

Here, finally, is last year's annual report:

199 reports tally 14,642 birds in 2002

Monitors in approximately half of California's 58 counties came through with respectable numbers again last year. While the number reported was unexpectedly lower than the the last three years, the number of monitors was slightly up.

Perhaps those with fewer boxes elected to skip their reports again. If

so, it is unfortunate, because the sum of those smaller trails and single nestboxes represent a significant addition to the habitat of the cavity-nesters in California. Whole communities, some with over 50 nestboxes failed to contribute their totals.

Last year, our total amounted to 17,339 birds from 189 reports.

Now that the 2003 season is over, we hope to have 2003 reports from everyone, member and non-member alike. The reporting form is enclosed. Please send it in. While you're at it, why not include your check for \$5? It's the cheapest environmental organization we know of. Either way, we want your report. Do it now!



BLUEBIRDS FLY!

California Bluebird Recovery Program's *newsletter*

—sponsored by Mount Diablo Audubon Society
—affiliated with the North American Bluebird Society

for the encouragement and conservation of cavity-nesters—especially bluebirds—anywhere in the West

\$2.50 per issue
suggested donation

Highlights from last year

Western Bluebirds lead the pack in 2002

As usual, out of the total number of birds of all 17 species (not counting House Sparrows) reported this year, 7233 of them were Western Bluebirds (WEBL), a whopping 49%. The following table presents how the top Counties ranked in numbers of fledges (F). Also included are number of reporters (R) and the ratio of fledges per reporter (F/R).

County	Fledges (F)	Reporters (R)	F/R
Orange	4012	41	98
Alameda	342	3	114
Los Angeles	303	2	152
Amador	302	7	43
Kern	286	3	95
El Dorado	263	16	16
San Mateo	240	47	5
Santa Clara	233	25	9
Contra Costa	200	14	14
Santa Barbara	198	4	50
Mendocino	174	3	58
Placer	154	9	17
Glenn	112	1	112
Riverside	111	1	111

It is not too surprising that Orange County has the 5th highest fledgling/reporter percentage since almost all of

their nestboxes are hung in trees and placed mostly in golf courses, parks, cemeteries and green belts where trees are plentiful. And of the 4012 total, **Dick Purvis** reported 1542 of them—a busy guy is he.

WEBL FLEDGLING LEADERS

Once again **Dick Purvis** of Orange County led all reporters in total WEBL fledges reporting 1542, followed by **Bob Franz** of Orange with 742. The top 5 are shown below.

	<u>Fledges</u>	<u>Tries</u>	<u>F/T</u>
Dick Purvis -Orange	1542	462	3.3
Bob Franz - Orange	742	220	3.4
Irv Tiessen - Alameda	314	81	3.9
Linda Violette - Orange	237	61	3.9
Chuck Vaughn/Bob Keiffer - Mendocino	174	58	3.0

Note that both Irv and Linda have 3.9, well above the other three. Linda's success is particularly amazing as many of her nestboxes are in areas where House Sparrows are very aggressive. In her fight against them, she is using nestboxes with a pair of holes side-by-side in the front to see if they deter HOSPs from invading.

~Bob Franz

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Did you ever wonder how CBRP got started? Not that you have been sitting on the edge of your chair, searching the www for answers to such a deep question—the answers are definitely not to be found there.

The venture was hatched and fledged in Concord, CA, at a regular meeting of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Chapter on the first Thursday of September 1993. Now you know how old we are.

Some events leading up to that date enabled **Don Yoder** to learn that only 13 CA bluebird nestbox monitors had sent reports to North American Bluebird Society in 1992. Just imagine—with all of our habitat and all of the people living here, it seemed ludicrous that only 13 birders surfaced in such an effort, keeping records and sending them to NABS for their regular Annual Report.

The activity should have involved more people who reported more birds fledged, and earned a more prominent position with the national organization, NABS, and its leadership.

On the date mentioned above the featured speaker was **Bob Barnes**, Field Representative of Audubon California out of Sacramento. Bob's chosen subject was *Birds in Flight*, a timely topic dealing with preservation of habitat for all birds faced with the loss of their nesting areas due to development. His remarks described an opening in which Yoder's ideas could be developed further.

At the end of the meeting Bob agreed that a statewide program to try to determine how many people were currently helping bluebirds could be a worthwhile effort. There would be a fair probability that some who were involved were not reporting their results. An effort to encourage all monitors to submit reports could be beneficial. A post card survey mailed to NABS members in 15-

20 counties was interpreted as showing enough interest to promote such a program.

At a later lunch date with Bob, some of his suggestions aided in getting the Program underway: issue a newsletter—probably quarterly; secure agreement for Mount Diablo's treasury to hold funds collected for the bluebird program; with approval, use California Audubon's bulk mailing permit to distribute the newsletter, and in return, copies of the letter would be mailed gratis to two officers of each of the statewide chapters. A program which proved successful in several other states would also be tried here—select available willing and experienced individuals in each county to serve as County Coordinators to afford local promotion and assistance to trail monitors in establishment of new trails, trying to answer nesting questions and helping with problem solutions—and assign to Yoder a fancy title of Program Director.

