



# Bluebirds

## One Nestbox at a Time

By Lucinda Valdes

Vibrant blue, social charmers, bluebirds have captured the heart and imagination of the state and one birding enthusiast in particular—Linda Crum, Texas Master Naturalist and board member of the Texas Bluebird Society.

Recipient of the organization's Blue Feather Award for her conservation efforts, Ms. Crum has inspired more than one hundred homeowners in the area to add bluebird nestboxes to their landscapes in the past year. Nestboxes are playing a vital role in the recovery of the diminutive bird, formerly in serious decline.

Unlike most songbirds, bluebirds do not build nests in treetops. "They nest in a cavity," Ms. Crum explained, "and bluebirds can not excavate their own cavity." Historically, bluebirds rely on abandoned sites created by woodpeckers or natural decay in trees and cedar fence posts.

"Bluebirds were in a lot of trouble during the early part of the twentieth century," she said. "Not just from habitat loss, but from competition with house sparrows, a non-native species." The aggressive bird can still be a threat, but the specially-constructed nestboxes help to safeguard the Eastern bluebird.

The rewards of adding a nestbox to the home landscape are many. In addition to being pretty, "bluebirds seem to form some type of relationship with humans," according to Ms. Crum. Courtship, nest building and rearing of young are easily observed. "When I whistle, they answer," she said.

On Thursday, April 2, at 7:30 P.M., enjoy a close-up view of bluebirds with Linda Crum at *Attracting Bluebirds*. Featuring beautiful photography of the life stages and habits of bluebirds, the program is a *Walk in the Woods* Nature Lecture hosted in the L.G.I. Lecture Hall at McCullough Junior High School. Nestboxes will be available, while supplies last, with a \$15 membership to Texas Bluebird Society.

Organized by Community Associations of The Woodlands, the program is free due to the sponsorship of The Woodlands G.R.E.E.N., Waste Management and The Pineywoods Nursery. Call the Community Associations' Environmental Services Department at 281.210.3900 for more information. ♻️

*The male Eastern Bluebird (above) is more vividly colored than the female. Insects comprise 90 percent of their diet.*

Photo by Mike and Jean Drummond



Photo by Bill Griffith

Linda Crum monitors 10 nestboxes in the area, recording nest building, egg laying and fledging of young. Old nests are removed for the health and safety of the bird.

### Walk in the Woods Nature Lecture *Attracting Bluebirds* With Linda Crum

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L.G.I. Lecture Hall  
McCullough Junior High School  
281.210.3900