



## The *Ultimate* **MUST DO** Guide For Dealing with Bluebird Predators!

***Predators are an absolute certainty in the Bluebird world!*** Unfortunately, there are no exceptions to that rule. House sparrow, wrens, raccoons, snakes, crawling insects, flying insects, cats, mice, squirrels and the list can go on and on and on. Even the environment can be challenging to Bluebirds and it can even seem like a predator at times. And, not so unlike us humans, the Bluebird's first line of defense to the hazards of life starts right in the home, "where the heart is."

So here are a bunch of "MUST Dos;" the simple and easy things you can check the nestbox for immediately to help deter predators, as well as optimize the "home" for your Bluebirds.

And, just as a side note: whether you refer to it as a Bluebird house, home, box, nestbox, nesting box, etc., etc., it's all good; we'll be referring to it as a nestbox, since it is the box where they nest in order to lay eggs and fledge. And, ultimately, it's the great outdoors that is their home.

### ***The MATERIALS are important***

- Naturally weather resistant woods (those NOT treated with chemical preservatives) include:
  - Western red cedar and White cedar (naturally insect resistant)
  - Hemlock
  - Redwood (naturally insect resistant)
  - Cypress
- Other common materials that can be used:
  - Pine (a softwood)
  - Or exterior grade plywood  
both should be sealed with a water-based paint or stain or other non-toxic product to help against weather degradation. The inside of the nestbox should not be painted.
  - Hardwoods can also be used  
more weather resistant, so staining or painting is not necessary
- Plastics
  - Insect resistant
  - Weather resistant
  - Sturdy and rugged
  - Sheets material can be used
  - Large diameter drain pipe can be used
  - Recycled materials



- Do NOT Use
  - pressure treated wood or plywood (typical green-ish color), they contain preservatives that could be harmful the birds
  - metal can get very hot and overheat the nestbox

***The DIMENSIONS are important***

Bluebirds are cavity nesters, meaning they prefer a nestbox that basically resembles a long-narrow hollowed out space.

Square floor sizes of:

- 4 inch x 4 inch
- or 5 inch x 5 inch
- and up to 5 ½ inch x 5 ½ inch are typical and common, but not absolute
- Some nestboxes will have even smaller floors.

An angled overhanging roof of helps to deter predators and prevent rainwater from entering the nestbox

A nestbox entry hole diameter of 1 9/16 inch is acceptable for all (3) species.

Entry hole dimension preferences more specific to each species:

- Eastern Bluebird: 1 ½ inch diameter round hole  
OR  
a 1 3/8 inch wide x 2 ¼ inch vertical height oval hole  
OR  
1 1/8 inch horizontal slot
- Western and Mountain Bluebird: 1 9/16 inch diameter round hole  
OR  
1 3/16 inch horizontal slot
- If you are fortunate enough to live in an area where you enjoy multiple species of Bluebirds, use the larger opening

A ¾ inch to 1 inch thick piece of wood extended from and surrounding the entry hole will hinder and protect eggs from predators. A shaped metal copper plate surrounding the entry hole can be added for even further protection.

Check for a 4 ½ inch to 6 inch dimension from the bottom of the entry hole to the floor of the nest box.

A front or side door that opens - closes and can be secured makes the nest box easy to monitor the nest and easy to clean after the fledglings have left the box.



Bluebird nestboxes should NOT have a perch. Perches will make it easier for predator birds such as house sparrows to occupy the nestbox

Ridges, slots, saw cuts (kerfs) or similar grooves on the interior side of the door will help the fledglings grasp and claw this "ladder" as they exit and find their new world

Vents for air flow can be added unless insects or the cold climates are a problem. A double roof can also help lessen the heat

Cuts or drilled holes in the floor are important for rainwater drainage. A non-toxic exterior grade caulking can be used to seal the exterior joints between the roof and the walls

(Thanks and credit to the North American Bluebird Society dimensional guidance)

### ***The MOUNTING is important***

Bluebirds will nest anywhere between 2 to 50 feet high! Mount the nestbox with the entry hole at least five feet above the ground, at a convenient height to make it easy to check the nest box occasionally. Six to eight feet off the ground will help deter cats and other predators

Mounting on a metal pole is suggested. Metal poles are more difficult for predators to climb. Using a baffle, a device used on poles to restrain or prevent predators from climbing is suggested. Wooden poles, wooden posts, fences or trees are NOT suggested since it makes it easier for climbing predators. Mounting to trees can also lead to insect problems.

### ***And Finally.....***

Now, just a little reality check. Whether you are new or experienced to Bluebird-ing or whether you are purchasing, building or repairing a Bluebird nestbox, do keep in mind that there are many, many choices out there for nestboxes and no one single Bluebird nestbox is the perfect habitat based on regional variations or absolutely guaranteed to prevent all predators. But, with a little guidance and information and the above "tried and true" methods and with a little patience, trial & maybe even error, we sure can give it our best attempt to make the world a better place for Bluebirds.

Happy Bluebird-ing, from your friends at:



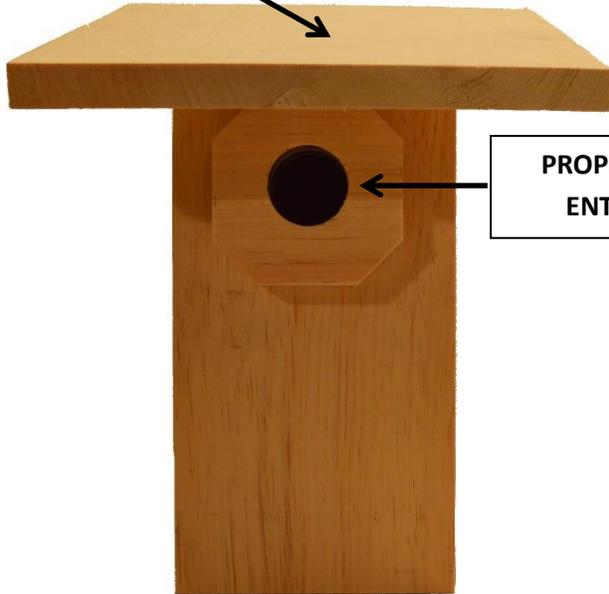


**MUST DO for BLUEBIRD NESTBOX**  
(SHOWN ASSEMBLED)

OVERHANGING ROOF

ANGLED FOR ROOF

VENT HOLES  
(6x)



PROPERLY SIZED  
ENTRY HOLE



FRONT VIEW

FRONT-SIDE ANGLED VIEW  
(ROOF NOT SHOWN)

PREDATOR GUARD  
(ROOF NOT SHOWN)

METAL FACE CAN BE  
ADDED FOR ADDITIONAL  
PROTECTION



Thanks and credit to NABS, the North  
American Bluebird Society



**MUST DO for BLUEBIRD NESTBOX**  
(SHOWN UN-ASSEMBLED)

