



Photo Credit - Photo Contest Winner, Scott Peavy

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## PRESCOTT BLUEBIRD RECOVERY PROJECT

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

### Newsletter Fall 2017

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Newsletter Editor  
Jody Burnim

### Would You Like to Help Bluebirds by Monitoring Nestboxes?



"Basket of Nestlings"  
Photo Credit Scott Peavy

We will hold our February New Monitors' Workshop, February 24, 2018, 9:30 am until noon at Champoeg State Heritage Area Visitors' Center. Register to attend by sending an e mail with your name, mailing address, E mail address and preferred telephone contact to [email@prescottbluebird.com](mailto:email@prescottbluebird.com).

Each year, in order to continue monitoring all of the PBRP active routes there is a need for new volunteers to fill vacant routes. We recruit by word

of mouth, information on our website and Facebook page, and community communication tools within specific areas where bluebird nest box routes are maintained. You can be a part of this rewarding activity by attending the New Monitor's Workshop in February.

Visit our website or Facebook Page for more information about the workshop and our non-profit project.

We'd love to have you join us!

### Save the Date: Spring Workshop

Meeting will be from 9:30 am to noon  
on Saturday, February 24, 2018



Photo Credit Gwen Martin



## 2017 Project Statistics

### Nest Boxes Monitored:

Total	771
Used by Bluebirds	241
Available for other species	530

### Fledglings:

Bluebirds	1,112
Swallows	836
Others	117

### Clutch Ratio:

Bluebird clutches	378
Nest boxes	771
Clutch/Box Ratio	49%

## Important Upcoming Dates

February 24, 2018 9:30 am - noon	Spring Workshop at Champoege State Heritage Area Visitors' Center
March/April 2018	Begin cleanup and monitoring routes
April, 2018	Begin weekly reports to your bander in April
End of months May-September	Bander reports to date sent to data base coordinator
September 9, 2018	Monitor end of season bluebird & other species reports to your bander when all nesting activity is completed
September 19	End of season reports reviewed by bander & to data base coordinator
September 30	Final banding report to data base coordinator when all bandings are completed
September TBA	Fall Wrap Up Meeting at Champoege State Heritage Area



Photo Credit Kristin Andolsen



Photo Credit Gwen Martin

## Spring Workshop - Need for New Volunteers

February 24, 2018 - 9:30 am to noon

Each season some of our wonderful volunteers have to drop out of bluebird field work. This leaves vacancies on bluebird routes that new volunteers are identified to fill. At the Spring Workshop, we host interested new volunteers and provide information about the detail of the monitoring we do, the time commitment, the record keeping and report submission, then take application forms from those who are interested. We are especially looking for volunteers in communities near our routes in Clackamas, Washington Yamhill and Northern Marion counties. If you are interested or know someone in your community that might be, contact us by e mail through our website or directly to email@prescottbluebird.com .

## Fall Wrap Up Meeting

After the official Annual Meeting, volunteers participated with the board and other volunteers in recapping the 2017 nesting season.

Dave presented an interim End of Season statistical report. Since all reports were to be turned in that day, full season numbers were not yet available. He highlighted the decreases in number/ per cent recovery rates for adult nesting bluebirds and some curious discrepancies in numbers banded vs. number of eggs laid. Discussion ensued.

Bob Burbank reported on the Technical Committee temperature sensor project. Paired nest boxes were fitted with sensors inside the box and outside to measure ambient temperature and placed in selected locations. The variables were altitude of the site, whether the box was occupied by a nesting pair and nestlings, or whether the box was vacant. One of each box pair was a conventional box as used historically, and the other with a retro-fitted extra roof mounted on the existing roof with spacers to allow an air layer between the two roofs. The temperature sensors recorded and stored temperatures taken every 15 minutes. These sensors have now been collected and their coded location information and data will be in the hands of Master Bander Dr. Donald Powers. This was certainly a heat-challenging year for nesting birds, and we are interested in what kind of data was obtained.

In an open session, volunteers shared questions, incident-based reports, and anecdotes (the joys and challenges) from the nesting season just concluded.

With retirement of 5 board members prior to the elections held during the Annual Meeting, there is a need for new volunteers in

PBRP support roles long held by board members who have left the board. Filling these important needs will be discussed further at the first meeting of the newly-elected board in October.

New board members have expressed interest in crafting and making personal commitments to committee and organizational work to address current and upcoming needs. We have untapped talent among volunteers in our organization! If you are a volunteer and have an interest and aptitude, you can provide help to the project without being a board member. Contact the board at email@prescottbluebird.com.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**Dana Robinson/Greg LaHaie**

Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project has had the unusual distinction of having had two acting presidents during one term in 2017.

