



Photo Credit ~ Zenobia Lapeyre

An affiliate of the North
American Bluebird Society



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PRESCOTT BLUEBIRD RECOVERY PROJECT

Post Office Box 1469 | Sherwood, Oregon 97140 | www.prescottbluebird.com

Newsletter ~ Spring 2014

Upcoming Events Calendar

April, 2014	Western Bluebird Nesting Season and Route Monitoring Begin
April 11, 2014	Quarterly PBRP Board Meeting
June 13-15, 2014	North American Bluebird Society Annual Convention
July 11, 2014	Quarterly PBRP Board Meeting
October 10, 2014	Quarterly PBRP Board Meeting
September 13 9-noon	Annual Meeting - Fall Wrap Up - final Bluebird and Other Specie Reports and Banding Reports due



Photo Credit ~ Michael Miles

2013 Project Stats

Nest Boxes:

Total	903
Used by Bluebirds	290
Available for other species	613

Fledglings:

Bluebirds	1,455
Swallows	994
Others	119

Clutch Ratio:

Bluebird clutches	442
Nest Boxes	903
Clutch/Box Ratio	49%

Nest Box Placement - House Sparrows Not Welcome

Used with permission of Harry Fuller, Oregon birder & author of FREEWAY BIRDING

Harry Fuller, author of Freeway Birding (freewaybirding.com) created these pictures and captions presenting the dilemma of the competition for nesting locations between native species and non-native species. In the photo, bluebirds represent the natives and house sparrows the non-natives. Our project selects sites carefully for appropriate bluebird habitat, and we do not place boxes in areas where House Sparrows are active. At times, habitat changes and House Sparrows move in. We remove any nestboxes that were previously placed in such locations.



It's not just about the nest box, but where that nest box is placed. This one happens to be in a patch of oak savannah above 1000 feet elevation. It's surrounded by open meadows and rolling hills, that drop down to a natural stream. No humans live within a mile of the place and it is set back from roads and highways. No pesticides, no toxins just the sort of neighborhood you would want for raising your family if you were a bluebird.

Photo Credit ~ Harry Fuller



This nest box is on a fence line in a backyard garden. It faces a busy sidewalk, busy road, busy parking area, has an adjacent dog park, Cats roam free in the neighborhood. Just the kind of avian slum where you would expect the hardscrabble House Sparrow to eke out a living on bread crumbs and seed.

From The President's Nestbox

By Dave Flaming

Welcome to Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project's 2014 season. We began the year with our annual new monitor training workshop on March 8 with more than 40 individuals in attendance. The workshop began with an introduction to the history of our project along with topics on the life and breeding cycle of Western Bluebirds. A question and answer period followed the presentation. A special 'Thank you' to Backyard Bird Shops for providing door prizes for this workshop.

I am pleased to announce that Dana Robinson has become a bander for the project. She will be banding and managing monitors in Clackamas county. In addition, Michael and David Wert will be bander assistants in Yamhill county and Karrie Duckworth will be a bander assistant in Clackamas county.



Photo Credit ~ Zenobia Lapeyre

Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project

WESTERN BLUEBIRD NESTING SUMMARY

	2010	2011	2012	2013
Nesting Attempts	502	414	401	442
Failed Attempts	150	145	99	106
% Successful	70%	65%	65%	76%
Earliest Hatch Date	4/28	5/5	4/20	4/12
Latest Hatch Date	8/28	8/18	8/23	8/21
Total Eggs Laid	2,430	2,043	2,055	2,286
Avg Eggs/Clutch	4.8	4.9	5.1	5.1
Total Hatchlings	1,743	1,507	1,576	1,828
% Eggs Hatched	72%	74%	77%	80%
Avg Hatchlings/Clutch	3.6	3.6	3.9	4.1
Total Nestlings Banded	1,484	1,200	1,337	1,706
% Nestlings Banded	85%	80%	85%	93%
Total Nestlings Fledged	1,394	1,086	1,258	1,455
% Nestlings Fledged	80%	72%	80%	80%

Check our web site for additional statistics: PrescottBluebird.com

Photo Credit ~ Zenobia Lapeyre

37th Annual North American Bluebird Society Conference - In Boise Idaho

We are fortunate that the national meeting of the North American Bluebird Society (NABS) will be held in Boise, Idaho, June 13-15, 2014. This is an opportunity to meet other volunteer bluebird conservationists from across the country and our neighbors to the north, Canada.

Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project is an Affiliate Member of NABS. Some of our current volunteers have attended these annual meetings in Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Nebraska somewhat recently. Founding Members Pat and Brenda have attended conventions here on the west coast.

Consider attending this meeting. Show your pride in the Western Bluebirds of our area, and learn about Eastern and Mountain Bluebirds from our counterparts outside the Willamette Valley.

For details and registration information, go to this address on the internet. Or, simply search in your internet browser for North American Bluebird Society, and follow the link on their web page to the conference website..

<http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org/conventions/2014/NABS2014.pdf>



Photo Credit ~ Zenobia Lapeyre

Save
the
Date . . .

September 13, 2014

9:00 am until noon

Annual Meeting

Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project

Held at Champoege State Heritage Area



Photo Credit ~ Zenobia Lapeyre

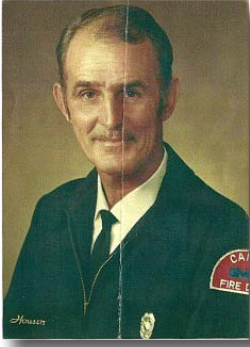
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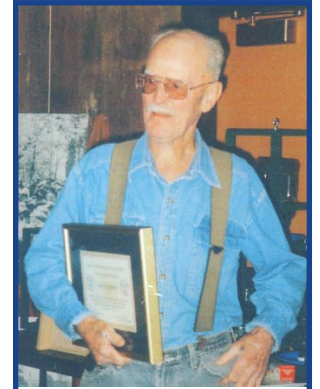
Jack Stennet - Nestboxes as Memorials

By Nancy Fraser, Board of Directors

Jack Stennet was a Korean War veteran, a 24-year firefighter in Milwaukie, and had a long history of community service. Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project and Western Bluebirds were recipients of his generosity with his time and energy!

Jack reluctantly retired from building Western Bluebird nestboxes in 2011. He had first contacted PBRP in 1992, responding to our need for assistance in building nestboxes and his pleasure in the efforts we make in sustaining the species. In the next nearly 20 years he built over 2300 boxes using his woodworking equipment and donated materials. During that time he often devoted more than 4 hours every day to provide nestboxes for bluebirds. As you can imagine, he left us an ample supply when he was no longer able to provide this dedicated service. Because of this resource, we can replace aging nestboxes and place new ones in suitable habitat!!

Jack passed away on January 23 of this year. All of us who host, monitor, or otherwise enjoy and employ bluebird nestboxes have been assisted by his generous volunteer work. Jack was not only a contributor to our project with his box building skills, he was an advocate and admirer of the Western Bluebird!



PBRP ~ 2001
"Boxbuilder Extrordinaire"

Ants, Friend or Foe?

by Dave Flaming

On occasion, ants may be found in our Bluebird nests. Our experience with ants is that they appear when nestlings are present and there is an abundance of uneaten matter within the nest (cracked eggs, etc).



Photo Credit ~ Zenobia Lapeyre

PBRP does not recommend the use of chemicals to drive ants away. Two of the most popular organic methods of driving ants out of the nest are to place broken cinnamon sticks or crushed

peppermint leaves under the nest. Proponents of these methods guarantee the ants will be gone in 2 - 3 days. The course of action we recommend is to do nothing as the ants will leave within 2 to 3 days, after having cleaned the nest. The important factor is that the ants are eating the food matter accumulating in the nest and providing a housekeeping service for the Bluebirds. Other than being a nuisance for monitors, ants are generally not a threat to live nestlings or adults.



Safe Monitoring Practices

by Dave Flaming

With the start of another Bluebird season, lets take a moment to review some safe monitoring practices.

Carry on your person:

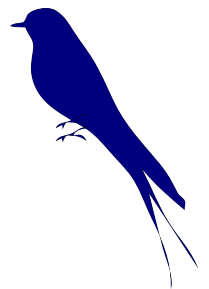
- Cell phone
- A 2nd key to your vehicle
(monitors are known to lock themselves out)

Carry in your vehicle:

- First-aid kit
- Dust mask
- Sun screen protection
- Vinyl/latex gloves

Observe safe monitoring practices:

- Never reach into a nest box without first looking into it
- Never climb a ladder or step-stool to monitor a box
- Never climb a fence to get to a box
- Never enter a pasture containing farm animals
- Always leave gates the way you found them
- Always park your vehicle well off the road
(use your vehicle safety flashers if necessary)



What Makes a Good Bluebird Nesting Location - A Bluebird Box is Not Enough

By Nancy Fraser

Bluebirds are exacting about choosing a nestbox or a natural cavity to build their nests and raise young. The location is all about the food supply for the new hatchlings, and few competitors for the food and shelter. If bluebirds are seen in an area during the usual nesting season (April through August or early September), placing a nestbox may result in a nesting pair choosing the site. If seen during the winter, they are most likely searching for native berries or what few insects might be available to sustain themselves over the harsher weather, but usually don't linger to nest in the area.

