



An affiliate of the North  
American Bluebird Society



#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Gwen Martin &  
Nancy Fraser  
*Co-Presidents*

Lisa Fratianni  
*Treasurer*

Lyn Burniston  
*Secretary*

Nancy Fraser  
*Newsletter Coordinator*

Karrie Duckworth

Michelle Harrington

Diane Harris

Barbara Holland

Susan Mates

#### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

*Finance Coordinators*  
Jim and Barby Conroy

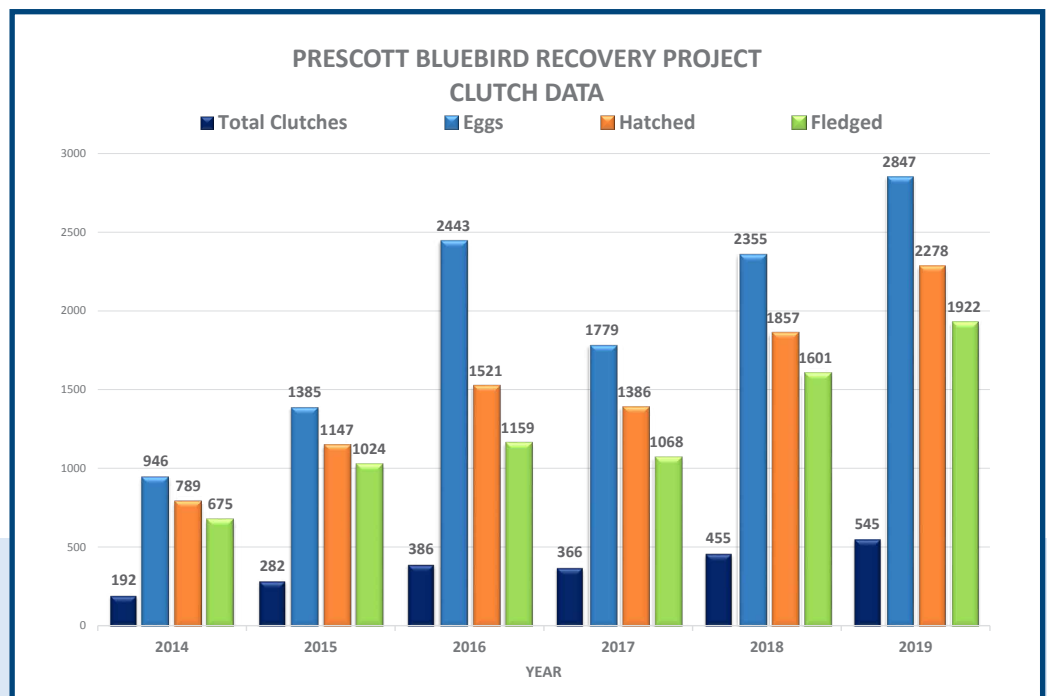
*Newsletter Editor*  
Jody Burnim

Photo Credit - Scott Peavy

## PRESCOTT BLUEBIRD RECOVERY PROJECT

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

### Newsletter Fall 2019



## Presidents' Message

Greetings from the Board of Directors! In late September we celebrated our volunteers and the bluebirds we all love at our Fall Wrap Up and Annual Meeting. The turnout was excellent and the opportunity to meet together with Monitors and Team Leaders for sharing information superb. We've been working on communication, and our experience at this meeting was very rewarding. Everyone especially enjoyed the chance to chat together over a tasty lunch after the formal portion of the meeting had ended.

Beginning with the October board meeting, we will focus on evaluating this season and planning for upcoming seasons. One goal (of many) we had going into 2019 was to improve communication project wide for our volunteers. We received lots of feedback at the fall meeting, and hope to continue to expand creative ways to share field experiences and project-wide trends being observed and reported by monitors and team leaders. We'll all be enriched by the shared knowledge.

A new study by scientists from Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and collaborators at six other institutions has found that the breeding population of birds in the U.S. and Canada has dropped nearly 30% since 1970. The study was published in the journal

*Science* on September 19 of this year. It appears that the nesting success in 2019 has improved even above that of 2018.

