



Virginia Bluebird Society

726 William Street
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22401

Mailbox Perils for Bluebirds

Many of the mailboxes in our suburbs have an additional paper box underneath the mailbox. Some of you still get the newspaper delivered every day, but if you have gone digital, then this box often becomes a place for someone to stuff flyers and junk mail. Unfortunately, this paper box is also attractive to native cavity nesting birds, especially bluebirds.

The best way to help the bluebirds is to prevent them from nesting in your paper box in the first place. If you are receiving a physical newspaper every day, you will usually not have the bluebirds nesting because the paper comes every day, and you can continue to remove any nests that they start.

If you do not get the newspaper, the paper box can go for weeks without you checking, and that can be a problem for the bluebirds. If the bluebird does build a nest in the paper box, many things can happen and most of them are not good. The eggs or chicks could be pushed out on to the ground. If too many papers are shoved into the box, the eggs or chicks can be crushed. Too many flyers pushed into the box can prevent the parents from getting to the chicks to feed them. . Black snakes, cats, squirrels, and other critters can reach the nest, and eat the eggs or chicks.

The Virginia Bluebird Society recommends that you pre-stuff most of your paper box with newspaper. That way, the bluebirds cannot nest in the box, and set themselves up for failure. An added bonus – it keeps the junk mail out of the paper box. If you do have bluebirds trying to nest in your paper box, you might consider installing a nest box in your yard as an alternative for them. The best time to install a nest box is early fall. We have plans on our website to show how to properly build and install predator guards.

We encourage anyone who has an interest in bluebirds to check out our website at <http://www.virginiabluebirds.org> for more information how to install a nest box in your own yard and ensure that you do it properly. There is also a link on our website of a short tutorial that gives a lot more info on being a proper bluebird landlord. If you would like more information, you can also contact your local VBS county coordinator that is listed on our website.