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design for 2022 Staff Report

luebirds suffered a tough year in 2021. An unseasonably cold winter storm across Texas in February destroyed food sources and likely killed thousands of the native thrushes wintering in the region. When spring arrived across the northern United States, many people who maintain nest box trails noticed bluebird activity in their yards and around nesting boxes down as much as 50%.

Bluebird associations across the country reported fewer birds this year, so 2022 might be an even more important spring to maintain healthy bluebird trails. There are three bluebird species, all found in North America: eastern, western and mountain. The eastern occurs in the Great Lakes region.

Discombobulated weather trends aside, two other problems facing these beautiful little cavity nesters remain. First, a sharp decrease in the number of available nesting sites, partially because civilization dislikes and chops down dead trees and snags that contain natural cavities. And second, two invasive birds that are rougher and tougher than bluebirds and take over natural sites and bird houses: starlings and house sparrows.

The Bluebird Recovery Program has thousands of members across the United States and Canada who monitor bluebird opulations and establish "bluebird trails," which consist of many properly spaced bluebird houses. These trails typically fledge thousands of young bluebirds every year.

In the past, Outdoor News has printed plans for the Petersen nesting box, and while it remains a viable option, bluebird advocates increasingly are recommending the design shown to the right: the Gilbertson PVC box. The lightweight design of its PVC construction works better on skinny, more predator-proof rebar poles.

Seasoned nesting trail hobbyists also believe the design is less likely to prematurely fledge young birds.

Bluebird houses also attract tree swallows, house wrens, a few chickadees and white-breasted nuthatches, plus starlings and house sparrows.

the young and adults, and often bury their victims beneath their own nests.

Gilbertson PVC Bluebird Nest Box

protected by law, so anyone can destroy their nests if they try to take over a box, and shoot the

mounting them, visit the Bluebird Recovery Project Facebook page or www.bbrp.org/

23/32" hole x 13/4" deep through

wood block, center as shown,

Material List for Roof

1 - 8 ½" x 7 ¼" x ¾"

approximately 4" diameter is to

dark brown water base stain

slip fit inside PVC body, paint with

Drip line grooves 1/8" deep, 5/8" do not penetrate roof (pole cedar or PVC (PVC is in from edge, three sides conduit attachment) recommended) PVC Roof house trim works well Body of screws 41/3" apart, K-Lathe (roof) Assembly 1 - 1 ½" x 1 ¾" x 7 ¼" Screws #8 X 1", position so that PVC box Cedar or other wood (a is centered side to 2X 4 cut in half works side on roof, screw in well), paint if not cedar screws until head is (wood block) 71/4" 2 – K-Lathe screws #8 3/4" above surface X1" (for PVC nest body attachment) 2 - Coated deck screws #8 x 11/2" (attach roof to Drip line wood block) 13/4" groove 1/8" 1 – Self-tapping sheet deep, 5" metal screw #8 x 3/4" (for diameter cirpole attachment) cle, position 1 - Small amount of to center exterior glue (roof to on K-Lathe wood block) screws, circle 1 - Pole assembly Wood 1 ½" X 1 will end up 34" by 714" long outside PVC (wood block) body 81/2" #8 X 3/4" self-tapping sheet metal screw, installed when **Nest Box Body** attaching conduit, into conduit White 4" PVC thin wall sewer Attach roof to wood block using pipe, prefer white exterior glue and two #8 X 11/2" for birch tree bark Roof - 34" PVC coated deck screws installed from the design (recommended) or topside, drill pilot holes cedar - 81/2" X 71/4" 1%16" diameter **Nest Box Body** hole (entrance hole) (11/8" diam-Slot for screw eter for chickadee head engagebox) ment to attach to roof, two, one each side Scratch marks 3/8" long 3/8" 1/2 Thinwall conduit inside & outside, from top "Slicken" the Carnauba-type extend about 21/2" auto paste wax will conduit by from hole down improve predator rubbing with for birds to grip protection Paint inside coarse steel wool with a dark brown exterior Recess floor 1/4" water base stain, from bottom, glue 61/2 same stain can and nail (3) in be used on the place, caulk under outside for a side of floor to birch tree bark seal Three nails equally design spaced to hold floor, Floor drain hole drill hole for nails in case of water, Material List for Nest Box Body through PVC ½ concrete 1 – 4" thin wall PVC sewer pipe 8" long (prefer white for birch pattern) normally left reinforcing Material spec. ASTM2729 PVC (body) from drill on rod driven 2 hole saw 1 – ¾" thick X approx. 4" diameter non-treated wood (floor) feet into the 3 - Small tack nails to attach floor (about ½" long) ground 1 – Small amount of exterior glue to attach floor Floor is 3/4" non-treated wood, 1 – Small amount of dark brown exterior caulk to seal edge of floor

1 - Small amount of dark brown exterior water base stain for inside body

and if desired exterior birch bark pattern