See Page 6 for additional information and seven simple actions that we can take to reduce or prevent these losses.

Most of our nesting data is in (see graphic comparison of 6 years of data on Page 1). It appears that the nesting success of 2019 has held improved even above that of 2018. The bluebirds are resilient, and our efforts in providing nest boxes as alternatives to natural cavities that are dwindling supports their fledging success. Although it is the common bird species that have disappeared so alarmingly, the three species of bluebirds are not among them.

We urge that you continue to support and celebrate the bluebirds' ability to recover from less successful breeding seasons in order to sustain their presence in the northern Willamette Valley.

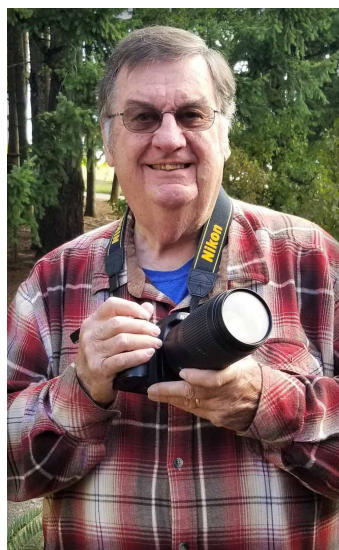
Cheers,  
Nancy and Gwen

*May all your blues be birds!*  
- Bet Zimmerman Smith

## 2019 Photo Contest Results

By Gwen Martin

Congratulations go out to Scott Peavy, who submitted the winning entry for this year's PBRP Photo Contest. We received some beautiful



Scott & his camera  
Photo Credit Lolly Peavy

photos of Western Bluebirds, and we are grateful to all those who submitted pictures. Our volunteer judges reviewed the entries for their technical quality, originality, and artistic merit. Congratulations, Scott; we hope you enjoy your \$50 gift certificate to Backyard Bird Shop.

Scott Peavy is no stranger to the Photo Contest, having previously claimed the top prize in 2017. He is an accomplished amateur photographer who captures images not only of Western Bluebirds, but also other songbirds. Scott and his wife, Lolly, are long time



Winning Photo 2019 - Photo Credit Scott Peavy

supporters of PBRP who have hosted our nest boxes on their property near Newberg for over 20 years.

Thank you to all who submitted photos and a special thanks to our volunteer judges. All the entries were displayed at the annual fall meeting in September and enjoyed by the attendees. Watch for the 2020 Photo Contest — we hope to see YOUR photos next year.

## To Our Volunteers

Thank you for the dedication, time, and energy you provide on behalf of the bluebirds, your fellow volunteers, and our Citizen Science organization. We are, together, a remarkable team.

Jeannette Adlong	Judy Henrickson	Ruthan & Ken Panck (TRNWR)
Betty & John Ballentine	Carolyn Hockman	Harold Potter
Keith Bounds	Barbara Holland	Peter Ramer
Robert Burdick (Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge-TRNWR)	Thomas Houseman	Eileen Reid
Lyn Burniston	Amy Beth Jacobsen	Leah Rivendell
Janet Carlson	Cathy Kelly	Betsey Rixford
Sharon & Steve Coan	Lauri Kunzman	Russ Rosner
Debbie Dale (TRNWR)	Susan Lamb	Teresa Schechtel
Dan and Lynn Dickinson	Ike Leahy	Ellie Shipley
Karrie Duckworth	Barbara & Don Manghelli	Dee & Don Sitko
Ginger Edwards & Bob Meehan	Caroline Mann	Christie Smelser
Lynn Erdman	Gwen Martin	Chelsey Smelser
Nancy Fraser	Sue Martin	Helga Stephenson
Lisa Fratianni	Susan Mates	Stone Creek Golf Club (Tyler & Steve)
Steve Gutting-Flowers	Stan & Krista McKay	Bob Swanson (TRNWR)
Debra Hall	Peter Mitchel	Onalee Wasserburger
Michelle Harrington	Scott Morrison	Michal Wert
Diane Harris	Cheryl Neal	Dave Wert
Sarah Hatfield & Jeff Murray	Elaine Newland	Kit Whittaker
Mary Hayden	Tricia Niday	
	Stephen & Judy Page	