In February 1994 we filed a formal Fictitious Business Name in Contra Costa County under the title of California Bluebird Recovery Program with the byline "for the encouragement and preservation of cavity-nesters—especially bluebirds—anywhere in the West". The publishing of the early newsletters was given as an additional assignment to **Sheila Green** in the Audubon office, Sacramento. When Sheila had to shed the additional load, a light shone out of the forests and grasslands to carry on the communication: **Hatch Graham**, with **Judy**, his wifely assistant, picked up the publishing and fostering of the newsletter. Hatch is a retired forester, versed in many birdly things and in desktop publishing of newsletters for several organizations. In June 1997, he renamed the newsletter

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California Bluebird Recovery Program

Founded in 1994, originally supported by National Audubon Society-California and now by Mount Diablo Audubon Society, and affiliated with the North American Bluebird Society, CBRP is "for the encouragement and conservation of cavity-nesters—especially bluebirds—anywhere in the West."

CBRP is non-profit, has no paid staff, and is supported entirely by the efforts of volunteers and donations accepted by Mount Diablo Audubon Society on CBRP's behalf.

CBRP welcomes membership from the public who wish to support its program, and especially seeks those who will place appropriate nestboxes in the proper habitat, faithfully monitor the birds' progress through the nesting season, and report yearly on the results.

CBRP can furnish nestbox plans, a monitoring guide, forms for monitoring and reports, technical advice through a network of county coordinators, and sometimes the nestboxes themselves.

Membership, which includes this quarterly newsletter is available for a donation of \$5 or more made payable to "MDAS—Bluebirds" and mailed to CBRP, 2021 Ptarmigan Dr #1, Walnut Creek, CA 94595. Donations are tax-deductible.

California Bluebird Recovery Program

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BLUEBIRDS FLY!

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Did you ever wonder—

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ter *Bluebirds Fly*, with an open option for any alternate name that might be submitted by subscribers. (No further name ever came forth). And in the Spring 1998 issue the sub-heading was appropriately changed from “preservation” to “conservation” of cavity nesters. (Had you not noticed?)

The newsletter itself has experienced careful handling and editing to provide useful information for birders. It is intended to be a vehicle for sharing of Field Notes by birders for birders up and down the state.

Inclusion of birding data from outside sources also adds interest and reliable reading material. Nestbox plans and drawings have proven to be useful aids in helping new monitors. Data collection and formatting of annual nestbox reports from many California monitors alone is a strenuous job, when solicitation of many reports has been required if they are to be published at all.

As quoted above, the byline “conservation of cavity-nesters—especially bluebirds—” has been interpreted broadly to encourage participation with all cavity-nesters, since scarcity of habitat affects them all. Our report forms contemplate use of your nestboxes by any variety that is able to gain access to the cavity inside and we are anxious to receive reports of new and unusual varieties that find the boxes useful.

New contacts that you make will surely appreciate your birding efforts if you share things you learn along your birding trail. Insects would soon overrun our habitat if birds were not around to help us control the creepy-crawlies on which they survive.

Happy Birding to all—

~Don Yoder

HIGHEST NUMBER OF SPECIES REPORTED

It is interesting to see which trails and monitors have the most variety of species nesting. Last year’s leader was **Irv Tiessen** of Alameda County who reported 8 different species out of the 17 native cavity-nesters reported on. **Don Yoder** of Contra Costa was second with 7, followed by **Dick Purvis**, Orange/LA/San Bernardino, **Hatch & Judy Graham**, Alpine/Amador/El Dorado and **Tex Houston** of Santa Clara with 6. Many others had 5.

YOUR 2003 REPORT DUE NOW

To the best of our knowledge, the last of our cavity-nesters had fledged by the first week of August. As you read the results of 2002 in the issue, why not take the time to send in your 2003 report? Judy Graham who assembled many of the reports has vowed to enter this year’s reports as they arrive. Some have already been received.

A part of the delay in this newsletter has been the the tardiness of some of our monitors. Even so, many failed to report last year’s totals. Let’s try to do better this year.

We were sorry to have a number of our loyal followers come up missing. In some cases, new jobs preempted the luxury of enjoying the nestbox monitoring. Ill-health was the problem for a few.

We are fortunate that some new and active monitors have added their energies to our cause. Those of you who find time at a premium and are tempted to skip reporting, may we suggest you find a friend, neighbor, or other family member who will take over from you and send in your report for this year. Now. Please.

Support our benefactors



Founded in 1978, the **North American Bluebird Society (NABS)** is a non-profit organization determined to increase the populations of the three species of bluebirds on this continent. Inasmuch as the populations of these birds have diminished due to the maladroitness of human beings, as well as natural disasters, the society strives to explain the importance of preserving native cavity-nesters.

The society works within the bounds of effective conservation to study obstacles impeding bluebird recovery and to promote ideas and actions which might reduce their effect.

Membership is \$15. NABS’s mailing address is PO Box 244, Wilmot, OH 44689.

www.nabluebirdsociety.org



There are local chapters of the **National Audubon Society (NAS)** in all fifty states, Guam, and Latin America. In California there are over fifty local chapters. Chapters have newsletters, monthly programs, and field trips to local areas of interest. The Mt Diablo chapter actively assists **CBRP** with its business administration and with mailing.

To join NAS, contact your local Audubon Chapter or mail new member dues of \$20 to NAS, PO Box 51003, Boulder, CO 80323-1003, which includes a quarterly magazine as well as membership privileges in your local Audubon chapter.

