

## Zeppick Nest Box Installation

2-11-15

### Choose Your Site

1. Install nest box in area that is kept mowed (i.e. short grass habitat). A solitary tree nearby will become a sentry post and will allow the male Eastern Bluebird to perch and protect his female and young.
2. Make sure site is at least 7 feet from fence posts or tree trunks so a squirrel cannot jump to nest box. Make sure any tree branches above nest box are at least 9 feet above top of nest box so squirrel cannot drop onto box.
3. Heavily wooded, brushy or wood-edge areas should be avoided to eliminate competition with House Wrens. Nest box site should be at least 40 yards from such areas.
4. Site nest box as far from human structures and evergreen trees as possible. Both of these areas are highly attractive to House Sparrows, a non-native aggressive competitor.

### Install Your Nest Box

NEVER mount a nest box on a tree. Pole and baffle system are important to keep climbing predators out of the nest box. Pole and baffle systems can be purchased at Wild Birds Unlimited or you can do it yourself.

Here are instructions and materials needed to mount your nest box yourself. You will need:

- 1" diameter x 10' length EMT galvanized steel pipe
- 4" diameter x 10' length Thin wall PVC pipe
- 4" diameter PVC cap for 4" PVC pipe
- conduit hanger or hose clamp for 1" pipe
- #8 x 3/4" sheet metal screws
- 1/4" x 2-1/2" stainless or galvanized steel carriage bolt
- 1/4" stainless or galvanized steel nut
- metal washers
- 14 – 16 gage wire or zip tie
- 1-1/4" hole saw for drill
- 1" diameter cap for top of pole
- Tools Needed: Power drill; Pole pounder; Hacksaw

1. Use hacksaw to cut 1" diameter steel pipe to a length of 8'.
2. Drill 9/32" hole one inch from top of pipe. This hole is for carriage bolt to slip through for nest box installation. Don't install box yet.
3. Use pole pounder to drive pole about 2 feet into the ground. You want final height of nest box to be at eye level for ease of monitoring.
4. Use hacksaw to cut 4" diameter PVC pipe into four 30 inch lengths. One 10' section of PVC pipe can be used to make four predator baffles. Only one baffle is needed per nest box.
5. Use 1-1/4" hole saw to cut a hole in center of 4" PVC cap.
6. Attach PVC cap to one end of PVC pipe, using four #8 x 3/4" sheet metal screws. Do NOT use glue. It does not work well (cap comes loose).
7. Install conduit hanger or hose clamp on steel pipe. Hold up nest box to see where it will sit on the pole. Install clamp a couple inches just below bottom of box.
8. Slide baffle over pole. It will sit on conduit hanger (or clamp) and should wobble freely. If fit is too tight, sand or drill away a little more material from the PVC cap.
9. Install nest box by slipping carriage bolt and washers through hole in top of nest box and the metal pole. Tighten with nut. Try to face entry hole south to southeast (out of prevailing winds). If you need to turn pole in ground, a pipe wrench tightened near base of mount pole can be used to turn pipe to proper direction.
10. Drill two holes in base of box for wire or zip tie to secure bottom of box to pole.
11. Cap top of pole to keep rainwater from entering which will cause freezing/cracking of pole.

If you want to paint baffle, lightly sand and use a high gloss paint (slick surface to keep predators from gaining access). Forest green or black are attractive colors. If you want to paint nest box, use a light color such as an earth tone tan exterior acrylic latex paint. Never paint the inside of the nest box.

QUESTIONS? Please Contact:

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- 1) Point small hole in pipe in southeast direction.  
Pound 1" EMT conduit pipe 2 - 2.5 ft into the ground.