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful,  
committed citizens can change the world;  
indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.*

*- Margaret Mead*

*Photo Credit  
Betty Ballentine*





## Fall Wrap Up and Annual Fall Meeting

By Nancy Fraser

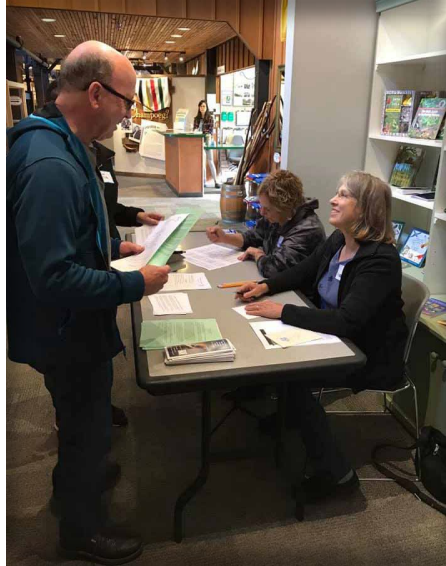
The annual meeting was called to order at Champoeg State Heritage Area on September 28, 2019, at 9:30 am.

Daniel Klug, Champoeg Interpretive Park Ranger and Volunteer Coordinator welcomed us to the park and thanked us for our bluebird conservation work.

Board Past President Karrie Duckworth thanked all the volunteers who participated this season on behalf of the Board of Directors. Monitors, Team Leaders, and Board Members were asked to stand and be recognized by the Board and their Fellow Volunteers.

Treasurer Lisa Fratianni gave a financial overview and entertained questions. She reported the preliminary nesting data results. There are 13 more route reports to be submitted and included. The final report will appear in the fall newsletter. There are 44 active routes and nearly 800 nest box locations being monitored.

Lisa also showed a working version of a Google Map that we will be developing to show all the monitored locations and how they are distributed. This will be very helpful in assigning routes to make them easier to efficiently monitor weekly during



*Signing In - Photo Credit - Gwen Martin*

Gwen Martin, Board Co-president, reviewed the proposed changes to our By Laws that were distributed to all members in advance of the Annual Meeting and also printed on the agenda. The changes were approved unanimously.

The formal business meeting was adjourned at 10:45.

Nancy gave a newsletter update. Deadline for submitting photos and material is October 20 (earlier would be appreciated).

Gwen announced the winner of the 2019 Photo Contest and encouraged volunteers to warm up their cameras and submit photos to the contest next season. We are always looking for photographs for our publications and information materials, and use both photo contest entries and photographs you take during your PBRP activities. We especially encourage photographs of our volunteers engaged in their work, as well as pictures of our photogenic bluebirds.

Attendees were asked whether the communication by e mail over the season was enough or too much. The audience responded that they wanted more communication throughout the season. Those who attended our no host get togethers in July said they were enjoyable and meeting other volunteers gave them more of a sense of inclusion in the project overall.

New Monitor at Champoeg Steve Glutting-Flowers described what is going on at the park, bluebird-wise. He reported increasing bluebird nesting attempts, changes he made to some nest box placements including GPS tracking and his observations of tree and violet green swallows. He staffed a table about the birds and our project at a state-wide Park Weekend during the summer that was well received by visitors.

We ended out meeting with social time during lunch.



*Steve Gutting-Flowers Talks Monitoring at Champoeg - Photo Credit - Karrie Duckworth*

the nesting season. We do not yet have the tools to modify our data base to include GPS location co-ordinates as it takes an expert to edit the Access software to accommodate them. The board will include discussion of the mapping and data base in their two "out of nesting season" meetings in October and January.



