

Nature Notes

Mountain Bluebirds



I do not know where the expression 'bluebird of happiness' comes from but I understand the sentiment. When I see the first bluebird in March I know that spring will soon be here.

There are two species of bluebird in the Kimberley Nature Park,



Male Mtn Bluebird

Photo by S Hansen

the most common being the Mountain Bluebird.

The male is the most striking sky-blue and the female is an overall lighter gray-blue. Bluebirds belong to the Thrush family along with Robins,

Varied Thrush and Swainson's Thrush.

The male bluebird returns first in the spring and establishes a territory that is always in an open woodland or an open grass-land such as Sunflower Hill. The pair will form a strong bond that lasts through the season, usually producing two broods.

The female will build a woven grass nest in a pre-existing tree cavity or man-made bluebird box. The four to six pale blue eggs will hatch in fourteen days and both parents will feed the young until they fledge at the age of twenty-one days.

Insects are bluebirds' main food source. They are one of the few species that will hover, then snatch the prey from the ground. This unique technique is called ground sallying



Female Mtn Bluebird
Photo by Birdfeeder USA

The bluebird song is a short series of burry whistles but these birds are usually identified by their beautiful color.

Visit www.rockies.net/kimberley/naturepark for a hard copy or more information about Nature Park events.