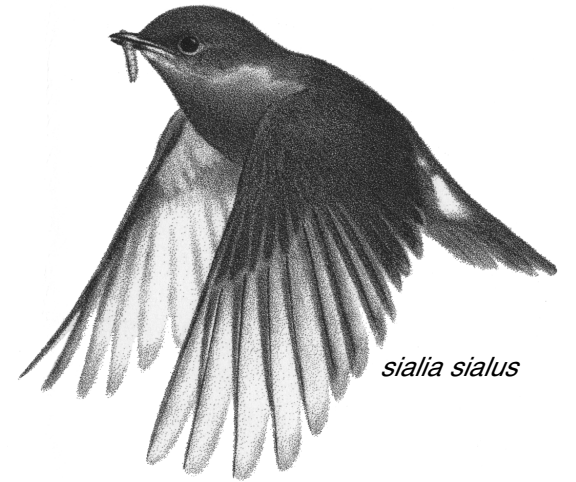


Blue bird habitat
 established
 as an
 Eagle Scout Project
 by:

Michael Williamson
Boy Scout Troop 105
Paola, Kansas



Hillsdale Bluebird Trail

Hillsdale State Park



Hillsdale State Park Office
 26001 W. 255th St.
 Paola, KS 66762
 (913) 783-4507

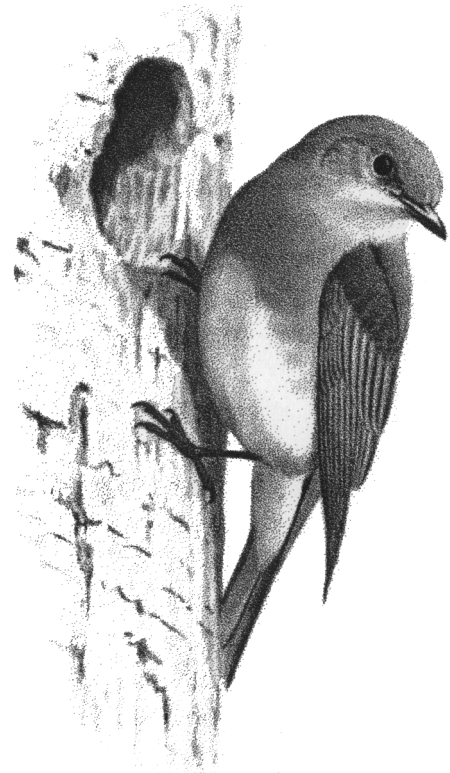
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EASTERN BLUEBIRD

Description: 5-7 in. long. Male bright blue on back, wings, and tail; throat and most of underparts orange-rusty; belly white. Female similar, but paler, back tinged with brown; throat rusty, not gray as in western bluebird.

Habitat: Farmlands, orchards, open woodlands.

Nesting: Consists of a cup of grass stems 4-6 ft. above the ground in woodpecker hole, birdhouse or other cavity. Eggs 3-7, pale blue or white. Eggs hatch in two weeks with babies leaving the nest in 15-20 days.



Bluebird Facts:

The bluebird has long been a favorite bird in North America. Once a common bird, the bluebird has seen a decline in numbers. Insecticides and destruction of habitat has caused a 90% decline in their population. Those who love the bluebird have begun a campaign to save them through the erection of thousands of nesting boxes appropriate for this species. They are predator and competitor proof, and the bluebird is beginning to reappear where these boxes are established.

People sometimes create bluebird trails by hanging many houses in one area, to give the birds ample housing. They are often placed atop of fence posts, giving the appearance of a "trail."

These are three species of bluebird: western, mountain and eastern. Eastern bluebirds breed east of the Rocky Mountains. It is bright blue with rusty-red breast. The west bluebird breeds in western states from Canada to Mexico and east to Colorado. It has a blue throat, and the red color extends to its upper back. The mountain blue birds breed in the northwest, east to the Dakotas and North into Alaska. It is entirely blue with a white underbelly.

Blue birds diet consists of 90% insects. They also enjoy berrying plants such as bittersweet, hackberry, dogwood, privet, honeysuckle, bayberry, sumac and many others.

The spring courtship rites of the bluebird are among the most enjoyable to witness. The male selects a suitable nesting cavity and devotes all his energy to luring a female with his song. He sings and sings, as the female sits passively by, enjoying his effort. The final selection of the nesting place is hers, and if she finds his choice unacceptable, he must search for something better.

Two bluebirds never nest near each other. They are very territorial. Houses must be placed 100 ft. apart and 4-6 ft. above ground.

Nest building is done by the male bluebird. The nest consists of dry grass, pine needles and plant material approx. 3-4in. deep.

Western and mountain bluebird eggs are pale blue. Easterns' are also pale blue but are sometimes white.

Blue birds have a couple a nesting competitors - the sparrow and starling. Sparrows can break the bluebirds eggs and starlings are know to chase them out of the area.

We can assist in the return of these birds, by providing suitable habitat, winter shelter and feed supplies.

Bluebird Nest Box

