



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”

2018 STATEWIDE RESULTS

Results for 2018 are quite similar to those for 2017. There are no surprises in the 2018 results – the top producers and counties are pretty much the same as for the past few years. See the state summary article which is elsewhere in this issue for details (the full 23 years of state reports are available at: http://cbrp.org/documents/results_23yr.pdf). Also see the 2018 Annual report which will be found on the CBRP web site at: http://cbrp.org/annual_reports/ar2018.pdf; this report provided the detailed trail by trail, species by species results as reported by the trail monitors.

Reports were received from 20 counties, 172 monitors and 310 trails. These show that the 5358 (5333 in 2017) boxes installed on the reported trails yielded some 19731 (20246 in 2017) fledglings of which 10859 (11044 in 2017) were Western Blue Birds and the remaining 8872 (9202 in 2017) were distributed among 19 other cavity nesting species.

Orange County, as usual, was the top producing county (by almost a factor of two) for the number of trails, nest tries, total fledglings and Western Bluebird fledglings. See the table of results by counties which appears elsewhere in this issue.

The top producers were **Lee Pauser** (Santa Clara) with 1850/701 fledglings (total/WEBL), **Steve Simmons** (Merced) with 1772/190 fledglings (mostly Wood Ducks), **David McMichael** (Riverside) with 1599/73 fledglings, **Irv Tiessen** (Alameda) with 1534/824 fledgelings and **Melanie Truan** with 961/250. See the table of results by monitor which appears elsewhere in this issue.

The table of state results shows CBRP results for the first and most recent years of the 23 years during which CBRP has been collecting data (1997-2018). The full 23 year results are on the CBRP web page. From 1996 thru 2006 trail-by-trail data were collected from handwritten worksheets, summarized by county coordinators and entered into a statewide spreadsheet. From 2007 thru 2011 box-by-box, trail-by-trail data were entered by monitors directly into a homegrown database. For the past seven years trail-by-trail data were entered by monitors directly into a shared, on-line spreadsheet. Each method has had its own problems resulting in some inaccuracies. In particular the number of nest tries was incorrect from 2007-2011 leading to errors in all ratios and percentages based on that quantity. Note that for the past few years the number of nest tries is again approximately equal to the number of boxes and so, the resulting ratios are more accurate.

If you would like to enter additional detail (box-by-box) with dates and detailed results, I strongly encourage you to participate in Cornell University's e-bird and/or Nestwatch programs. Data on the NestWatch site is of great scientific value and provides information for researchers all over the world. See the following links: General information about the eBird program at Cornell: <http://ebird.org/content/ebird/> Nestwatch web site: <http://nestwatch.org/> Information and an easy to use spreadsheet on the CBRP web site:



The Director's Chair

Thanks to all of you who entered your 2018 results on-line. We used Google Drive again this year for on-line, shared data collection with few problems. I continue to look for a better/simpler way to collect data but have not found one.

The 2018 Annual Report is available in full color for viewing and/or downloading on our web site: at http://www.cbrp.org/annual_reports/2018ar.pdf/. Several articles summarizing the 2018 results will be found in this issue of *Bluebirds Fly!*. 2018 results are similar to those for 2016 and 2017. Note that this and previous newsletters and annual reports as well as updated state results (23 year history), box-by-box and trail-by-trail data) are also available on our web site. Link to <http://www.cbrp.org> and look under "Program Results".

Special thanks to those of you who made donations to CBRP in 2018 (amounting to \$1255 in 2H 2018 and \$2690 for the year) - see the 2nd half 2018 donor list elsewhere in this issue. Donations just about cover the cost of printing and mailing the 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 numbers. 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 or zero 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.

I want to encourage monitors to contribute to and participate in Cornell University's NestWatch Program using their web site or the bulk upload template on the CBRP website so as to preserve the nesting data you collect and to make that data available to researchers around the world. It is not too late to contribute your data to NestWatch.

The link to the NestWatch web site is: <http://www.nestwatch.org>.