Like the bluebird families that sometimes struggle with change, PBRP has had its share of challenges impacting its recent presidents. Dana Robinson began the term with high goals and hopes for progress in many areas. New technical committees were formed, and the expansion of photo contests and scholarships were underway. The nest box temperature button project required consensus of funding and implementation. Things were on the right track out of the gate.

But family obligations presented themselves, and a leave of absence mid-term was inevitable for Dana. A 'stand in' or interim president was chosen from the board (the word volunteered might be an overuse of the word) and the duties of the Spring Kick Off presentation and establishing new monitors with new routes fell to Greg as the successor president.

PBRP's email box began humming with requests for box repair, advice on predator protection, and presentations to outside groups as spring arrived and the more 'normal' tasks of monitoring and banding got underway.

Midway thru the year, the totter went back to teeter as Greg's father became mortally ill. Yes, you guessed it, Dana once again took the reins as president from Greg who was overwhelmed by family obligations.

Now, as we complete the term and pass the presidential baton on to a new group of enthusiastic volunteers, we wish them just enough excitement to manage under ONE new president. Like the bluebirds, sometimes things go very smoothly, and we wish nothing less for the new president and board of directors!

*Dana and Greg*



*Photo Credit Gwen Martin - Clover Bloomin' Time in the Nestbox Neighborhood*



# Thank You

## Thank you to our volunteers...

The PBRP Board of Directors and your fellow volunteers thank you for your generous and dedicated work in fulfilling our mission: "dedicated to the recovery, restoration, and enhancement of the Western Bluebird".

Jeannette Adlong	Mary Hayden	Scott Morrison
Betty & John Ballentine	Colleen Hill	Cheryl Neal
Keith Bounds	Barbara Holland	Elaine Newland
Bob Burbank	Thomas Houseman	Donald Powers
Jody Burnim	Colleen & Mike Keyes	Anita Purcell
Lyn Burniston	Carol Krueger	Joy Redington
Jim & Barby Conroy	Lauri Kunzman	Betsey Rixford
John Deen	Greg LaHaie	Dana Robinson
Dan and Lynn Dickinson	Susan Lamb	Russ Rosner
Karrie Duckworth	Robin MacKenzie	Ellie Shipley
David Elliott	Barb & Don Manghelli	Nelda & Ron Skidmore
Lynn Erdman	Caroline Mann	Chelsey & Doug Smelser
Dave Flaming	Caroline Martin	Patty & Rick Sorensen
Nancy Fraser	Gwen Martin	Helga Stephenson
Lisa Fratianni	Sue Martin	Denise Szott
Claudia Fredricks & Mike Miles	Susan Mates	Mike Turley
Debra Hall	Stan & Krista McKay	Tualatin River NWR
Michelle Harrington	Jess & Joannie McNiel	David & Michal Wert
Diane Harris	Ginger & Bob Meehan	Kit Whittaker



Photo Credit  
Zenobia Lapeyre

## Discovery - What Bluebirds Eat

(FROM CAL. BLUEBIRD RECOVERY PROGRAM newsletter "Bluebirds Fly!"; original title "What's for Dinner Bluebird" by Gillian Martin & used with permission)

I recently stumbled upon a database that revealed the diet of the Western Bluebird. Not surprisingly, it is primarily animal matter (81%) according to author John L. Capinera in his 2010 book *Insects and Wildlife*. Such findings, as you may know, are the result of observing bluebirds and examining their stomach contents after death.

Photo Credit Zenobia Lapeyre



Capinera reminds us that "wildlife optimize their food intake based on energy and nutrition derived, balanced against energy expended in obtaining food". Availability and developmental needs also impact what birds eat or are fed by parents.

Photo Credit Betty Ballentine



## Here is the breakdown of diet content provided by Capinera:

- 24 % beetles & weevils
- 21.3 % grasshoppers & crickets
- 14.8 % fruit
- 6.7 % bees, wasps, & ants (mostly ants)
- 6.4 % leafhoppers, treehoppers, white flies & aphids
- 2.1 % other animals (mostly spiders)
- 1.2 % weed seed
- 0.7 % flies
- 0.1 % other insects

Photo Credit Zenobia Lapeyre





## New Board of Directors Elections

By Nancy Fraser, Nominating Committee & Board Member

At the September 9 Annual Meeting, the new PBRP Board of Directors was elected. Members are Jeannette Adlong, Lyn Burniston, Karrie Duckworth, Nancy Fraser, Lisa Fratianni, Diane Harris, Carol Krueger, Gwen Martin, Dana Robinson, and Nelda Skidmore. The first meeting was held October 13. Karrie Duckworth is our new Board President, Lisa Fratianni the Treasurer, and Nelda Skidmore the Secretary. Configuration of committee chairs and coordinators will be decided during the

next meetings of the board. Our plans for field and educational outreach activities during 2018 will also be developed. The outgoing and returning board members are excited about the enthusiasm and willingness to help our project demonstrated by these the new and returning board members!