Florida study shows damage to wildlife

CATS INDOORS! PROGRAM GAINS GROUND

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — With 4 million to 6 million unwanted animals—mostly cats—put to sleep each year in the United States, some people might consider it more humane to free the felines into the wild. But as these cats forage for food and establish their territories, they kill more than a billion small mammals and birds each year, many of which are threatened or endangered, a University of Florida study shows.

Feral, or free-roaming, untamed cats pose a serious threat to endangered species nationwide as colonies of the wild cats have grown, largely because local groups provide funding and resources to sustain them, according to the study commissioned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

In addition, those who release cats into the wild or support feral cat colonies are violating numerous federal and state wildlife protection laws; enforcement of the law in these cases has largely been ignored. “The domestic cat species is not indigenous to Florida or anywhere else in North America. They impact native wildlife in three primary ways: predation, competition, and disease,” said **Pamela Hatley**, a law student at UFlorida’s Levin College of Law who conducted the study. The results will be published in the *Journal of Land Use & Environmental Law*.

The number of feral cats in the United States is estimated to be 40 million to 60 million, Hatfield reports, and adds, “Cats are non-indigenous predators that compete in the wild with native predators like owls, hawks, and fox, because cats, being subsidized by humans, outnumber these native predators and prey on the same small mammals and birds. Thus, cats reduce the prey base for

native predators, making it difficult for native predators to feed themselves and their young.”

In addition, cats spread diseases—rabies in particular—that can kill wildlife. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that rabies is more than twice as common in cats as it is in dogs or cattle, and cats have the highest incidence of rabies among domestic species.

Hatley works with the University’s Conservation Clinic, which was commissioned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to determine the applicability of federal, state and local wildlife laws to the practice of releasing cats into the wild and maintaining feral cat colonies. Compounding the problem is that another 40 million domestic cats nationwide also roam outside, hunting and killing small animals. For example, the Lower Florida Keys marsh rabbit is a federal endangered species with a remaining population of about 100 to 300. A 1999 study found free-roaming cats were responsible for 53 percent of the deaths of these rabbits in one year, and a 2002 study indicated the species could be extinct within two or three decades.

Cats also have been recognized as instinctive predators and a serious threat to the Key Largo cotton mouse, Key Largo woodrat, Choctawhatchee beach mouse, Perdido Key beach mouse, green sea turtle, Roseate Tern, Least Tern and Florida

Scrub Jay.

Cat predation also is a serious problem in California and Hawaii, where, like Florida, the climate is ideal for cats to survive outside and breed year-round. As a result, endangered animals, such as the Hawaiian Goose, California Brown Pelican and blunt nosed leopard lizard also face additional threats.

“There are some 15 million cats in Florida which spend all or part of their time outside preying on wildlife,” Hatley said. “It is estimated that cats kill as many as 271 million small mammals and 68 million birds each year in Florida, many of these members of threatened and endangered species.”

As an alternative to euthanasia, many cat advocates believe in trap-neuter-release, or TNR, programs, in which feral cats are spayed or neutered and returned to colonies where caretakers look after them. While the programs aim to reduce wild cat populations, however, irresponsible pet owners continue to release unwanted cats that often join feral cat colonies.

In Florida, such colonies are known to exist in 17 counties. The largest, in Key Largo, may include as many as 1,000 cats and operates on an annual budget of \$100,000.

Hatley reported the TNR programs and managing large numbers of cats in colonies do not effectively control cat overpopulation or the predation of endangered animals.

And although Hatley determined releasing cats into the wild and supporting feral cat colonies is a violation of federal laws, such as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Endangered Species Act, enforcement of these and other state and

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CATS PROGRAM GAINS SUPPORT IN FLORIDA

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local regulations with the same goals is rare against those who release cats or support feral colonies.

The Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, for example, has left enforcement of state laws up to local governments, whose ordinances vary greatly as to what they prohibit and the fines involved.

“It is essential that our state and local governments take steps to educate the public about the destructive impact of free-roaming cats on native wildlife,” Hatley said, “and strictly enforce against the release of cats into the wild.”

Michael Wooten, an associate professor of biology at Auburn University, has done extensive research on endangered beach mice nationwide. His studies have found limited direct evidence that feral cats hunt the endangered mice, but he has observed immense indirect evidence, including cat paw prints in the dunes where mice live and mouse-tracking devices in the bellies of cats.

“Predators in general have taken quite a toll on the beach mouse population,” Wooten said. “Where you have cat colonies, there is a decrease on the mouse population.”

Feral cat colonies are a well-intentioned but misguided idea, he added. “If people really loved animals, they wouldn’t release large groups of predators into the wild.”

~based on an article by Piper Stannard

For more information on the **Cats Indoors!** program contact:

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A nestbox sweet as honey

Orange County monitor, **Bob Franz** writes: “One of my nestboxes is hung from a tree in a park near some picnic tables. On June 26, I observed 4 nestlings; however, on July 3, a small swarm of bees was going in and out of the nestbox so I didn’t tempt fate and left it alone. In succeeding weeks the swarm got larger and larger until it covered the whole front and bottom of the nestbox. At this point I hesitated to call the bee removal guy since I could not salvage anything anyway, and I thought I would just let them be. (!)

“Periodically I would check it and the swarm remained. Then on August 25, I checked it again—and the box was gone! I looked on the ground and saw a small piece of honeycomb. Then I walked over to the creek.