The link to the bulk upload documentation is: <https://goo.gl/PqHXiX> and

The link to the bulk upload template is: <https://goo.gl/6eQA9f> (send the completed template to me and I will make the arrangements with NestWatch.)

I get a great deal of enjoyment from my memberships in and donations to NABS (North American Bluebird Society) and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology – especially from their quarterly publications: *Bluebird*, *Journal of the North American Bluebird Society* and *Living Bird* respectively. Both publications are highly informative and easy to read and I feel that I am making worthwhile donations to birding. Their wonderful websites are:

<http://birds.cornell.edu> and

<http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org/>

NABS has a special (low price) one-time membership for members of "Affiliate Organizations" such as CBRP. This is designated as the "A+" membership and is only \$15; a great way to try out NABS membership. Link to <http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org/PDF/MembershipApp.pdf>

for a printable form which includes the "A+" membership.

Remember to start getting ready for the 2019 nesting season by cleaning and repairing your nest boxes by the end of February.



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

Happy New Year and happy 2019 birding. **Dick Blaine** - dick@theblaines.net

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_yKJrMlnAbsLulCRQorvFi1vi3Wil)

[id=1haZZCx2HM_n8zg_yKJrMlnAbsLulCRQorvFi1vi3Wil](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1haZZCx2HM_n8zg_yKJrMlnAbsLulCRQorvFi1vi3Wil)

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.

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

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.nabluebirdsociety.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.

EIGHT YEAR HISTORY COMPARED TO 1996
Space limits prevent displaying of the full spreadsheet

	1996	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Average*
Counties	21	24	20	20	20	24	21	20	20	25
Reporters	169	168	170	169	157	160	178	169	172	188
Species	16	26	21	24	21	20	21	20	19	20
Boxes (N)	2400	5426	5293	5664	5067	5601	5793	5333	5358	4600
Tries (T)	1526	3202	5715	5715	5096	5526	5742	6007	6291	4131
T/N	0.6	0.6	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.2	0.9
Eggs (E)		28386	28423	27876	24058	26262	27509	27395	27097	24625
E/N		5.2	5.4	4.9	4.7	4.7	4.7	5.1	5.1	5.2
E/T		8.9	5.0	4.9	4.7	4.8	4.8	4.6	4.3	5.8
Chicks (H)		22794	22747	22489	19481	21234	22872	22998	22840	20012
H/N		4.2	4.3	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.9	4.3	4.3	4.2
H/T		7.1	4.0	3.9	3.8	3.8	4.0	3.8	3.6	4.6
H/E		0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8
Fledged (F)	5077	20323	20477	19754	17056	18144	19873	20246	19731	16024
F/N	2.1	3.7	3.9	3.5	3.4	3.2	3.4	3.8	3.7	3.4
F/T	3.3	6.3	3.6	3.5	3.3	3.3	3.5	3.4	3.1	4.0
F/E		0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
F/H		0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9

Check out the full 23 year spreadsheet at http://www.cbrp.org/annual_reports/2018ar.pdf/.



I am missing current e-mail addresses for the following contacts. If you want to continue to receive periodic information_send_your current email information to cbrp@cbrp.org. If not, let me know and I will remove you from my contact list.

I am missing current e-mail addresses for the following contacts. If you want to continue to receive periodic information_send_your current email information to cbrp@cbrp.org. If not, let me know and I will remove you from my contact list. **Dick Blaine**

