Monitoring Your Bluebird Box

Nesting begins in early March and ends in August and you should monitor weekly.   
  
Do not monitor in cold, wet, windy conditions   
  
Observe box for mother to leave before opening. Talk as you approach the box and/or gently tap the side of the box, and slowly open. If mother does not leave the nest, close the door and check again next week.   
  
Minimize the amount of time the box is open (should be less than 1 minute)

Spreadsheet Design

On that spreadsheet I have put in enough lines for 20 boxes and have included second and third nesting lines for each box, whether or not you need them. So the only thing you have to do is record the numbers as listed below and the computer will automatically add the numbers for you in the totals columns.

**Word of Caution:** The horizontal and vertical **total columns** have zeros (0) in them. This means they have formulas in them that automatically add the numbers as you type them in. **Never put any numbers in those total spaces**. If you change or delete a number in one of those columns, you delete the formula and it will no longer add up the numbers for you.

**Recording the data on your spreadsheet**

**(There is a legend at the bottom of the spreadsheet that explains the symbols.)**

In the nest column, indicate whether the box is empty or has a partial **P,** complete **C,** or occupied **O (**occupied with eggs or chicks) nest.   
**(Nest building takes 4 days to two weeks)**   
  
Record the number of eggs and/or chicks & indicate the species with an X under bluebird, Carolina chickadee, titmouse, other). Once the chicks have fledged, change the X under species to the actual number of chicks that fledged in that box.   
**(Bluebirds lay one egg a day until they have 3 – 5 and then begin incubating).**   
  
Once the first egg is laid, sprinkle ant bait such as Spectracide at base of wooden or metal post and repeat weekly until chicks fledge (this protects the chicks from fire ants)  
**(Chicks hatch in 12 – 14 days)**  
Observe chicks for vigor, parasite, injuries.

**(make notation in comment section)**  
**Do not inspect box if chicks are more than 12 days old** (they will try to jump out of the   
box when you open the door and you will never catch them)   
**(Chicks fledge after 17 – 21 days)**   
  
**Your spreadsheet will automatically record the number of fledglings and species**.   
  
Clean out empty nests after birds fledge. Discard **away from nest box** to keep predators   
away.   
**(Bluebirds build a new nest for each brood and may have 3 broods per season).**