Photo Credit Betty Ballentine

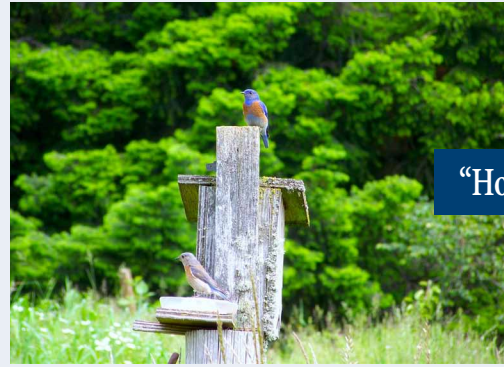
Retiring board members who have made stellar contributions to the board and to PBRP overall with their field work, as well as serving as officers and coordinators, include: Bob Burbank, Dave Flaming, Greg LaHaie, Lauri Kunzman, and Joy Redington. Though Joy and Greg's length of board service has been relatively short (in the 4-6 year range), their impact has been substantial. Lauri and Dave have served on the board for at or near two decades, guiding PBRP with enthusiasm and with excellent results.

Bob Burbank has filled so many needed gaps in our field work and helped co-ordinate banding equipment and nestbox supplies and accessories, it seems he has been volunteering for 47 years! He has never to my knowledge turned down a request to take on more responsibility. At the end of this board term he reluctantly retired from the board and from active field work. I won't print here how many years of growing smarter Bob has on the rest of us, but I don't think he would mind me telling you that he's working towards the century mark.

Thank you Lauri, Dave, Bob, Joy, and Greg!



Photo Credit Nancy Fraser - It's the pits - bluebirds eat cherries!



"House Hunting"

Photo Credit Zenobia Lapeyre



"House Occupied"

## Scholarship Award

We were honored to have the presence of Henry Baumgardner, at the Annual Meeting. Henry is a West Linn High School graduate who received our annual Scholarship Award.

Henry will be studying at Oregon State University's College of Earth, Ocean and Atmospheric Sciences. Henry says in his thank you, "It is my dream to spread awareness and appreciation of our natural world to as many as I can. There

is so much work to be done, and I must first educate myself fully before starting in on the real work. Thank you for awarding me with this scholarship and with it I accept the responsibility of putting it towards something larger than myself."





Photo Credit Gwen Martin

## How Important are Bird Baths?

(From NABS Journal, Summer 2017, from original material in Birding Community E-bulletin) <http://refugeassociation.org/news/birding-bulletin>. Used with permission)

Bird baths may not be essential, but they are helpful. Origins of man-made bird baths are unknown, but they may have originated with the Greeks, Romans, or Egyptians. The first commercially available bird baths are believed to have been offered in mid-19th century Europe. The ubiquitous “bowl on a pedestal” is the classic historical design.

Baths need not be simply ornamental; they can be useful for birds’ drinking and bathing. It is often hard for birds to find a source of clean, open, shallow water, especially in urban and suburban areas. Summer is the most common time for water to be sought, but it is needed year round. Winter can be the most difficult time for wildlife to find water sources.

Bath design can be variable, but three important elements are essential: cleanliness, depth and safety. Use clean, fresh water. Clean the bath with a stiff brush (2-3 times a week) and refill with fresh water. Not only is a clean bath more likely to appeal to birds, but it reduces the risk of contamination with disease-producing organisms. The bath should have a shallow, sloping depth of about a half inch up to three inches. Birds of various size will use the bath. Place a flat rock in the bath to make it possible for the shorter-legged birds to leave the bath. Protect the bathers by placing the bath away from low vegetation that could provide cover for predators such as cats.

Other considerations include a method of providing moving or dripping water and a means to keep the water from freezing in winter. Devices are available commercially and will help attract birds year round as well as making it possible for them to utilize



Photo Credit Zenobia Lapeyre

the bath when temperatures are below freezing.

Although some birders scoff at bird baths, so long as they are well maintained and situated they can be more attractive and useful to birds than bird feeders.

