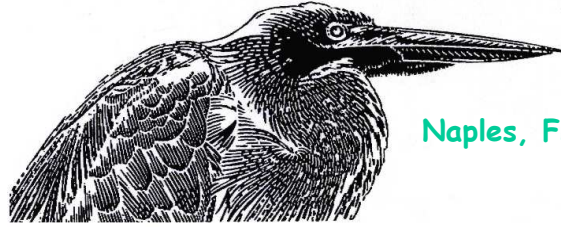


Audubon Young Birders Club



Naples, FL

Audubon Young Birders Club's **Bluebird Rescue Team**

The Bluebird Rescue Team is a non-profit, education, conservation, and research outreach program of the Collier County Audubon Young Birders Club that promotes the recovery of bluebirds and other native cavity nesting bird species in Collier County. We welcome your interest and participation!

Collier County has a small resident population of Eastern Bluebirds that is under stress from competition by exotic species such as the European Starling and House Sparrow. We humans can help the recovery of this lovely bird, as others have done in their own communities across the nation, by starting a bluebird trail.

The Bluebird Rescue Team is a wonderful way to connect your class or group with nature while helping one of our most charming native birds. Bluebird trails are simply a series of nest boxes set up in appropriate habitats and monitored on a regular basis (2-3 times per week during nesting season, once per week other times) to collect data and help protect the birds from other aggressive species or predators. Over the past 30 years, bluebird trails have greatly helped the recovery of Eastern Bluebird and Mountain Bluebird populations in the US.

Bluebird trails represent a commitment specifically to bluebirds; it is of utmost importance that the boxes not be allowed to be taken over by exotic species such as starlings or house sparrows. Other desirable species such as wrens may try to utilize the boxes and should be allowed to do so.

If you decide to form your own Bluebird Rescue Team, AYBC will assist you with setting up the program by providing nest boxes, monitoring instructions, site selection for nest boxes, an introductory presentation to your group, and act as a resource should you have questions or problems arise. At the end of the year we ask that you share your data with us so we can monitor the health of bluebird populations across the County.

Getting Started:

1. Contact the Audubon Young Birders Club at Collier County Audubon Society to let us know you are interested: 643-7822 or lbeall@collieraudubon.org
2. Provide a description of the group who will be participating and the leader's name and contact information.
3. Let us know where you would like to set up your bluebird trail; we will help you determine if the habitat is suitable or help you locate one.

Setting Up the Bluebird Rescue Team:

1. AYBC will provide bluebird nest box materials which can be pre-assembled for you, or put together by your group (we use screws for fastening so no hammers are needed). This is a great way to engage your kids in the project. We recommend the assembly of the nest boxes be an activity that is part of the introductory presentation.

Setting Up the Bluebird Rescue Team (cont'd):

2. One of our representatives will present the Bluebird Rescue Team project to your group, explaining basic facts about bluebirds: what they look like, what they eat, the sound of their calls, their preferred habitat, problem predators, etc. and how they will be assisting the species.
3. We will work with you to determine good locations for installing the nest boxes and provide mounting instructions.

Monitoring the Bluebird Trail:

1. Explain to your group that the nest boxes must be monitored PROPERLY. It is vital that the responsible adult be present whenever nest boxes are opened to prevent injury to the birds or to the kids (if startled birds fly out, or fledglings fall from nest, etc). Kids should NOT monitor boxes on their own and should protect the boxes from disturbance by other curious kids.
2. AYBC will provide instructions on proper procedures for monitoring boxes, and a sheet for noting your observations.
3. AYBC will also provide support information as needed on food sources, how to thwart would-be usurpers, predators and parasites, how to tell a bluebird nest from another bird's nest or eggs, etc.
4. Enjoy the outdoors and the other creatures in it! Be patient, it may take some time for the birds to find your boxes. When bluebirds are not around, there are always other interesting birds and creatures doing fascinating things, if we take the time to look.

Audubon Young Birders Club
1020 8th Ave. South, Ste. 2
Naples, FL 34102
Phone(239)643-7822
www.collieraudubon.org