There it was half submerged in the water with only the back visible. Since it looked fairly intact, I retrieved it to confirm. Yes, the nestbox appeared to be okay though it was covered with green algae and a few ants. When I looked inside it was completely full with layer upon layer of honeycomb. I removed it with a stick and brought the nestbox home.

“I am drying it out and I hope to be able to remove all comb residue and put it back into service—but not at that site.”

(Too bad vandals destroyed the hive. Wild honeybees have suffered from alien mites and loss of habitat and are badly needed as pollenizers for many agricultural crops. Beekeepers will happily remove colonizing honeybees.~Ed.)

CBRP PROGRAM SEVEN-YEAR TOTAL

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Counties	21	31	33	37	33	26	28
Reporters	169	293	326	264	178	175	193
Species	16	17	16	20	20	18	18
Boxes(N)	2400	3642	4142	4596	4167	4209	4027
Tries (T)	1526	2442	3214	3527	3783	4023	3937
T/N	64%	67%	78%	77%	91%	96%	98%
Eggs (E)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	20315	23470	23981
E/N	-	-	-	-	5.5	5.6	5.9
E/T	-	-	-	-	6.1	5.8	6.1
Chicks (H)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	17204	18501	19250
H/N	-	-	-	-	4.1	4.4	4.8
H/T	-	-	-	-	4.5	4.6	4.9
H/E	-	-	-	-	75%	79%	80%
Fledged(F)	5077	8393	11326	13122	15703	17339	16201
F/N	2.1	2.3	2.7	2.9	3.8	4.1	4.0
F/T	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.7	4.2	4.3	4.1
F/E	-	-	-	-	68%	72%	68%
F/H	-	-	-	-	91%	92%	84%

Yuba and Sutter are counted as one county since data submitted was merged into one set.

Boxes total is of all sizes—standard, large and small.

Totals, ratios, and percents are slightly lower due to failure of some monitors to report eggs and chicks.

In search of an organic insecticide

A home building contractor in Texas wanted to treat under the slabs to prevent termites and scorpions from invading the homes if the slabs cracked as they often do. He searched for a low cost, environmentally sound material.

Farmers storing grain in silos wanted to prevent infestation of the grain with weevils and other insect pests. What could they use on food-stuffs that would be harmless to humans?

With growing concern about the environment, what can the home gardener use to combat pests?

Is there a substance that can be used on internal parasites in large feedlots that won't contaminate the soil?

What can bluebird monitors use to prevent mites, ants, and other insects from killing or weakening the baby birds?

The answer is in a natural product that you probably eat in your breakfast cereal, your baked goods, and many packaged foods. Most beef, pork, lamb, and chicken has been fed this material and can still be called organic.

What is it? Diatomaceous Earth; usually called DE.

What is DE?

Diatomaceous Earth is a naturally occurring siliceous sedimentary mineral compound from microscopic skeletal remains of unicellular algae-like plants called diatoms. These plants have been part of the earth's ecology since prehistoric times. Diatoms are basic to the oceanic cycle, and the food for minute animal life which in turn becomes the food for higher forms of marine life. As living plants, diatoms weave microscopic shells from the silica they extract from the water, then as they die, deposits are formed and then fossilized in what are now dried lake and ocean

beds. The material is then mined, ground and screened to various grades, for the countless uses in today's products and processes, from toothpaste to cigars, plastics to paprika, filter media in swimming pools to home fish tanks, as well as insect and parasite control in animals and grains.

When insects come in contact with DE, their shell is worn through and death is by dehydration. There is no survival and no immunity. The product does not contain persistent chemicals harmful to the environment and to higher forms of life, or to which insects become immune—it is an organic insecticide—a much needed revolution for pest control.

Is DE really safe?

Make sure the DE you use is Amorphous Diatomaceous Earth. In an article in *Common Sense Pest Control Quarterly*, published by BIRC, Volume III, Number 1, Winter 1987, the matter of safety is explored. We quote:

"Both swimming pool grade and natural diatomaceous earth come from the same fossil sources but they are processed differently. The natural grades are mined, dried, ground, sled and bagged. The pool grade is chemically treated and partially melted and consequently contains crystalline silica which can be a respiratory hazard. Thus, it is imperative that only natural diatomaceous earth be used. This noncrystalline silica is not a hazard as the human body apparently can dissolve it."

"Make sure the DE you use meets World Health Organization (WHO) safety standards. WHO cautions that DE with a crystalline silica content over three percent (3%) is dangerous for ingestion by humans or animals. Most food grade DE has less than 1% free silica. Swimming pool

DE ranges from 60% to 70% free silica.

Additional Information

The Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, sets "tolerances" on poisonous chemical insecticides because residues of these insecticides are known to cause cancer and other alarming physiological effects when introduced into the bodies of test animals.

The Department of Agriculture in Michigan said in a letter:

"Our animal pathologist has examined the vital organs ... and has found no visible evidence of organ abnormalities. These organs were... from a slaughtered dairy cow having free choice access to fossil shell flour for approximately five years."

The University of Arkansas did a study to determine whether the addition of diatomaceous earth was harmful to chickens. Their conclusion: "It posed no threat."

Application

For ants and mites sprinkle DE directly on nests and eggs taking care not to inhale the dust. You can coat the floor of empty boxes in the spring.

If you have dogs or cats, DE can be used as an excellent flea and tick powder; rub 1 tbsp into the coat of a larger dog, 1 tsp on cats.

