

PRESCOTT BLUEBIRD RECOVERY PROJECT

NEWSLETTER | SPRING 2026



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Presidents' Message

By Sarah Hatfield and Gwen Martin

As this issue goes to press, the bluebird nesting season is well underway. Most of our monitors have reported nests and eggs in many of their boxes and, just in the past week or so, there have been some hatchlings! As any volunteer can tell you, there is nothing like peeking in a nest box and seeing those tiny beaks opening up and hearing them chirp.

Much like the life cycles we get to witness out in the field, changes happen in our membership as well. This year we say goodbye to some long time monitors:

Cheryl Neal has volunteered for 33 years.

Rick and Patti Sorensen have volunteered for more than 20 years.

Both have been kind enough to show the new monitors the box locations and make some introductions to landowners. Thank you, all, for your love and commitment to the Western Bluebird. "May the bluebird of happiness light on your shoulder today".



- Newly hatched nestlings
Photo Credit - Sarah Hatfield

And we welcome the following new monitors:

Jonathan Ellsworth
Michaella Fithian
Nancy Goetz
Devon Johnstone
Lisa Presnall
Roger Williams

Please join us in welcoming them. If you see them out in the field, please say hello!

If there is one common thread in all of the articles in this issue, it is the volunteers and their love of birds. This organization is a grass-roots operation that relies on the work of volunteers. We are grateful that so many of you have given your time and energy to preserving the Western Bluebird. As you may know, every year we hold a recruiting meeting seeking new monitors to fill in vacant routes. This year we had more people interested than we had available routes. We hate to turn away volunteers but we don't currently have enough team leaders to add any new routes. The only way we can add more boxes and routes to our project is by having experienced monitors who can work with new volunteers. If you are currently a monitor and are interested in being a team leader or mentoring a new volunteer, please let your team leader or any board member know.



- Look at the beautiful blue eggs! Photo Credit - Jeff Murray



THANK YOU, DONORS!

The following people and organizations have given generously to the Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project in the past year. We are so grateful for your support.

Jeffrey Adlong	Randy Hove	Carol Pattee
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Robert & Joanne Herbst	Michelle Orthus	Lee & Carol Zinsli
Catherine Hollinrake	Marshall Page & Fran Fulwiler	

Bluebirds Everywhere

Bluebirds have long captured the imagination. Their name and image can be found all around. Here are some more images of bluebirds in the “wild”. We’d love to continue this feature and see some of your bluebird encounters and use them in upcoming newsletters. Please send them to info@prescottbluebird.com

- Trellis Bistro in Dundee, Oregon Photo Credit - Gwen Martin



- Bluebirds as garden art Photo Credit - Sarah Hatfield



Volunteer Dates to Remember

Volunteer Happy Hours

July 7th in West Linn & July 9th in Sherwood

Sit, sip, snack, and swap tales! It can be lonely out in the field, and sometimes your non-birding friends and family just don't understand the highs (and lows) you experience with the birds. These social hours have become a fun way to meet fellow monitors. Check your email and our Facebook page for more details closer to the dates.

PBRP Annual Fall Meeting

August 29th at the Tualatin Heritage Center

End of Season Reports Due

End of August - Early September

Please get your end of season reports to your team leaders as soon as your last clutch has fledged. For more details, see the “Volunteer Resources” section of our website, <https://prescottbluebird.com/>

Annual Meeting

Please join us on Saturday August 29th
for our Fall Membership Meeting.

We mark the official end to the monitoring season at this time and it also serves as the organization's annual membership meeting which is required of us as a non-profit organization. This is an opportunity to thank our volunteers, share any news from the field, and conduct official business, such as electing new board officers. All volunteers and monitors are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Saturday August 29th

9:30-11:30 AM

Tualatin Heritage Center

8700 SW Sweek Drive
Tualatin, OR 97062

Bluebirds at Luscher Farms

By Denise Szott



- Sally Visser checking a box at Luscher Farms
Photo Credit - Denise Szott

Part of the fun of being a bluebird volunteer is simply getting outdoors and exploring nature. As you train your eyes to look for bluebirds, you begin to see lots of other flora and fauna.

A small group of Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project volunteers did just that on a misty, cool day in April, gathering at Luscher Farm. The property is a former dairy that was purchased by the city of Lake Oswego from Rudie

and Esther Luscher in 1990. The city's intent was to have the farm serve as an agricultural example to educate visitors about local food and organic, sustainable plant production. More properties were added between 1991 and 2005 and the site now includes community gardens, the Rogerson Clematis Garden and Hazelia Field.

The Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project partners with Luscher Farm, and this year has 17 western bluebird boxes scattered across the 152-acre property, 100 acres of which are a natural area. Last year, there were 32 successful fledglings from PBRP boxes and 34 in 2024. In 2025, PBRP coordinated with the City of Lake Oswego to fund and erect an educational sign about western bluebirds and Hubert Prescott, whose efforts in the 1970s spawned the recovery project. The sign is located near the farm's children's play area.