Full Name City

Adams, Jim
 Aldrich, Jim Sornona
 Alvarez, Graciano
 Anderson, Jeanie San Diego
 Association, Calif Waterfowl Sacramento
 Audubon Society, Audubon California Sacramento
 Audubon Society, Eagle Lake Susanville
 Audubon Society, Foothills Auburn
 Audubon Society, Fresno
 Audubon Society, Laguna Hills Audubon Society,
 Mill Valley
 Audubon Society, Palomar Escondido
 Audubon Society, Plumas Quincy
 Audubon Society, San Bernardino Valley San Bernardino
 Audubon Society, San Diego San Diego
 Audubon Society, Sierra Foothills Grass Valley
 Audubon Society, South Coast San Clemente
 Audubon Society, Tulare County Visalia
 Audubon Society, Ventura Ventura
 Audubon Society, Whittier Area Downey
 Bluebird Society, Indiana Leesburg
 Bluebird Society, Lafayette County Darlington
 Bluebird Society, North American Wilmot
 Bluebird Society, Oklahoma Sperry
 Bluebird Society, Schoharie Co. Richmondville
 Bluebird Trail, Southern Interior Oroville
 Bouwkamp, Katie W. Sacramento
 Chappell, Glen Redlands
 Clarence, Donald Rancho Santa Margarita
 Covington, Bill Lincoln
 Cox, Harold & June Maryville

Full Name City

Davis, Steve
 Ellis, Stephanie Cupertino
 Eno, Steve & Cheryl Raymond
 Giffin, Kelley Goleta
 Gray, Linda Lake Arrowhead
 Gunterman, Joan L Sacramento
 Kawakami, Kathleen
 Messner, Charlene Newcastle
 NABS Affiliate, Aldo Leopold Audubon
 Society
 Stevens Point
 NABS Affiliate, Bronx River -
 Sound Shore Audubon Society Scarsdale
 NABS Affiliate, Brown County Bluebird Club
 Nashville
 NABS Affiliate, New Jersey Bluebird Society
 Union
 NABS Affiliate, Oklahoma Bluebird Society
 Broken Arrow
 NABS Affiliate, Our Bluebird Ranch Black-
 foot
 Pahl, Casey
 Pels, Paul
 Pgm Mngr, Reg. Wildlife
 Project, Bluebird Rcvry Denver
 Sandri, Megan & Melanie Walnut Creek
 Steele, Dale Stockton
 Tehachapi Mountains Birding Club,
 TMBCTehachapi
 Vermont, BluebirdsAcross Waitsfield
 Wakelee, Heath Granite Bay
 Wildlife Program, Okla Nongame Oklahoma
 City
 Yasuda, Don Pollock Pines

Monitor 172	County	Tot Fledge 19786	WEBL Fledge 10885
Lee Pauser	Santa Clara	1850	701
Steve Simmons	Merced	1772	190
David McMichael	Riverside	1599	73
Irvin Tiessen	Alameda	1534	824
Melanie Truan	Solano	961	250
Bill Ralph	Madera	575	72
Susan Bulger	La, Orange	370	370
Rich Wright	Santa Clara	348	238
Valerie Sinex	Orange	318	314
Bob Keally	Orange	309	301
Jim and Connie Rogers	Santa Clara	307	120
Bill Covington	Placer	292	175
Karen Oba	Orange	266	266
Jo-Ann Collier	Orange	261	259
Christine Tischer	Orange	259	68
John Venhuizen	Orange	257	211
Linda Violet	Riverside	256	256
Luise Hall Gustafson	Contra Costa	199	128
Norm Franz	Orange	187	187
Georgette Howington	Contra Costa	182	81
Joan Miller	Orange	176	166
Danny Henson	Orange	174	174
DAVID M. COOK	Santa Clara	161	126
Jerry Millett	Los Angeles	150	150
Fran Elvin	Contra Costa	148	30
Barbara Willey	Santa Barbara	148	136
Kappy and Fred Hurst	Orange	142	142
Mike Azevedo	Santa Clara	134	50
Roger Kneeland	Los Angeles	130	130
Patricia Clark	Nevada	126	51
Susana Guerrero	Los Angeles	120	106
Robin Suan	Orange	120	120
Susan Carder	San Mateo	120	15
Ray Abeyta	Contra Costa	110	106
Bill Wallace	Orange	110	110
Caryl Carr	San Mateo	110	30
Gerald Orcholski	Los Angeles	109	94
Nancy Driscoll	Orange	108	108
Judy Bright	Orange	107	98
Elena Hery	Orange	99	94
Terry Vassey	Orange	99	99
Lana & Bill Rocha	Contra Costa	97	37

