

Steve & Regina Garr are the owners of

**Birds-I-View** and have spent many years committed to helping our native cavity nesting songbirds prosper!

The Garrs have assisted in co-founding two separate State Bluebird Societies. Steve is a past President, Vice-President and Board Member of the North American Bluebird Society, and is a life member of that organization. He is the current President of the Missouri Bluebird Society and Regina is the organization's Secretary and Newsletter Editor.

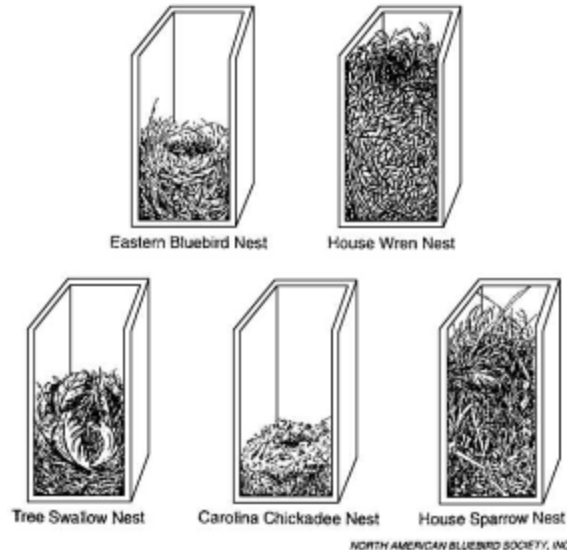
Steve and Regina are honored to be recipients of the NABS "John & Nora Lane Award" for Outstanding Contributions in the area of Bluebird Conservation. Steve spent nine years as the **Bluebird Columnist** for the *Nature Society News*. Much of Steve's research has been focused on "Bringing Bluebirds Back to the City". **Birds-I-View** is a proud **Corporate Member** of the **North American Bluebird Society**.

## Who's Nesting in your Box?

Many desirable native songbirds will use your "Bluebird Box". The non native "House Sparrow" will also attempt to use your nest box and it is important for the safety of our native songbirds that House Sparrows not be permitted to nest in Bluebird Boxes.

To assist you in nest identification, we provide you with the information and sketches below!

### CUT-AWAY VIEWS OF NESTING BOXES



**Eastern Bluebird Nest:** cup shaped nest of woven grass, pine needles can be used. 4-6 light blue eggs, small percentage can be all white.

**House Wren Nest:** made up of small twigs. The nest cup itself is very fine twigs and grass woven together. The male often builds many "false" nests in nearby cavities.

**Tree Swallow Nest:** cup shaped nest with grass and feathers (usually all white feathers) All white eggs, often 6-8.

**Chickadee Nest:** starts with moss and finishes with fur or hair type material. They will cover bean-sized eggs with hair when away from the nest— making it difficult to see when the first egg was laid.

**House Sparrow Nest:** loose grass, feathers, small wild flowers, trash. Weaves a nest that completely fills the cavity and has a tunnel to the bottom. **DO NOT ALLOW** House Sparrows to nest.

**Tufted Titmouse Nest :** Not Pictured. Similar to the Chickadee's nest with moss & fur, but perhaps more leaves

**Carolina Wren nest:** Not pictured. This wren uses moss, many dried leaves, and a "roof" made of the nest material on top.

BIRDS - I - VIEW  
Jefferson City, MO

# Bluebirds!



## Birds-I-View

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# How you can Help the Bluebirds!

Loss of habitat (due to introduction of non-native bird species and to land being cleared for development) has certainly been the greatest challenge for all of our native cavity nesting songbirds– including Bluebirds. You can help these lovely birds prosper and enjoy their “company” by providing man-made cavities for them to raise their young. Following are a few tips on attracting Bluebirds plus important information on proper care & habitat .

## A Proper Bluebird Box

- Well Ventilated, water tight, has drainage holes, easy to monitor, easy to clean, and has adequate roof overhang.
- Cedar , Cypress, and Redwood are ideal, although plywood and other types of wood can be used. If you decide to paint the box, only paint the outside a light color.
- Treated Lumber should not be used for nest boxes because of the birds exposure to toxic material in an enclosed area.
- Should not have a perch– sparrows and wrens are attracted to perches.
- Entrance holes for Eastern Bluebirds, can have a variety of shapes. A round entrance hole should be 1- 1/2” in diameter. An oval hole should measure 1- 3/8” x 2 -1/4”. “Slot” boxes entrances should measure 1- 1/8”. The box should measure at least 6 “ from the bottom of the entrance hole to the inside floor. This depth , along with the proper size entrance hole, helps to protect the birds/eggs from predators reaching in.

## NEST BOX PLACEMENT

- Please place boxes on a metal pole. Most predators are accustomed to going up a tree ( or wood) to look for food. Of course, Bluebirds could successfully raise young in boxes on trees, but the Bluebird landlord is setting himself up for much heartache when the box cannot be adequately protected from predators. Also, ants are a serious problem with boxes on trees.
- Mount the box so the entrance hole is at least five feet above the ground and try to face the box away from any prevailing winds. This height helps to protect the birds from many predators, yet is low enough for easy monitoring. **Facing the nest box towards an overhang or perch area 20 to 100 feet away ( such as a tree branch, power line, Shepherds Hook, or house eave) can be a real advantage to attracting the bluebirds.** Many studies have shown that the male bluebird likes to perch where he can watch the entrance hole to the nest box. Also , the fledglings will have a safe place to



fly to when they are ready to leave the box.

- Do not be afraid to try to attract bluebirds in suburban and even metropolitan areas! Often, in these areas the only thing lacking to entice bluebirds is a cavity ( nest box). We often say, “ If you have enough open area that you need to mow your grass, you could have enough open area to get Bluebirds”! You may wish to avoid brushy /woody areas to avoid drawing house wrens to the nest box.



Photo by Steve Garr

## Nest Box Monitoring:

*We recommend putting up a Bluebird Box only if you intend to Monitor it.*

- Check your Bluebird Box a minimum of once per week during the nesting season until the chicks are close to fledging.
- It is often recommended that you not open the nest box once the babies are 13 or 14 days old . Bluebirds will generally fledge in 18-21 days from the time they hatch and you do not want them to be startled into fledging too soon. In many areas, Bluebirds will nest three times during the season, and during the second and third nesting they will frequently fledge in 16-18 days.
- Bluebird usually lay 4-6 light blue eggs. (a small percentage of bluebird nests will contain all white eggs)
- Incubation of the eggs usually lasts 12-14 days.
- Remove the nests after each nesting as soon as the young have fledged. Do not discard old nest material directly below the house, or you will attract predators.
- Keep records!! We have **Monitoring Forms** for you here at Birds-I-View and we urge you to turn your nest box data into the Missouri Bluebird Society or your local/state Bluebird organization.
- We believe that Good Stewardship dictates that you do not allow the non-native house sparrows to nest in your nest boxes.

*Steve & Regina Garr*

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