As a spray, mix 2 pounds per gallon of water with a mixing agent and spray trees and other plants. As soon as it dries the DE will be effective on crawling insects.

Some monitors carry a "salt shaker" filled with DE on their rounds and apply it liberally to nest and eggs and even on infested chicks, taking care to keep it out of their eyes.

More information can be found on dotcom internet sites. Search on Google for "diatomaceous earth."

DON YODER'S

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Spring 2003

Did you ever think “your birds” were jumping the gun by starting the spring nesting tasks entirely too early—or that they just couldn’t wait to start pairing up and start a family before the usual time? **Peter Wetzel**, Orange, believed he might have an entry for the “First Egg Laid” record—while some of you were still shovelling snow or doing those mid-winter nestbox service rounds. He found one of his boxes on the ground just before the end of January—no way to tell when it had suffered such ill treatment. Opening the box revealed 3 clean, shiny bluebird eggs, unbroken but lying askelter on the nesting material. There were no bluebirds in sight and none arrived to express concern over his presence at the box. He concluded they must have been placed by a late nester, after his last visit at the end of the ‘02 nesting season; it really seemed time to remove the material and clean the box—all ready for new occupants in ‘03.

✍

The numerous bluebird organizations throughout the country include birders and friends with the same goals as our own. Proof that non-members also take an interest in the welfare of trails: Your Program Director (PD) received a call from a So. CA fireman who was familiar with the work being done regularly by one of our star birders/trail managers. The caller wanted help in contacting the birder to convey information about tree cutting near one of his boxes—and that the box was temporarily hung in a different location. We supplied the phone number by which he could reach the birder. Maybe it is also a demonstration of the value of a good public image—when the public wants to participate

and become involved.

✍

Perhaps we haven’t given enough attention in these pages to the **NABS Speakers’ Bureau**—a coordinated effort to encourage birders to explain the bluebird recovery effort to the public. Throughout the country birders present slide shows, films, demonstrations of methods to attract cavity nesters and their problems if no effort is made to provide substitute nesting places. Various tools are used to describe & demonstrate the problems facing bluebirds and the way we can help : slides, movies, sample boxes, box building activities, free boxes, predator guards, and explanations of the habitat needs of our feathered friends.

These presentations build interest and encourage growth of the nestbox trail response by growing numbers of people. Placement of a single box by a youngster can lead eventually to a number of boxes and new interest, in various age brackets, in preserving habitat. If you have made such presentations, given talks or shown slides at a public event, you should email **Ron Kingston**, Chairman, kingston@cstone.net. You can be added to his extensive roster and report your activity at the end of the year. NABS can furnish brochures, and draw from a broad list of educational supplies. Currently paid NABS members enjoy price reductions on audio/visual items.

✍

Mentioned here earlier but a reminder won’t hurt : we have a set of 80 NABS colored slides, showing cavity nesters and some of the elements of managing a nestbox trail. The slides are carried in a Kodak carousel projection tray, with a script and recorded sound track. The equipment is available to any speaker

wishing to make a slide presentation for promotional purposes. An accompanying colorful banner also calls attention to your display area.

Contact us at the address on page 3 for particulars about getting these items to you; call us in time for mail delivery in time to meet your deadline.

✍

We have just received a renewal check from **Kyle & Rita Yates**, El Dorado. They surely would be excellent reporters for Project Feeder Watch. Early in March their yard was already geared up for an active birding season. Rita reports that on the day she wrote “...today in our back yard we have seen: 2 bluebirds investigating the bluebird house where we had 4 babies last year; a nuthatch nesting in another bluebird house; a pair of phoebes at the mealworm feeder; one brief visit from a Merlin; dozens of goldfinches at the thistle feeder; humming birds; a pair of titmouses; aerial mating displays of 3 Red-shouldered Hawks overhead and which appear to be nesting in our neighbor’s oak trees; several varieties of sparrows and finches; 3 mourning doves. This has to be our best day of bird-watching ever. All we need now is our neighborhood herons, egrets, and ducks to visit our creek—and we’ve got it all!

(Gee, they seem to have it all already. Sounds like very little work would get done in that backyard. PD.)

✍

From **Peter Wetzel**, Orange: Good news! We have 5 **WEBL** young in that nest at Peter’s Canyon Park. They look like they are about 3 days old today, March 20. No other boxes have any birds nesting and at Holy Sepulcher, just 2 miles away, action has come to a stop—no new nests

and I saw only one pair guarding a box.

❏

And so early in the season it's good to get such a message as this one from **Linda Violett**, Orange: Yes, Don, some of our trails are already hatching WEBL. My first clutch of the season hatched 3/21—7 chicks.

❏

It's a real pleasure to hear the 'history' of a new birder's attraction to bluebirding. Similar stories could come from new birders of any age who have the good fortune to see the arrival of adult bluebirds and beginning occupancy of an existing nestbox. Just a single trial box, put in place with high hopes by a hopeful landlord, can start a new 'career' for a conservationist.

"As a beginner, I put up our nest in 1999. No Bluebirds came to our box, and I was ready to give up. However in the spring of last year, my husband noticed a male Bluebird on top of the box. Half an hour later he brought a female to inspect the box.

