



# PRESCOTT BLUEBIRD RECOVERY PROJECT

Post Office Box 1469 | Sherwood, Oregon 97140

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

## Newsletter FALL 2015

Photo Credit Zenobia Lapeyre

An affiliate of the North  
American Bluebird Society



### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Dave Flaming**  
*President*

**Lauri Kunzman**  
*Treasurer*

**Nelda Skidmore**  
*Secretary*

**Bob Burbank**  
*Banding/Nestbox  
Supply Coordinator*

**Lyn Burniston**

**Nancy Fraser**  
*Newsletter Coordinator*

**Pat Johnston**  
*Founding Member*

**Greg LaHaie**

**Donald Powers, PhD**  
*Master Bander*

**Joy Redington**

**Dana Robinson**

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

*Finance*  
**Jim and Barby Conroy**

*Website/IT & E Mail Voice of  
PBRP* **Charlie Stalzer**

*Newsletter Editor*  
**Jody Burnim**

*Data Base*  
**Dave Flaming**

*Nest Box Building*  
**Jeff Wiese**

## The CALL of the Western Bluebird

*Greg LaHaie*

In the bird watchers books, they describe the Western Bluebirds 'call' as sounding like someone saying 'TEW'.

When I first read this description, it was useless to me. I had no idea how that was supposed to sound. The internet was informative, with sample audio clips repeating the sounds of calling bluebirds. Still, it seemed indistinguishable from the other birds, at first.

Nonetheless, it wasn't very long in the field as a PBRP monitor that I came to recognize that unique chirp as a sure sign I was in the presence of bluebirds. Only after enough listening did I become 'attuned' to the sound. I recognized it well enough to begin mimicking the sound back to the bluebirds when they were near. As crude as my imitation was, I felt my call was well received by my friends. At least they didn't fly away. And of course, I don't know how a bluebird sounds when it is laughing at you.

Recognizing the sound of, and 'calling' the western Bluebird has served me well. I often hear them before I see them. They learn to identify my (hilarious) call to them, and associate it with the arrival of worms during my visits. Funny how tolerant of my linguistic errors they become when such patience results in a tasty treat!

I would recommend all monitors practice the skill of making bluebird calling sounds. It's good fun and the birds need a laugh every now and then!

Photo Credit Zenobia Lapeyre



Photo Credit Greg LaHaie

Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project 2015 Season				
	2013	2014	2015	
Boxes Monitored	858	822	747	
Nestlings Banded	1706	747	1174	
Adults Banded	115	66	92	
# of Monitors	49	46	39	
# of Banders	13	13	11	



## From The President's Nestbox

*By Dave Flaming*

The 2015 Bluebird breeding has come to a close and I am happy to report that we had a much better year than we did in 2014. Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find a chart showing the comparative statistics for the past 3 seasons.

I have announced to the Board of Directors my intention to step down as president effective with the October 9th board meeting. At this meeting the Board will elect a new president to serve for the next 2 years. I am confident the project will continue to protect and enhance the growth of our Western Bluebird within the northern Willamette Valley. I will continue to band Bluebirds as well as function as the project's Data Base Manager.

The purpose of the Data Base Manager is to audit and combine all of the banding and recovery data at the end of the season. All of this data is then forwarded to our master bander Dr. Donald Powers who in turn submits it to the Bird Banding Laboratory, administrated by the Department of the Interior.

Article I of the Project's bylaws states that in addition to protecting and enhancing the lives of Bluebirds, our project will educate the public regarding this bird, and its endangered habitat and its predators. In this regard, three years ago our Board voted to establish a scholarship program for high school students living within our project boundaries who "show talent and skills in academics, and display a desire to improve the environment." Since that time we have awarded scholarships to 4 very deserving students. This year's recipient is Claire Massaro from West Linn High School. You may read more about Claire in an article located elsewhere in this issue.

I am grateful to the board for its efforts in educating the public. We have the best looking Bluebird newsletter in the states (in my opinion) with a current distributorship of 987 not including 85 individuals who choose to read the newsletter on line.

I have a long list of individuals to thank for their support during my tenure but don't have space to list them all. I wish to thank our homeowners who enable us to come onto their property to monitor and band Bluebirds. Additionally, a big "Thank You" goes out to all the monitors and banders who worked countless hours and drove many miles to help protect our Western Bluebirds.

Dave Flaming



*Photo Credit Zenobia Lapeyre*

### IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

October 9, 2015	Board of Directors Meeting
January 8, 2016	Board of Directors Meeting
February 27, 2016	Spring New Monitor Workshop
April 8, 2016	Board of Directors Meeting
March/April, 2016	Begin route monitoring
September, 2016	Final route monitoring
August 20, 2016	Banders' final reports due
Sept. 10, 2016	Monitors' End of Season Bluebird Report & Other Species Nesting Report due
Sept. 10, 2016	Fall Wrap Up

## Volunteer Monitors Needed for the 2016 Nesting Season

In 2015, for the first time in many years, there were not enough interested volunteers to cover all of the locations that have historically been monitored by our project.