If there are non-native species (such as House Sparrows and European Starlings) present along with bluebirds, there will be conflicts as each species tries to claim the nestbox. Often such conflicts result in abandoned nests, and may lead to destruction of eggs and young, and killing of adult bluebirds, especially by House Sparrows. This species does not require a cavity for nesting, but likes the comfort of owning a covered home if they can claim it. Placing nestboxes in areas where House Sparrows are present presents an immediate danger to the survival of bluebirds and their young when they attempt to nest. If the sparrows successfully claim the nestboxes, they may be able to raise 3 broods of young, resulting in continued increase in pressure on native species attempting to nest. This is one reason bluebirds are no longer commonly found in our towns and suburbs.... sparrow competition.

The habitat for bluebirds, that glean their favored insect and invertebrate food items from the ground, is neither tall grass or crops nor lawns heavily groomed, chemically enhanced or treated to reduce insects and weeds. This type of management can reduce food items to the point that the environment won't support the bluebird family's needs, or may have a toxic effect on adult and nestling birds.



Photo Credit ~ Zenobia Lapeyre

Bluebirds hunt from perches and use a convenient perch site near the nest location to watch over it and defend it. Open areas, not heavily treed, but dotted with trees and shrubs are an ideal habitat. Think golf rural golf courses, vineyards, large mowed yards and mowed pastures . . .

Bluebirds appreciate a source of water (shallow bird bath), but placing nestboxes in areas with natural or artificial ponds can put bluebirds into competition with Violet Green and Tree Swallows, species that nest in natural or artificial (nestbox) cavities, and appreciate aerial swooping above ponds to glean the insects on which they feed.

Nestboxes placed in habitat that is brushy or more heavily treed are happily taken by Chickadees, Nuthatches, and Wrens, other native bird species that nest in cavities.

Experience within our project suggests that bluebirds are rarely likely to nest closer than one quarter mile to another bluebird pair.

If you have the right habitat for bluebirds, and if you have seen them around, by all means consider putting up a nest box. If you don't, it isn't your fault, just serendipity. Consider getting a comforting bluebird fix by becoming a volunteer monitor with Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project!

Spring Workshop - New Monitors & Current Monitor/Bander Get-Together

By Nancy Fraser

Our spring workshop serves three purposes:

1. Bring current monitors together to talk bluebird and catch up with fellow volunteers before the bluebird breeding season begins.
2. Recruit and orient new monitors to replace those who have retired from our project.
3. Provide information about bluebirds - natural history, behavior, food resource, nesting cycle, preferred habitat, etc. What are the threats to their survival and sustaining their numbers? We are not actively seeking locations to install bluebird nestboxes, but want to educate the public to recognize appropriate habitat for the birds to successfully raise their young.

This year's workshop was held on Saturday, March 8, at Champoege State Heritage Area. There was a great turnout, lots of fun and enthusiasm, good questions and answers. There was Standing (and Floor Sitting) Room Only, even after Park volunteers and staff kept miraculously coming up with more chairs. More than 50 people attended. Most of our vacancies that needed new volunteers were in the Sherwood area, and though there were few attendees from the area, we were pleased that other interested new volunteers were willing to travel some distance from home to reach their newly-assigned nestbox routes.

Welcome to our new volunteers, and welcome back to our current volunteers! You have made and will make a difference for the bluebirds.

New Volunteers

Thank you and welcome to Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project!

Barbara Edmonds
Lisa Fratianni
Michelle Harrington
Carol Horvath
Emily & Alicia Jespersen
Chelsey & Doug Smelser
Denise Szott
Alicemay Thorton
Pat Whalen

Be a part of the newsletter!



We need your contributions!!

THIS IS THE SPACE RESERVED FOR YOUR ARTICLE OR PHOTOS.

Submit your photos & ideas to pbrpnewsletter@yahoo.com for consideration

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Where: Ashland, Oregon

When: May 30-June 1, 2014

For information, go to website at
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