

DESCRIPTIVE NESTING HISTORIES OF POSSIBLE BLUEBIRD BOX OCCUPANTS

Nesting Activities		Bluebirds	Tree Swallows	House Wrens	House Sparrows
Dates:	Earliest arrival	First week in March	Last week in March	Late April	Permanent Resident
	Peak arrival	Mid to late March	Mid to late April	Early May	Permanent Resident
	Breeding season	Mid to late April	Mid May	Late May	Late April to early May
	Peak departure	Late Sept. to early Nov.	July & August	Early September	Permanent Resident
Nest Building:	Location of nest (in natural cavities)	Open country with scattered trees to wood borders, near mowed or sparsely covered ground	Partly open country with old or dead trees, often near water	Open woodland & wood borders, shrubland, farmland, suburbs, up to 200' from cover	Hole or crevice anywhere, especially by buildings
	Male claims nest with:	Grass (1-6 weeks before nest building)	Curved white feathers	Twigs with spider egg cases	Grass or by sitting in hole
	Materials	Dry grass & weed stems, pine needles (occasionally fine rootlets or twigs), lined with finer grass (occas. hair or feathers)	Dry grasses (occasionally straw, cattails or pine needles), lined with feathers (often white)	Twigs with spider egg cases (occasionally stems, leaves, fibers), lined with fine grass, feathers, hair, bark strips	Long coarse grass stems with seed heads, weeds, feathers, trash
	Size & shape	Loosely built with 2-3" cup	Loosely woven with large, shallow cup, feathers upright curving over eggs	Bulky base of twigs (nearly filling box) with small deep cup at top rear	Large untidy dome with side entrance to deep space with little or no bottom
	Days to build and builder	4-11 days usually (2-14 days possible) by female usually; can be up to 1 week before 1 st egg is laid	14-21 days usually (7-30 days possible) by female.	8-10 days for male to build base; 4 days for female to line; can be up to 2 days before 1 st egg is laid.	Can be built in 1 day, usually by male.
Eggs:	Color (size)	Blue to white, somewhat glossy	White, slightly glossy to non-glossy	Light pink to white with rust specks	Off-white to bluish-green with gray/brown spots
	Total number laid	4 - 6 eggs (3 - 7 possible)	5 - 6 (4 - 8 possible)	5 - 8 eggs (up to 12 possible)	4 - 6 eggs (3 - 8 possible)
	Incubation period	12 - 14 days (12 - 18 days possible)	14 - 15 days (13 - 16 days possible)	13 days (12-15 days possible)	12 days (10 - 14 days possible)
	Hatch timing	Approximately same time	Approximately same time	Approximately same time	Approximately same time
DO NOT DISTURB after: (Age when nestlings could prematurely fledge)		12 days	15 days	9 nine	Remove eggs before they hatch!!
Total Time in Nest:		17 - 18 days usually (15 - 20 days possible)	20 - 21 days usually (16 - 24 days possible)	16 - 17 days usually (12 - 18 days possible)	15 - 16 days usually (14 - 17 days possible)
Number of Broods:		2 broods sometimes 3	1 brood (rarely 2)	1 to 2 broods (rarely 3)	2 to 3 broods (sometimes 4)