

Do's and Don'ts for Success With Mountain and Western Bluebirds

DO'S

1. Secure landowner's permission when putting up boxes.
2. Boxes should be 3 ½ to 4 ½ feet above ground level
3. Whenever possible, face box towards a small tree or shrub. If a fence post is used, face box lengthwise of the fence when possible. This establishes perch sites for the male when the female is brooding. Always face the box away from prevailing winds. *DO NOT USE POWER OR TELEPHONE POLES!*
4. Place boxes in pasture or short grass areas. Remember, bluebirds forage on the ground to secure food for their young. Be sure to place along the fence line away from animals. Cows and horses will rub on the boxes and in many cases are successful in rubbing them OFF the posts. Horses and mules are inquisitive, and will take the lids off to see what is in the box.
5. If placing boxes near homes, vacation homes, rural areas, be sure that the occupants do not have outdoor cats. Bluebirds will tolerate people, but they cannot survive being hunted by cats.
6. Use singleton trees far enough from dense trees to avoid squirrel depredation.
7. For experimental trails, place 4 to 5 boxes per mile. If successful, more boxes can be added later to increase the trail, but never closer than 100 yards from each other. Numbering boxes makes record keeping uncomplicated.
8. Monitor the boxes about once a week during the nesting season.
9. Clean the boxes every year. When monitoring, cleaning the boxes when they the chicks fledged makes spring cleaning much easier.

Don'ts

1. Don't place boxes near thickets or thornapple, chokecherry, wild roses or the juniper clumps found in drier areas of the state, as this is house wren habitat and they will destroy the bluebird nests.
2. Don't place boxes near summer fallow or wheat crop areas as there is no feed available and there is the danger of spray.
3. Avoid fence posts with braces running to the ground as weasels and chipmunks can readily run up to the box.
4. Avoid heavy timber areas and areas of heavy ground cover.
5. Avoid areas close to stagnant ponds and swamp areas because tree swallows will claim the houses.
6. Don't place boxes near homes or farm buildings or feedlot areas because of CATS and house sparrows. Houses should be at least ½ mile away from those areas.
7. NO POWER OR TELEPHONE POLES!