

Blue Jay Profile

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff



These large songbirds are easy to spot due to their bright blue color and crested head. Though they are one of the most beautiful songbirds, Blue Jays are not always a welcomed sight. That is because some of them feed on the eggs or nestlings of other birds. Some Blue Jays have also learned how to imitate the calls of hawks. Scientists believe they do this to tell other jays that a hawk is nearby, or to trick other birds into thinking a hawk is nearby.



Interesting Facts:

Family: Corvidae

Scientific Name: *Cyanocitta cristata*

Location: The Blue Jay's range extends from central Canada down to Florida. You can find them from the East coast to west of the Rockies. Some have even been spotted in Washington.

Blue Jays prefer deciduous, coniferous, or mixed forests. You will find them most often on the edge of forests, rather than deep within them. You can also find them in suburban areas.

Migration: Some Blue Jays migrate, especially out of their northern-most nesting ranges, but some Blue Jays winter over in all parts of their range. It is not clear why, within the same range, some will leave and some will stay.

Nesting: The Blue Jay nest consists of twigs, grass, and mud. It is lined with softer materials like hair and fur. They nest in the Y-shaped crooks of tree branches, commonly about 10-25 feet off the ground. Females produce 3-7 bluish eggs with brown spots. She incubates them 17-18 days. Fledglings leave the nest in 17-19 days, and Blue Jays have 1-2 broods each summer.

Diet:	They eat mostly nuts, including acorns, as well as fruit and seeds. They also are known to eat insects, and some may eat eggs or nestlings of other birds.
Size and Color:	Adults are 12" long, with a wingspan of 13" to 17". They are almost entirely blue and have crested heads. They have a black collar and necklace. Their wings and tail have black bars and white tips. They have grayish white underparts.
Special Characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They form large feeding flocks in autumn.• They are known to imitate the calls of hawks.• One of the most easily recognized wild bird species.
Attract Them:	Blue Jays, especially in winter, are known to visit feeders for an offering of sunflower seed or cracked corn. Their large size means that a hopper- or platform-style feeder is more suitable for them.