



What Birds Can Be Found Using Bluebird Nest Boxes?

Eastern Bluebird

The eastern bluebird is a familiar backyard bird with its vibrant blue feathers, brick-red breast, and throat. They are found throughout the eastern United States and are year-round residents in South Carolina. Bluebirds consume primarily insects in the summer and berries in the winter. Some of their prey items include caterpillars, grasshoppers, crickets, and spiders, and some of their winter food consists of currants, wild holly, hackberries, juniper berries, and dogwood berries.

Breeding in South Carolina occurs between February and September, and individuals can raise up to three broods a year, although having two is more common. Females make nests in cavities by loosely weaving together pine straw and grasses into a cup shape. Clutch size can vary from 2 to 7 eggs, with an average of four or five being common in our area. Eggs are light blue, with the infrequent occurrence of white eggs. White eggs will still hatch normal-colored bluebirds. The egg color does not affect the outcome of the chick.

Leucism does, however, occasionally appear in bluebirds. This is when all pigmentation is lacking from the bird's feathers, resulting in a completely white-feathered bluebird. This differs from albinism, a complete lack of melanin production, resulting in a bluebird with a completely white body and red eyes. While both conditions are rare, leucism is more common than albinism, and there are several leucistic bluebirds at Palmetto Bluff.

Carolina Chickadee

The Carolina chickadee is a common, year-round resident in South Carolina and much of the eastern United States. They feed primarily on caterpillars, aphids, spiders, and many other insects but also consume some seeds, berries, and fruit.

The breeding season occurs in early spring and lasts through mid-July. The female makes the nest in a cavity out of moss, adding a thick lining of plant fibers or hair to the top of the nest. She lays 3-10 eggs and raises only one brood a year. The eggs are white with small reddish-brown dots.

Carolina Wren

The Carolina wren is a year-round resident of South Carolina and can be found in most of the eastern United States. Its diet consists of caterpillars, spiders, moths, leafhoppers, beetles, crickets, and other insects. Occasionally, it will consume fruit pulp or seeds from bayberry, sweetgum, and poison ivy.

The breeding season for Carolina wrens occurs between March and October. A pair's male and female work on building a nest together. Nests are found in cavities and are usually domed with an entrance hole in the side. Various nesting materials, such as pine needles, grasses, straw, hair, feathers, string, bark strips, or even snakeskin, may be used. Clutch size fluctuates between 3-7 eggs; females can raise up to three broods a year. Egg color can vary between a creamy white and a pinkish white with fine, rusty-brown spots.

Tufted Titmouse

The tufted titmouse is a common, year-round resident of South Carolina and most of the eastern United States. Their diet consists mostly of insects and other small arthropods such as caterpillars, wasps, treehoppers, spiders, snails, and beetles. They will also feed on seeds, nuts, and berries.

Tufted titmice breed from March to May. They build their nest in cavities like many other small songbirds. Nests are cup-shaped and made from moss, grasses, bark strips, or wet leaves. The nest is lined with soft material such as cotton, wool, or fur from various mammals. Clutches range between 3-9 eggs, and the female raises a single brood yearly. Eggs are white or creamy white with brown, chestnut red, or purple spots.

Bats in Bird Houses

Occasionally, bats will roost in birdhouses or cavity nest boxes. If you come across a bat using a birdhouse, do not attempt to remove it from the box. You do not want to injure the bat or risk being bitten. Bats switch their roosts often, so there is a good chance it will be gone by the next day and not return to the box. Please report any finding of bats using birdhouses, as we are interested in which species are utilizing them. For more information about bats, see **Bats of Palmetto Bluff**.

Check out [this link](#) from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology for more information on common backyard birds.