

## WESTERN BLUEBIRD HATCHING SCHEDULE

Ordinarily, all the eggs hatch the same day, but in rare cases one egg may hatch the following day. The female broods the nestlings for the first six days. Initially, all the food is brought in by the male.

### HATCHING DAY

The hatchling is completely naked except for grey down on the head, shoulders and back. Weight averages 2.5 grams. Lower legs are 3/8" in length. Average body length is about 1.5".

### DAY 1

Similar to hatchling, except for larger size. Body weight is about 4 grams. Body length is about 1 3/4".

### DAY 2

Contour feather development is under way in shoulder, spine and vent areas. Weight averages 7 grams. Lower leg averages 1/2".

### DAY 3

Ear openings are evident for the first time. Weight is about 9 grams.

### DAY 4

Wings are generally darkening, with feather sheaths breaking through. Sheaths of the tail feathers have come through. Weight is increasing rapidly, and is now about 15 grains. Lower leg is now about 5/8", allowing the hatchling to begin balancing himself.

### DAY 6

Feather tracts are all very dark, and feather sheaths are breaking through on the legs, shoulder, and posterior portion of the spinal tracts.

### DAY 8

Eyes open for the first time, feather growth is rapid, but primary and secondary feathers on the wings are still enclosed in their sheaths. Feathers in the leg and vent areas are out of the sheath. During the first week the greatest change in the nestlings is an overall increase in size. Body weight averages 21 grams, almost 9 times hatching weight in just one week.