DONORS TO CBRP IN 2018

Doris & Bill Allison	Amador
Nancy Arbuckle	San Mateo
El Dorodo Audubon Soc	Los Angeles
Southern California Bluebird Club	Orange
Kate Brennan	Nevada
Patricia Clark	Nevada
David Cook	Santa Clara
Eva & Kurt Davis	El Dorado
Sandra Dempewolf	San Diego
Joe Chandler	Orange
Tom & Elena Hery	Orange
Fred & Kappy Hurst	Orange
Leila Johnson	Riverside
Amy Kernes	Orange
Sharman Knox	Los Angeles
Colleen Kvaska	Orange
Cindy Lockhart	San Mateo
Joan Loney	Santa Clara
Charles Lowrie in Memory of Karen	Amador
NABS	
Sue McDonald	Orange
Lee & Janna Pauser	Santa Clara
Riverside – Corona Resource Conser-	Riverside
Jeff Bonneville	Solano
Tina Sommers-Bernhardt	Orange
Mary Steele	Orange
Irv Tiessen	Alameda
Bill Wallace	Orange



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.

TOP COUNTY RESULTS

County	Tot Fledge	WEBL Fledge
20	19715	10854
Orange	6305	4962
Santa Clara	3601	1517
Merced	1772	190
Alameda	1534	824
Contra Costa	1299	718
Los Angeles	1032	1003
Yolo	662	134
San Mateo	659	260
Riverside	548	180
Madera	505	72
Solano	437	189
Nevada	414	248
Placer	339	198
Santa Barbara	192	162
San Bernardino	141	26
San Diego	102	98
Mariposa	95	0
Shasta	55	52
Ventura	15	13
Sacramento	8	8

ORANGE COUNTY TOTALS DOWN

Orange County usually leads the state in WEBL totals, but this year their totals are down from a high of 7777 in 2011 to 4962 in 2018. This decline is due to several factors. As **Director Blaine** mentioned in previous issues, **Dick Purvis** has retired from active monitoring. He had as many as 400 nest boxes at one time. The SCBC is attempting to find replacement monitors to fill the gap. We believe other factors are the retirement and/or death of monitors, the decline of nest box numbers, a failure to report results to the state database, the high temperatures in SoCal, the loss of trees due to Shot Hole Borers and other pests, etc.

Jim Semelroth

California Bluebird Recovery Program – County Coordinators Jan 2019

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	mambarago@mcn.org
Merced	Steve	Simmons	Merced	209-722-3540	simwoodduk@aol.com
Nevada	Kate	Brennan	Grass Valley	530-268-1682	woodswom-
Orange	Dick	Purvis	Anaheim	714-776-8878	dickersly@aol.com
Placer	Heath	Wakelee	Granite Bay	916 797-4536	
Riverside	Erin	Snyder	Riverside	951-683-7691 x207	snyder@rccrd.org
Sacramento	Vicki	Butler	Sacramento	(916) 448-8030	butlerrowe@sbcglobal.net
San Bernardino	Glen	Chappell	Redlands	909-794-3470	
San Diego	CM	Killebrew	Ramona		sdbluebirds@cox.net
San Louis					
Obispo	Paul & Judy	Burkhardt	Creston	805 438-4491	tinhornranch@sbcglobal.net
San Mateo	Chris	O'Connell	Redwood 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

HOPE FOR 2019 COMES IN THE NAME OF LARA TSENG



Need a heart-lifter to start the new year? The Southern California Bluebird Club has just the tonic you may need. Here she is. **Lara Tseng**. We will be sharing much more about her later in the year. But enjoy what's in store.

Lara is a middle-school student in Southern California. The fact that she has just assumed responsibility for five bluebird nest boxes in an urban park is really just one dollop of cream in the story. By learning *The Law's Guide to Drawing Birds*, she will be sketching the species that reside in her 'bluebird park' and recording what habitat elements they are using. Her nest box results and bird species accounts will be submitted to the City of Mission Viejo, and as a way of giving back, she has already committed to participate in their Arbor Day event in spring.

