



BLUEBIRDS FLY!

California Bluebird Recovery Program Newsletter

—Assisted by Mount Diablo Audubon Society —
An affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society

\$2.50 Per Issue
Suggested
Donation

www.cbrp.org

“For the encouragement and conservation of cavity-nesters — especially bluebirds — anywhere in the West”



AWWWW

I am a little short of content this issue, so here are 1000 words. “**Fledglings on the feeder**” image by **Marc Havens** with permission to use it in our mission.



The Director's Chair

I just returned from our annual vacation on the Big Island of Hawaii. As always the birding and snorkeling were great but the downside was the VOG (air quality) on the West (Kona) side of the island resulting from the Kilauea eruption. Surprisingly, the air quality was better in the town of Volcano, which is only a few miles from the Kilauea crater. Unfortunately poor media reporting has decimated tourism on the entire island.

Orioles, Oak Titmouse, Jays, Chickadees, and Anna's Hummers are only a few of the many species which are at our feeders this time of the year. We really enjoy the activity as we can see the feeders from our breakfast room table. Activity gets intense near sunset each day but continues all day long. It is amazing how well these species get along patiently taking turns at the various feeders. For the first time in several years three of my five bird boxes produced Chestnut Backed Chickadees. All-in-all this is starting out as a great birding season for me.

Please enter your end-of-season data into the CBRP data-entry spreadsheet. I would like to start working on the 2018 annual report early and so would like to have all of your data entered by December 1, 2018. **Attention Santa Clara County (CNRP) trial monitors:** I would like to have your (preliminary) data by September 1 in time for our annual meeting later in the month.

CBRP data entry spreadsheet:

CBRP collects aggregate data by species and trail (not detailed nestbox by nestbox data)

<https://goo.gl/jgMK5v> or

[https://drive.google.com/open?](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1haZZCx2HM_n8zg_yKJrMlnAbsLulCRQorvFi1vi3WiI)

[id=1haZZCx2HM_n8zg_yKJrMlnAbsLulCRQorvFi1vi3WiI](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1haZZCx2HM_n8zg_yKJrMlnAbsLulCRQorvFi1vi3WiI)

Cornell's NESTWATCH:

NestWatch collects detailed box-by-box by species by trail information suitable for scientific research. Please participate in their program as well.



California Bluebird Recovery Program (CBRP) Board Members

Dick Blaine, Program Director — dick@theblaines.net

Dave Cook, Board Member — justdave50@comcast.net

Georgette Howington, Asst. Program Director—

Jim Semelroth, Editor,— jimsemweed@cox.net

ghbirdscape@gmail.com

Dick Purvis, Recruiting — dickersly@aol.com

Documentation for Cornell NestWatch Bulk Upload Template:
Download to your computer for your reference.

<https://goo.gl/PqHXiX> or

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/14Irq7cS02GrClgj-q5ENVZ6Q14M3LpkWFR4Fh24YcM/edit>

NestWatch Bulk Upload Template (Spreadsheet)

Download to your computer, review the instructions sheet (sheet1) and then enter the data for each nest box and each trail into sheet2. Send to me (dick@theblaines.net) and I will review and forward to NestWatch.

<https://goo.gl/6eQA9f> or

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B8OLjlvu4wKlZm5NcDhHUFNKX2s>

Special thanks to those of you who made donations to CBRP this year - see the donor list elsewhere in this issue. Donations barely cover the cost of printing and mailing this newsletter. I am reluctant to ask for dues and prefer to encourage donations. If donations decline from present levels I will revert to on-line newsletters only. Following your name on the mailing label for this issue of *Bluebirds Fly!* are two strings of digits. The first is the date of your most recent contribution in the form *yyyymm* and the second is the amount in the form *\$\$\$*. If these fields are blank then you have not made a contribution in the past three years. My practice is to remove monitors/contributors from the contact list after three years with no activity.

Dick Blaine - dick@theblaines.net

About the California Bluebird Recovery Program Founder - Don Yoder; Emeritus - Hatch Graham

Our Mission

Enlist current bluebirders and recruit others who will help reestablish bluebirds to their normal habitat

- ◆ Locate preferred habitat for the placement of nestboxes suitable for bluebirds
- ◆ Secure monitors to care for the boxes and keep systematic records of the development of young birds during the nesting season
- ◆ Record and analyze all annual summaries of nestbox records
- ◆ Provide a forum (newsletter) through which fellow trail monitors can exchange information and secure help in solving problems encountered in the field.

Learn More

To learn more about the California Bluebird Recovery Program and other cavity nester conservation programs, visit the below web sites:

<http://www.cbrp.org>

<http://www.nabluebirdssociety.org>

<http://www.socalbluebirds.org>

sdbluebirds@cox.net

<http://www.sialis.org>

If you are looking for a mentor, start by contacting the county coordinator in your county listed on page 12. You can also contact **Dick Blaine** (dick@theblaines.net) or **Dick Purvis** (dickersly@aol.com).

