

**Welcome Back Bluebirds!**  
**A Celebration of the Return and the Recovery of the Eastern Bluebird**

Join JDCF to celebrate a huge conservation victory! The Bluebird Recovery Project began in Jo Daviess County in 1993. This event will celebrate the success of this program and its leaders, and look at what we will all need to do in the next 30 years to maintain the population of our Gems of Blue!

After the population of the eastern bluebird plummeted by nearly 90% in the mid-1900s, today it is considered a species of low conservation concern. This spring as they come back from their annual migration south we will celebrate both their return to NW IL and the recovery of their population!

**Why:** Celebrate the coming of spring with Jo Daviess County area community  
Learn how to install and care for a bluebird box  
Ask questions and/or share your knowledge  
Bluebird boxes being sold throughout event for \$35  
Bluebird box door prizes!  
Silent auction of bluebird-themed art and memorabilia

**Where:** Elizabeth Community Building  
402 West St, Elizabeth, IL 61028

**When:** March 29<sup>th</sup> 2025 9:00am – 12:00pm

9:00 -10:00am Silent Auction of Bluebird-themed art and memorabilia with light breakfast fare, tea, coffee, spend time with fellow bluebird lovers.

10:00-11:00 Welcome

Bluebird Recovery Program overview

The lifecycle and lifeways of Eastern Bluebirds

Demonstration on how to properly approach and monitor birdbox

11:00am-11:50pm Bluebird Box How-to Stations

Station 1: How to protect your birdboxes against predators and pests

Station 2: How to install or replace a bluebird box

Station 3: A closer look at all of the birds/nests that you might find in your box

Station 4: Recording and submitting your Birdbox observations on NestWatch

Station 5: Sign-up to volunteer to support the birds!

- Pledge to monitor a box(es) on your property and upload the information to NestWatch
- Put up a birdbox on your property
- Become a bluebird monitor on a public trail
- Shadow an experienced nest box monitor
- Build birdboxes
- Replace birdboxes on public trails
- Be a Christmas or Spring Bird Count Volunteer
- Upload fellow monitors observations into NestWatch

11:50am Silent Auction results announced – need to be present to win

12:00pm Meeting closes and sales finalized

### **2024 Bluebird Monitoring Results – Final in-house JDCF tally**

To the monitors – thank you for another year of your dedication. Congratulations!!! Together we counted 343 bluebirds fledged in 2024.

The earliest egg award goes to both Carol Mantey and Nan Hoff, both of whom had eggs in late March. Monitoring was most frequently reported to be weekly, especially on public trails. Many who tracked more often had boxes on their own property. Predation was due to the usual suspects. Wrens were the main culprits, followed by house sparrows, black flies, raccoons, and ants.

#### Bluebird Monitoring Results 2024

Total Nest Boxes Monitored: 168

Next Attempts: 142

Total eggs laid: 528

Eggs Missing, etc.: 112

Total Hatchlings: 416

Hatchling dead, gone, etc.: 73

Total fledglings: 343

Total volunteer hours: 225

### **An epic legacy and a look at the future**

In the 32 years that it has run, the Bluebird Recovery Project has fledged a total of 29,791 bluebirds!! That is almost 30,000 Bluebirds in 30 years. This is thanks to EVERYONE who has put up a birdbox, cared for it, and reported their observations. But a special thank you goes to Joan Harmet and Grace Storch for leading the charge to start this important work in Jo Daviess County.

Looking into the future, JDCF wants the data that monitors collect to go into the hands of scientists that can use it to better track and manage bird populations. Monitors will now be using the official NestWatch data sheet to record your observations. JDCF wants to empower you to upload your own observations directly into the NestWatch App or website. If you are not ready or interested in making the jump to uploading your data yourself, you can still send your datasheets back to JDCF and we will upload your data into NestWatch.

We can all take good care of your nesting native birds by taking good care of their homes. Their habitat has not come back, so without these nest boxes the population will crash again. Help us continue to take care of our Gems of Blue!

See you on March 29<sup>th</sup>!

Thank you,

Vicky, Hillary and the Bluebird team