A caution about “casual” water sources that can be a danger to birds: Straight or steep-sided objects around your home/gardens/animal shelter areas can result in drowning for birds that enter seeking water and then cannot climb out. If you do have domestic or farm animal water sources, put a stick or other object in to provide egress for birds who may enter and need to get out. (I try not to keep open containers of water about, including buckets or dishes that accumulate rainwater. Either turn them upside down, or put an appropriately-sized stick inside to give birds an escape route.) — Editor



Photo Credit Zenobia Lapeyre



## Predator Guards

(From "NestWatch, Cornell Lab of Ornithology")  
used with permission

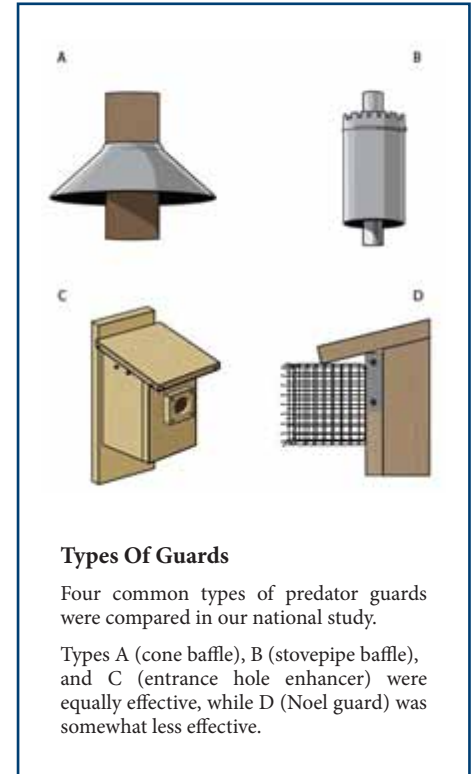
Humans have been providing nest boxes for cavity-nesting birds for hundreds of years. In the last 50 years, a lot of creative ingenuity has gone into trying to solve the problem of nest predation. Enter the predator guard, a device that is installed on or below nest boxes to keep predators away from vulnerable eggs, nestlings, and even incubating females. However, almost no studies have tested their performance. In 1969, L. Kibler hypothesized that metal cone-shaped guards on nest box mounting structures are 'probably' the most reliable device against ground predators, yet 50 years later no conclusive research has been published.

With the rise of citizen scientist nest monitoring, it's now possible to test the effectiveness of predator guards in improving nesting success of cavity-nesting birds on a large spatial scale (United States & Canada). Using NestWatch data from 24,114 nest records submitted to NestWatch from 2014–2016, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology tested whether installing predator guards on nest boxes is an effective management technique. We also tested how different guard types compared to each other, and whether or not multiple guards is any better than a single guard.

Looking at all species combined, nest survival data suggested a 6.7% increase in nest success for attempts in boxes with guards versus attempts in boxes without guards. That may not be the 100% protection that many people believe they're providing, but 7% is actually a large increase at the national level. There are few other actions a homeowner or monitor can take that would improve nest success to that extent. However, all species did not benefit equally. Western Bluebird stood out as a species for which a predator guard

did not seem to make a difference. We're not sure why, but it could be that other factors (e.g., weather, insect supply) have more impact on their nesting success than do predators. Other species, such as Carolina Wren, showed a 15.7% increase in nest survival when guarded!

Although all types of guards correlated with improved nesting success, birds nesting in boxes with cone-type baffles, stovepipe baffles, or entrance hole extenders (also called hole enhancers by PBRP) were most likely to result in successful nesting. The Noel guard did not show as well, although it is surely better than nothing (see guard types in photo). Additionally, birds nesting in boxes with multiple predator guards (such as a cone baffle and a hole extender) were more successful, on average, than birds nesting in boxes with only a single guard.



## Photo Contest Results

To everyone who submitted their outstanding Western Bluebird entries, please accept our gratitude. We received a whopping 29 wonderful photographs! After careful review and a lot of consideration, PBRP Board members would like to congratulate Scott Peavy as the "What is Blue and Always Makes Us Smile?" 2017 Spring Photo Contest Winner!

Scott's winning photo met our contest criteria of technical quality, originality, artistic merit and natural habitat. We were pleased to award him with a \$50 Backyard Bird Shop Gift Card and his photo will be featured in future PBRP publications.

I did ask Scott how he captured such a great shot, and he replied, "I was quietly waiting with my camera, watching the bird bath." I do believe Scott's patient efforts paid off handsomely with results we can all enjoy with a smile.



Photo Credit Scott Peavy

Again, thank you to everyone who participated and helped to make our contest another success. Stay tuned for our next photo contest announcement in the Spring 2018 newsletter or follow us on Facebook for contest details and other upcoming PBRP events.

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