



All Volunteers Season Kickoff March 9, 2024

Photo by Mindy King





***We are dedicated to
increasing & protecting
the Eastern Bluebird population
of Bella Vista, Arkansas***

NABS Factsheet

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Getting Started with Bluebirds

Over the years, land has been cleared for housing and commercial developments, highways and agriculture, and many old trees have been cut down. Wooden fence posts that provided nesting cavities have been replaced with metal posts.

NABS Factsheet

Monitoring Bluebird Nestboxes

WHY MONITOR YOUR NESTBOX?

It is very important that bluebird nestboxes be actively monitored (checked) at least once a week. Bluebirds are tolerant of humans, and will not abandon a nestbox that is properly monitored. All bluebird boxes should be built so that they can be opened either from the side, front, or top.

A box that is not monitored may do more harm to bluebirds than good. Monitoring increases the chances of success for bluebirds using the box. When good records are kept, it is also valuable for determining population trends.

Monitoring nestboxes will alert you to problems birds may be having with predators and competitors. **House Sparrows** (sometimes called English Sparrows) and **European Starlings** are non-native species introduced from Europe. Their aggressive seizure of cavity nest sites is a primary reason for declines in bluebird populations. Starlings nest in many of the natural nest sites but can be excluded from nestboxes by using 1 1/4 or 1 3/4 inch entrance holes. House Sparrows are smaller, so they can readily enter bluebird nestboxes. They frequently kill adult and nestling bluebirds, destroy their eggs, or drive them from their nests. At no time should they be allowed to successfully nest in bluebird boxes. Doing so will increase the House Sparrow population and further reduce the number of bluebirds. See the NABS factsheet on [House Sparrow Control](#) (available on our website at www.nabluebirdsociety.org/bluebirdfacts.htm).



A **paper wasp** or **mouse** nest will drive nesting birds away from the box, and should be removed. Take appropriate precautions to avoid breathing the dust from a mouse nest.



Knowing what species is using the box is also beneficial. Bluebird societies would like you to monitor and report all species using your nestboxes, not just bluebirds. Tree Swallows, titmice, chickadees, Carolina and House Wrens and nuthatches are all native, beneficial birds. Remember: It is illegal to remove an active nest of any native cavity-nesting bird. Keeping records on a weekly basis, and sending survey forms in at the end of the nesting season increases our knowledge of cavity-nesting birds.

After any nesting effort has ended, either due to nest failure or successful fledging of the young, remove the used nest from the box. When a bluebird nest is successful, re-nesting in the same box may be encouraged if the first nest is removed. This can be done as soon as all chicks have left the nest. Females usually build a new nest.

WHAT TO MONITOR

When you monitor a box, determine which species is using it by examining nesting material and eggs. Record the date and the number of eggs or young observed. Knowing when the eggs were laid will help you determine if they are infertile, or when they should hatch and when the young would be expected to leave the nest. In the case of most cavity nesters, one egg is laid one each day until the entire clutch is complete. Incubation will then begin. For bluebirds, incubation typically lasts approximately 12-14 days. After hatching, the chicks will remain in the nest for about 17-21 days. Your monitoring should be limited to viewing from a distance after the 12-13th day, or the chicks might jump or fly from the box prematurely.





Agenda

- 1) New Volunteers**
- 2) What's New**
- 3) House Sparrows**
- 4) Best Practices**



What's New



New Monitors

- ★ **Darryl Beachy (BVCC)**
- ★ **Kassi Bradford (St. Bernard Church)**
- ★ **Deidre & Alan Cheney (Scotsdale)**
- ★ **Keith Elliot (BVCC)**
- ★ **Terri McClure (Glasgow Car Trail)**



Substitute Monitors

★ **Kassi Bradford**

★ **Tami Moore**

★ **Becky Pratt**



Grant Programs

The Bella Vista Bluebird Society (BVBBS) has two grant programs – our annual student grant, started in 2021; and a nest box grant, started in 2023. Both programs benefit Eastern Bluebirds.

Nest Box Grant:

A group awarded a BVBBS nest box grant must include establishing and/or enhancing nest box trails on land within the state of Arkansas (outside of Bella Vista). The BVBBS will send 3 nest boxes and educational materials to get a group started.

All details about this grant, and who to contact can be found at:

- [Nest Box Grant](#)

Student Grant:

We plan to award a cash student grant each year as long as funds are available. The decision on whether to award a grant, as well as the amount of the grant, will be made by the board on an annual basis. The grant for 2023 will be posted on September 1st; the amount will be \$1,500.

- [Request for Proposals](#)
- [Signature Page](#)

For questions about our grant programs, contact us at bellavistabluebird@gmail.com.