We would like to hear from you or from your neighbors who might be interested in monitoring bluebird nesting in 2016.

Sometimes, there are enough interested people at our Spring New Monitors' Workshop, but their location makes it impossible for them to commit to monitoring once a week during April through August/September.

For that reason we have a great need for volunteers who live in the Sherwood/Wilsonville/West Linn/Oregon City/Beaverton areas. If you have thought about being a monitor before, or you know of someone who would be interested, our workshop date is February 27, from 9:30 am until noon, at Champoege State Heritage Area.

We'll be there, and we would be thrilled to see you and talk about bluebirds and monitoring their nesting activities on a "bluebird trail" of existing nestboxes in your community or nearby communities. To register to attend, see our website [prescottbluebird.com](http://prescottbluebird.com).

*Have a great fall,  
winter holiday,  
and spring season!*



## Story of the Little Blue Hen

By Nelda Skidmore

It is hard not to become emotionally involved when you monitor bluebirds. My husband and I have been monitoring the nest boxes at the Champoeg State Heritage Area.(CSHA) for a number of years and have observed the continual challenges these birds face. One little hen has especially caught our attention. She has survived and been successful despite some very daunting obstacles. One of the advantages of banding is that we have been able to track her through the years and see how she has been doing.

This hen was banded as part of a second clutch in 2012 at a nesting box just outside of the CSHA. She was off to a good start by having the advantage of being hatched in a box actively tended by a vigilant land owner. However, 2012 was not a high fledgling yield year for our route within the CSHA. A number of hens died after laying eggs resulting in lost clutches. This left a number of boxes with lonely bachelors for the rest of the season.

In 2013 the little blue hen nested in the CSHA at Box 29. This box is about a mile from where she hatched. She had one clutch of 6 eggs in mid May. The clutch failed, we think due to cold, rainy weather. We lost a lot of first clutches that year due to weather but ended with a higher than average yield for the year. The hen was just a one year old and inexperienced which may have also contributed to the failure of the clutch.

2014 was the year she really caught our attention. First of all she survived the winter. We had a large population decline that year. We had only 3 active nests on our route compared to a typical year of approximately 13 clutches. Two of those active nests lost the male right after the eggs were laid. This hen was one of the ones that lost her mate. She laid 6 eggs and four of those eggs hatched. We think right around the time the eggs hatched the male was lost. The odds are not very good for a hen to successfully raise chicks on her own but this bird did not abandon the nest and frantically did the work of two to keep the chicks fed. With the help of banders Lauri Kunzman and Scott Morrison and a concerned birdwatcher we did supplemental feeding to help her out. All four young fledged.

In 2015 she was back! We had feared she would be so depleted of energy after raising a brood by herself that she might not survive the winter. Thankfully the winter was mild and the spring was warmer and dryer than usual. This year she had two successful clutches. She fledged 5 chicks in the first clutch and 3 on the second clutch. Her mate was a one year old male. In the two other nests in the park, both parents were one year olds and each pair only had one clutch, and only fledged 2 chicks per clutch. We think the little blue hen's age and experience made the difference in the number, size and success of her 2015 clutches.

It has been interesting to follow the life of this bluebird as she switched boxes (some of the bluebirds we monitor return to the same box year after year), became more experienced as a parent, and overcame hardships to continue to live and thrive. Monitoring can be emotionally challenging especially when we have had such a sharp downturn in number of nesting bluebirds but this little hen with the power to survive gives us hope for the continuation of the species.



Photo Credit Zenobia Lapeyre



Photo Credit Zenobia Lapeyre



## Mealworm Donation to Audubon Society of Portland Wildlife Care Center

By Nancy Fraser

During the early nesting season, PBRP volunteers provide supplemental food resources for bluebirds with nestlings by leaving mealworms at the nestbox on their regular visits. As food sources become more available in the mid to late summer, these offerings are reduced. When the nesting season is over, we no longer have need for these insect larva that the bluebirds so enjoy having to meet the needs of their young.

In late August, mealworms are gathered up and taken to the Wildlife Care Center (WCC), the animal rehabilitation facility at Audubon Society of Portland. Dr. Deb Sheaffer, WCC Veterinarian, told me how our donated mealworms were used: this season: “Your donation helped a Big Brown Bat, a couple of Northern Flickers, a Common Merganser, a Wood Duck, many Vaux Swift nestlings, and a couple of Barn Swallows that all absolutely needed the mealworms rather than other diet options. We also offered them to the Virginia Rail, Chickadees and other Insect-eating animals. They are used to provide enrichment to our non-releasable education birds.”

The Wildlife Care Center is the oldest and busiest wildlife rehabilitation facility in Oregon. Each year about 3,000 wild animals are treated for release back to the wild. Volunteers and staff respond to more than 10,000 wildlife-related inquiries. The center’s goal is to give injured, native wildlife a second chance at life in the wild and to reduce wildlife hazards in our communities by educating people about interactions with wildlife.

