Impact Project Report

Improving Local Bluebird Populations

Issue

North American bird populations are in serious decline - 30% decline since the 1970s of all birds. From the 1900s-1970s, the Eastern Bluebird population declined 90%. However, due to efforts of private citizen-volunteers installing bluebird boxes, populations have begun to recover - about 2.4% per year.

Project

Eastern Bluebirds love the north Raleigh area; to increase their population, Master Naturalist Cari Votava installed a bluebird nestbox trail of 20 nestboxes on the Bedford section of the Neuse River Greenway Trail. Ten boxes were installed in March, which she maintained, monitored, and reported nesting data to Cornell's Nestwatch Program. An additional 10 boxes were installed in August, after nesting season ended. She will maintain, monitor, and report nesting data on these in the next nesting season (March-August).

The US Army Corps of Engineers has agreed that she can install 20 nestboxes around Falls Lake Dam. These will be installed in October/November, and she will maintain, monitor, and report nesting data in the next nesting season.



Results

Nesting season ended in late July, so the initial 10 Bluebird boxes installed on the western section of Bedford Greenway early in March 2026 hosted many families:

- 4 bluebird clutches laid a total of 17 eggs, 14 babies fledged.
- 1 clutch of Carolina Chickadees laid 6 eggs, 5 babies fledged.
- 1 clutch of Brown-Headed Nuthatches laid 6 eggs, 6 babies fledged.
- 1 clutch of House Wrens laid 7 eggs, 7 babies fledged.



The newer 10 nestboxes will host birds in the next nesting season, as will 20 bluebird boxes on top of Falls Lake Dam. This project has increased the local bluebird population for the enjoyment of people, and it has contributed to increasing the local bluebird population. As these are native birds, it contributes to the health of the environment.

Most of the bluebird boxes were built by teenage scouts as credits toward their merit badges. Some local scouts also provided adequate predator baffles and helped with installation. Cari is grateful for the support provided by the NC Bluebird Society, and willingness of the Raleigh Parks & Recreation Department to consider expanding the trail once renovations on the Bedford Greenway are completed late 2027.

Student

This project is the work of Cari Votava.

Highlight

Partner Organization

NC Bluebird Society

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