

How Can You Help Bluebirds?

There are two main actions that NIH staff can take to promote the proliferation of bluebirds. They are:

- 1) **Volunteer as a monitor on a bluebird trail, either at the NIH or elsewhere.** Monitors are always in high demand and they are vital for tracking the local bird population, keeping the boxes properly maintained and protecting the native species from house sparrows and other invasive species. The data collected from monitoring is helpful for understanding successful practices and identifying productive bird boxes. In addition, monitoring data can help locate and change unproductive boxes. Please visit our [“Staff Spotlight”](#) article if you are interested in learning more about the volunteering process.

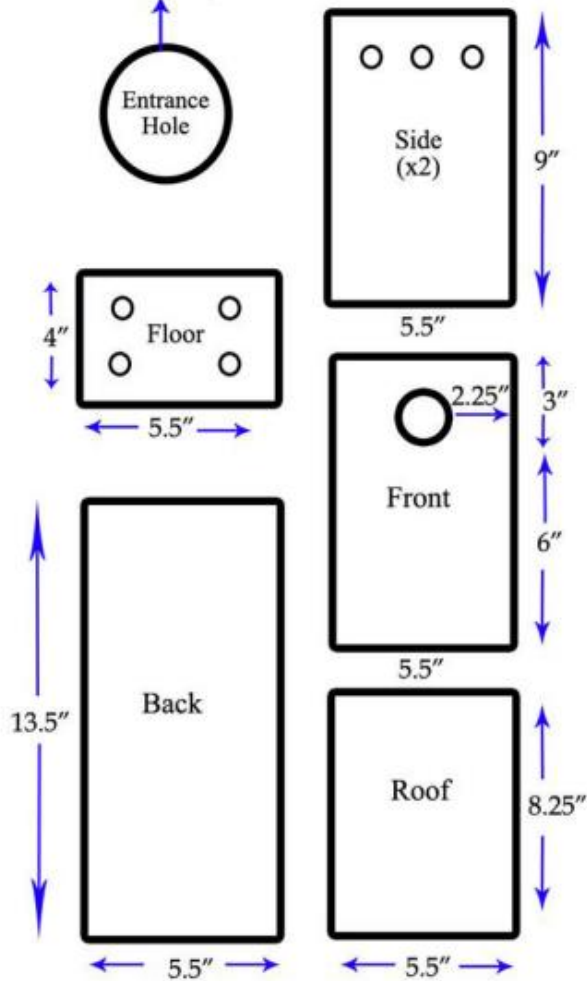


- 2) **Install a bird box in your own yard.** Ready-made boxes can be purchased from a variety of places or you can build your own by following one of many simple blueprints. As an example, we have included directions for building a bird box on the following page ([Tree Swallow, Eastern Bluebird and Great-Crested Flycatcher Nest Box](#)).¹ Please be sure that your bird box meets established specifications for bluebirds, such as those from the [North American Bluebird Society](#). Here are a few additional tips for placing and maintaining your bird box:²

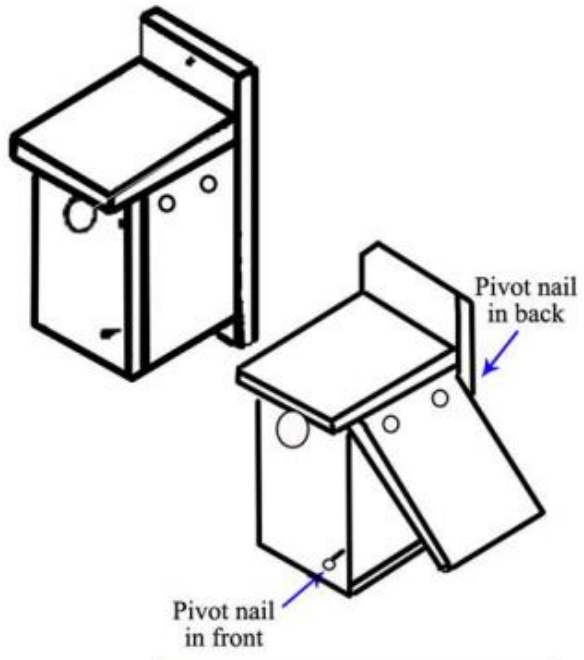
- Place boxes in large, open areas such as a field or a low meadow with scattered trees
- Do not place a perch on the box, as it may assist the bluebird’s competitors
- Do not paint the box
- Place boxes by the 3rd week of February
- Place boxes 4-6 feet above the ground and install a [predator guard](#) on the pole
- Remove nesting material after fledglings have left to allow for another brood to be raised
- Clean out and make any repairs to the box after the last brood leaves for the year, typically in September

Tree Swallow, Eastern Bluebird and Great-Crested Flycatcher Nest Box

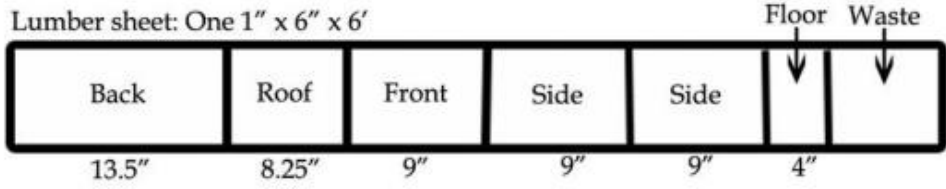
1.5" diameter for bluebirds & swallows
1.75" diameter for flycatchers



Note: These dimensions assume you are using a 3/4" thick board. Some cedar boards are 7/8" thick. So, if using 7/8" thick board, then make the floor 3 3/4" wide.



Note: Two pivot nails allow side to swing out for cleaning. Use one nail at the bottom to close side.



*[Provided by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources](#)¹