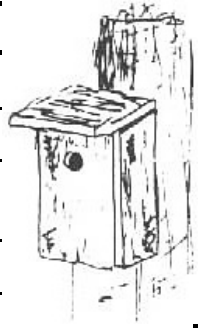


Bird Houses for Cavity Nesting Songbirds – SW Oregon – Guidelines



Nest Box Placement

1. Face box **away** from afternoon sun, nor should the prevailing wind blow into the opening.
2. Correct **height**, but not so high the box can't be checked or cleaned (see Table below).
3. Generally, nest boxes placed on the bare portion of a tree trunk or on a pole in the open have a better chance of being occupied than do boxes surrounded by vegetation.
4. The top of the box should **not tip to the rear (backwards)**. Young birds might not be able to get out!
5. Boxes do not need perches, which serve predators better than residents of the boxes.
6. **Well-spaced-out boxes** will receive more use than those clustered together. (Avoid inter- and intra-species territorial conflicts.) If possible, place boxes so that one cannot be seen from another.
7. Black-capped chickadee (conifer), White-breasted Nuthatch (conifer), Oak Titmouse (hardwood), and Ash-throated Flycatcher (hardwood) seem to favor nest boxes **placed up into the lowest live limbs** of the preferred tree type, a short distance (perhaps 1 to 3 feet) out from the bole, preferably not in densely vegetative limbs, but somewhat open. (Dennis Vroman)

Song birds which use standard "square" nest boxes with an entrance hole of 1½"

SW Oregon (Siskiyou National Forest and surrounding areas)

Likely	Possible (these species tend to prefer natural "tree-like" cavities)
Western Bluebird	Black-capped Chickadee*
Mountain Bluebird (at high elevation)	Chestnut-backed Chickadee* (higher elevation)
Tree Swallow	Mountain Chickadee* (at high elevation)
Violet-green Swallow	White-breasted Nuthatch* (valleys, foothills)
House Finch (sometimes nest in bird houses)	Red-breasted Nuthatch* (higher elevation)
House Wren*	Oak Titmouse* (valleys, foothills)
Bewick's Wren*	Bold = most common nest box users in interior (Rogue/Illinois) valleys.
Ash-throated Flycatcher (valleys, foothills)	Note: you may choose to destroy nests of House Sparrows, to give native cavity nesters a better chance at success. House Sparrows are not protected by law. 1½" hole excludes European Starling.
House Sparrow (ugh!) (Near human dwellings.)	

*These species can utilize entrance holes 1¼" in diameter, which excludes House [English] Sparrows.

Dimensions of nest boxes for various species of birds that regularly use them, and the height at which they should be placed above ground (Homes for Birds, 1969, USFWS Con. Bull.14).

SPECIES	Floor of Cavity	Depth of Cavity	Entrance above Floor	Diameter of Entrance	Height above Ground ^{1/}
	Inches				Feet
Bluebirds	5x5	8	6	1½	5-10
Chickadees	4x4	8-10	6-8	1⅞	6-15
Titmouse*	4x4	8-10	6-8	1¼	6-15
Nuthatches*	4x4	8-10	6-8	1¼	12-20
House / Bewick's wrens*	4x4	6-8	1-6	1 - 1¼	6-10
Tree / V-G swallows	5x5	6	1-5	1½	10-15

^{1/} Many experiments show that boxes at moderate heights, mostly within reach of a person on the ground, are readily accepted by many birds.

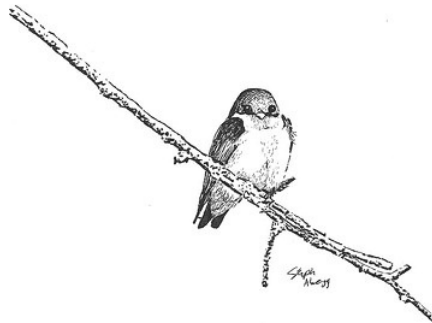
IDENTIFICATION OF SOME OF THE BIRDS USING BLUEBIRD NEST BOXES IN OREGON

Identifying field marks of six of the most common birds using nest boxes, and a description of their nests and eggs follows. The information is taken from Peterson's Field Guide to Western Birds (1969) and Robbins' Birds of North America (1983) respectively.

SPECIES	FIELD MARKS*	NEST	EGGS
WESTERN BLUEBIRD	6" long. Male: bright blue head, wings, tail; reddish-brown breast. Female: gray head, back, pale blue wings, tail; pink breast. 232, 250.	Fine textured grass 4-5" high, deep cup, occasional feather.	3 - 7 pale blue-green, rarely white.
TREE SWALLOW	5-1/2" long. Male: metallic blue head, back; dark rump. Female: dull blue-gray head, back; dark rump. Both sexes white below, white on face extends up to eye. 203, 220.	Coarse textured grass, 3-4" high cup lined with many fluffy feathers.	3 - 5 white; indistinguishable from Violet-green Swallow.
VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW	5-1/2" long. Both sexes similar, female less colorful. iridescent violet-green head, back; white below, upper rump; white on face to above eye. 203, 220.	Coarse textured grass, 3-4" high cup topped with many white feathers.	3 - 5 white.
BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE	4-1/2 " long. Both sexes similar. Black cap, throat; back grayish; white below with buffy flanks, white cheeks. 211 228.	Moss, 3-4" high, cup lined with fur, horsehair.	6 - 9 white, dotted with reddish-brown.
HOUSE WREN	4-1/2" long. Both sexes similar. Dark brown above, grayish-brown below; tail usually cocked up. 220, 236.	Twigs, often fills box; cup lined with fur, grass.	6 - 9 white with reddish-brown speckles.
HOUSE SPARROW	5-1/2" long. Male: black throat, gray below, reddish-brown nape, brown back, gray cap. Female: brown back, gray below, buffy eye strips. Both sexes have finch-like beak. 264, 278.	Coarse textured grass, buds, string. Often fills box. Lined with feathers.	3 - 7 white to greenish-white speckled with brown.



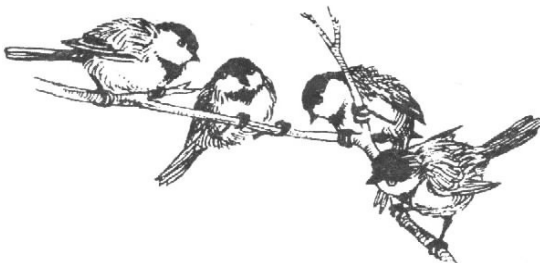
*Western Bluebird
Pair at nest box
Photo ©Tom Grey
<http://tgreybirds.com>*



*Tree Swallow
by Steph Abegg*



Violet-green Swallow



Black-capped Chickadees



House Wren



English or House Sparrow