Warner Parks Bird Information Research and Data (B.I.R.D.) Program

2025 EASTERN BLUEBIRD REPORT

Since 1936, staff and volunteers at Warner Parks have monitored and banded Eastern Bluebirds to document breeding success to inform our understanding of bluebird populations. This important endeavor was started by Amelia Laskey because at the time, bluebird populations had sharply declined because of the introduction on non-native European House Sparrows and European Starlings.[1] Laskey installed bluebird boxes throughout the park and monitored the number of young produced at each box.

2025 celebrates the 90th year of this legacy project in Warner Parks, and is the longest continuous Eastern Bluebird nest box research project in the United States. This research is carried out by a team of staff and volunteers who monitor approximately 50 nest boxes throughout Warner Parks from March through September each year.

All banding is conducted under a state permit and a federally authorized Bird Banding Permit issued by the U.S. Geological Survey's BBL.

FRIENDS OF WARNER PARKS

METRO PARKS NASHVILLE

WARNER PARK NATURE CENTER

Why bluebirds matter

From a practical perspective, bluebirds are important to our native habitats as they help control insect populations and disperse seeds. But bluebirds are also symbols of happiness, love, and renewal. Their colorful plumage and expressive songs have delighted Warner Parks' visitors for years.

An Eastern Bluebird calendar

February - March: Bluebirds are searching for nesting sites such as tree cavities or human-made bluebird boxes, singing to establish territories, and forming pair-bonds.

March - May: Nesting season begins with courtship and nest building. Both parents feed the young. The Bluebird Team begins regularly monitoring the nest boxes to document the number of eggs and young that fledge.

May - August: The nesting cycle is repeated with second and even third clutches. Males care for the young of previous broods. Typically earlier clutches produce more young (4-6) compared to the later summer clutches with 3-4 young).

September: The nesting season winds down. Family groups are frequently seen together and both parents and young birds help feed the final brood of the season.

Fall - Winter: You may notice more bluebirds as northern birds spend the winter here. Winter is a crucial survival period - native insects and berries and roosting boxes/natural cavities critical to their survival.


Photo by Jenna Atma

2025 Bluebird Research Results


Photo by Graham Gerdeman

Eastern Bluebird totals

- 347 eggs with 287 hatching and 251 fledging (grown and leaving the nest)
- 215 nestlings were banded between 7-10 days of age
- 10 adults were captured and banded at the nest
- 18 adults were recaptured. This year, two female bluebirds used Purple Martin colony gourds as their nest boxes, and both were successful with 5 fledged young each!
- Only 7 nests were predated this year. Poles and baffles have decreased predation from snakes and raccoons that have been more common in previous years. However, the main causes of nest failure this year were a combination of ant nest infestations, and side effects from insecticides used on nearby non-park lawns. Avoiding pesticides helps keep our birds safe and healthy!

Other species

- Tree Swallows laid 34 eggs, 30 hatched, and 12 fledged. Of these we banded 7 young and 5 adults. Tree Swallows, a native bird, have expanded their breeding range and began nesting in Warner Parks in 2008.
- One Carolina Chickadee nest produced 4 eggs, although none of them hatched. We had no other species using the bluebird nest boxes this year.


Photos by Jenna Atma

2025 Eastern Bluebird Report

A huge thank you to our dedicated Bluebird Team!

- Bluebird Team Coordinator and Leaders: Diana McLusky & Jenna Atma
- Monitors and Banders: Jenna Atma, Kim Bailey, Laura Cook, John Kell, Rachael Payton, and Evelyn Paret
- Bluebird data analyst Emily Culbertson, who is in the process of compiling all of our bluebird data going back to 1936!
- All of the other amazing staff and volunteers who helped contribute to this legacy research project for its 90th year!

Photos by Jenna Atma

To learn more about the Bird Program's avian research and upcoming events please visit our Friends of Warner Parks website: https://warnerparks.org/initiatives-and-impact/bird-program

The BIRD Program is supported in partnership by Friends of Warner Parks, Metro Nashville Parks and Recreation, and Warner Park Nature Center.