



Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project Newsletter – Fall 2008

An affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society



From the President's Nest

Box *-by Nancy Fraser*

The 2008 bluebird nesting season is over, and anecdotal evidence from monitors and banders suggests that again it was an unusual year. I have tumbled finally to the realization that every nesting year is unique. With the dedication and hard work of all of you volunteers and the cheerful collaboration of landowners, I believe that this year we have made some strong improvements to education, conservation, and site selection for nest boxes supplementing natural cavities for bluebirds.

And we can do better. In the coming year, I have great confidence that we will be able to strengthen our understanding of our mission and purpose, enhance our conservation education efforts to support that purpose, and concentrate our efforts on improving bluebird nest box routes.

I want to applaud each and every one of our volunteer monitors, and recognize the efforts of those of you who joined our ranks for the first time this season: Lori Loen, Marilyn Jones, Russ Rosner, Marcia Sherry, Nelda & Ron Skidmore, Laurie Skinner, Susan Sokol Blosser, and Debby White. I want to thank Caroline and Stephen Brandt for completing

their first year as banders, and welcome Zenobia Lapeyre and Sondra Moroney, who have just completed their year as assistants to banders.

Over the past year, we have had two board member resignations. Thank you to Carole Hallett and Jim Kreutzbender for their generous donation of their time and input into the governing of our project. At the August meeting, the board appointed Zenobia Lapeyre to Carole's vacant position.

This year, four of our volunteers were able to attend the 30th Anniversary annual meeting of the North American Bluebird Society (NABS). As a NABS Affiliate, we were highly encouraged by NABS officers and fellow members to host a NABS convention in the northwest in 2010. Review of the complexities of hosting a national convention and the effect it might have on accomplishing the goals and purpose of our project over the next two years ultimately led to our declining this opportunity at this time.

The Board of Directors is working on several projects during the Western Bluebird "off season". We are committed to completing these in order to create a successful season next year and to celebrate both the bluebird and the bluebird project volunteer. Stay tuned for details in the next newsletter!

Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project

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Voice of Prescott Telephone Line to be Closed

At a recent Board of Directors meeting, expenses were reviewed. One of the items discussed was the value versus the expense of maintaining the published PBRP message telephone line. After reviewing the frequency of calls and type of calls received, the Board voted to phase out this number.

The public, volunteers, and landowners can contact PBRP via the web site (www.prescottbluebird.com), through our mail connection (PBRP, PO Box 1469, Sherwood, OR 97140), and through their monitor or bander. It is imperative that the contact numbers or e-mail for monitors and banders be given to landowners each year, and that monitors and banders have contact information for each other. At the Fall Wrap Up meeting and the Spring Session, monitors and banders will be given tools and tips to assist in making this information available.

We Want to Hear From/About You!

PBRP volunteers describe a wide constellation of backgrounds, interests, and skills (besides their bluebird skills and interests). We would like to brag ourselves up a bit and share with other volunteers what we are about and what makes us tick, kick, giggle, and blossom. Please, if you are contacted by the Newsletter Editor or a PBRP Board member and asked to share some of your biography for upcoming newsletters, give it strong consideration. We'd like to get to know you!

A Recovered Bluebird

-Story and Photographs by Zenobia Lapeyre

It was a sunny day in May and the air snapped with energy and expectation. Biology students on a field trip disembarked from their bus as I watched. They gathered around Dave Flaming as he explained the procedures and equipment that he would use as he banded the clutch of bluebird nestlings in the nearby nest box. Students milled around taking pictures, asking questions and soaking up the experience. It was the first clutch on my first route as a bluebird monitor. As I observed this PBRP “rite of passage”, I could not have been prouder even if I had been biologically involved.

A few days later something happened to the adult female and she disappeared. The male was left on his own to continue to raise the five nestlings. This is a seemingly impossible task for one parent, but to his credit he was able to keep two of the five nestlings alive until their fledge date.



