



Eastern Bluebird



Western Bluebird



Mountain Bluebird

Bluebirds are among the most well-known and popular groups of birds in North America. They are members of the thrush family and are thus related to robins. There are three species of bluebirds: the eastern bluebird, the western bluebird, and the mountain bluebird. Bluebirds can grow to lengths of about seven inches. They weigh a couple of ounces.

The Eastern Bluebird – This bird is common in southeastern Canada, the eastern United States, and northern Mexico. It eats insects and berries and can be attracted to feeders with mealworms. Males are sky blue above and orange below. Females are similar to males but paler in coloration. Eastern bluebirds nest in tree cavities but can be attracted to man-made nest boxes. They are usually found in open areas with scattered trees, including suburban neighborhoods. The eastern bluebird is the state bird of New York and Missouri.

The Western Bluebird – The western bluebird is similar to the eastern bluebird. It is found mostly in the western United States and northern Mexico. Like the other bluebirds, the western bluebird nests in tree cavities or man-made nest boxes. Unlike the other bluebirds, however, western bluebirds prefer forests rather than open areas. Males look like male eastern bluebirds except they have orange on their backs. Females are more grayish than males.

The Mountain Bluebird – The mountain bluebird is found in western North America. Unlike the western bluebird however, it can be found as far north as Alaska and northern Canada. The mountain bluebird is found in alpine meadows and open areas. It often feeds by catching insects in mid-air. Males are dazzling blue above and lighter blue below. Males are told from other bluebirds by a lack of orange on the underparts. Female mountain bluebirds are largely gray with hints of blue. Mountain bluebirds nest in tree cavities and man-made nest boxes. The mountain bluebird is the state bird of Idaho and Nevada.

- 1. Which is NOT something all three bluebirds have in common?**
 - A. Females have duller colorations than males
 - B. All are state birds of at least one state
 - C. All bluebirds are related to robins
 - D. All will nest in man-made boxes

- 2. How is the mountain bluebird dissimilar to the other bluebirds?**
 - A. It lacks orange on its underparts
 - B. It prefers open area habitats
 - C. It nests in tree cavities
 - D. It is about seven inches in length

- 3. What do the mountain bluebird and eastern bluebird have in common?**
 - A. They are both found in the same parts of the United States.
 - B. They both hunt insects in mid-air
 - C. They both prefer open area habitats
 - D. They both have similar colorations

- 4. Which is NOT true?**
 - A. Two of the three bluebirds live in the same kinds of habitats
 - B. Two of the three bluebirds live primarily in the western part of North America
 - C. All three sometimes nest in tree cavities
 - D. All three will catch insects in flight

- 5. Which could be a title for this passage?**
 - A. Bluebirds of the Western United States
 - B. Comparing and Contrasting the Three Bluebirds Species
 - C. Bluebird Conservation
 - D. Attracting Bluebirds to Your Yard