

More about Blue Birds....



There are 2 species of bluebirds in our region- Western (males have ruddy breast) and Mountain (pure deep blue). Theoretically Mountain BB tend to occupy habitats in higher elevations but here is a lot of overlap in their range (7,000' elevation) they winter as far away as Mexico or other parts of Colorado.

The nest boxes along the Dave Wood interpretive trail – are not likely used by Bb because the locations (need to be more open areas and the holes are too large). At some point we hope to work with volunteers relocate the boxes and monitor them for activity.

BB primarily eat insects - - so pretty ideal to have around.

They nest in hollows of mature trees/ old wooden fence posts, etc. Over the past 75 years most of their prime habitat has been lost – destroyed or developed

At the same time their habitat was disappearing, the English (house) sparrow was introduced and flourished, out competed the bluebirds for nesting spots.

English sparrow first arrived in New York in 1852 introduced to help Manhattan reduce the overabundance of linden moths. The species has since spread throughout the US. It is highly aggressive species and very prolific breeder. They go for the same nesting habitat as bluebirds and will actually attack bluebirds and kill their young for the nest.

Starling are another prolific and invasive species - is a strong competitor with bluebirds

Trees swallows are the primary enemy in our area out competing bluebirds for nesting habitat.

In the 1970's their populations were in steep decline

Volunteers have constructed nest boxes along what is known as “The bluebird trail” – is a path of boxes in clusters throughout most of the 50 states and British Columbia. In Colorado there are about 600 boxes found along the trail between Gunnison and lake city alone.

The boxes have a 9/16” hole- big enough for bluebirds, too small for starlings – set up along highways situated near PJ trees, ideal places to shelter fledglings. BB breed between April and July- volunteers watch the boxes and report their finding to the Cornell Laboratory which studies bird populations.

Look for Pollinators along the trail! Butterflies, insects, bees even lizards!

There are 946 native bee species in western Colorado – 8 bumble bee species populations are threatened (populations are low), One species is rare – the western bumble bee. Pollinators are important for humans (all the food we enjoy as a result of pollination) but they are critical for pollinating native plants which are important foods for wildlife!