A naturalist at heart, Lara has immersed herself in the study of birds, their habitat needs, and human-caused environmental problems. It perplexes her why everyone does not want to hear her message and help birds. But she does not give up. She has distributed informative materials, pulled wild mustard to improve habitat, and has assisted the Cavity Conservation Initiative with a community event. Her backyard has become the site of a year-long science project to observe if and when birds will consume cooked eggshells (for their calcium).

But birds are not all that occupies her time. She has plunged into a study of technology and robotics with ambitions for applications to help disabled dogs, among other things. It will not surprise you that her parents are immensely supportive and are equally proud of her. Don't we all want more Laras?!!

Gillian Martin: Gillian.Martin@CavityConservation.com

CALIFORNIA BLUEBIRDER AUTHORS

California has many active bluebirders as the charts in this issue indicate. We also assist the NABS with funds and articles for the beautiful journal, *Bluebirds*. The winter 2018-2019 issue has two articles, one by **Gillian Martin and Susan Bulger**, *Is your Backyard Bluebird Nestbox a Tragedy Waiting to Happen?* Gillian has a second article, *Filling Tree Cavities May Mean Additional Habitat Loss for Bluebirds*. Gillian is the creator and Director of a project of the SCBC, Cavity Conservation Initiative, a project to preserve dead and dying trees for cavity nesters. <http://cavityconservation.com>. She is also the co-founder of TreeCareForBirds.com, a program which has recently been adopted by the Western Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture. The program has produced best management practices for the industry to prevent harm to nesting birds during tree care....this includes protection of birds nesting in dead trees.

HOW ARE BIRDS COPING WITH CLIMATE CHANGE?

Sorry about the huge URL

https://action.audubon.org/sites/default/files/ClimateWatch2017ResultsReport_Final.pdf?ms=science_citizen-eng-email-ea-newsletter-20180829_american-birds_%5baudience%5d&utm_source=ea&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=20180829_american-birds&utm_content=%5baudience%5d&emci=b949fa46-ebaa-e811-bce7-000d3a12b800&emdi=2aa23772-a4ab-e811-bce7-000d3a1366c1&ceid=634643&smartlinkdata=JmZuPUdpbGxpYW4mbG49TWFvdGluJmVtPWdtOTlvaG12ZXIINDBjb3gubmV0JmFkZDE9MzEwMDErQXVndXN0YStEcismY2k9TGFndW5hK05pZ3VlbCZzdD1DOSZwYz05MjY3NyZocD05NDk0OTUwOTc3Jm1wPTExNDQ5NTA5NzcmcD1Ncy4%3d

ANOTHER ANALYTICAL ARTICLE ON GLOBAL WARMING

The winter issue of *Bluebird, the Journal of the North American Bluebird Society* has an interesting article by President Bernie Daniels. As Donald Rumsfeld stated, there are knowns, and there are unknowns, known unknowns and ... With long trends of weather and climate, their effects on animal and plant species are complicated. With bluebirds, there are other factors such as pesticides, invasive species, human interference, etc.

YET ANOTHER TREND THAT MAY AFFECT BLUEBIRD NUMBERS

Peter Bryant, former President of the Newport Bay Conservancy in California gave a presentation in November to the Southern California Bluebird Club about the drastic decline of insects worldwide. Three quarters of all animal species are insects, which total over one million. He gave many examples, and showed studies from all parts of the world. He focused on Butterflies of the many species throughout the world, and demonstrated their decline. We in California are stunned by the large decline in the Monarch Butterfly. Peter suggested several reasons for the decline, but concentrated on the role of pesticides as a major contributor to the decline. He can be reached at peter.bryant@newportbay.org.