Photo of male Western Bluebird

Time passed. The surviving nestlings grew. I became a Bander Assistant, training to become a bander. One year and one month after he was banded, I captured one of “my” bluebirds from that first banding experience.



Photo of male Western Bluebird

He had not only survived but he was now the father of a healthy clutch of his own. He was at a nest box a short distance from where he was hatched.

I realize that the purpose behind banding nestlings before they hatch is to create a database. I know that it is important to recapture the banded adults in order to track the data, to measure the success of the Project, and to gather other pertinent details. But it sure is nice to meet an old acquaintance.



Photo of male Western Bluebird



Photo of female Western Bluebird taken by Sue Blanchard

Ways to Help Birds on Your Property and in Your Community

1. Green with native plants. Whether you live in the country or city, green spaces provide food and resting places for many native bird species. Plants native to your local area are adapted to local conditions and provide many benefits. Learn about native plants in our area at: www.audubonportland.org/sanctuaries/planting/guide
2. Avoid or curtail use of fertilizers, insecticides, or herbicides. Fertilizers work their way into groundwater, rivers, lakes, and the ocean, contributing to pollution and oceanic “dead zones”. Learn more by visiting: www.audubon.org/bird/at%5Fhome/ReducePesticideUse.html
3. Conserve and preserve snags - dead or dying trees. Leave SNAGS in place to continue the cycle and shelter bluebirds and other cavity nesters, among other bird and animal species.
4. Keep cats indoors. Cats kill millions of birds every year. Urban outdoor cats are vulnerable to autos, infections, diseases, poisons, and injuries in cat fights, as well as attack by predators. Keeping cats indoors protects humans and the cats themselves as well as birds. Learn about the Cats Indoors campaign at: www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/policy/cats/index.html and <http://www.audubonportland.org/backyardwildlife/brochures/cats>
5. Support local nature walks and other environmental education programs. The more we know about the plants and animals around us, the wiser our choices will be about local and regional issues affecting the natural world.
6. Ride a bike or public transportation when possible. Millions of birds die each year from collisions with cars. Pollution and habitat destruction from obtaining petroleum products kills or reduces reproductive success for many more.
7. Make your windows bird-safe. Collisions with window glass kill as many as a billion birds a year. Strategies for making windows safer, including effective netting and the safest placement of feeders, are listed at: www.birdscope.org
8. Reduce, reuse, and recycle. The more demands for new paper, the less sustainable forestry becomes, and paper production is a very polluting process. Minimizing our use of paper products protects bird health and habitat.



Applying What I've Learned

-Story and Photographs by Lauri Kunzman

Today (late March 2008) we lost house and barn power from 7:30 AM until 1:15 PM, with outside temperature at 33 degrees. We have 8-day-old baby chickens (chicks) that will grow up to be our 'ladies' and give us fine free-range eggs. However, right now, they are very young and need to have a heat lamp available to them at all times. I had to decide where to take them to keep them warm. I chose to take them into our house and into our downstairs bathroom. It is nice and warm in there and quite a small room so I figured it would hold the existing heat best.

Because I band Western Bluebirds, I have learned to put nestlings that need to be out of their nest for a short time into a dark, warm space which means a basket lined with a soft cloth (always washable) plus a light covering.



When it is dark, quiet and warm for the chicks they pretty much just sleep or at least settle down and aren't scared or traumatized. But since this was really daytime for these chicken chicks, I draped the top (yellow) blanket over the handle thinking they might want to get out and explore. I provided them with their food and water and their 'hiding box' but they never ventured out of the basket.

I left, closing the bathroom door, to go out to Champoeg Park to do some monitoring 'clean up' duties. Upon returning, the power was still off.....but not for too much longer. I took off the top towel to check on them and they were all hunkered down.



At 1:15 the power returned and the heat lamp was working again, so I was able to take these chicks back to their 'ICU' area, which is the chick holding pen in our barn.



I couldn't resist sharing with you how fun it was to know how to help these young chicks. Now, I probably would have figured out something - but my training with PBRP made this an easy set of actions to take.

