

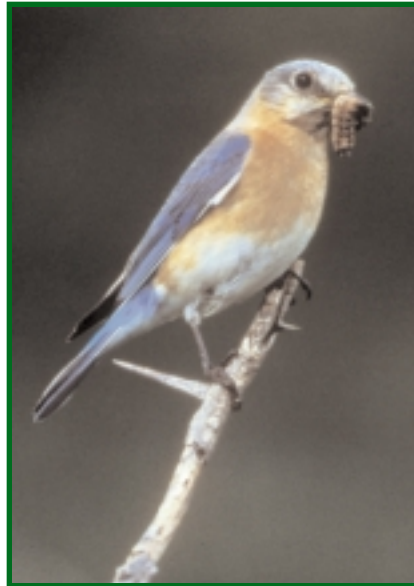
# Welcoming Bluebirds

“Oh bluebird, welcome back again,  
Thy azure coat and ruddy vest  
Are hues that April loveth best...”

—John Burroughs

In the 1970's, Eastern bluebirds were an uncommon sight in Vermont. Starlings and house sparrows, both non-native species, were nesting in the woodpecker holes in which bluebirds traditionally nested. Few people understood the importance of leaving dead trees standing as homes for wildlife and unwittingly cut down nest trees. Open fields, where bluebirds feed, were growing up into forest.

Through the efforts of bird conservation organizations— educating people about bluebirds and building nest box trails— bluebirds increasingly grace Vermont's summertime landscape.



## Aerial acrobats

Next time you're lucky enough to spot that brilliant flash of blue and russet, stop a while to watch the male Eastern bluebird in action. From his field-side perch, he may swoop out to nab a dragonfly in mid-air. He may drop from his perch to the ground and return with a fat caterpillar twisting in his beak.

Try finding a female bluebird. She wears muted tones of blue and brown, allowing her to blend more with her surroundings.

## What you can do

- Build a bluebird house, or better yet, build several. Check out Donald Stoke's *The Bluebird Book* for details on construction, placement, and spacing.
- Leave dead trees, called snags, standing in your woods. Bluebirds will nest in holes they find in snags that border an open field.



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