*Audience Participation Photo Credit - Nancy Fraser*

## Important Upcoming Dates

February 29, 2020 9:30 am - noon  
Spring Workshop  
at Champoege State Heritage Area Visitors' Center

March/April  
Begin inspection/cleanup of route and nestboxes

April (or when first bluebird eggs are laid)  
Begin weekly detailed observation reports to your Team Leader

May 18, 2020 10:00 am - 4:00 pm  
Bird Festival at Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge

May - September (or until last bluebirds fledge)  
Begin compiling End of Season Bluebird Nesting Reports  
as clutches are started

July dates TBA  
East of Willamette and West of Willamette No Host Volunteer  
Get Togethers. Volunteers are welcome at either OR BOTH

September 20  
Complete and send End of Season Bluebird Nesting Reports  
to your Team Leader

September date TBA  
Fall Wrap Up/Annual Meeting  
at Champoege Site Heritage Area Visitors' Center

## Hold That Date! Spring New & Returning Monitor Workshop

The Spring Workshop is held on a Saturday in early spring. We advertise for and encourage individuals who are interested in volunteering as Western Bluebird Monitors on vacant routes (where the previous monitors have retired or for other reasons are unable to continue volunteering). Returning Monitors and Team Leaders are also invited to network with their peers and meet with and answer questions asked by potential new volunteers.

If you are interested, or know someone who might be curious or ready to sign up, please keep an eye on our website ([www.prescottbluebird.com](http://www.prescottbluebird.com)) or our Facebook page (@prescottbluebird) for announcements early in 2020.

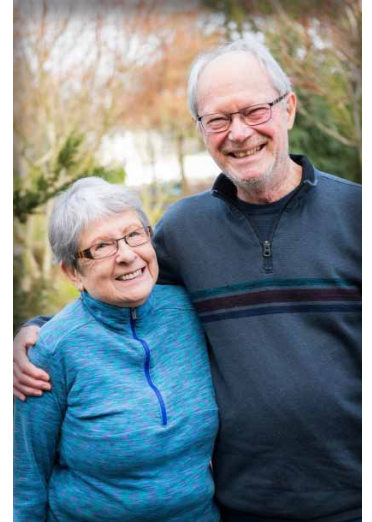
The date is Saturday, February 29, 2020. The meeting will be held at the Champoege State Heritage Area Visitors' Center Auditorium from 9:30 am until noon. Visitor parking fees will be paid for those attending.

Current PBRP volunteers: mark your calendars and join us to kick off the 2020 nesting season.

Interested new volunteers: mark your calendars! Make a difference for Bluebirds!

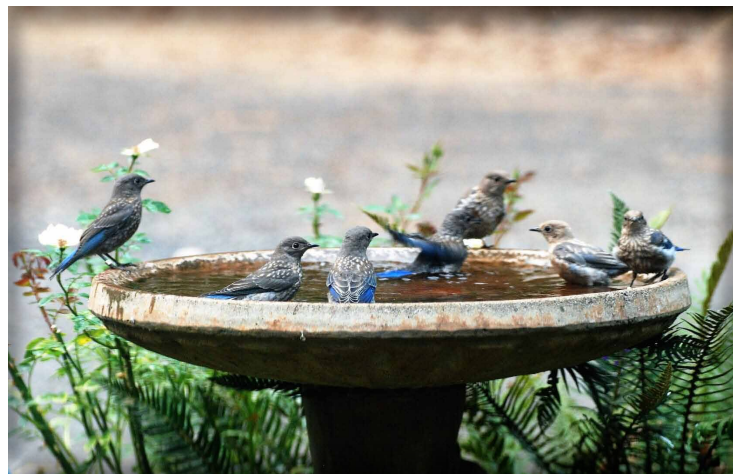
## Notes from the Nest Box

Sadly, PBRP notes the passing of long-time volunteer, Barbara Manghelli, on September 20, 2019. Barb began monitoring nest boxes after her retirement in 2001, and she enlisted her husband, Don, to join her on the route when he retired. Like most PBRP volunteers, Barb was captivated by the charming ways of the bluebirds. She also persevered through the more challenging parts of monitoring—the years where poor weather impacted nesting success, the inevitable nest failures, and the frustration of house sparrows. Beyond a commitment to the bluebirds, Barb and Don enjoyed getting to know the landowners on their route along Parrett Mountain Rd, and through the years they developed friendships with many of them. Barb will be missed by “her bluebirds” and by the friends she made along her route.