Box 1. Female Chickadee became trapped by strand of nest material. Male fed her as she was teathered by one leg, unable to move more than 8 inched from nest opening. Up to this point they were bonded attentive pair. after she struggled for some tme and became more bound, I was able to catch her in a towel against the box, untangle her and set her free. They abandoned the nest, but the adults will live to try again. If I had not untangled her she would have died along with the eggs.Box 2. Titmice built a beautiful nest and then decided to rebuild elsewhere.. Box 3. Bewick babies are quite quiet compared with loud Chicadees.

WEBL don't nest here on the coast, but we did have nesting VGSW in our boxes from 2000-2015. Then they stopped, and we didn't see many VGSW here at all--until this year, when once again, we not only saw more of them, but they came back to nest! (okay, just 4 fledglings, but for us, it was wonderful).

Excess heat for several weeks over 104 caused death of 5 hatchlings

As of early October 2018, we are getting 30+ bluebirds coming in simultaneously to feed on mealworms each day in our backyard; we have no idea where they're all coming from!

Removal of trees due to the infestation of Shot Hole Borer necessitates reduction of nest boxes in county parks. Still, every box produces clutches. Less than half of bluebird pairs nested a second try this season. **Jim Semelroth**, Orange County

We found a three-foot snake in our nest box

Coons found one line of TRES boxes, mites caused abandonment of another line. Fewer new boxes will be mounted on poles at 100' spacings away from old scout fencepost locations

Added two new locations 11 BNOW boxes. Heavy mortality of owls two ranches, and some boxes on a third ranch, CDFW analyzed one of two in late July and found starvation. Hunting range can be in ruran ranchets. Will increase frequency of monitoring to spot when problems arise

Winter storms, downed trees and accessibility resulted in 11 boxes being removed. All tree-mounted nest boxes to be replaced with pole-mounted boxes as conditions permit

I moved all of my golf course boxes to the perimeter, reachable by car to avoid conflicts with golfers. **Gary Livesey**, Orange County

I rigged up a holder for my camera phone to take images of the inside of the nest box without opening the door. **Jerry Millett**

115 degrees F on 7/6. On 7/9 found 2 desiccated of 3 nestlings in one box; third nestling missing. Found all 3 recently dead nestlings in a second box.

We in the Southern California Bluebird Club are aggressively seeking new monitors to take over abandoned nest boxes rather than adding new trails. **Bill Wallace**, President

THE NUMBER ONE RULE ABOUT RESCUING BABY BIRDS

When tragedy happens how often do we say, “If only... If only.” Looking back on this story about two rescued baby Acorn Woodpeckers, “If only” applied not once, but three times in the decision-making process. The outcome might have been more positive and less costly had those involved been better informed. These circumstances included a construction crew (which likely removed a dead tree in which the birds were nesting), and a retail bird supply store to whom they delivered the nestlings.

Let’s begin with how this could have been prevented. “If only”...the construction company had known that before removing a dead or living tree during the nesting season (for most birds this is February through September) it is important to determine if birds are nesting in the tree. Destroying an active nest and killing native birds without a permit is against the law.

Second. “If only”...the crew knew **the number one rule: Call a bird rehabilitation center for guidance before rescuing a bird.** Having contact information for the nearest wildlife rehab center at every outdoor work site can save time and save birds. Open this link to [find one near you.](#)

Third. “If only”...the retail store had know that **it is critical to ask where precisely the birds were found** when they accepted the birds and before they contacted the [Songbird Care and Education Center.](#) Owner, Vicki Anderson says, “Under the terms of licensing, a bird rehab center’s first responsibility is to learn where the birds are found and try to return them to their original location. Doing so increases their chances of survival.” She points out that unfortunately, veterinary clinics, pet and bird supply stores are locations used by the public to drop off rescued birds. These places are not licensed to rehabilitate wildlife and are poorly equipped to handle such situations. Delaying proper care and providing insufficient information can reduce a bird’s chance of survival.