Post note: September 2008 – all chicks survived and are now laying lovely pullet eggs.



Results of Nesting Season on One Bander's Route

-by Nancy Fraser, Bander

First let me emphasize that this is a totally random sampling. It cannot be extrapolated to give the seasonal data reports that will be reported in their entirety for all of PBRP in our spring issue. Production (available volunteer time) has required that this year's fall newsletter be mailed earlier than usual, and our volunteer monitors and banders have not been able to complete and submit their reports to the Database Coordinator.

My eight banding routes are clustered to the west, southwest, and southeast of Sherwood. I also band at Sokol Blosser Winery south of Dundee (where a bander has retired and as yet we have no local volunteer to do banding). These routes comprise just over 200 nestboxes. Eight tireless volunteer monitors visit these boxes one or more times a week during the April through August nesting season.

I have heard anecdotal reports from other PBRP volunteers that this season seemed quieter than usual. Some of my routes are new to me, as I have taken them over from retired banders or through re-adjustment of bander route assignments. On those routes

that I have done for a number of years, I would say that bluebird activity is lower, and that both bluebirds and Violet Green Swallows (the next most frequent species using our nestboxes) had a more difficult time bringing their broods to a successful conclusion. There were more eggs that did not hatch, which I attribute mostly to the rather violent swings in weather during the spring and early summer.

Overall, on these eight routes, here is a summary of what was recorded for bluebird nesting activity:

Number of nesting attempts (defined by even one egg laid): 90

Number of eggs laid: 467

Number of eggs which did not hatch (predator, abandoned, or infertile): 114

Number of young hatched: 353

Number fledged: 267

Percent of eggs hatched: 76

Percent of young fledged: 76

Earliest egg laid: March 22, 2008

Latest egg laid: August 17, 2008





Environmental Education at the Tualatin River NWR

-By Janice Jenkins, Environmental Education Specialist at TRNWR

Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project has had a long-standing relationship with The Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge, where there are many productive nestboxes fledging bluebirds each season. This past year, through a grant from the Weyerhaeuser Foundation, PBRP and the Refuge collaborated in planting native plants to study winter foraging habits of bluebirds. The following information is provided by the refuge.

Reminder: Seasonal Trails Close Oct. 1st

The weather is changing. Wintering waterfowl will soon arrive on their fall migration from arctic nesting grounds. Beginning October 1st, the Refuge closes dike and service roads to all public access. This minimizes disturbance to ducks and geese that use Refuge wetlands to feed and rest. The 1-mile year-round trail remains open and provides great viewing of fall and winter wildlife. The seasonal trails will reopen again May 1st, 2009. The Wildlife Center is open Tuesday-Sunday, 10:00am-4:00pm.

The Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge Environmental Education Program enables students to learn the value of our ecosystems and extends the learning process beyond the conventional classroom. We offer comprehensive, interdisciplinary, hands-on learning methods to correlate with teacher's objectives and Oregon state benchmark standards. A diversity of

resources, habitat, and wildlife can be found on the Refuge, allowing students to experience nature firsthand while sparking their natural curiosity and developing a respect for nature. As educators, we strive to increase environmental awareness throughout our communities and offer quality environmental education.

Students explore the outdoors at the Refuge through free teacher-led field trips with trained Refuge volunteers accompanying groups to offer their nature observation skills and knowledge about the Refuge. Our curriculum offers a variety of outdoor lessons for teachers and parent volunteers to teach and lead, while the new indoor lab program with staff-led activities enhances and expands outdoor learning experiences by engaging students with hands-on activities.

Since field trips are teacher-led, teacher workshops are offered so teachers can learn ways to inspire students using the Refuge as an outdoor classroom. We offer free workshops in February, April and September to provide teachers with the tools and information needed to prepare students and parent volunteers for a successful teacher-led Refuge field trip. Teachers must attend a Refuge workshop before scheduling a field trip on the Refuge.

