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## PRESCOTT BLUEBIRD RECOVERY PROJECT

Post Office Box 1469 | Sherwood, Oregon 97140 | [www.prescottbluebird.com](http://www.prescottbluebird.com)

### Newsletter ~ Spring 2012

#### ~ 2011 Contributors ~

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*Fly bluebird, fly  
With subtle song  
so sweet  
Bring the hope  
of summer on  
your wings  
A joy for all who  
meet.*



Prescott Bluebird  
Recovery Project

[prescottbluebird.com](http://prescottbluebird.com)

PBRP Bookmark

Concept by  
Lauri Kunzman

Design & Poem by  
Scott Morrison

**To all of you, without exception, our heartfelt thanks.**



## Mealworm Thoughts

by Bill DeLacey, Landowner (including photos)

I have evolved to my supplemental mealworm feeding strategy. I start putting out mealworms in mid April, to attract the adults and show them what a wonderful location this yard is. Small feedings early and late in the day help supplement the shortage of insects in early spring. I believe the mealworms give the parents a significant edge in survival, by providing a base food source. In 2011, the late wet spring resulted in a higher need and more worms fed than usual and was a hard year for all birds.



*Mealworm Feeding Station*

I feed more while the female is on the eggs to keep her on the nest longer. She does not have to leave and search for extended periods during late spring for her food. When the eggs hatch I switch to small mealworms and up the feeding again to give the young a good start. Normally after fledging the parents take the young birds away and worm consumption drops for a week or two. They return with the young birds after two weeks and typically drop in for worms in the morning and evening. During the day they are out hunting and training.

The Duncraft mealworm feeder box is my choice for the early spring through mid summer feedings. It has two bluebird sized holes in each end. This defeats all the larger birds who can't get in. If you just place mealworms out in a dish, the Jays, Robins, Starlings and Sparrows quickly locate the new food source and swarm it. It is not possible to keep ahead of their appetites.

The feeder I originally used had a perch below each entry. This allowed Sparrow type birds to land and learn how to enter. I removed the perches and it worked much better.

The Bluebird's ability to hover and enter a bluebird sized hole separates out the majority of the other birds that would feed on mealworms.

In mid summer the Yellow Jackets become pests and in late summer and early fall make it nearly impossible to continue to feed mealworms. As soon as the Yellow Jackets start to swarm into the feeder house the Bluebirds are reluctant to enter. I then move back to an open feeder at our table. I have discovered that if the feeder is filled with the mealworm bedding meal it reduces the Yellow Jacket's ability to attack the mealworms. The mealworms naturally burrow down in the mealworm meal and hide. The Bluebirds quickly figure this out and throw meal around with their beaks to find a mealworm. The young Bluebirds quickly pick up this skill. Last year was very bad with Yellow Jackets. They were much more numerous than any other year. I fought them until several weeks after the Clutch #3 chicks had fledged, then gave up for the year.

NOTE: Mealworms can't stand direct sun. If you put them out in the direct sun they thrash about and die very quickly.

Thanks to our friends,  
Lauri Kunzman, our Bander  
Tom Aufenthie, our Monitor  
Bill DeLacey  
October 2011



*A small, mobile bird bath.  
The bluebirds love to take baths!*



*Adults feeding mealworms*

## Dried Mealworms *(blowin' in the wind)*

Some vendors offer packets of dried mealworms. I purchase suet for my backyard birds that incorporates dried insects.

Some of the landowners whom I have visited this early season report some success with birds accepting slightly hydrated dried mealworms. I suspect if there were wriggly, live mealworms or natural prey, bluebirds would turn up their noses (and be better served with more nutritious food, especially for nestlings). Hydrated dried mealworms are an out of season or occasional replacement for fresh mealworms. Putting the non-hydrated dried worms out is probably not worthwhile. If nothing else, they will blow away!

## Record Setting Male Bluebird

A long-time landowner in our project lives near Champoeg State Heritage Area, and walks the park's paths almost daily. This winter he discovered a bright blue male bluebird dead in the park. He recorded the bird's band number and contacted CSHA bander Lauri Kunzman. The extensive PBRP data base showed that this bird was banded as a nestling over 9 years ago, June 26, 2002, at the park. This same bird was recaptured at two different Champoeg nestboxes, once in July of 2004, and again in June, 2005. Lauri remembers having a beautiful male bluebird at yet another box in the park for several years, but had been unable to recapture this wily fellow. We believe that this bird is the oldest male known to our project.