Please consider supporting our efforts. There is a donation form on the back page of this newsletter. Your contribution is tax-deductible and goes a long way in helping us conserve the bluebird population in California.

County	First	Last	City	Home#	Email
Alameda	Georgette	Howington	Martinez	925-686-4372	ghbirdscape@gmail.com
Contra Costa	Georgette	Howington	Martinez	925-686-4372	ghbirdscape@gmail.com
Los Angeles	Dick	Purvis	Anaheim	714-776-8878	joann1@socal.rr.com
Madera	Bill	Ralph	Raymond	(209) 966-2260	Bill@dryadranch.com
Mendocino	Michael & Marybeth	Arago	Fort Bragg	707-962-0724	mmbarago@mcn.org
Merced	Steve	Simmons	Merced	209-722-3540	simwoodduk@aol.com
Nevada	Kate	Brennan	Grass Valley	530-268-1682	woodswom-an55@goskywest.com
Orange	Dick	Purvis	Anaheim	714-776-8878	dickersly@aol.com
Placer	Heath	Wakelee	Granite Bay	916 797-4536 951-683-7691 x207	snyder@rcrcd.org
Riverside	Erin	Snyder	Riverside	207	butlerrowe@sbcglobal.net
Sacramento	Vicki	Butler	Sacramento	(916) 448-8030	
San Bernardino	Glen	Chappell	Redlands	909-794-3470	
San Diego	CM	Killebrew	Ramona		sdbluebirds@cox.net
San Louis Obispo	Paul & Judy	Burkhardt	Creston Redwood City	805 438-4491	tinhornranch@sbcglobal.net
San Mateo	Chris	O'Connell	City	650-281-5256	chrisoco@yahoo.com
Santa Barbara	Barbara	Willey	Lompoc	805-588-4997	Barbara.willey@verizon.net
Santa Clara	Mike	Azevedo	Fremont	510-792-4632	Geochelone@aol.com
Shasta	Larry	Jordan	Oak Run	530-472-3131	larrytech@frontiernet.net
Solano/Yolo	Melanie	Truan	Davis	530-754-4975	mltruan@ucdavis.edu
Sonoma	Mike	Crumly	Sonoma	707 996-7256	mikec@freixenetusa.com



COUNTY BLUEBIRD COORDINATORS MEETING

**“Migratory Bird Treaty Act: How to Protect if You Are
Like Me and in the ‘101- Environmental Action For Dummies Class”**

By Georgette Howington

These days not having enough time is a common challenge and keeping up with a full life plus nest box monitoring and volunteering in your community can be challenging to say-the-least. But I, like most of you, are determined to do my share of helping the birds and the environment because, like you, I value and love them. A few years ago, I decided to become a member of the Legislative Action Committee in the Mt. Diablo Audubon Chapter here in Contra Costa County. Why? Laws like the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Endangered Species Act are threatened!

Other than march for the Farmworkers Rights with Caesar Chavez when I was a teenager and waving flags at rallies against the Viet Nam War in the 60's, I have voted at every local, state and federal election since. Aside from that, however, I admit being ignorant about the details of the inner workings of local, state and federal politics plus the hierarchy of government. Thus, my reluctant but firm enrollment in the “101 for Environmental Action Dummies Class.”

If you want to be more effective as a voice for birds, wildlife in general and our environment and you have not taken the step to be activist politically here are some simple steps for you. Ariana Rickard, Associate Director, Chapter Network for California Audubon (arikard@audubon.org) gave me a “How to contact your elected officials” sheet that I am excerpting for you here. If you want the entire copy, just email me and I will send it to you! And anything else that I get that may help you along your journey of letting your voice be heard.

Also, if you are already actively participating, I would enjoy hearing what you are doing to support MBTA and the ESA or any other environmental issues.

“In the current political climate, it is imperative that we all get involved and contact your representatives on issues that affect birds, wildlife, and habitat. Here is a cheat sheet to help provide regular feedback to your elected officials.”

Phoning is better than emails, but if you can't get through, try emailing or writing a letter. Lines are busy and mailboxes are full. Try calling Washington at 6AM our time and you can often get a person just as they are starting their day.

Contact your own representative, they want to hear from their constituents. The exception would be to thank a representative who crossed party lines to support something you favor.

When your call is answered, tell the staffer you are a constituent, where you are calling from, the issue and your position pro or con. Include the bill number if it concerns leg-

isolation. Include a SHORT personal story, such as situations you have experienced or witnessed with direct relation to the issue, but don't ramble on or repeat yourself.

