

Up, up, and away—foiling predators by putting boxes out of reach

CHANCE'S ELEVATOR POLE WITH STANDARD NESTBOX

modified by H. Graham

Bill of Material:

- 1 ea 5' section 1/2" EMT (conduit) pipe
- 1 ea 4 1/2' section 3/4" EMT pipe
- 1 ea 16d nail (locking device)
- 1 ea standard side-opening nestbox (NABS after Zeleny) with back extension removed
- 2 ea 2 1/2" x 1/4" carriage bolts with nuts & washers
- 2 ea 12" pieces of black tie wire (baling wire)

Instructions:

1. Affix 1/2" pipe to back of nestbox with the 2 carriage bolts (pre-drill 1/4" holes in pipe and box)
2. With 1/2" pipe inserted about 2 3/4" into 3/4" pipe, drill holes through both pipes with 3/8" bit
3. Firmly attach 3/4" pipe to fencepost (wooden or studded-T) with wire
4. Orient holes in proper direction (away from prevailing storms)
5. Lock two pipes together with 16d nail - *COUNTER PIN IS BETTER*
6. Mark pipes with marking pen to easily locate matching holes

To Operate:

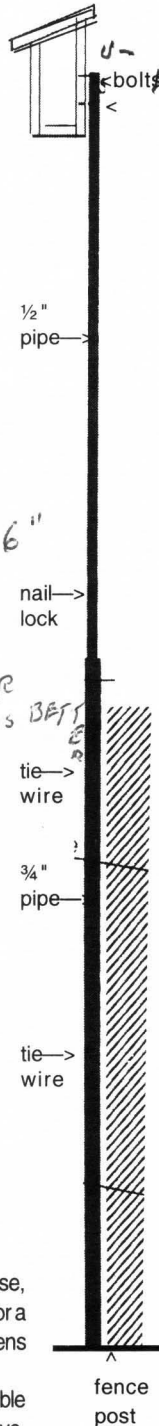
1. Remove locking nail
2. Slide upper pipe down into lower pipe
3. Open side-opening box, inspect nest, eggs, and chicks
4. Close box; record observations
5. Raise upper pipe and box until marks are visible
6. Lock pipes in place with nail

Comments:

Few cavity-nesters are bothered by the raising and lowering. Bluebird, titmouse, and swallow hens take the ride up and down, often after being lifted off the eggs for a count or even after being banded and replaced on the clutch. Flycatchers and wrens usually leave the nest as it is approached in any case.

The advantage of this system is to gain the height above predators and still be able to easily monitor. Therefore the side-opening box is preferred because it will be at eye-level when lowered. A top-opening box is normally too high for this application.

Owing to the support of the lower pipe and the "splice" in the middle, the 1/2" pipe is quite sturdy. Several have survived 90mph winds in exposed places. While raccoons are known to climb 3/4" poles, the 1/2" pipe, when graphited, presents a formidable obstacle.



out of reach

Since he first began in Orange Co in 1984, the single most important innovation **Dick Purvis** adopted was the hanging box.

Rather than attach boxes to tree trunks where they not only attract predators but also vandals in the many parks and golf courses of his populous area, Dick hangs the boxes high up on a tree limb.

It takes the device shown below—a box lifter which is just a slightly larger box on swivels in a slingshot shaped holder. The nestbox stays upright as it is hoisted up into the tree.

It's especially useful in public locations and the boxes experience few losses. The idea has spread to the also populous Bay Area where **Howard Rathlesberger** and his many trail coordinators use the same system in San Mateo Co.

Even in more rural areas they're found useful. After experiencing devastating losses to raccoons, **Hatch Graham** in Amador converted his 70-box trail to 50 elevator poles (see left) and 20 tree-hanging boxes. The only losses he's had have been from whip-snakes—not a problem in the cities.

PURVIS'S HANGING NESTBOX & BOX LIFTER