Welcome  
Spring!!

## Have You Heard . . .

A noteworthy or amusing statement made by one of our volunteers or landowners in the field? We would like to further share our project and our bluebird lovers' experiences and comments in our newsletter. I have a couple to start:

*"Learning about bluebirds and monitoring a route has made me feel good about myself and affected my health and well being."*

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*"Thank you for all that you do."*

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*Seen on a sign: "Mole Crossing"*

This will be eye-opening (as well as entertaining). Keep your eyes and ears open this season and send your submissions to [pbrpeditor@yahoo.com](mailto:pbrpeditor@yahoo.com).



Photo Credit ~ Zemobia Lapeyre

# PRESCOTT BLUEBIRD RECOVERY PROJECT

## Western Bluebird Nesting Summary

	2009	2010	2011
Nesting Attempts	552	502	414
Failed Attempts	159	150	145
% Successful	71%	70%	65%
Earliest Hatch Date	5/1	4/28	5/5
Latest Hatch Date	8/21	8/28	8/18
Total Eggs Laid	2,827	2,430	2,043
Avg Eggs/Clutch	5.1	4.8	4.9
Total Hatchlings	2,125	1,743	1,507
% Eggs Hatched	75%	72%	74%
Avg Hatchlings/Clutch	3.8	3.5	3.6
Total Nestlings Banded	1,917	1,484	1,200
% Nestlings Banded	90%	85%	80%
Total Nestlings Fledged	1,729	1,394	1,086
% Nestlings Fledged	81%	80%	72%

Check our web site for additional statistics:  
[prescottbluebird.com](http://prescottbluebird.com)



## 10 Ways to Improve Your Monitoring Day

By Dave Flaming, Bander

1. **Treat yourself.** Start your day by going out for breakfast, or at least a latte and pastry at your favorite coffee shop. There is a good chance you will find me there!
2. **Tell others.** Don't miss an opportunity to tell people why you are out on a cold and wet day. There are a couple of baristas out there who no longer think of me as the "grande, non-fat, sugar-free, vanilla latte, please" guy, but rather the bluebird guy. From time to time they even ask how my bluebirds are doing.
3. **Invite a friend.** Invite a friend to accompany you on your route, or perhaps a grandchild, niece or nephew, or the neighbor's child. Refrain from being a tour guide, pointing out everything YOU see. Instead ask what your guest is seeing. Take time to see your route through the eyes of someone else, particularly through the eyes of a child.
4. **Pack a picnic.** Pack a picnic lunch to eat on your route. I love this birding expression: "The best birds are sandwich birds." Isn't it amazing how many birds we see once we lay our binoculars down and pick up a sandwich? Perhaps we can learn to relax and open our eyes to nature through sitting down and eating more sandwiches.
5. **Practice listening.** After eating those sandwiches, find a comfortable sitting spot under a tree or against a fence post, close your eyes and just listen for 10 or 15 minutes -- not any longer as we don't want you falling asleep!
6. **Don't concentrate all your attention on bluebirds.** Most of us have "life" bird lists, some of us even maintain state and county bird lists. Why not a bluebird route list? How many different species of birds can we find on our route? How many mammals? Butterflies? Insects? Wildflowers?
7. **Talk to your homeowners.** At times we seem to be in such a hurry to check the next box that we fail to say hello to our homeowners. Homeowners are very important to the recovery of bluebirds; they are the silent volunteers of our organization.
8. **Unwind your route.** Have you ever monitored your route backwards? Why not? We tend to become comfortable by starting with box number 01 and ending with 99. Why not get a completely new perspective of your route? You will be surprised by all the new things you see as you unwind your route.
9. **Use Alternative Transportation.** Try walking your route, or riding your bicycle (you are allowed to drive to your route). I have a friend who, when her car broke down, rode her horse (she lives on her route). She reported that it took her 5 hours to monitor her route and the next day her bottom was sore!
10. **Have Fun!** By all means, have fun on your route!



