

State of the Climate



Adult male and female. Photo: Richard Riggerink/Audubon Photography Award
<https://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/eastern-bluebird>

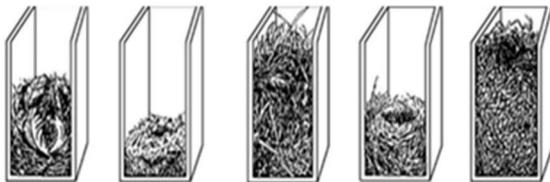
Bird species can be good indicators of ecological change, and some are early responders to climate change threats. According to the Audubon Society, “29% of New Jersey’s 248 bird species are vulnerable to climate change”.

Long-term monitoring is needed to determine the impact of climate change, including increased summer heat, heavy rainstorms, and drought, on natural habitats, breeding, and natural food sources.

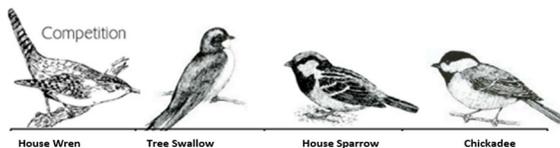
Bluebird Food Source:

Bluebirds eat insects that feed on native plants. These include flowering dogwood, holly, eastern red cedar, elderberry, viburnum, bayberry, blueberry, and serviceberry.

Bird Nest ID & Nestbox Competitors



Tree Swallow Carolina Chickadee House Sparrow Eastern Bluebird House Wren



Forest Resource Education Center-www.Forestrycenter.nj.gov

Help Bluebirds Survive and Thrive

- Install nestboxes -Location is crucial.
- Learn to recognize nests and eggs.
- Control predators, including sparrows, raccoons, snakes, squirrels, cats, and birds of prey.
- Provide native plant food sources.
- Monitor and maintain nestboxes.
- Bluebird nesting timetable is mid-March to September

For More Information About Eastern Bluebirds

NJ Bluebird Society – North American Bluebird Society - Audubon Society - The Cornell Lab of Ornithology – Forest Resource Education Center/forestrycenter.nj.gov



Eastern Bluebird Fledglings
 Photo by Kenn Kilgore

N.A. Bluebird Society-Eastern Bluebird Photo: Kenn Kilgore



For more information visit: www.monmouthparks.com



Monmouth County’s Huber Woods Park is the Host Partner for this RES Bluebird Monitoring Project.

This Bluebird Monitoring Project was created in partnership with the Rutgers Environmental Stewards (RES) program.

The program is funded by Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station. For more information, visit envirostewards.rutgers.edu.



Photo: NJ Bluebird Society

Eastern Bluebirds New Jersey

Introduction

The eastern bluebird (*Sialia sialis*), are cavity-nesting songbirds. They were once an abundant species along the east coast of the United States, but have been impacted by habitat loss and the introduction of aggressive, non-native birds. Since the 1970s, bluebird enthusiasts have been building and monitoring bluebird trails and the bluebird population has seen a steady increase in numbers. Bluebirds are now nesting successfully in areas where they had been missing for 25 years.



Photo by Hazel Erikson/Audubon Photography Awards
<https://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/eastern-bluebird>

Eastern Bluebird Facts

- **Territory:** The establishment of a territory is a gradual process and begins when a mated pair or a single male arrives at the breeding grounds. Bluebirds will usually return to areas where they had bred previously and will search for nest boxes and natural cavities.
- **Habitat:** Eastern Bluebirds can be found in open country with scattered trees. Examples include farms, roadsides, and suburbs where there are extensive lawns. Bluebirds have an average territory size of between 2 and 3 acres. Bluebirds wander to other habitats in winter.
- **Mating:** The male establishes a territory and begins searching for a female by perching and letting out loud song bursts, sometimes up to 25 chirps per minute. Courtship can take several days. Then they will begin by building a nest, in preparation for raising young.
- **Nest:** Currently, most bluebirds nest in manmade nest boxes, due to lack of natural cavities. If no manmade boxes are available, bluebirds must find a naturally occurring cavity (i.e., a hollow tree) or a cavity left by another animal, such as a woodpecker.
- **Incubation:** The female will begin to incubate after the last egg is in the clutch. The female will sit on the eggs, keeping the eggs at a temperature of at least 95°F. The length of incubation averages between 12-14 days.



BLUEBIRDS USUALLY HAVE 4 TO 5 EGGS PER CLUTCH
PHOTO: BET ZIMMERMAN/NORTH AMERICAN BLUEBIRD SOCIETY

- **Hatchlings:** When the eggs hatch, the young are completely featherless. The mother will continue to sit (brood) over the nestlings. After 5 days, the young will have developed feathers. The young will remain in the nest for about 16 to 21 days.
- **Fledglings:** A bird that has left the nest but is still dependent upon its parents for food is called a fledgling. After about 2 weeks, the fledglings will begin to follow the parents around to gain experience in finding food. After about 5 weeks, the young are on their own. At this point, they are referred to as juvenile birds.
- **Blue Bird Nestbox Trail Setup:** A Bluebird Trail consists of a series of bluebird boxes set up at about 300 feet apart. A trail can have a few boxes or a multitude of boxes, based on access to suitable property.
- **Monitoring:** A commitment is required to monitor a bluebird trail. Each box should be checked once a week, and a record should be kept of what is found in a box. This is an extremely important step, and dedication to monitoring the bluebird trail is essential.