"We left for Mexico a day later, for a week. When we came back I did not see any activity, however my husband was sitting on the swing, and saw both the male and female. Needless to say I was so excited when she started nest building. They had a brood of 4 and they all fledged. And lo and behold, after I cleaned the box, she came back and started building a second nest.

"While she was doing this the first fledglings would come and visit. A second clutch of eggs bore fruit again, with 4 more babies. Was I ever surprised to see the first fledglings visiting their new siblings, and feeding them now and then. They successfully fledged, and would visit the box now and then. I am patiently waiting for them to return.

"I have built 10 boxes and given

them away in our area of Crest, El Cajon, CA 92021. I have made several boxes with old wood fencing, along with new cedarboard fencing. My neighbors are eagerly waiting to see whether Bluebirds will take up residence. I also provided them with Bluebird books "Enjoying Bluebirds more". Some paid me for the books and nests, some I gave as gifts.

I would like to monitor the boxes, but I do not have the knowledge of how to do it. I would also like to join our CBRP. I already am a member of NABS as of this year. I know it's too late to enter our count of 8 fledglings, but thought you would like to hear of our account.

Happy Bluebirding,

Jean De Silva Caggiano

(Jean has joined CBRP, has received her Monitoring Guide, and is anxiously watching activities at the nestbox center of attractions. —PD)

❏

From Wheatland in Yuba County, **Helen & Roger Goforth** reported on their trail. Helen writes:

"We have now taken our boxes down and brought them home for revamping and hoping to add more boxes to our trail. January 1st I will retire and hope to be a better Monitor next year. We enjoy the Newsletter and all the tips. Does anyone have a tip on how to keep ants and mites out of the boxes? We finally have guards, but now we have to fix the boxes, because of Woodpeckers, but we really enjoy them. Thank you for your patience. Hope we're not too late! Happy Trails!"

(See our article on Diatomaceous Earth in this issue. Dotcom sources on the internet include: www.ghorganics, mcmurrayhatchery, extremelygreen, and custommilling —Ed.)

❏

Richard Kempton, Ventura, reports that 2003, ("unlike 2002 with no rain

= no growth = no insects = no surviving bluebird young") had perfectly distributed rains into May and best plant growth in years.

❏

For much of the southland, 2002 was not the best year. **Jan Wasserman**, the Tree Swallow lady from Ventura, described 2002 this way, "And finally, to sum up just how bad this season was for me: At the end of the season, with few birds left in nests, we found a nest with 4 out of 5 nestlings dead. The nest itself was gross, so we cleaned it up a little by taking off the top layer and putting in some fresh feathers. Dusted the nest with DE, and put it back. The nestling was ready to fledge, and sure enough, as we walked back down the dike about 20 minutes later, the bird fledged as we watched. He got halfway across the pond area when he was accidentally hit by an adult and fell straight into the water. We were too far away to do anything about it, but he was swimming toward the other shore with the adult TRES guiding him when a Black-crowned Night Heron swooped down and ate him. As I said this just about sums up the entire season for Ventura County Tree Swallows."

❏

Chuck & Karin Lowrie, Amador, had their usual Oak Titmouse nesting in the box near their house. Six fledged. Taking heed of our comments that **Dr. Terry Whitworth**, the blowfly investigator, has about all the bluebird nests needed from East to West but still needs nests of other species, Chuck & Karin sent their nest off to the good doctor in Washington State.

He reported on 5/9/02, "The nest was not infested."

Nests of other species are still wanted—especially of other species besides our cavity-nesters. Send nests to Terry Whitworth, PhD, 3707 96th St East, Tacoma, WA 98446.

California Bluebird Recovery Program

ANNUAL REPORT

Name: _____ Year: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Physical Location of Trail (or Name): _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____ County: _____

No. Boxes: 1-Standard: _____ ; 2-Larger than Std: _____ ; 3-Smaller than Std: _____ ; Total: _____

No. Box pairs (2 boxes within 15 feet of each other): _____.

		1st Brood	2nd Brood	3d Brood	Total
Species:	No. Nests with 1 or more eggs:				
	No. Nests hatching 1 or more:				
Box Type No.:	No. Nests fledging 1 or more:				
	No. Eggs laid:				
	No. Chicks hatched:				
	No. Chicks fledged:				
Species:	No. Nests with 1 or more eggs:				
	No. Nests hatching 1 or more:				
Box Type No.:	No. Nests fledging 1 or more:				
	No. Eggs laid:				
	No. Chicks hatched:				
	No. Chicks fledged:				
Species:	No. Nests with 1 or more eggs:				
	No. Nests hatching 1 or more:				
Box Type No.:	No. Nests fledging 1 or more:				
	No. Eggs laid:				
	No. Chicks hatched:				
	No. Chicks fledged:				
Species:	No. Nests with 1 or more eggs:				
	No. Nests hatching 1 or more:				
Box Type No.:	No. Nests fledging 1 or more:				
	No. Eggs laid:				
	No. Chicks hatched:				
	No. Chicks fledged:				
Species:	No. Nests with 1 or more eggs:				
	No. Nests hatching 1 or more:				
Box Type No.:	No. Nests fledging 1 or more:				
	No. Eggs laid:				
	No. Chicks hatched:				
	No. Chicks fledged:				
Species:	No. Nests with 1 or more eggs:				
	No. Nests hatching 1 or more:				
Box Type No.:	No. Nests fledging 1 or more:				
	No. Eggs laid:				
	No. Chicks hatched:				
	No. Chicks fledged:				
Species:	No. Nests with 1 or more eggs:				
	No. Nests hatching 1 or more:				
Box Type No.:	No. Nests fledging 1 or more:				
	No. Eggs laid:				
	No. Chicks hatched:				
	No. Chicks fledged:				
Species:	No. Nests with 1 or more eggs:				
	No. Nests hatching 1 or more:				
Box Type No.:	No. Nests fledging 1 or more:				
	No. Eggs laid:				
	No. Chicks hatched:				
	No. Chicks fledged:				
Species:	No. Nests with 1 or more eggs:				
	No. Nests hatching 1 or more:				
Box Type No.:	No. Nests fledging 1 or more:				
	No. Eggs laid:				
	No. Chicks hatched:				
	No. Chicks fledged:				