Photo courtesy of Becky Boyd

Latest News:

- [It's almost time!](#)

Feb 22, 2024

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- [Fledgling Count](#)

Sep 4, 2023

The Bella Vista Bluebird Society would like residents with bluebird boxes in their yards

- [Time to Check Your Nest Boxes](#)

Feb 28, 2023



Nest Box Grant

***Help start bluebird trails in Arkansas
outside of Bella Vista***

Osage Park in Bentonville





\$2000 Student Research Grant



Experimental manipulation of thermal variability and average temperature to determine the thermal drivers of reproductive behavior and offspring phenotypes in Eastern Bluebirds

Will Kirkpatrick, PhD candidate



Bentonville Garden Club Gift



***Conservation Committee
Caitlin Kelley, Lori Eakins, Tarsha
Shepherd and Bridgette gifted The
Bella Vista Bluebird Society with a
\$500 grant to promote its mission.***



Taller Posts, Stovepipe Baffles

- ***Butch, Sue, Steve***
- ***Branchwood reseach boxes***
- ***16 7ft T-posts replaced all 6ft posts***
- ***8 posts got 28x8 stovepipe baffles***



Potential New Baffles??





Adopt a Highway

Third Year

***1 Mile on Rt. 71
Lancashire to Trafalgar***

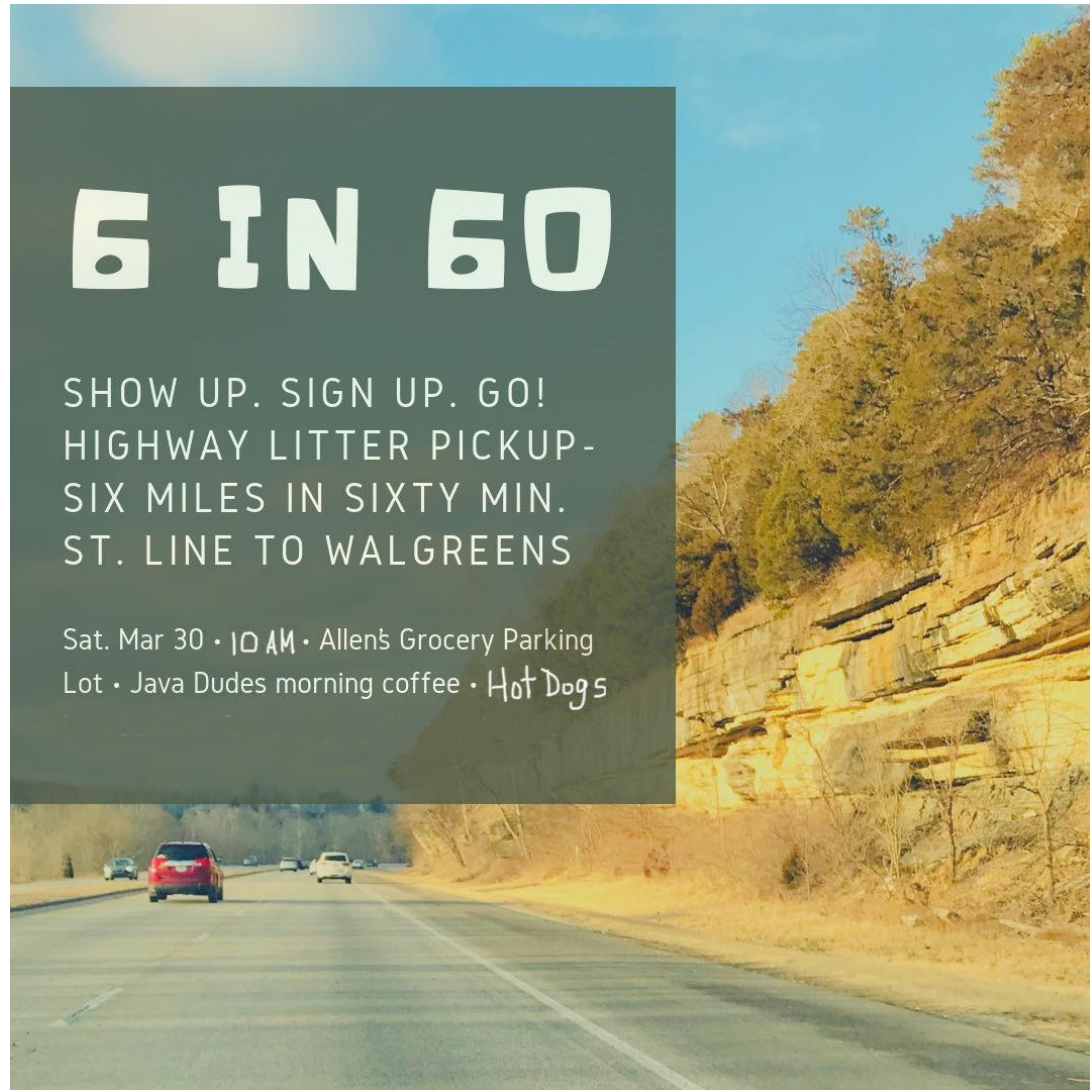


Photo by Jacqui Stockman

Thank you Jacqui & Becky!