While we knew Barb through her love for bluebirds, she was also passionate about many other causes: the environment, homelessness, women's issues, hunger, and social justice. She told Don she didn't want a memorial service. Rather, she wanted people to take some action, to do something good, as a way to remember her, such as donating to a favorite charity or supporting a cause like PBRP in her honor. Her family is working with Tigard Parks and the Tualatin River Keepers on an interpretive sign about the trilliums in Cook Park. Friends can donate in her honor at <http://www.tualatinriverkeepers.org/donate>.

Barb Manghelli leaves a legacy of activism for causes she believed in. PBRP is grateful for all she did for the bluebirds and for her contributions to the PBRP organization.



*Photo Credit Scott Peavy*



## Recent Study Published

Over the past 50 years, there has been a nearly 30% decline in total birdlife in the U.S. and Canada - based on information obtained from Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY

An article published in the September issue of the journal *Science*, includes data collected by seven collaborating organizations. The losses amount to nearly 3 billion birds, with 90% of losses coming from just 12 families, including the sparrows, blackbirds, warblers, and finches. Common birds—the species that many people see every day—have suffered the greatest losses, according to the study. Losses include favorite species seen at bird feeders and in yards, such as Dark-eyed Juncos down 168 million, White-throated Sparrows down 93 million, Red-winged Blackbirds by 92 million, and Eastern & Western Meadowlarks by a combined 139 million individuals.

“We want to keep common birds common, and we’re not even doing that,” said Pete Marra, a study coauthor who formerly directed the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center.

Scientists who conducted the research say their results “signal an urgent need . . . to avert continued biodiversity loss and potential collapse of the continental avifauna.”

Cornell Lab conservation scientist Ken Rosenberg, lead study author, says that if this kind of detailed information had been known about the Passenger Pigeon at the point of its 30% loss, the species could have been saved. “I don’t think any of these major declines among birds are hopeless at this point,” Rosenberg says. “But that may not be true 10 years from now.”

Rosenberg is still an optimist, even if these research results seem daunting. “If we take simple actions, we can reverse these bird declines,” says Rosenberg. “But we need to shake people, wake them up.... This is happening.”

### 7 Simple Ways to Help Birds

1. Make Windows Safer  
Day and Night Simple adjustments to your windows can save birds’ lives.
2. Keep Cats Indoors  
Indoor cats live longer, healthier lives. Outdoor cats kill more birds than any other non-native threat.
3. Reduce Lawn by Planting Native Species  
The U.S. has 63 million acres of lawn. That’s a huge potential for supporting wildlife.
4. Avoid Pesticides  
Look for organic food choices and cut out some of the 1 billion pounds of pesticides used in the U.S. each year.
5. Drink Coffee That’s Good for Birds  
Shade-grown coffees are delicious, economically beneficial to farmers, and help more than 42 species of North American songbirds.
6. Protect Our Planet From Plastics  
91% of plastics are not recycled, and they take 400 years to degrade.
7. Watch Birds, Share What You See  
Bird watchers are one of science’s most vital sources of data on how the ecological world is faring.



Want to know more about the seven points above, or read the original *Science* article? Use these links in your internet browser.

