington), Nekoosa, and Port Edwards.

Although the 2016 season is late, it is still possible that the eight nest boxes on the Lincoln High School property will attract one or more species from this group: Eastern Bluebird, Tree Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee and House Wren. This was a great learning experience for our students, allowing them the opportunity to be involved in preserving such a beautiful songbird!