Next Outing



6 IN 60

SHOW UP. SIGN UP. GO!
HIGHWAY LITTER PICKUP -
SIX MILES IN SIXTY MIN.
ST. LINE TO WALGREENS

Sat. Mar 30 • 10 AM • Allen's Grocery Parking
Lot • Java Dudes morning coffee • Hot Dogs

Sat, March 30
Litter pickup along Rt 71

Meet at
Allen's Grocery Store
or
Trafalgar & Rt 71



House Sparrows

House Sparrows

**Never, ever, ever let a
House Sparrow fledge chicks in a
bluebird or purple martin house**

**Destructive, non-natives that will destroy
eggs and kill baby & adult bluebirds or any
species in a nest box that they want.**

Remove House Sparrow nests after eggs are laid.



Bet Zimmerman



Bet Zimmerman



Adam Kumiszcza



J.M. Garg





Robin

Eastern bluebird

House Wren

House sparrow

White breasted nuthatch

Tree swallow
(unusual pink)



Other Birds That Use Bluebird Nest Boxes





Best Practices



Google Sheets for Monitoring

- *At desktop better with Google Chrome*
- *Download the Google Sheet app to use on your phone*
- *2024 sheets are ready*
- *Allows collaboraton with your Trail Boss & substitute monitors*
- *We now have a Tutorial*



Monitor Data Sheet

To help BVBBS monitors, we have provided blank data sheets, in both portrait or landscape formats, to use in the field; a sample data sheet, to refer to when filling in your personal data sheet in Google Sheets; and a Google Sheets Tutorial.

[Data Sheet – Portrait](#) [Data Sheet - Landscape](#)

[Sample](#) [Google Sheets Tutorial](#)

- 1) The intent of the monitor data sheet is to have:
 - consistent abbreviations from all monitors, so that
 - each box can be evaluated efficiently, and
 - total yearly box activity can be easily determined and compared with previous years
- 2) Filling in data*:
 - While monitoring, use the portrait or landscape sheet in the field to record your data. These forms have adequate room to make entries into the cells.
 - After gathering your field data, transfer it to your personalized data sheet in Google Sheets. Refer to the sample above for help.
 - Or, using the Google Sheet app, you can record your field data at your trail using your phone and/or tablet. See the Google Sheets Tutorial above for help.

- [BVBBS Statistics](#)
- [Golf Course Schedules & Maps](#)
- [How to Install a Nest Box](#)
- [How to Monitor a Nest Box](#)
- [Monitor Data Sheet](#)**
- [Nest Box Plans](#)
- [Trail Map](#)

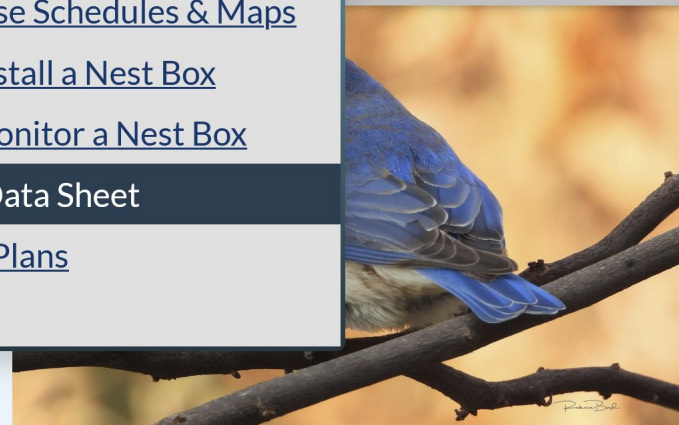


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Google Sheets Tutorial

- ***Instructions for both handheld (phone, tablet) and desktop***
- ***Clear graphics***
- ***Contact Randy Hamm or Laura Claggett with questions or problems***

- Change the text color to correspond to the species found in the nest box. Select the cell you used in step 4 to highlight it, then use the A underscore to get to the color palette and select the color closest to the color of the text of the appropriate species.

The screenshot shows an Excel spreadsheet with a data table and a color palette. The data table has columns for HOLE #, BOX #, and DATE. The color palette is open, showing a grid of colors. Red arrows point to the 'A' menu option, the color palette, and the cell containing '4E'.

