

## **NABS NESTBOX APPROVAL CRITERIA**

The goal of the NABS Approval Criteria is to ensure the best and safest habitat for bluebirds (and other native cavity nesters) and guide the general public (many who may be purchasing a nestbox for the first time) to help them select one that fulfills the highest standards endorsed by the North American Bluebird Society.

### **MATERIALS**

- ✧ Wood, at least 3/4 inch thick is recommended (e. g., cedar or redwood which are long lasting when left natural, pine or exterior plywood.)
- ✧ PVC pipe or PVC materials.
- ✧ Never use preservative, or pressure treated wood, ceramic, or thin metal stock.

### **ENTRY HOLES**

- ✧ Eastern & Western bluebirds need a 1-1/2 inch round hole (1-9/16 inch is acceptable).
- ✧ Mountain bluebirds need a 1-9/16 inch round hole.
- ✧ Where Eastern or Western species overlap with Mountain, use 1-9/16 inch round holes.
- ✧ On a Slot Box the slot width should not exceed 1-3/16 inches.
- ✧ Other entry hole dimensions/shapes not mentioned here will be reviewed on a case-by- case basis, but they must exclude the entry of the European starling.
- ✧ It is recommended that all nestboxes have a “bird ladder” on the inside under the entry hole, such as saw kerfs or rough surfaces. These enable nestlings and tree swallows easier exit.
- ✧ Never use an under-the-hole perch on any nestbox.

### **FLOOR SIZE**

- ✧ Nestboxes for Eastern and Western bluebirds should have a floor area which is nominally 10 square inches (e.g., 3x3-5/8 inches) or preferably 16 square inches (e.g., 4x4 inches).
- ✧ Nestboxes for Mountain Bluebirds should have a floor area which is nominally 16 square inches (e.g., 4x4 inches) or preferably 25 square inches (e.g. 5x5 inches).

## **ACCESS**

- ✧ Nestboxes must have access doors on either the side, the front, or the top, to facilitate monitoring and cleaning.

## **COLORS**

- ✧ Natural (uncoated) wood is recommended.
- ✧ If paints or stains are applied to the outside of the nestbox, use only exterior, water-based products (e.g., latex), linseed oil or tung oil.
- ✧ Use only heat reflective colors (e.g., white or light earth-tones) to reduce overheating inside the nestbox.
- ✧ Painting or staining the inside of a nestbox is not recommended.

## **ROOFS**

- ✧ The roof should provide sufficient overhang beyond the box entrance or vent holes to protect the birds from the elements.
- ✧ The roof should have a minimum of ½ inch of overhang at the back unless other features prevent rain water from entering the joint between the back and the roof.

## **RAIN WATER CONTROL**

- ✧ Holes or corner openings in the floor (bottom) of the nestbox are strongly recommended and allow for rain water to drain out and to facilitate air circulation inside.
- ✧ Nestboxes must have watertight construction at all seams/joints.

## **HEAT PROTECTION**

- ✧ Cross-ventilation is strongly recommended. One vent notch or a vent slit per side at the top, just under the roof overhang area, will serve this purpose.

## **DISCRETIONARY LATITUDE**

- ✧ On a case-by-case basis, exceptions to these minimum NABS requirements may be approved by a majority of the NABS Nestbox Committee for those nestboxes that have a proven record of successfully fledging bluebirds in various regions throughout North America.