For a sneak peek at our curriculum visit:
<http://www.fws.gov/tualatinriver/education>

Teacher workshops are held on scheduled dates, from 8:30-1:00 pm at the Refuge. To obtain information about upcoming workshops or field trips, to sign-up for workshops or field trips, or for other information, contact:

Environmental Education Specialist - Janice Jenkins, 503-625-5944,

Education@friendsoftualatinrefuge.org



Memories of 30+ Years as a Bluebird Volunteer

-By Pat Johnston, a Founding Member of PBRP

Pat Johnston, one of the founding members of PBRP, has honored us by writing down some of her memories and experiences as a bluebird volunteer. Thirty plus years of volunteering adds up to a LOT of wonderful experiences, so we have divided Pat's article into two installments. The second installment will run in our Spring 2009 Newsletter.

As I look back over the last 30 years that I have been working with bluebirds, I am amazed at all the changes that have taken place in the landscape. When I first started, the area was all small family farms, sometimes with a cow or some chickens, maybe a horse, and small orchards, mainly walnut or filbert. Sherwood was a small country town, with the main street facing the railroad tracks. Six Corners was a small group of stores at the intersection of Hwy 99E, Edy Road and the Scholls Sherwood Road.

Now Sherwood is a huge shopping complex, with houses spreading in all directions over acres of land and covering many of the small farms. Fortunately, during this time of explosive growth, the Tualatin Valley Wildlife Refuge was conceived and slowly assembled from farms and dairy land of willing sellers. The land has slowly been returned to its original grassland

configuration, and is now a safe refuge for native species of the Pacific Northwest and a welcome stopover for migrating birds.

In spite of all this growth, one thing has changed for the better. Whereas bluebirds were almost non-existent in the mid 1970s, now their numbers are increasing to the point they are nesting on the property of many landowners and in some rare cases nesting in the yards of homes in subdivisions. This is due first and foremost to providing nestboxes in a suitable habitat in which they can raise their families since all of their natural cavities - tree snags and wooden fence posts - have been removed.

My first encounter with a bluebird occurred in the 1970s, when the Audubon Society of Portland scheduled a field trip led by Hubert Prescott, with bluebird sightings guaranteed. Never having seen a bluebird, I thought this would be an excellent opportunity to add a new bird to my life list. I will never forget the thrill of seeing my first bluebird! What a beautiful and rare little bird! It was nesting in one of Hubert's nestboxes on a tree-lined lane leading up to a farmhouse east of Sherwood, on property that is now a park. When Hubert explained his work, and that he was in need of volunteers to monitor some of the 200 plus nestboxes that he had mounted, there was no turning back.

I was assigned a route on Chehalem Mountain, and was immediately impressed by the friendliness of the residents and the beauty of the area. And of course, the chance to work with this beautiful little bird that was so people-tolerant was pre-eminent!

At first I was afraid to move any nestbox. Since they had been placed by Hubert, it seemed that I dare not question his authority. I soon overcame that problem and proceeded with my learning experience. There was a

period of time when house sparrows were taking over many of the nestboxes, and the bluebirds were not making any effort to resist. They would just sit on a branch and watch the sparrows usurp the nest. They seemed so wimpish that it was almost embarrassing to be associated with them.

But finally they became braver and strong enough to contest the situation, and although they didn't often win out, at least they were doing their best to defend their homes. Now we do all in our power to help the bluebird win out in this battle. Mainly, we do not put nestboxes in areas where there are sparrows, and since house sparrows are not native birds, it is legal to remove the nests and eggs of this species.

One year when we had a severe cold spell during the nesting season, many of the nestlings died from a combination of hypothermia and starvation. This occurred because the male could not find enough food for his brood, and the female bluebird would leave the nest for protracted periods of time searching for insects. Insects, of course, disappear during cold spells.

