

Dark-eyed Junco Using Nest Box

By **John C. Barber**
and

Margaret M. Barber

31700 Trillium Trail
Pepper Pike, OH 44124
jbarber227@hotmail.com

We report on an unsuccessful nesting attempt in a wooden nest box by Dark-eyed Juncos (*Junco hyemalis*) in Cuyahoga County. Dark-eyed Juncos nest in northeast Ohio (Rosche 2004) and in eastern Cuyahoga County consistently (J. Barber, unpublished banding data). The nest was constructed of dried grass, with finer grass used as lining, fully filling the base of the box. We had not seen

juncos using a nest box previously, nor encountered this occurrence in published literature.

On 30 May 2009, we frequently observed banded adult juncos near a wooden nest box mounted 2.4 meters above the ground under a first-story eave of a house on a heavily wooded street in Pepper Pike, Ohio. The nest box is an open-faced style designed for Carolina Wrens (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*), built with a rectangular opening across the face of the house (see photograph). On 05 June 2009, M. Barber heard faint peeping coming from the box and observed two banded adult juncos bringing food to the box many times over the next several days. Checking the nest box on 13 June, J. Barber found the box empty and the nest undisturbed. Adult juncos continued to be seen in the area, but no young were in evidence. The adults were not re-trapped to confirm a male–female pair, to avoid



distracting them from re-nesting.

We speculate that, in this area of high populations of egg-eating mammals and birds, including Eastern Chipmunks (*Tamias striatus*); Red Squirrels (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*); Eastern Fox Squirrels (*Sciurus niger*); and Blue Jays (*Cyanocitta cristata*), the juncos nested in the high box to avoid egg predators. A. C. Bent notes that “the Junco often builds in rather unusual situations” (Bent 1968), and records several nestings on artificial substrates by various junco subspecies. The *Birds of North America* account (Nolan *et al.* 2002) describes Dark-eyed Juncos nesting in a wide variety of locations, including tree branches, flowerpots, rock clefts, in vegetation on trellises, and in human-made sites such as tires and cans, but he does not mention them using nest boxes.

Literature Cited

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