Bluebirds

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Bluebird Nest Box

A contribution from the Chickadee Checkoff, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism.

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs described herein is available to all individuals without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, ... of the Secretary, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, 1020 S Kansas Ave., Topeka, KS 66612-1327. 06  /11

Marvin Schwilling was a long time employee of the Kansas wildlife agency. Starting work in Kansas in 1951, Marvin worked in several capacities as a research assistant and biologist and was involved in a wide range of wildlife and parks projects. He retired from the agency in 1996, and in 2008 the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism established the Marvin Schwilling Memorial Bluebird Program. This program continues to promote bluebird recovery in Kansas.

Marvin Schwilling Memorial Bluebird Program

Note:

Entrance hole is 2 1/4" x 1 3/8"

Waste

Two pivot nails allow side to swing out for cleaning. Use nail at bottom to close side.

Lumber:

One 1" x 6" x 4' 11" 8"  8" 8"  8" 4" 8"

5 1/2" 5 1/2" 5 1/2"

5 1/2" 5 1/2" 5 1/2"

Back Side Side Front Top Floor
The Eastern Bluebird, with its brilliant blue and rust colors and melodic song, is a bird appreciated and enjoyed by all who get the chance to see or hear it. Eastern Bluebirds begin arriving in Kansas by early March. While some over-winter in the state, this species is one of the earlier to return from the southern US to Kansas. In the spring, the male Eastern Bluebird begins singing to attract a mate. He willanded near his territory and sing a loud, clear song. The female will look for a suitable nesting site and may build her nest in a natural cavity or nest box. She will usually choose an open area with sparse trees or shrubs.

The female will have from 4-7 light blue to white eggs after building a grass-lined cup nest in the bottom of the nest box. She alone incubates the clutch. Hatching occurs 11-12 days after the eggs are laid. The young are brooded for several days and fed by both sexes. After about 2 ½ weeks, the young fledge.

Nest boxes should be placed about 3-4 feet from the ground, facing any direction. It is not necessary to remove old bluebird nests unless they are very untidy. Wrens, sparrows, and other smaller birds may also use the nest box. To prevent other species of birds from nesting in the boxes, the entry holes should be 1.5-2 inches in diameter.

The bluebird house plan shown in the accompanying diagram is a simple pattern which can be made from a 1" x 6" cedar board that is four feet long. Cedar is the preferred wood because it will last a long time. The house can be left unpainted or may be painted a light color that will reflect sunlight which reduces interior heat in the summer.

House Sparrow nests should be removed from bluebird boxes immediately. House Wrens, chickadees, nuthatches, Tufted Titmice, and Tree Swallows may also use the nest box. It is important to keep these birds away from the bluebirds. Bluebirds may have up to three clutches per year and will re-nest as well from earlier failed attempts.

By constructing bluebird trails, civic organizations, youth groups, and individuals can assist in efforts to help bluebird populations recover. Nestboxes provide a safe nesting site for these birds and can be placed along trails or in designated areas. Bluebird trails can be a great way to get involved in wildlife conservation and make a positive impact on the environment.

The Kansas Bluebird Nesting Record is a useful tool for tracking the populations of bluebirds in Kansas. It provides information on the species, number of nesting attempts, number of young fledged, and other relevant data. This record helps to monitor the health and well-being of the bluebird populations in the state and can be used to assess the effectiveness of conservation efforts. Please use the space above for additional comments and to describe any unusual observation. Mail completed form by Oct. 1 to the address below or submit online on the KDWPT website under "Kansas Bluebirds" in the Other Services/Wildlife Diversity web pages.