It was during this period that we began placing mealworms near the nestbox as supplemental food. The mealworms were helpful for nestling survival, but after using them for quite some time, we are rethinking the issue. If bluebirds are to survive on their own, they need to learn to search for their food as they have for the past 10,000 years. Teaching them to be welfare birds is not doing them any favor. It has to be "survival of the fittest" in the cold cruel world, as it has always been. So mealworm use has been cut down to just a token few when the monitors visit once a week

When my grandchildren were youngsters, frequently one of them would accompany

me when I would monitor my nestboxes. They were a great help. They could retrieve the trap for me, and an extra pair of eyes was always useful. They even found more than a few bands on the ground, which was all that remained of a bluebird that had met an untimely end. Maybe because the kids were small and closer to the ground, they spotted things that I would have missed.

But one thing they would never forget was the near miss with an ostrich! We were coming up Holly Hill Road one morning, when I rounded a curve and saw a huge ostrich racing down the road, and heading right for my car. I stopped, but with his huge paces, it looked like he would continue right up over the top of my car. At the last possible moment, he swerved and went around the car, just brushing the fender with his feathers. I have no idea where he came from or where he was going; all I know is that he was traveling.

I should mention that at this time, many of the roads were still gravel, although now almost all of them have been paved.

Over the years I have had some interesting experiences. I remember one time when I was watching a pair of bluebirds on a nestbox. The property owner came rushing up in his pickup wanting to know in no uncertain terms what I was doing on his property. I explained that I was monitoring the bluebird boxes, and his wife had given me permission to come on the property. He apologized and drove off, leaving me puzzled by his manner. Later I learned that he was being investigated by the "Feds" and that he thought I was spying on him. I have no idea what his infraction was, but I understand that he spent some time confined as a guest of Uncle Sam.

To be continued...

End of the Season Renovations

Based on ideas from Bluebirds Across Nebraska's "Banner"

The end of the 2008 nesting season has arrived, and many of us are feeling the loss of no longer visiting our bluebird nestbox routes. The weather is still mostly fine, creating opportunities to prepare for next season that will spare you being out during the often unpleasant early spring Oregon weather! Spend some time reviewing your data and nestboxes. Think about whether boxes should be replaced, renovated, moved, or just plain removed. Lack of use, sparrow or wren problems, consistent use by swallows rather than bluebirds, predation problems, etc., are all reasons to consider changes. If spring and nesting activity start early next year, you will be ready!!

1. What was once good bluebird habitat can instead become good habitat for competitors. The encroachment of brush or small trees can turn once-productive nestboxes into boxes where bluebirds may lose eggs and nestlings to wrens. The encroachment of human activity and buildings, deliberate seed feeding or horse barn proximity can encourage House Sparrows where they have not been present before, with the resulting potential loss of eggs, nestlings, and adult bluebirds.

2. Boxes constantly used by House Sparrows should not be ignored. Trapping is the most effective method of sparrow control. When trapping sparrows, it is your responsibility to destroy the unwanted, non-native birds and also **BE SURE YOU RETURN TO THE TRAP WITHIN AN HOUR OF SETTING** to ensure that if native species are trapped, they are released in a timely fashion. If trapping is not an option for you, boxes that repeatedly attract sparrows should be removed or moved to another location.

3. Boxes that are placed too close together should be relocated. Current thinking suggests that unless the boxes are in ideal habitat (short vegetation, scattered trees/bushes/fence lines to perch on, & a hill or trees blocking the view between boxes), the boxes will more productive if they are placed 125-150 apart.

4. If a box has not been used for three years or more, relocate the box. Sometimes moving a box as little as 50 feet will make a difference.

5. Consider getting rid of one of any two paired "back to back" boxes. Instead, where swallows are prevalent, place two boxes about 10 feet apart and make sure the entrance holes don't face each other.

6. The longer your nestboxes have been in place, the more likely that a predator will discover them. Sometimes moving boxes will help. Nestboxes mounted on fence lines or trees with easy access by climbing predators are likely to be constantly raided. Move them or place guards before they become feeders for the predators.

7. Check the condition of your boxes. If a repair is modest and the box has been productive every year for bluebirds, go ahead and repair it. Otherwise, take it down and put up a new box at that site.

