



## Nestbox Management for Landowners

### Style of nestboxes:

Nestboxes should be designed for protection from the Texas heat. Landowners can contact Texas Bluebird Society about purchasing nestboxes (delivery not available) or building their own nestboxes from TBS plans found on the website [www.texasbluebirdsociety.org](http://www.texasbluebirdsociety.org) (click Building Plans). *This is not the only nestbox suitable for Texas conditions.*

### Placement of nestboxes:

To attract bluebirds, nestboxes should be placed in a somewhat open area with short grass. Some landowners mow paths or perform controlled burns to provide the short grass bluebirds prefer. Afternoon shade, if possible, gives added protection from heat. A tree, fence, high line, snag or pole should be nearby for perching. To encourage multiple families of bluebirds, place nestboxes 100 yards apart. To encourage bluebirds plus other cavity nesters, place them closer together. Leaving nestboxes up year round furnishes protection for birds in the winter.

### Mounting nestboxes:

Nestboxes should be mounted five feet or higher; however, TBS does not recommend mounting them on trees or posts that would make nestlings accessible to predators. The ideal posts to use are 1-inch galvanized steel pipes or 3/4-inch EMT conduit sleeves over 5/8-inch rebar stakes. A telescoping pole, which provides extra distance from predators, is another good option. In addition, TBS strongly recommends adding a Kingston or another type of predator baffle\* to deter snakes, raccoons and cats. Visit [www.sialis.org](http://www.sialis.org), [www.nabluebirdsociety.org](http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org) and [www.texasbluebirdsociety.org](http://www.texasbluebirdsociety.org) for more information about predator control measures.

*\* To deter snakes, a 4- to 5- foot section of PVC can be slipped over the mounting pole and painted with grease. Clean with a solvent at the end of the nesting season.*

### Monitoring nestboxes:

Monitoring nestboxes includes looking in the nestboxes, correcting any troublesome situations (such as removing wasp nests and fire ants), recording what is observed and reporting the data to NestWatch at [www.nestwatch.org](http://www.nestwatch.org). Ideally, nestboxes should be monitored weekly from February through September. Landowners may want to team with others in the community or hire someone who can check the nestboxes each week. If weekly monitoring is not a practical option, monitor as often as possible and report findings to NestWatch. Bluebirds will nest 2 to 4 times per season in Texas so used or abandoned eggs and nests should be removed to allow subsequent nesting (dispose far away from nestboxes to avoid attracting predators). Between September and January, all nesting material should be removed. Note that it is against the law to keep old nests, eggs or feathers of any native birds without permits.