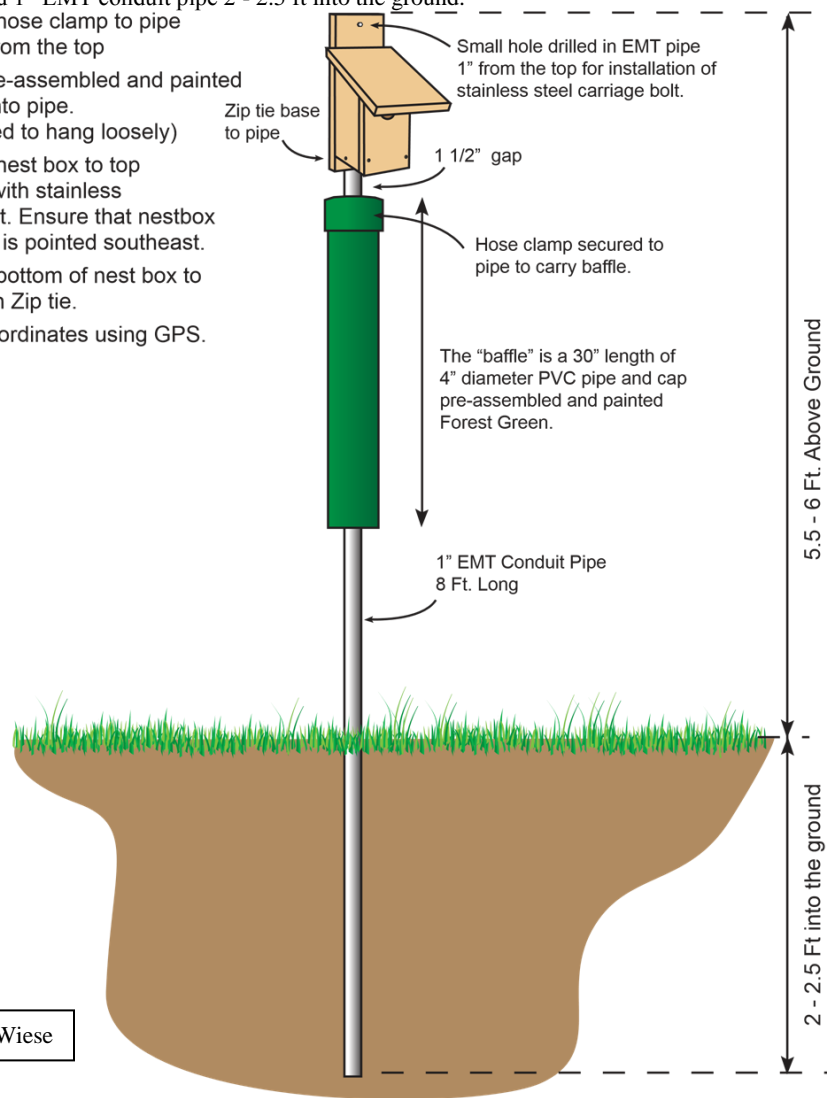
- 2) Secure hose clamp to pipe  
16.75" from the top

- 3) Slide pre-assembled and painted  
baffle onto pipe.  
(designed to hang loosely)

- 4) Secure nest box to top  
of pipe with stainless  
steel bolt. Ensure that nestbox  
opening is pointed southeast.

- 5) Secure bottom of nest box to  
pipe with Zip tie.

- 6) Mark coordinates using GPS.



### Multiple Nest Boxes

1. If you are installing more than one nest box on your property for Eastern Bluebirds, space boxes at least 100 yards apart.
2. If pairing nest boxes for Eastern Bluebirds and Tree Swallows, space them as close as 5 feet and as far as 5 yards apart.

### Monitoring Nest Box

1. It is important to quickly assess the progress of nesting birds by monitoring every 3 to 7 days. Quick, responsible nest checks will not cause the birds to abandon their nest. Try to monitor in the middle of the day and avoid opening box during heavy winds, cold, rain, or at dusk.
2. Do NOT allow non-native House Sparrows to use nest boxes. These competitive aggressive birds will probably be your worst challenge when trying to attract native cavity nesting birds. For more information on how to control them, please go to: <http://www.sialis.org/> Contact us if you need further help.
3. A trail data sheet is enclosed to help you gather data during your weekly nest checks.
4. Consider becoming a citizen scientist and enter your data online via Cornell Lab of Ornithology's NestWatch. As NestWatch chapter coordinators, we can help you with that too. This service is free and a great resource for research scientists and YOU: <http://nestwatch.org/>