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AN INNOVATIVE AND ELEGANTLY SIMPLE WAY TO DO SOMETHING FOR BLUEBIRDS (AND TAKE LITTLE TIME AWAY FROM TRANSPORTATION MAINTENANCE DUTIES)

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Abstract

Bluebird boxes were attached to the back of small road signs and are maintained by the maintenance sign crew with minimal time away from their primary duties. Because locations were chosen where bluebirds had already been seen, success has been 100% since the project started in 2001. In 2002, 120 bluebirds were fledged and approximately 120 tree swallows as well. So far in 2003 there have been 30 pair of nesting bluebirds. We have had more problems this year with English sparrows killing bluebird chicks. Last year two boxes suffered from raccoon predation but that has not been repeated since the sign poles were greased.

Costs were for materials only, boxes were built by the winter night crews when they were not plowing.



Biographical sketch: Jim Wicks has worked for the NYSDOT for 33 years and has been interested in bluebirds for 20 years, joining the National Blue Bird Society about 12 years ago.

Amy Kahn has been with NYSDOT for 6 years and has worked as an ecologist for 22 years. She has a Masters in Environmental and Forest Biology from SUNY CESF and has birded for most of her life.