



Protecting Habitat

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Healthy habitat is the foundation of bluebird conservation. BRAW works with landowners, volunteers, and communities across Wisconsin to create safe nesting opportunities and protect the environments bluebirds depend on.

Nest Box Standards

Bluebirds thrive when nest boxes are built and installed correctly. BRAW recommends:

- **Approved dimensions** that match natural cavity sizes
- **1½-inch entrance hole** to exclude starlings
- **Unpainted, untreated wood** for safe temperature regulation
- **Front-opening design** for easy monitoring
- **Secure mounting** on metal poles, not trees

Downloadable nest box plans are available for anyone who wants to build their own.

Predator Protection

Predators are the biggest threat to nesting bluebirds. Effective protection includes:

- **Pole-mounted predator guards**
- **Baffles** to stop raccoons and snakes
- **Avoiding trees, fences, and structures** predators can climb
- **Proper box height** (4–6 feet) for safety and monitoring

These simple steps dramatically increase nesting success.

Habitat Requirements

Bluebirds prefer open, grassy areas with scattered trees and low vegetation. Ideal locations include:

- Pastures
- Parks
- Large yards
- Nature centers
- Trails and open fields

Boxes should be placed **100–300 feet apart** to reduce competition.

★ Habitat Challenges

Bluebirds face increasing pressure from environmental changes across Wisconsin. Two major factors affect their ability to find safe nesting sites and raise young successfully.

Climate Change Impacts

Shifts in temperature and weather patterns influence bluebird habitat in several ways:

- **Rising temperatures** reduce insect availability, the primary food source for nestlings.
- **Altered migration timing** can disrupt breeding cycles.
- **Changing vegetation patterns** affect the open habitats bluebirds rely on.

These changes make proper nest box placement and habitat management more important than ever.

Habitat Loss

As natural landscapes change, bluebirds lose access to the cavities they depend on.

- **Urban development** removes old trees and natural nesting sites.
- **Agricultural expansion** reduces open, grassy areas.
- **Invasive species** such as European Starlings and House Sparrows compete aggressively for nesting cavities.

Providing safe, well-placed nest boxes helps offset these losses and supports healthy bluebird populations.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

To keep bluebirds safe, avoid:

- Mounting boxes on trees
- Using decorative or unventilated boxes
- Placing boxes too close together
- Installing boxes in dense brush
- Leaving boxes unmonitored

A well-placed, well-maintained box makes all the difference.

Resources & Downloads

- Nest box building plans
- Predator guard diagrams
- Habitat placement checklist
- Seasonal maintenance guide