On this Saturday morning, Sally Visser led potential PRBP volunteers on a hike across the Luscher fields to check on her bluebird boxes. This is one of the walkable routes PBRP maintains, as opposed to those that require driving. Attendees included Mickie Harshman, Karen and Bryan

Alles, and Amanda Wilson. They had learned about the recovery project through local news stories or at the informational session.

It was a misty, chilly day and Sally emphasized how it's important to check the boxes and provide mealworms during inclement weather. "They need you especially then," she said. Sally explained that the boxes are usually placed no closer than one football field apart and noted their orientation. "They don't face south because that's where the prevailing winds come from," she said.

As Sally knocked on the boxes first to avoid startling any birds inside, the group waited for a glimpse of the interior. Unfortunately, many of the boxes on the route had wasps in them; not uncommon. Removal, though, is necessary and often they will return. To prevent that, rubbing a bar of soap on inside surfaces of the bluebird boxes will keep the insects at bay without fazing the birds.

As the hikers neared a few of the boxes, bluebird pairs were seen cautiously watching. As mealworms were placed on the dish on top of their box, they swooped in to dine. At one of the last boxes they peeked into, the group was rewarded with the sight of a tall, neatly crafted nest perfectly prepared to welcome baby bluebirds.

The Luscher fields are delightful to explore, with bucolic vistas, rolling hills, wetlands, a variety of wildlife and vegetation, including white oaks, poplars, hawthorn hedgerows, red-flowering currants, Oregon grape and remnants of former orchards and pastures.

The group saw many birds besides western bluebirds, including a great blue heron, kestrels, sparrows, robins and more, since the habitat is conducive to a variety of species. Sally and the volunteers pointed out violet-green swallows, which can be confused with bluebirds. The swallows compete for the nesting boxes and appear around the same time in spring as bluebirds. They are slightly smaller in size and have a lot more white coloration.

- Luscher Farms / Photo Credit - Denise Szott



- Mickie Harshman feeding mealworms / Photo Credit - Denise Szott



Luscher Farms continued

As a bonus, the PBRP visitors got a quick lesson in beekeeping from Trevor Vollintine, who maintains stacked hives at the farm. Trevor is the founder of Raw Oregon Honey, based in Oak Grove. He was checking on his bees and stopped to tell the group about his brood, with queen bees raised from Portland stocks. His bees forage on the nearby blackberries, old-growth trees and the local gardens. Trevor collects and sells the unfiltered, pure honey.

The Luscher Farm outing was a field trip in every sense. It's a fun, vast property to wander and one where you're more than likely to see our bluebird friends.



- Bluebird Pair at Luscher Farm / Photo Credit - Denise Szott



-Beekeeper Trevor Vollintine / Photo Credit - Denise Szott

Making Windows Safer for Birds

This article originally appeared on the Cornell Lab of Ornithology website and has been reprinted with their permission.

There are plenty of reasons for people to love windows—they let in natural light, they make rooms feel bigger, and they remind us that no matter how long we spend cooped up indoors at work or at school, there's still a whole beautiful world out there and that it's worth looking at. Birds, on the other hand, don't have quite so many reasons to love them. In fact, to birds, windows are nothing but a dangerous trap.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service states that, "One of the greatest hazards to birds is plate glass, with windows in homes and offices killing as many as one billion birds each year." In the interest of protecting birds and promoting interest for students, we wanted to share some background on when and why window strikes happen, and some easy ways to prevent them.

Have you ever seen someone accidentally walk into a glass door? Birds have an even harder time detecting glass than humans do. Plate glass windows can reflect elements of a bird's natural environment, such as trees, shrubs, and the sky, leading birds to fly right into them. At night, lighted high-rise windows also pose a huge threat to birds, especially nocturnal migrants like orioles, tanagers, and warblers.

Here are some effective ways to make your windows safer for birds:

- Install a small-mesh net or screen (a net 5/8" in diameter works well) at least 3 inches from the glass. Make sure that it is taut enough that the birds will bounce off unharmed instead of hitting the glass.
- Add bird images to your windows. These are commercially available but also fun for kids to make.
- Cover your windows with a one-way transparent film. This way, the window will appear opaque to birds on the outside, but you will still be able to see through them from the inside.
- Install shutters on the outside of your windows and keep them closed when you're not in the room. These are also great for energy saving! Similarly, external awnings can block reflections.
- If you have internal blinds, keep the slats only half open.

Mark the outside of your windows with vertical strips of soap, paint, or masking tape, spaced no more than 6 inches apart. You can find more details on these solutions and photo examples at this American Bird Conservancy page <https://abcbirds.org/solutions/preventing-collisions/> These simple fixes can make a wonderful difference for birds, so take action to help save the lives of the birds in your area!

Bonus bird/window interaction: Sometimes, especially during the spring and early summer when birds are breeding, male birds attack their own reflections in windows. While this type of window interaction is far less harmful than a collision, a battle with a window reflection can leave birds exhausted and weak (in addition to probably driving you bananas!). Try temporarily covering the mirror or window; this tends to be a temporary problem and he'll move on soon!

