

I'd like to know how folks can buy a bluebird box or box kit

- You can order boxes by calling the Audubon office, 303-973-9530, and talking to Lara. The boxes would need to be picked up at the Audubon office, which is at the north end of Chatfield State Park. She is a part-time employee, so you may have to leave a message. You will need to pay her for the boxes before or at the time you come to pick them up. They accept cash, check, and credit card. The boxes are \$35

How do you attract bluebirds to nesting boxes?

- The most important factors are having an appropriate nesting box, and placing the nesting box in an appropriate environment.
- It's very important to completely clean out nesting boxes EVERY YEAR by early March.
- The size of the entrance hole is extremely important. A  $1\frac{9}{16}$ " round hole or a  $1\frac{3}{16}$ " horizontal slot is ideal for Mountain or Western Bluebirds (the 2 varieties in our area) Read the Getting Started With Bluebirds Factsheet for important nestbox information.
- Since you want to accommodate both Western and Mountain Bluebirds, the floor area should be 25 to 30 square inches ( $5\frac{1}{2}$ " x  $5\frac{1}{2}$ " inside is great)
- Placement is monumentally important - refer to the Factsheets, especially "Getting Started With Bluebirds". The "Setting up a Bluebird Trail" section has excellent notes about best locations.
- Two keys to creating a route: place the boxes 200-300 feet apart, but you can place two boxes close to each other at each location. Two boxes close together will not attract bluebirds to both, but will allow bluebirds to nest when another species (e.g., a swallow or wren) takes over one of the boxes.
- You can also place a little pile of nesting materials near the box to aid in nest building.

Safeguarding practices from parasites and predators

- An appropriate nestbox
- Snake guards - See the "Getting Started with Bluebirds" Factsheet for more information.
- If cats are in your area, mount the box as high as possible on a smooth pole.
- If possible, don't install your boxes within 10' of a tree or other secure object from which a predator can jump on to the box.
- If raccoons or cats are a big problem, you can attach an entrance hole guard to keep raccoons or cats from reaching into the box once they gain access to it.
- Reference this "Predator Control" Factsheet for more information:  
<http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org/PDF/NABSFactsheetPredatorControl.pdf>

How to monitor my box(es)? I have heard that there are specific practices for monitoring the boxes – when, and when not to look in them...

- Nestwatch.org is a great start to learn how to monitor the nest boxes. There is a tutorial at Nestwatch.org that takes you through the process of approaching the box; opening the box; checking out the adults, eggs and chicks, etc. It also lists abnormal things to look for and has a data collection process that adds your nesting box or boxes to the ongoing North American Bluebird Study.
- Reference the "Monitoring Bluebird Nestboxes" Factsheet

Why didn't any bluebirds make a home in my box(es)?

- It all starts with choosing a good location: Bluebirds are going to be attracted to areas where there is good cover, nesting locations and food. Nesting boxes augment an otherwise good location. Some of these key points are not apparent in the late winter/early fall when you are placing the box(es). You will have to assess the area during the first season of monitoring. Do you see bluebirds in the area? Are they going into natural cavities to nest? If there are young birds around, are they in brush near your nest boxes? Bluebirds eat insects - mostly grasshoppers, caterpillars, etc. - do you see these prey insects in the area?
- If you have provided a clean and appropriately built nesting box, in a good location, it may still take a couple of nesting cycles for the birds to find and use the boxes. It is not uncommon for a new nestbox route to be vacant for a year or even 2 before it is used extensively... Timing is critical. Make sure that your route is placed by early March to ensure that it is available when the birds arrive during spring migration.

Additional notes:

- Consider monitoring your nestbox during the nesting season (Reference "Monitoring" Factsheet)
- We strongly encourage all nest box monitors in Colorado to report your observations and results to the NestWatch system at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology by using the NestWatch app on your cell phone while you are at your nest boxes. The website is [NestWatch.org](https://nestwatch.org). You can go there and sign up to be a certified nest watcher. They have an app you can put on your mobile device that makes it very convenient to enter data when you're checking your box(es).