

The Gilbertson Conduit/Rebar Nest Box Post

Steve Gilbertson, Andover, Minnesota, inventor

Drawing and text by Don Bragg, Rhinelander

The Gilbertson conduit/rebar nest box post is an economical and highly protective system for easy nest box placement.

A five-foot length of 1/2-inch concrete reinforcing rod (called "rebar") is driven approximately 2 feet into the ground. A five-foot length of 1/2-inch inside diameter metal electrical conduit pipe is slipped over the rebar that protrudes above ground.

The conduit pipe and rebar are locked together at the base of the conduit with a conduit coupler and two bolts. The lower bolt furnished with the coupler must be replaced with a slightly longer bolt to allow the bolt to reach the surface of the rebar. The coupler then may be firmly tightened against the rebar a few inches above the surface of the ground.

Use two conduit clamps to secure the nest box to the top of the post approximately 5 feet above ground. Improved support can be given to a heavy box, such as the Peterson nest box, by clamping the post to the forward surface of the 2" X

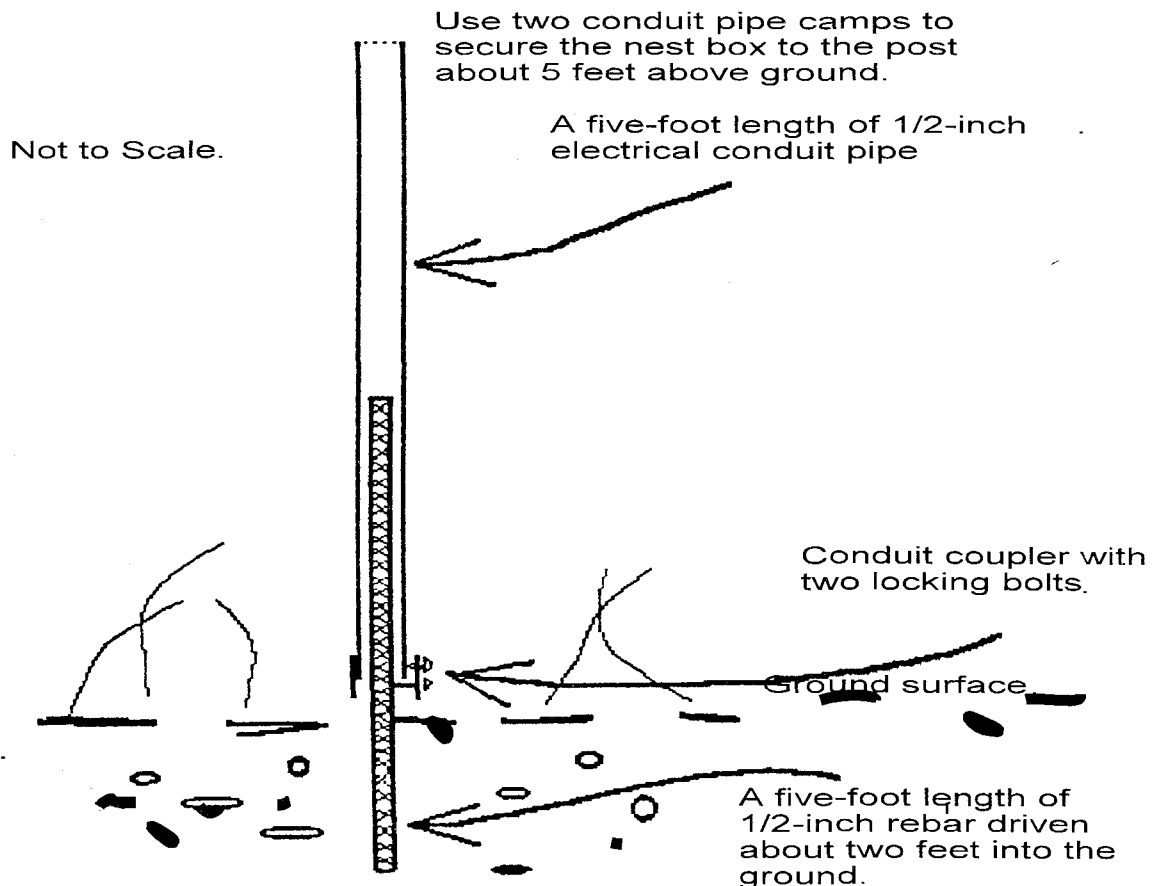
4" wood that extends below the box. This will position the post nearer the box's center of gravity.

"Slicken" the conduit by rubbing the surface with a coarse grade of steel wool. Carnauba-type auto paste wax polished over the conduit surface will improve predator protection.

Electrical conduit pipe and rebar are commonly sold in 20-foot lengths. The conduit pipe, clamps and coupler can be purchased where electrical building supplies are sold. Conduit pipe is easily cut with an ordinary hacksaw.

The concrete reinforcing bar can be purchased at concrete mixing plants. It, too, can be cut with a hacksaw but often the plant workers will cut the rebar into five-foot lengths for you with their heavy cutting tool at no extra charge.

Prices will vary, but by shopping around a bit you can expect to pay about \$5 to \$7 for each assembled conduit/rebar post. They are a cinch to transport and erect even in remote locations.



Conduit/Rebar More Than Tripled Bluebird Production

by Pat Ready, Stoughton

When I took over the bluebird trail at Lake Kegonsa State Park last spring all the houses were mounted on wooden posts. Predation from raccoons, cats, chipmunks and the like was prevalent despite the wire guards mounted on the front of each box. I decided to mount all of the existing houses on conduit as well as any new boxes I added to the trail. Most of the 18 existing houses were the Hill Lake and Herman Olson designs. The conversion to conduit was easy. (See attached photo.)

✓ I attached a 2-inch x 2-inch wood block along the back near the top. The bottom of the block has a 3/4-inch hole drilled part way into it.

✓ I pounded a 4-foot rebar into the ground about half way.

✓ I put a 5-foot piece of conduit over it.

✓ I hung the house on the conduit making sure it fit into the 3/4-inch hole in the block of wood.

✓ Then I secured the house to the pole using a conduit clamp.

By the end of summer I had 28 nest boxes in the park, thanks to Girl Scout Troop 495 that donated 10 new ones. Five bluebird pairs nested twice through the summer. The total number of bluebirds fledged were 34 compared to 9 the year before. Nine eggs were lost in two of the nest boxes early on before I converted them to conduit.



Pat Ready of Stoughton, above, replaced wooden posts on a state park bluebird trail in Dane County and stopped most of the predation loss plaguing the trail.

I also converted 12 nest boxes to conduit for Dorothy Haines who monitors the trail at Lake Farms County Park near Madison.

I definitely recommend the Gilbertson conduit/rebar for a mounting post.