Call as many times as you like on as many issues as you like. They don't care. Call a couple of times a week, rather than one daunting session.

Keep this info close to your phone or computer. Resolve to block out 15 minutes at a time twice a week so you don't burn out. You are not likely to run out of issues.

Go to <https://works.audubon.org> and register plus sign up for alerts from <http://www.ca.audubon.org> And please, if you want to share your journey with me my email is ghbirdscape@gmail.com Let's defend the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Check out H.R 4239 and S.935! PLEASE. That's our homework for now. More later fellow students. Let's GO!!! Please, support AB 2627

A TRUE LOVE-NEST

At the beginning of the season, there were 5 tiny hatchlings in a very active box. Alas! on a subsequent check a few days later, I was crestfallen to find all the little chicks dead! The parents were distressed flying back and forth. I was very puzzled because the little bodies were perfect and without outward signs of illness. The nest was clean. Both parents had continually been very much in attendance, the weather was not too hot or cold, and the nest-box is situated convenient to grassy areas and actually hangs in a Carrotwood tree laden with ripening fruit.

I removed this nest-box and hung a fresh one in its place. As I left, I saw Mom alight on top of the new box while Dad watched from the roof nearby. I hoped they would make another nest and checked on this a couple of days later thinking I might find a few strands of straw. What a total surprise instead to find Mom inside the clean, empty box with 5 pretty blue eggs. No nest!!! It appears the eggs were laid in a great rush in only two days. The power of love must have been so strong, the couple had not taken the time to build a second nest! I cycled back home where I had kept aside a nice, clean uninhabited nest into which I then carefully placed the eggs. I have followed this family closely and am overjoyed to share that all the eggs hatched and all the chicks have recently fledged. I hung a new box in place yesterday. Once again, as soon as I left the immediate area, I looked back and saw Mom alight atop the bird-box with Dad watching from the roof. Hopefully, they will decide upon a 3rd family, this time taking the time to build a new nest before starting it!

Beverly Gandall

I'm moving most of my nest boxes out of the driving ranges of the golf course at Dove Canyon in Orange County. Much less interference of the golfers. I can access them from the roadway around the course. Lots of House Sparrows in my neighborhood park. **Gary Livesey**

Not sure if this qualifies as a trail tale, but after 4 springs we finally have a Western Bluebird pair nesting in our backyard bluebird nest box in Foothill Ranch, CA. We have had this box in our small back yard for about 7 years, and have had Western Bluebirds, House Wrens and Oak Titmice start a nest in our two boxes, but they have never gone beyond nest building. This spring and now summer, we have a Western Bluebird pair that have established a nest and are currently feeding their young. We have not disturbed them so I can not tell you how many young there are. Both the male and female Western Bluebirds have been carrying worms and other small critters to the nest and today while walking by the nest I heard young birds calling for food. I have not opened the nest box to count the hatchlings, but my guess from the sounds there are 4 or 5 of them

Pete and Mitsuko Gordon

I am down to eight boxes in Laguna Niguel Regional Park because of the die-off of most of the sycamores from the Shot Hole Borers. All over the city the sycamores in the medians are half gone and a major budget influx will be needed to dispose of the dead trees. I saw one Jacaranda tree dead next to a dead sycamore. Sycamores are favorites in the southland because of their horizontal limbs to hang our Purvis boxes. **Jim Semelroth**

This is my 3rd year having a box near the Japanese Garden on the campus of Cal State Long Beach. In the two previous years, a pair of western bluebirds have had two broods each season, beginning in April. This year, they were there in early April, but did not build a nest. I figured it was due to all the construction nearby. The field the box is adjacent to is being used as a laydown yard for some large projects and the field is torn up, with piles of dirt and very dusty. I gave up hope but I checked the box anyway and on June 22 there was a tall nest and 2 eggs. The gardener and I talked about it and he told me about a children's book The Best Nest where the birds look for a better home and come back to the original one. We wonder if that's what happened in this case. (On June 29th there were 5 eggs.) I think there will be 5 fledglings from this nest. **Julie Decker**

Front yard box occupied again, but I am sure this is a different pair from previous years. Last year, the pair only had one brood of four. This year they are working on a second brood with six eggs and the male is a dive bomber. I believe the pair from last year might have died or got a divorce. **Jim Semelroth**

I'm up in Arcadia, neighboring the LA Co Arboretum. Have 2 boxes, one in front yard, one in back. Front had 5 eggs, fledged 3. Backyard had 4 eggs, fledged 2. I feed on an elevated tray roasted worms every day. Last week a female and a fledgling landed on the tray as I was finished pouring the worms in. I was literally eye to eye with them... it startled both of us, then I looked down and they continued to feed. Quite a thrill!