Call your coordinator if you need help—

Are you having problems identifying your birds? Are you having problems with wasps, blowflies, mites? Have your nestlings been abandoned? Are your nestboxes being invaded by House Sparrows? Your County Coordinators can give you advice and assistance, or have resources they can call on to help. Keep in touch.

COUNTY	COORDINATOR	STREET	CITY/STATE/ZIP	PHONE	FAX	E-MAIL
Alameda	Ann Kositsky	1090 Miller Ave	Berkeley, CA 94708	(510) 527-5091		alpa@pacbell.net
	Raymond A. Fontaine	PO Box 92	Livermore, CA 94551	(510) 447-0213		rayfontaine@msn.com
Amador	Hatch Graham	PO Box 39	Somerset, CA 95684	(530) 621-1833	621-3939	birdsfly@innercite.com
Contra Costa	Shirley & Warren Engstrom	232 Tharp Drive	Moraga, CA 94556	(925) 376-4695		wlese@juno.com
	Oscar Enstrom	1932 Golden Rain Rd	Walnut Creek, CA 94595	(925) 952-9261		bigo@lanset.com
El Dorado	Hatch Graham	P.O. Box 39	Somerset, CA 95684	(530) 621-1833	621-3939	birdsfly@innercite.com
Lake	Jeannette Knight	PO Box 152	Cobb, CA 95426-0152	(707) 928-5250		
Lassen	Edward Bertotti	470 413 Wingfield	Susanville, CA 96130	(530) 257-3774		
	Tom Rickman		Almanor, CA 96130	(530) 257-4188		trickman@fs.fed.us
Los Angeles	Doug Martin	13066 Shenley Street	Sylmar, CA 91342	(818) 367-8967		
Madera	William Rihn	PO Box 1648	Coarsegold, CA 93614	(209) 683-3052		
Marin	Ruth Beckner	15 Portola Avenue	San Rafael, CA 94903	(415) 479-9542		jbeck1924@cs.com
	Meryl Sundove	37 Greenwood Bch Rd	Tiburon, CA 94920	(415) 388-2524	388-0717	msundove@audubon.org
Mariposa	Lawrence Punte	9443 Banderilla Dr	LaGrange, CA 95329	(209) 852-2559		
Napa	David Graves	1500 Los Carneros Ave	Napa, CA 94559	(707) 257-0843		
Nevada	Walt Carnahan	12821 Bradford Dr	Grass Valley, CA 95945	(530) 273-4599		w.carnahan@sbcglobal.net
Orange	Dick Purvis	936 S Siet Place	Anaheim, CA 92806	(714) 776-8878		Dickersly@aol.com
Placer	Heath Wakelee	6019 Princeton Reach Wy	Granite Bay, CA 95746	(916) 797-4538		towa1@cs.com
Plumas	Mark Williams or Melissa Nelson	PO Box 767 PO Box 767	Chester, CA 96020 Chester, CA 96020	(530) 258-5166		
San Bernardino	Glen Chappell	1923 Abbie Way	Upland, CA 91784	(909) 981-1996		glen.chappell@worldnet.att.net
San Joaquin	Thomas Hoffman	10122 E Woodbridge Rd	Acampo, CA 95220	(209) 369-8578		thoffman@lodinet.com
San Luis Obispo	Judith Burkhardt	PO Box 296	Creston, CA 93432	(805) 438-4491		burkhardt@onemain.com
San Mateo	Howard Rathlesberger	230 Ridgeway	Woodside, CA 94062	(650) 367-1296	369-4788	HJRath@aol.com
Santa Barbara	Richard Willey	4172 Vanguard Dr	Lompoc, CA 93436	(805) 733-5383		dick_willey@verizon.net
Santa Clara	David "Tex" Houston	1099 Fife Ave	Palo Alto, CA 94	(650) 326-3402		davidh@acterra.org
Sonoma	Mike Crumly	23555 Hwy 21	Sonoma, CA 95475	(707) 996-7256		mikec@freixenetusa.com
	David Graves	1500 Los Carneros Ave	Napa, CA 94559	(707) 257-0843		wavey@saintsbury.com
Sutter	Kevin A. Putman	2884 Coy Dr	Yuba City, CA 95993	(530) 755-1480		dputman@syix.com
Tehama	Pete Flower	331 Oak Street	Red Bluff, CA 96080	(530) 527-0392		
Tulare	Peter C. Morrison, MD.	325 So. Willis	Visalia, CA 93291	(209) 733-1154		
Ventura	Jan Wasserman	1158 Beechwood St	Camarillo, CA 93010	(805) 987-3928		bandlady@treeswallows.org
Yuba	Kevin A. Putman	2884 Coy Dr	Yuba City, CA 95993	(530) 755-1480		dputman@syix.com
All Others	Don Yoder	2021 Ptarmigan #1	Walnut Creek, CA 94595	(925) 937-5974	935-4480	cbrp@value.net



Find out more about your birds—have them banded

When you have determined your estimated hatching date, call a bander if one is near. Schedule permitting, the bander may be able to band the adult incubating the eggs and/or the nestlings a week or so after they pip from the eggs. Banding helps us learn about the site fidelity of the adults, the dispersal of the chicks, longevity, and other elements of population dynamics.