If you find an injured or orphaned animal (bird or other), take the time to contact the Wildlife Care Center to obtain the most informed instruction for how to proceed to help the animal. The Center is open 365 days a year, from 9 am to 5 pm and telephone is 503 292 0304. Don’t assume the animal needs or will benefit from your help (or mine). Give it the opportunity for evaluation and care by professionals and experienced volunteers.

For more information, visit the Audubon Society of Portland’s web site ([audubonportland.org/Wildlife Care Center](http://audubonportland.org/Wildlife%20Care%20Center)) or visit in person at 5151 NW Cornell Road, Portland.



Photo Credits Zenobia Lapeyre



Photo Credit Doug Hill; Catlow Valley, Harney County, June 2015

## How Many Burrowing Owls Can You Identify in this Picture?

Board Member Joy Redington is organizing a photo contest for volunteers and friends and newsletter readers who follow Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project. The contest will be in 2016, and more details will be provided in our 2016 Spring Newsletter. The Burrowing Owl picture? It was just to excite everyone’s attention. The photo contest will be limited to Western Bluebirds, not other species. How could we ever decide if we broadened the species? Choosing the best of the bluebird submissions will be difficult all on its own. They will all be wonderful subjects. Answer to the number of Owls? See Page 5.



## 2015 Fall Wrap-Up

By Nancy Fraser

The Annual Meeting was held on Saturday, September 12, at Champoeg State Heritage Area. Before the official meeting was opened, President Dave Flaming thanked and introduced the current Board Members and Committee Chairs present for their work in the past two years, and acknowledged the contributions of those were unable to attend. He asked all other volunteers

present to stand and introduce themselves. Dave highlighted the just completed nesting season and provided some abbreviated statistics from the data he has received so far from banders and monitors. The newsletter and material submission date deadline for the fall issue were discussed.

Dave asked board member Nelda Skidmore to introduce the PBRP Scholarship Award winner, Claire Massaro. Claire is a graduate of West Linn High School, and plans to attend Oregon State University in the fall, pursuing both a pure science and environmental science degree. She has been an outstanding and committed student at West Linn, and has served as Teaching Assistant for AP Environmental Science. She was applauded by the instructor for her contagious joy in experiences in Nature, and her willingness to share her enthusiasm and work ethic to make the class a more effective learning experience for everyone. PBRP is pleased to provide our scholarship to Claire to support her advanced academic work to become a force for protecting and preserving the natural world.



Board members Nelda Skidmore and Dave Flaming with PBRP Scholarship recipient Claire Massaro (center).

President Dave Flaming called the formal meeting to order. Lauri Kunzman, Treasurer, presented an overview of the income and expenses for the first 8 months of the current calendaryear. He next asked Bob Burbank, a member of the Nominating Committee, to present its recommendation for Board Members for the upcoming two years. The nominees were Bob Burbank, Lyn Burniston, Nancy Fraser, Pat Johnston, Lauri Kunzman, Greg LaHaie, Joy Redington, Dana Robinson, and Nelda Skidmore. The committee's slate was approved unanimously. The formal portion of the meeting was closed.

After a short break, Lauri Kunzman moderated a group discussion of some questions and some situations commonly encountered by volunteers in the field.

The meeting ended at 12:15 pm.



Photo Credits,  
Tom Cattrall,  
McMinnville, OR

### How Many Burrowing Owls Did You Find??

The number of Burrowing Owls  
in the picture is 4.

Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project  
PO Box 1469  
Sherwood, OR 97140

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
SHERWOOD, OR 97140  
PERMIT NO. 3

**CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**

ADDRESS LABEL PLACEMENT

*Thank you to:*



*Thanks for  
your support!*



**Tualatin River  
National Wildlife  
Refuge**

19255 S.W. Pacific Highway  
Sherwood, OR 97140

Phone: 503-625-5944

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

**Mailing List Message:**

Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project does not sell or share its mailing list with any other organization, affiliate, or individual. Your privacy is our highest concern. The only means of public contact to our project is thru our web site at: [email@prescottbluebird.com](mailto:email@prescottbluebird.com).

**Changes To Your E Mail or  
US Mail Address? Let Us Know**

Our mailing lists must be up to date so newsletters can be sent timely and cost-effectively to all of our readers. Please send changes to your address either to [email@prescottbluebird.com](mailto:email@prescottbluebird.com), or write to us at:

PBRP

PO Box 1469  
Sherwood, OR 97140

**Connect with Nature!**

West Linn Central Village  
22000 Willamette Drive  
503-655-2635

Northeast Portland  
1419 NE Fremont Street  
503-445-2699



Beaverton Town Square  
11429 SW Beaverton Hillsdale Hwy.  
503-626-0949

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

Lower Boones Ferry Road  
16949 SW 65<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
503-620-7454

Vancouver  
8101 NE Parkway Drive  
360-253-5771



**PRINTING  
& GRAPHICS**

Design ■ Copy ■ Print

**503.684.1313**