

Bluebird Facts

There are three species of bluebirds in North America—Eastern, Western, and Mountain. The **Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*)** is the one we have in Florida and it is non-migratory, meaning the birds stay here year-around.

Bluebirds are primarily insect eaters, but will eat berries in the winter when insects are less plentiful.

Bluebirds are cavity nesters and begin searching for suitable nesting sites in February, so houses should be in place by then. They build nests of grass and pine needles inside a natural nesting cavity or bluebird box, and it takes them from 4 days to 2 weeks to build the nest.

Nesting begins in early March and ends in mid- August, sometimes with 2 or 3 broods.

Eggs are laid one per day until they have between 3 – 5 blue eggs (5 % of bluebird eggs are white, and those chicks are identical to the ones that hatch from blue eggs).

Incubation doesn't begin until all eggs are laid and takes between 12 - 14 days for eggs to hatch. It takes another 16 – 21 days before the birds fledge (leave the nest).

Once the chicks have fledged, the nest should be cleaned out because the bluebirds build a new nest for each brood, and most probably the birds will nest again. Occasionally, the female begins building another nest in another box or cavity, for a second brood before the first chicks have fledged.

After the chicks leave the nest, they will stay with their parents while they learn to hunt for food.

Raising the chicks is a family affair and the first fledged brood of chicks will probably help the parents raise the second brood.

If you have questions, contact

Mary Miller at limpkin1945@verizon.net

Flatwoods Park Bluebird Trail Monitor

Tampa Audubon Society