“MONITORING AND BEING IN NATURE HEALS”

By Georgette Howington

UC Davis Naturalist Mt. Diablo Region

In June I had the honor of teaching a class, as part of an educational series, at the Gardens at Heather Farm in Walnut Creek. My class was titled, “Biodiversity and Anthropogenic Impacts”. Tom Garry, my monitor partner for the past 15 years taught a section on monitoring techniques as well as shared something very personal about his own journey as a nest box monitor. He was diagnosed with a serious and debilitating mental illness called, “Schizophrenia” about 35 years ago. Monitoring nest boxes has been and is a healing element in his life.

Fifteen years ago, when Tom first began monitoring with me he was apprehensive, heard voices on the trail and often distracted by the symptoms of the illness. Surely, he would give up after the first season. He didn’t. Instead, the quiet of the back trails, the feeling of purpose in monitoring, the general surprise of finding the contents of a box plus seeing baby birds gave him a sense of deep, rewarding joy.

Today, Tom Garry continues to monitor nest boxes with me every season! And guess what? He attributes a softening of symptoms, clarity of insight and a sense of purpose to being a nest box monitor.

One of the books on my recommended reading list for the class is, “The Nature Principle, Reconnecting with Life in a Virtual Age” by Richard Louv. “What would life be like if we were as immersed in nature as we are in electronics? In Richard Louv’s world, we’d be happier and healthier. We’d experience fewer cases of depression, anxiety and attention deficit disorder. And we’d build smarter, more sustainable communities.” Chicago Tribune

A MYSTERY NEST

One of my nest boxes was taken by bluebirds who built a nest and then abandoned it. The next week I found a smaller nest on top made from the thatch from dried thistle flowers. Then five small, aqua blue eggs with tiny black speckles on the big ends were laid. The parents were very shy and hard to see well as they didn’t hang around while I was there so I was mystified. The eggs hatched and I saw the parents well enough to ID them as finches. Although I wasn’t able to see them well enough to ID them from my books, a description of the eggs in one book told me they were purple finches. Mystery solved! Wonder if anyone else has had this species take over a nest box??? (The box is well inland on a golf course in San Clemente.) **Elena Hery**

I'm having increasing problems on several trails with Acorn Woodpeckers damaging my nest boxes, so I was left with the the choice of either removing the boxes, or trying to prevent/ reduce the damage. I've done both, however, this year I tried something different--I skinned the exterior of some boxes with a thin plastic. Although the woodpecker can punch holes through the plastic, it can't if it can't get purchase (cling to the sides of the box). Although the woodpecker can still cling at the entrance hole, an acrylic or metal protector placed around the entrance hole prevents the hole from being enlarged.

I purchased a 1/8" thick 4' x 8' sheet of white plastic from The Home Depot, and cut from it pieces to fit the sides, back and front of the nest box. The plastic was attached to the box using a staple gun and 1/2" staples. The plastic being white also helps keep the interior of the box cooler by reflecting radiant heat.

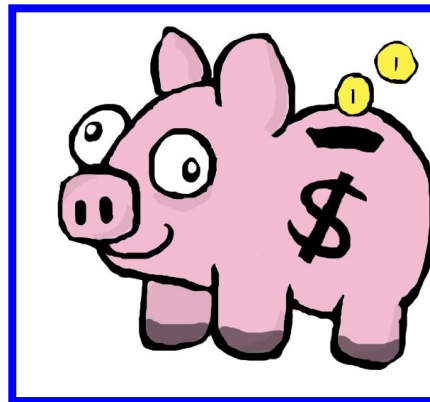
So far this season, every skinned box has had nesting species including Tree Swallows and Western Bluebirds, and no external woodpecker damage.

Lee Pauser



Donations in H 2018 - \$1485

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With much gratitude, we accept these donations.

To donate to the CBRP, please use the form or information on the last page of this newsletter.

Please send correspondence to CBRP
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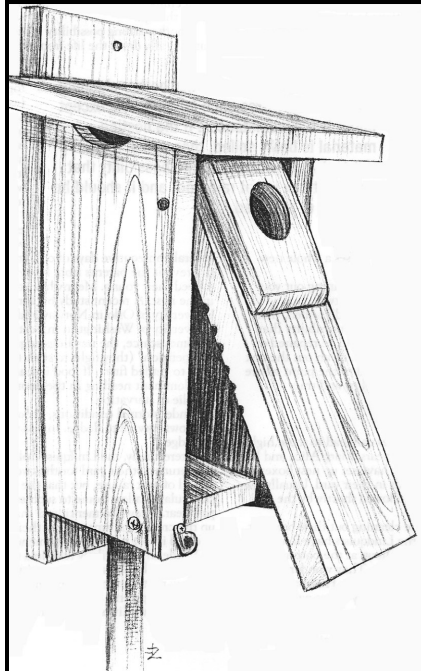
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