Photo Credit ~ Zemobia Lapeyre

## The President's Nest Box

*by Dave Flaming*

### Welcome to Spring!

I am writing this article the last week-end of February (newsletter deadlines) so spring remains a distant wish. Yesterday we had snow showers off and on but fortunately none of the snow stuck to the ground. Whenever the weather turns for the worst, we worry about our Bluebirds. Are they staying warm? Are they getting enough to eat? Our Bluebirds survive the winter by roosting in nest boxes on those cold & wet nights, and eating berries from native Willamette valley plants. As you may recall, 5 years ago, with the help of a grant from the Weyerhaeuser Company Foundation, PBRP purchased and helped plant native berry-producing plants on the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge. Today those plants are doing well and it won't be long before they produce much needed winter food for our Bluebirds.

With the beginning of another Bluebird season, I am pleased to announce that Coleen Hill has agreed to become a bander assistant this season. She will monitor the Laurel community route. I also want to welcome the following new monitors to PBRP: Bob Meehan & Ginger Edwards, Barbara Holland, Linda Long, Jess & Joannie McNeil, Laura Morris, Dana Robinson, Laurie Skinner, and Rick & Patty Sorensen. Thanks for volunteering and enjoy your bluebirds!

I wish to thank all of the homeowners who welcome us on their property during the bluebird nesting season. Without you and our wonderful group of monitors and banders, we could not succeed.

*- Dave Flaming*

### JOIN US AT CHAMPOEG BLUEBIRD DAY

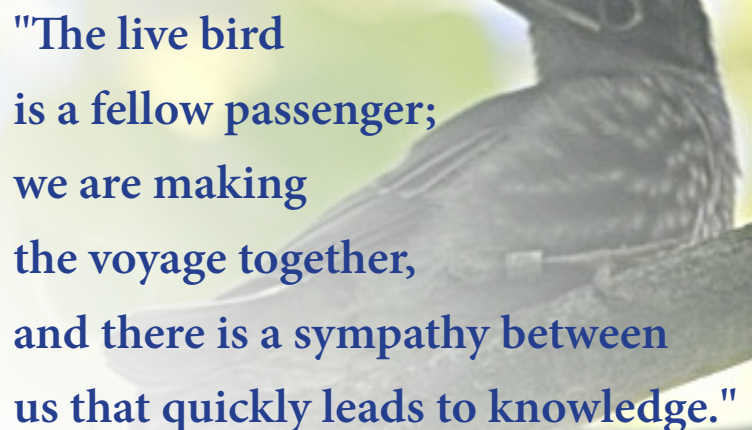
ON SATURDAY, JUNE 16

1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Events include:

- Observe bluebirds at their nest boxes
- Purchase and build a nest box
- Bluebird-related Junior Ranger program for the kids
- Bluebird exhibits, video presentations and sales items

COST: \$5 per vehicle parking fee



"The live bird  
is a fellow passenger;  
we are making  
the voyage together,  
and there is a sympathy between  
us that quickly leads to knowledge."

*- John Burroughs, American Naturalist*



## Bluebird Success On My Home Grounds

*by Ellie Shipley, Monitor*

My husband saves some of the knotholes from our firewood to make birdhouses. For years the swallows have enjoyed the two mounted about ten feet up on the front porch beams. Last spring, a bluebird decided he liked the view from up there, but the swallows kept dive bombing him.



Not to be discouraged, he stood his ground until one day he caught a swallow off guard sitting on the fence rail. He swooped down on the swallow and took it to the ground, holding the bird there as if to say "Stay away. It's my box this year." He had also previously chased a noisy wren away.

The swallow never bothered him after that, and the bluebird pair went on to fledge four young that we hope were as tough as their parent.



*Photos courtesy of Zenobia Lapeyre*

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PBRP, PO Box 1469, Sherwood, OR 97140.

### 2012 Important Upcoming Dates!

May 18 - 20	Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge Bird Festival
June 16	Champoeg Bluebird Day
September 15	Fall Wrap Up at Champoeg State Heritage Area
October 4-6	34th North American Bluebird Society (NABS) Convention, Newport Beach, California ( <a href="http://www.socialbluebirds.org">www.socialbluebirds.org</a> is the host NABS affiliate)

*Thank you to:*

### Connect with Nature!



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503-626-0949

[www.backyardbirdshop.com](http://www.backyardbirdshop.com)

Lower Boones Ferry Road  
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503-620-7454

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8101 NE Parkway Drive  
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