

[The Course Birding Blog, April 14-19, 2020](#)

April 14 — Always good to welcome back our friends the Northern Flickers, one of our few semi-migratory woodpeckers. I saw four of them at once around 8th-9th holes. Now if only one would catch on to one of our bigger nest boxes and move in. Same time, same area, our first sighting of a female Baltimore Oriole of the season.





Northern Flicker, Yellow-shafted (above). Female Baltimore Oriole (right).

April 15 — *One of my more intrepid adventures, in search of one of our best birds: Pileated Woodpeckers, which look and sound like Dr. Seuss characters, nest in big tree holes but will “sometimes” use a man-made birdhouse. So with social-distancing time and my tallest ladder on my hands, I posted a box 20 feet up on a tall tree in deep woods, their preferred habitat. I’ve always liked the thick forest alongside the 14th fairway, so . . . now it features a jumbo nest box, stuffed with wood shavings and hoping for one of those great cartoony birds to come hunting.*



Pileated Woodpecker

April 15, 19 — *Our Bald Eagles, like us, are hunkered down. For the past two weeks, Mom has been “under the radar” and somewhere down below visibility in the nest. This is the stage where we have to just keep hoping she (and sometimes Dad) are in there quietly incubating eggs. I haven’t seen either fly in or out of the nest site in a few weeks, but I’ve had their flyovers around the lake area, and locals are seeing the same. Hatch time is here, or already past. We wait.*



A nesting Bald Eagle

—In the golf course birdhouses, as of April 19th, we had 8 nests built or under construction (Bluebirds and Tree Swallows). On April 21st, 2019, that number was 14; in late April 2018, we had 11; late April 2017, it was 20. Hard to find the right scientific spin for those fluctuating numbers — the year-end totals are more important. But in September 2019, the National Audubon Society released a report that signaled “a bird emergency, a full-blown crisis”: Bird populations had declined by more than 3 billion since 1970 — which meant that we now have more than 25 percent fewer birds than we did 50 years ago. All of those losses, scientists concluded, are a result of human activity.

<https://www.audubon.org/news/audubon-declares-bird-emergency-demands-immediate-action-after-scientists-reveal>

— Tom Walsh