

Eastern Bluebirds

Jana Miller



Bluebird eggs in nest



Bluebird chicks a few days old

Jana Miller

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Bluebird chicks 10 days old



Bluebird fledgling

George Veazey



Flatwoods Park

Main Entrance (A)

14302 Morris Bridge Road, Thonotosassa, FL

Western Entrance:

Bruce B. Downs (CR 581) 1 mile NE of I-75 crossover

Written by Mary Miller
Cover photo by John Miller



Tampa Audubon Society
www.TampaAudubon.org
P. O. Box 320025, Tampa, FL 33679

Flatwoods Park Bluebird Trail



A project of the
Tampa Audubon Society, and
the Hillsborough County Parks,
Recreation & Conservation
Department

Flatwoods Park Bluebird Trail is a Success

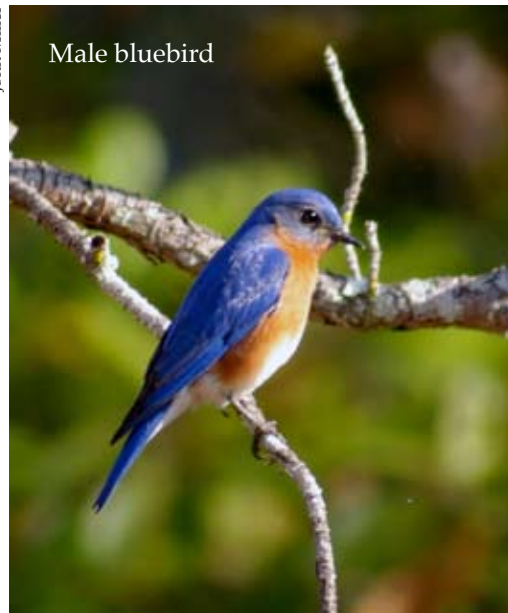
Flatwoods Park Bluebird Trail helps once-threatened bluebird populations rebound from serious decline. The boxes provide nesting cavities for bluebirds, whose natural nesting cavities were taken over by English house sparrows, introduced in 1851. Later decline was from habitat loss and pesticide use.

This bluebird trail has been in existence since the 1970s and monitored weekly since 2005. In addition to bluebirds (BB), other native birds like Carolina chickadees (CC), tufted titmice (TM), and Carolina wrens (CW) also nest in the boxes.

Our total number of chicks fledged since 2005:

Year	BB	CC	TM	Other	Yearly Totals
2005	74	11	26		111
2006	72	17	12	4 CW	105
2007	83	15	21		119
2008	119	21	12		152
2009	125	5	14		144
2010	148	26	20		194
2011	164	37	31		232
2012	148	15	15		178
2013	138	20	16	11 Bats	185
2014	172	10	13		195
2015	165	0	9		174
Totals	1,408	177	189	15	1,789

John Miller



Male bluebird

Some Interesting Facts About Bluebirds

- The bluebird is in the Thrush family and is about 7 inches long.
- There are 3 species of Bluebirds in North America; Eastern, Western, and Mountain.
- Only the Eastern Bluebird lives in Florida and lives here year round.
- The male has a bright blue back and a rust colored breast; the female is not as brightly colored.
- Nesting begins in March and ends in August in Florida, and the pair has 1 to 3 broods.
- In Florida, the bluebirds use their boxes primarily during nesting season. In colder winter weather up north, they seek refuge in their boxes for warmth.
- During the nesting season, the bluebird eats and feeds its young insects. The remainder of the year, the bluebird also eats fruits and berries.
- Flatwoods Park, with its pine flatwoods and adjacent open areas is a perfect habitat for bluebirds because they need open space for insect foraging.

John Miller



Tampa Audubon Society Bluebird Monitor cleaning a nestbox

Flatwoods Park is a Hillsborough County Park that has a seven-mile paved bike path, as well as many unpaved wilderness trails. The fifty-one bluebird boxes are located along the bike path and are maintained by Tampa Audubon Society and the Park staff.

When you visit Flatwoods Park, you may see a Tampa Audubon Society Bluebird Monitor opening boxes to count the eggs or chicks, cleaning out boxes, or clearing out predators, such as frogs and snakes.

The monitor asks that visitors please do not open or disturb the boxes or bother nesting birds, because extra handling could cause the birds to abandon the nests.

Most Americans have never seen a bluebird. So, if you spot a flash of blue flying along the trail, take a moment to enjoy this special treat and be thankful that the Flatwoods Park Bluebird Trail is helping the bluebird to make a comeback.

S U C C E S S !