The rescued Acorn Woodpeckers are now being cared for at Vicki’s facility in Orange County. This is a non-profit, volunteer-run, licensed rehab center that takes on the exhausting and costly care of hundreds of birds annually. Most of their ‘patients’ are casualties of construction, demolition, tree care and tenting houses during the nesting season, and of people who rescue baby birds without knowing the number one rule. **Gillian Martin**



THE END OF THE TRAIL

The Fall 2018 *Bluebird* includes an interesting article by Jim Walters titled "Sixty Years on the Bluebird Trail". Who is **Jim Walters** you might ask? Jim became acquainted with bluebirds in the 1950s when he and his parents constructed bluebird nestboxes and put them in the pastures of their farm in Johnson County, Iowa, near Iowa City. They had read about declining bluebird populations, and thought they should join in the effort to help them. He has been an active bluebirder ever since. In addition to monitoring a sizeable trail - once numbering over 100 - he currently heads up the NABS affiliate *Johnson County Songbird Project*. The following are a few of his observations and "words of wisdom."

o Around 1990, some bird enthusiasts and birders in my area got together to form the Johnson County Songbird Project - not just to do fieldwork with birds, but to use birds as a focus for environmental education, for both young people and adults. One of our first priorities was asking people to get serious about their nestbox projects. *Poor placement of nestboxes, without adequate predator protection and little or no monitoring, often harms the species we're trying to help. Better to not put up nestboxes at all than do it wrong. This is why I discourage mass nestbox production with young people - most of these nestboxes will not be put up correctly or monitored often enough.*

o One thing that has changed is in bluebird behavior. In the first few decades, I never saw an aggressive bluebird when I monitored. Sometime in the late 1980s, I first experienced a male defending the nestbox - against me!. During the 1990s, this behavior was still not widespread. Now, I am seeing many bluebirds - often both males and female - defending nestboxes, and I find these changes in behavior positive actions. *I have also, though very rarely, seen bluebirds kill both House Wrens and House Sparrows.*

o I've shifted from a quantity to quality perspective on trails. I once had over 100 nestboxes on our farm trail, but now it is just 20. *Better to do a good job with a smaller number of nestboxes that actually fledge birds, than to have a larger number of nestboxes that remain empty or where you continually fight competitors.*

o I don't share the antipathy many bluebirders have for House Sparrows. I do not use lethal methods of sparrow control. It amuses me to hear bluebirders rail against these species as "non-natives" that must be ruthlessly eliminated. At one bluebird program I attended, the speaker spent a considerable amount of time describing his efforts and glee in eliminating sparrows.*

o Now that I contemplate the "end of the trail" myself, my thoughts turn toward another responsibility: making sure that, if my trails survive me, there is someone trained and ready to take them over. A notable Iowa bluebirder who monitored a 600-nestbox trail, died. It wasn't long before his trail became essentially a House Sparrow trail. *So - older bluebirders - make plans for your own exit from the planet. Find a successor - make sure your trail will be monitored or taken down."*

Reviewed by Bob Franz, SCBC

I'm having increasing problems on several trails with Acorn Woodpeckers damaging my nest boxes, so I was left with 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



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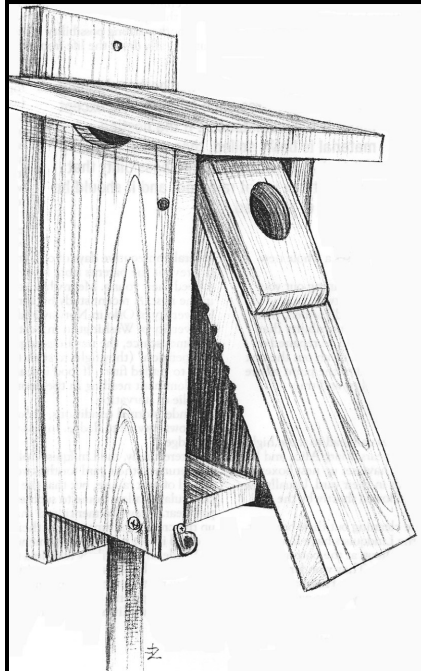
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