Amador & southern El Dorado	Hatch Graham	(530) 621-1833	birdsfly@innercite.com
El Dorado National Forest	Susan Yasuda	(530) 644-2324	sysasuda@fs.fed.us
Western El Dorado	Ray DiBasilio	(530) 626-5318	raydib@jps.net
Northern El Dorado	Dave Delongchamp	(530) 333-2304	selkaijen@jps.net
Los Angeles	Walter Sakai	(310) 434-4702	sakai_walter@smc.edu
Mendocino & Lake	Janet King	(707) 462-3277	kingfarm@sonic.net
Orange	Christine Mukai	(949) 261-5454	cmukai@chambersgroupinc.com
Placer & northern Sacramento	Dee Warenycia	(916) 786-5056	warblers5@aol.com
San Francisco Peninsula	Howard Rathlesberger	(650) 367-1296	HJRath@aol.com
Solano & Yolo	Melanie Truan	(530) 750-3825	mltruan@ucdavis.edu
Sutter & Yuba	Kevin Putman	(530) 755-1480	dputman@syix.com
Ventura	Jan Wasserman	(805) 987-3928	bandlady@west.net

*ALPHA CODES FOR COMMON CAVITY-NESTERS

AMKE=American Kestrel
 ATFL=Ash-throated Flycatcher
 BNOW=Barn Owl
 CBCH=Chesnut-backed Chickadee
 EUST=European Starling
 HOSP=House Sparrow
 HOWR=House Wren
 MOBL=Mountain Bluebird
 MOCH=Mountain Chickadee
 TRES=Tree Swallow
 VGSW=Violet-green Swallow
 WEBL=Western Bluebird
 WESO=Western Screech Owl
 WBNU=White-breasted Nuthatch
 WODU=Wood Duck

Anyone desiring to band who can commit 2 or 3 days per week is encouraged to contact Hatch Graham.

E-MAIL ADDRESSES?

Our roving reporter, **Bob Franz**, who roves mostly on the internet, has had e-mail addresses rejected by the following members and contributors. Would you please update your current address with Bob at

BOBFRAZ13@aol.com

In Amador County: **Richard Colby, Marion Kunkel, Dianne McCleery**; Contra Costa: **Bob Justice**; El Dorado: **James A Wright**; Placer: **Heath Wakelee**; San Mateo: **Lane Eubank, Fred Templin, Andrea Wuenschel**; Santa Cruz: **Tonya Hoff**; Tuolumne: **Larry Bodiford**; Yuba: **Helen Goforth**.

Any others who haven't given us your e-mail address may do so. We don't share our lists with anyone else. Thanks to all of you.

Please include your e-mail with your Annual Report.

ATTENTION AUDUBON CHAPTER OFFICERS:

This is the last "free" issue of *BLUEBIRDS FLY!* we will be able to send you. In the past, our arrangement with Audubon ~California was to send a copy to the President and Editor of each Audubon chapter in return for the cost of mailing under Audubon's bulk mailing permit.

This worked out well, two \$5 subscriptions for 50 chapters came to \$250, the approximate yearly cost of the mailing. Audubon ~California no longer underwrites us and **Mt Diablo Audubon Society** has assumed the mailing at **CBRP's** expense. We'd like to have you continue to receive our newsletter but it will require that you subscribe.

Please do. Send \$5 to

MDAS—Bluebirds,
2021 Ptarmigan Dr #1
Walnut Creek, CA 94595

The Poet's Corner

A Modest Proposal: English Sparrows

These weaver finches that fatten on the grain we spill; that cram the barn eaves weighing them down in unkempt tenement; these brown invaders that seize the homes of our songbirds, scalping the young and packing the nests with eggs of their own—

we're declaring war on foreign sparrows. We mean to net and trap them, sell them for plucked chickens.

We'll weave their feathers into amulets against every dusky race of aliens.

We'll fix them fancy:

sparrow à la périgourdine, à la Carême, la provençale. Sparrows roasted, grilled on skewers.

We'll crack their tiny bones in our teeth and lick their fat from our fingers.

We'll starve on them.

~Taylor Graham

from *Harmonics, Poet's Corner Press, Stockton, 2003*

Your subscription is a benefit of membership. Membership is available for as little as \$5 per year but *more* is greatly appreciated. We send the newsletter to many co-operators but we need paid members to keep printing. The year and month of your membership expiration is shown in the upper right side of your label, e.g., 200306= June 2003. You may have received this issue because you sent an Annual Report for 2002. Won't you support us with a membership as well?

Newsletter
v.8 no.4, v.9 no. 1+, Winter-Summer 2002-2003

BLUEBIRDS FLY!
California Bluebird Recovery Program's

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