HOLE #	BOX #	DATE
		3/20
1	1	
1	1A	
1	1B	
2	2	
2	2A	
3	3	
3	3A	4E
3	3B	
3	3C	
3	3D	
TOTAL		

AB	Abandoned: after 21 days, clutch of eggs not hatched OR nest not used	E	Eggs – 1E, 2E, Etc. remove clutch after 21 days if unhatched
NC	Nest Completed – use bird colors to identify nest	C	Chicks – 1C, 2C, Etc.
NI	Nest Invaded*	F	Fledged (left nest) – 1F, 2F, Etc.
FL	Flooded	D	Dead – 1D, 2D, Etc.

*For NI – make notes below of the type of predator, known or suspected, include Box # and date:
 2A, 5/22, nothing disturbed, maybe a snake? 3A, 6/13, same as 2A. 3B, 4/11, nesting material pulled out, raccoon or cat, Jim put guard on box.

6. For nest invasions, enter notes below the data chart, beginning with box # and date.

98	HOLE #	BOX #	DATE																		
99			3/20	3/27	4/3	4/11	4/17	4/24	5/2	5/9	5/16	5/22	5/29	6/6	6/13	6/20	6/27	7/5	7/10	7/19	
100	1	1					NC	NC	4E	6E	6E	6C	6C	6F							
101	1	1A		NC	4E	4E	4C	4C	4F		NC	5E				NC	NC	NC	AB		
102	1	1B	NC	1E	4E	4C	4D		NC	4E	4E	4C	4C	4F			NC	4E	4E	4E	
103	2	2		NC	NC	1E	3E	3E	3C	3C	3C	3F									
104	2	2A		2E	5E	5E	3C	3C	3F	NC	1E	NI			NC	4E	4E	3C	2C	2F	
105	3	3	NC		4E	4E	3C	3C	3C	3F					NC	4E	4E	4C	4C	4F	
106	3	3A	4E	4E	4C	4C	4C	4F				NC	2E	2E	NI				NC	3E	
107	3	3B	NC	2E	2E	NI		NC	4E	4E	4C	4C	4F								
108	3	3C			NC	4E	6E	6E	6C	6C	6C	6F									
109	3	3D					NC	4E	4E	4E	AB										
110	TOTAL																				
111	AB	Abandoned: after 21 days, clutch of eggs not hatched OR nest not used										Eggs – 1E, 2E, Etc. remove clutch after 21 days if unhatched									
112	NC	Nest Completed – use bird colors to identify nest										C Chicks – 1C, 2C, Etc.									
113	NI	Nest Invaded*										F Fledged (left nest) – 1F, 2F, Etc.									
114	FL	Flooded										D Dead – 1D, 2D, Etc.									
115	*For NI – make notes below of the type of predator, known or suspected, include Box # and date:																				
116	2A, 5/22, nothing disturbed, maybe a snake? 3A, 6/13, same as 2A. 3B, 4/11, nesting material pulled out, raccoon or cat, Jim put guard on box.																				
117																					



Monitor/Trail Boss Communication

- ***TB's contact info on monitor sheets***
- ***Timely communication about:***
 - ***Predators/pests***
 - ***Damaged/missing box***
 - ***Bent post***
 - ***Weeds or other obstacles***



Monitoring on Golf Courses

- ***Good manners – respect golfers***
- ***Check best time to be out with club house or cart barn***
- ***Least crowded early morning or late evening***
- ***Steve Skaggs email of maintenance days***
- ***Check Today's Play***

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Golf Course Schedules & Maps

[Bella Vista Golf Courses - Maintenance Schedules](#)

[Bella Vista Golf Courses - Today's Play](#)

[Golf Course Maps](#)

[Hours of Operation](#)

[BVBBS Statistics](#)

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Photo by Lisa Fulton



The Bluebird Shed

648 W. Lancashire





We monitor & maintain
577
nest boxes in Bella Vista

From 1980 - 2023 we helped fledge
55,000
Eastern Bluebirds



We have:

50 Monitors

10 Trail Bosses

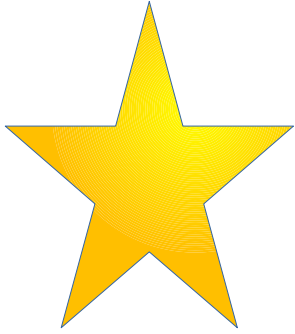
9 Board Members

6 Resident Installers

6 Box Builders

4 Corporate Supporters

The Bluebird Shed – THRogers – Lowes – BVPOA



Thank You