8. Perhaps your bluebird route or a substantial number of boxes are no longer located in good bluebird habitat. Investigate other locations (right of way) or ask landowners on/near your route about putting up nestboxes. Do not put up boxes on private property without asking permission; remember to explain that you (or another monitor) will need to be coming on the property weekly to monitor the box.



Photo of male Western Bluebird taken by Zenobia Lapeyre

Newsletter Ideas

The distribution method for our newsletters is being reviewed. The Board of Directors is evaluating alternate methods to ensure the newsletter is accessible in the most cost effective manner. We are considering methods used by other bluebird organizations and other non-profits.

Please assist us by completing the brief questionnaire below, clipping it, and returning it in the enclosed donation envelope. Thank you for your assistance!

READER SURVEY ON NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION OPTIONS

Please circle your opinion for each question and return. Thanks!

The Board is considering sending all newsletters in black & white hard copy, with the full color newsletter available on the PBRP Web Site. How acceptable to you would this be?

Good OK Marginal Not Acceptable

Comment _____

The Board is considering a dual mailing list: hard copy and e-mailing of a PDF or MS Word file newsletter. How acceptable to you would this be?

Good OK Marginal Not Acceptable

Comment _____

The Board is considering no hard copy distribution of the newsletter, but rather making it available on the PBRP Web Site. How acceptable to you would this be?

Good OK Marginal Not Acceptable

Comment _____

Female Western Bluebird Keeps on Truckin’

-Story and photographs by Zenobia Lapeyre

It began with a report from Pete Schmidt, the biologist at Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge. He had returned to his truck, parked at the refuge, to find a female bluebird had entered his truck through a partially opened window. He was able to capture her and to read the number on her leg band before helping her to find her way out of the truck.



The PBRP Data Base showed this female was at least a year old when she produced two broods in 2007. Five nestlings were banded in May and six nestlings in July.



I always enjoy learning the history of a recaptured bird. It really emphasizes the value of attaching the leg bands to the nestlings and the importance of keeping the database updated.

Subsequently, Dave emailed us that he had seen the female at a nearby nest box and that she was carrying nesting materials.



Pete shows Dave Flaming where his truck was parked when the female bluebird entered it.

This is the area where Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project volunteers helped to plant a host of plants earlier this year in a restoration effort to provide native plants for winter foraging for the birds. You can see some of the bamboo stakes and blue sleeves that are protecting some of those tender shrubs and trees.



Dave opened the nest box and discovered that the nest had already been completed.



As I prepared to leave the area, I took another look at the acres that have been planted, most of which are not visible in one photo, and I tried to speculate how it is going to look in five years or so when these twigs are trees that have outgrown their protective sleeves. It is so exciting to work with people who are working for the future, and enjoying the present in the meantime. And it is heartening to monitor the activities of this bluebird pair, after the female's close encounter with supportive and caring Refuge personnel.



Ultimately, this female produced 3 broods of

fledglings in 2008. The first brood of 6 was banded on May 13th, about 4 weeks after the female was released from the truck. Two more broods were banded: 3 nestlings on July 10th and 4 nestlings on September 3rd. The May banding was the first of the season for Dave Flaming, and the September banding was the last of the season.

Perhaps this busy female was trying to get Pete's attention, "Wait until you see what I do this summer!"

Upcoming Events

February 21, 2009

Spring Workshop for New Monitors (a.m.)
and Returning Monitors (p.m.)

TBA

Banders' Meeting 2009

TBA

Master Bander Meeting with Banders 2009

March 1, 2009

Deadline to submit articles for Spring
Newsletter

Early April, 2009

Visit your monitor route to check on nestbox
integrity, make repairs, etc.

