

they never objected to the loss of a ball.

Birds and mammals aren't the only denizens of golf courses, either, for water hazards attract reptiles and amphibians, such as turtles, salamanders and frogs. Once, at Carter Country Club in Lebanon, N.H., my son and I passed a water hazard where nothing was happening. When we passed this little pond again an hour later, we were astonished to find it alive with croaking, mating frogs.

These incidents are indicative of the added attraction that helps draw golfers to a course. With this in mind, there are a variety of ways that course managers can improve wildlife habitat.

One way, of course, is to minimize the use of chemicals that can harm wildlife, and many courses are now striving to do exactly that. This may be particularly important in regard to amphibians and other aquatic dwellers.

Regarding birds, there are two ways of attracting them: nesting boxes and plantings of shrubs and trees that provide food.

Nesting boxes immediately bring bluebirds to mind (see *Turfgrass Trends*, September 2010) but many other cavity nesters will also benefit from nesting boxes of the appropriate size for their species. Among those are kestrels; house wrens; barn, barred and screech owls; nuthatches; tufted titmice; chickadees; wood ducks; and tree swallows. Audubon societies, both the national and local, will provide information about where to purchase or how to construct nesting boxes. Good resources

include the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at <http://www.allaboutbirds.org/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?pid=1139>, or Google "Woodcrafting for Wildlife." Some state wildlife agencies also supply information and plans for nesting boxes.

Speaking of houses, there are also bat houses. Bats, though they're normally only seen from dusk to dawn, are also an asset that should be encouraged around golf courses because of the vast number of mosquitoes and other biting insects that they devour.

With the dreaded white-nose syndrome decimating eastern bat populations in caves where they hibernate, bat houses may assume an increasing importance in maintaining bat populations. Plans for bat houses can be obtained from Bat Conservation International at 1-800-538-BATS, or at www.batcom.org.

Back to birds: with the sole exception of Canada geese, birds are desirable because of the interest that they provide for golfers. Geese, of course, love to graze on lush grass, and their soft, greasy droppings are a real detriment on a golf course, especially on greens. Geese aside, plantings of fruit-bearing shrubs at appropriate locations can attract and hold birds on and close to golf courses.

There are many sources of information about shrubs and small trees that attract birds and can be planted on golf courses. For one good source, Google "Shrubs That Attract Birds." Next click on "Trees and Shrubs that Attract Birds." Then use the Selection Guide and scroll down to a long list of shrubs and trees. One omission in this list is noteworthy: in our area of New England, red-berried elders, *Sambucus pubens*, attract handsome cedar waxwings in droves.

Many golf courses put up bluebird nesting boxes, but there is obviously so much more that can be done at your course. All it takes is some thought, careful planning, and the assistance of some expert advice to turn your course into a haven for wildlife and an added attraction for golfers.

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Even the most serious golfers are typically charmed by the sight of wildlife on the course.

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