<https://www.birds.cornell.edu/home/seven-simple-actions-to-help-birds>

<https://www.birds.cornell.edu/home/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/DECLINE-OF-NORTH-AMERICAN-AVIFAUNA-SCIENCE-2019.pdf>



## BEAKY BULLETINS



Harold Potter

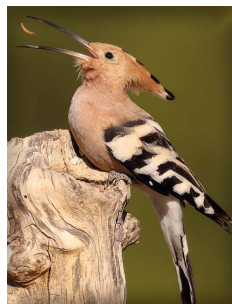
Photo Credit Gwen Martin

**A big THANK YOU** to Harold in Canby for donating his time and woodworking talents to assemble some of our nest box kits and make a supply of nest box hole enhancers for us. Harold is also enjoying having a pair of Bluebirds raising their family in a PBRP nest box behind his home. We ♥ our volunteers!!

### Monitors:

If you see a bird that looks like this

poaching mealworms, you must be in Eurasia. This is the European Hoopoe, a colorful bird with that crazy-looking crest.



Oregon Birders On Line reported on July 1 that Western Bluebirds fledged in a yard (4 blocks from the beach) in Bandon on June 28. This was

reported as the first known nesting in Coos County. The birder reporting this event also commented that for the past few years, there have been bluebirds in Coos County during winter, being reported sporadically during the county Christmas Bird Count.

**Monitors Betty & John** saw this on one of the last trips they made to their route this season.

Serendipitously, they caught bluebird parents in the act of fledging their young. It was the first time they were present when bluebirds fledged. Betty reports that it was interesting and (of course) delightful to witness the young birds leaving their nest. The last of the five youngsters to leave was very hesitant, but finally was coaxed into the next stage of his bluebird journey from a ROW nest box outside of Dundee.

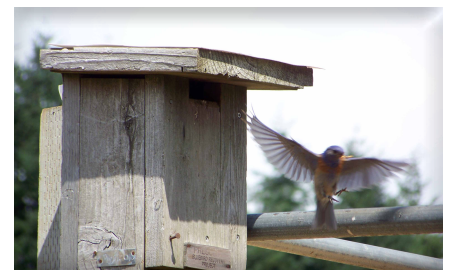


Photo Credit Zenobia Lapeyre

## A Dozen Bluebirding Myths

From information in *Bluebird*, Journal of the North American Bluebird Society, by Bet Zimmerman Smith

**MYTH:** You can put up a nest box & forget about it.

**REALITY:** Bluebird boxes should be monitored at least weekly to check on progress and control house sparrows, blowflies, paper wasps, & to remove unhatched eggs, etc. Boxes need to be cleaned out after nesting. Check boxes at least annually to replace split, rotten or broken boxes that could let rain in & chill nestlings. OR, replace the entire box.



Photo Credit Zenobia Lapeyre

**MYTH:** Bluebirds will remove old nests from a nest box.

**REALITY:** Bluebirds will not typically clean out old nests. They may build a nest atop another nest, but this promotes disease & parasite infestation & may increase the likelihood that a predator will be able to reach in & nab eggs/nestlings that are closer to the entrance hole. Remove the nest as soon as the young birds fledge (around 3 weeks after hatching) or if nesting fails (as bluebirds may attempt another nest in 1-7 days).

**MYTH:** If you open the bluebird box or touch the nest or young, the parents will abandon the nest.

**REALITY:** Don't worry that monitoring will make the parents desert the nest. Most songbirds have a poor sense of smell. Adults may pester you (it's their instinct to protect their nest, eggs, and young), but are unlikely to abandon the nest.

**MYTH:** House Sparrows won't bother bluebirds or their nests.

**REALITY:** House Sparrows are probably the # 1 enemy of bluebirds. House Sparrows are capable of entering the 1.5 inch round opening of a nest box. They will attack & kill adult bluebirds (sometimes trapping them inside the box), and destroy eggs & nestlings. These sparrows are non-native invasive pests not protected by law. Their nests, eggs, young and the adults may be legally removed or destroyed. It is better to have no box at all than to allow House Sparrows to reproduce in one.

**MYTH:** If you don't have problems with predators or competitors on a route the first year, you never will.

**REALITY:** It may take time for raccoons, cats, and other predators to discover nesting areas. Unless you don't mind finding broken eggs, abandoned/dead babies, or a pile of blue feathers, take precautions to prevent predators from entering the nest box.