Mid-April, 2009

Begin weekly route monitoring and weekly
reporting to your bander

June, 2009, TBA

Bluebird Day in conjunction with
Champoeg State Heritage Park Oregon
Sesquicentennial Events

September 9-12, 2009

North American Bluebird Society Annual
Conference, Harrisburg/Hershey, PA

Why Petting Nestlings is Not a Good Idea

-by Bet Zimmerman, originally published in the NABS Summer 2008 issue of "Bluebird", shortened and reprinted with permission

Okay, admit it, maybe you've done it, at least once – petting or stroking a beautiful baby nestling. Or you are showing a nestbox to a child, and they ask if they can pet the babies. The nestlings sit quietly in the nest, and seem almost tame. We feel so close to them and love and care for them so – it's like they are "ours." And it's amazing and tempting to get that close to a wild creature. Bluebirds (but not necessarily other cavity nesters) are remarkably tolerant of humans, and normal monitoring will not cause the parents to abandon the nest. But is petting baby birds a good idea?

I think there are several concerns.

- One is transmittal of disease, especially if you have pet birds you have handled, or if you are coming from checking another box where you touched nesting material or nestlings.
- Another is stress. Imagine how GARGANTUAN and alien we look to a bird. Yes, the babies may look calm, but is it because they are terrified and are instinctively pretending to be dead? Notice that the older babies are, the more likely they are to hunker down in the nest, pretending to be asleep or dead or trying not to attract attention.
- It can also stress out the parents, as they might think their babies are being attacked (although some parents are so used to monitoring they just observe). You wouldn't want the parents to choose to nest elsewhere next time because of too much interference.
- Some folks might view it as a violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act because it could be considered harassment (although lots of other things responsible bluebird landlords do, like

changing out a nest when it is wet/infested with blowflies, could technically fall into this category).

- It's harder to maintain an even temperature inside the box when it's open. The babies could get chilled, especially younger nestlings that are unable to maintain a constant body temperature. The longer the box is open, the bigger the threat.
- Newborn nestlings are extremely fragile.

It is a gift that birds nest in the boxes we provide. They are wild creatures. They are not pets, and they are not really "ours" – we are just blessed with an opportunity to observe them. Their welfare should be our primary consideration. I know that responsible bluebird landlords would never want to harm or stress nestlings. Thus, I recommend minimizing any handling of babies. Conduct monitoring quickly but carefully.

Visit www.siailis.org/monitoring for nestbox monitoring tips. For example, if you have a nest that's high up or difficult to see inside of, Ace Hardware carries a great extendible auto inspection mirror that will allow you to see what's going on inside the box.

May all your blues be birds!



Photo of Western Bluebird nestlings, taken by Zenobia Lapeyre

Join PBRP as a Volunteer Nestbox Monitor

There is always attrition in the ranks of our volunteers. We will need additional monitors for the 2009 nesting season. On February 21, 2009 we will hold our New Monitors' Workshop/Training at Champoeg State Heritage Park. Please help get the word out to friends and family. Recruit them (or yourself!) as a bluebird monitor. Contact any board member, or simply check the box on the donation form on this page.

Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project Funding

Nonprofit organizations such as PBRP are impacted by increasing costs in 2008/2009. We depend entirely on donations to fund our efforts at bluebird recovery, conservation, and education. The Board of Directors, Officers, Newsletter Editor, and all of the Monitors and Banders serve tirelessly as volunteers. Many of these volunteers donate goods as well, without requesting or receiving reimbursement. Although there are few major expenses, they are significant when there is no regular income to offset them. Expenses for purchase of mealworms, maintenance of the hardware and software for our educational programs and database records, educational stipends for the annual North American Bluebird Society conference, and the production and bulk mailing of two newsletters to over 1300 households each year require at least \$6,000 annually. PBRP's Board of Directors urges you to consider making a donation to PBRP using the form below and the envelope provided with this newsletter. Thank you.

-Nancy Fraser, President of Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project

**Yes! I want to help the
Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project!**

Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation of
 ___ \$20 ___ \$30 ___ \$50 ___ \$100



Other: _____ **Use enclosed envelope to mail.**

I am interested in volunteering as a Bluebird Monitor April to August

Name: _____ E mail: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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<http://www.fws.gov/tualatinriver/>