# Eastern Bluebird

*Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff*

Associated with love, hope, and happiness, bluebirds are frequently referenced in music and literature. Our fascination with them goes beyond their beautiful tru-a-lee song and their presence as a sign of spring.

We're fanatical about their survival. As numbers declined due to competition for nesting cavities by starlings and house sparrows, we championed their cause and began creating cavities for them. Our efforts have been successful, and we get a sense of pride each time we nest a new brood.

## Interesting Facts:

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| **Family:** | Turdidae |
| **Scientific Name:** | *Sialia sialis* |
| **Location:** | Eastern Bluebirds in the eastern two-thirds of North America, east of the Rockies and southeast Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. Habitat consists of open woodlands, clearings, farmlands, parks, orchards, or other open areas. |
| **Migration:** | They migrate during severe winters to middle parts of eastern North America, south into Mexico, the Gulf coast, Arizona, Florida, and Nicaragua. If they remain in a region for the winter, they group and seek cover in heavy thickets or other areas with adequate food and cover. |
| **Nesting:** | Bluebirds are cavity nesters. They rely upon the abandoned cavities of woodpeckers or rotted-out stumps or fence posts. They will also accept nest boxes. Females lay 4-6 pale blue eggs, and males do their share by guarding the cavity (or nest box) during nest construction, delivering food to the incubating female, and helping feed nestlings and fledglings. |



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| **Diet:** | Their diet consists primarily of insects and other invertebrates. Fruits become a staple in winter ranges where insects are scarce. Winter availability of food often determines whether they will migrate. |
| **Size and Color:** | About 7" long, the adult male has bright blue upper parts, rusty-red throat, breast and sides. Female wings are a duller blue than the male's with a brownish throat, breast and sides. |
| **Song:** | Their song is relatively quiet and very sweet, a chur-wi, or a tru-a-lee in soft gurgling notes. |
| **Attracting:** | Though they typically won't visit feeders, they will eat an offering of mealworms or suet. A vented nest box properly placed in an open area may attract them to nest. |
| **Life Span:** | Up to 7 years in the wild |



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