**MYTH:** If you don't get bluebirds in your nest box/trail the first year, you never will.

**REALITY:** It may take several years for bluebirds to find your nest boxes & choose to use them.

**MYTH:** It's too late in the year to install a nest box because bluebirds have already begun laying eggs.

**REALITY:** It's never too late to install a nest box. Bluebirds may raise 2 or 3 broods. If a nesting attempt fails, they may choose to move to another box. Bluebirds may roost in nest boxes during the winter.

**MYTH:** Bluebirds prefer to nest in boxes mounted at eye-level.

**REALITY:** Eye-level is convenient for human monitors. Bluebirds will nest in, and may even prefer, boxes that are 8-20 feet off the ground. It is preferred to mount boxes at eye level— it won't deter bluebirds and will facilitate monitor safety and maintenance of the nest box.

**MYTH:** You should collect earthworms & put them in a feeder for bluebirds.

**REALITY:** Bluebirds love mealworms, but should not be fed earthworms. The nestlings' undeveloped digestive systems cannot handle earthworms because of the dirt castings in the worm gut. Eating earthworms (sometimes used as a source of food by bluebird parents during bad weather when nothing else is available) can cause severe diarrhea, which can result in dehydration & starvation. Also, bluebirds rarely eat seeds—68 % of their diet is made up of insects: grasshoppers, crickets, beetles, spiders & caterpillars. They also like fruit from plants like flowering dogwood, holly, mulberry, wild grape, Virginia creeper, pokeweed & viburnum.

**MYTH:** Plexiglas roofs/holes in the roof/extra light in boxes can keep House Sparrows out.

**REALITY:** Not true. A change may temporarily deter sparrows, but they will nest in such boxes. Open topped boxes or those with holes in the roof are no longer recommended due to concerns about wet nests and hypothermia.

**MYTH:** Bluebirds were on the brink of extinction, but now they are back & no longer need your help.

**REALITY:** Bluebird populations decreased by an estimated 90 per cent from 1920-1970, threatened by competition from introduced, non-native species, loss of open space & nesting cavities, pesticide use, climatic events, and development of new farming methods or developing former farm land into human housing. With assistance from people like you, since none of these issues that cause declines has really gone away, bluebirds and other songbirds have managed to stabilize their population through periods of variable success. There are new climatic events with more profound effects already upon us over the 50 years starting in the 1970's (See Page 6).

**MYTH:** Bluebirds behave the same way, all the time, everywhere.

**REALITY:** Eastern, Mountain, & Western Bluebirds in different areas behave differently and show different preferences. The same birds may behave differently as they age; seasons, climate & conditions change from one year to the next. Do whatever works in your area to help bluebirds maintain their numbers and a special place in our lives.

Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project  
PO Box 1469  
Sherwood, OR 97140

**CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**

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

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/>



### Visit us on Facebook

Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project now has a Facebook page! Like us so you can stay in touch with what is happening with our precious Bluebirds. Find us at:  
<https://www.facebook.com/prescottbluebird>

### 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: [info@prescottbluebird.com](mailto:info@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 [info@prescottbluebird.com](mailto:info@prescottbluebird.com),

or write to us at:

PBRP

PO Box 1469 • Sherwood, OR 97140

### A Local Flock of Shops Connecting People to Nature for 27 Years

**West Linn**  
22000 Willamette Drive  
503-303-4653

**Northeast Portland**  
1419 NE Fremont Street  
503-445-2699



**Beaverton**  
11429 SW Beaverton Hillsdale Hwy.  
503-626-0949

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

**Lake Oswego**  
16949 SW 65<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
503-620-7454

**Vancouver**  
8101 NE Parkway Drive  
360-253-5771



503.684.1313

[jbprintingandgraphics.com](http://jbprintingandgraphics.com)  
11940 SW Pacific Hwy., Ste. B  
Tigard, OR 97223