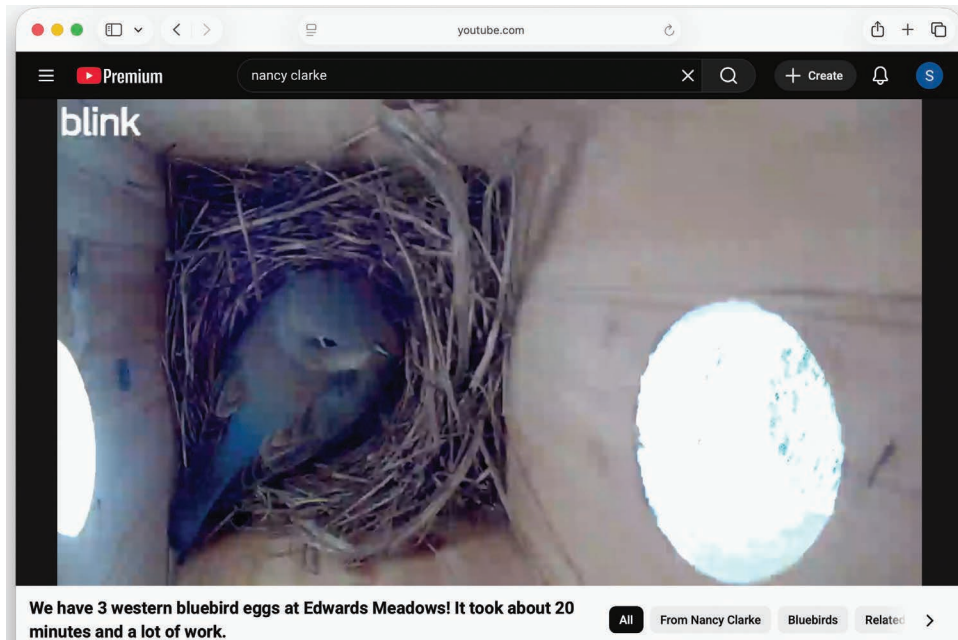


- Western Bluebird on the nest
Photo Credit - Sarah Hatfield

A Peek Inside a Nestbox

PBRP monitors, Tom and Nancy Clarke, along with volunteer box builder, Ed Hepp have recently installed a camera in one of their nestboxes near Hillsboro. This spring a bluebird pair has moved in. Viewers of Nancy's YouTube channel have been able to watch as the pair built a nest. They have gotten to see the birds defend the house from invasive English House Sparrows, carefully build their nest, and finally lay eggs. As of this writing, the female is sitting on the nest with five eggs. We are hoping to see chicks soon! We will update their story in the fall issue. Meanwhile, you can check out the webcam here: <https://youtu.be/AeqgqcKeRu0?si=4fA030BHH1PMMBU0>

- Clarke YouTube



Gladstone Nature Park Arbor Day Event

On a beautiful spring day in April, The Friends of Gladstone Nature Park hosted their tenth annual Arbor Day & Plant Sale. The sale supports restoration projects in the Gladstone Nature Park. Many local nurseries and nonprofit environmental groups were featured. The library gave out free seeds and books to kids. This year, PBRP was invited to host a table at the event. Board members, Maggie Stock and Janel Pahl were honored to spend the day talking to attendees about our organization and the Western Bluebird. For more information on this park see <https://www.gladstonenaturepark.org/>



Photo Credit - Maggie Stock



On the Bluebird Trail: A Simple Volunteer Effort with a Big Impact

by Kelly Bartholomew

This article originally appeared in Tualatin Life and is reprinted with their permission

There are seasons in life when everything feels heavy—when headlines, obligations, or personal challenges weigh more than usual.

And then there is spring.

For volunteers with the Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project, spring doesn't just arrive—it flutters in on bright wings, carrying with it something unexpectedly powerful: joy.

It begins with the boxes. Tucked along fence lines and open fields, these simple wooden homes are quietly waiting. Inside, if you're lucky, you'll find them—tiny, perfectly formed blue eggs, so vivid they almost don't look real. They are small miracles, no bigger than a thumbnail, yet impossible to ignore.

Out in the field, the world slows down. The bluebirds are already hard at work, darting back and forth with bits of grass, building something sturdy out of the simplest materials. There's a rhythm to it—the soft hum of insects, the rustle of wind through new leaves, the quick flash of blue against an open sky.

And then there are the people.

My Prescott Bluebird route winds through private properties, and none of this would be possible without the generosity of those who say yes to a small box on their land. Over time, those “yeses” become conversations, waves from the driveway, stories shared at the fence line. What starts as a conservation effort becomes something more—a quiet network of kindness rooted in a shared care for the natural world.

For volunteers, checking boxes isn't just a task. It's a reset. It's stepping outside of whatever feels difficult and into something alive, hopeful, and growing. It's witnessing, in real time, the persistence of life—how, despite everything, birds keep building, eggs keep hatching, and spring keeps returning.

And somehow, without much effort, that simple act of showing up begins to lift the weight of everything else.

Spring Means New Box Season

Every spring when monitors return to their routes, they evaluate the nest boxes and find that some need to be replaced. Here are some of our amazing volunteer monitors posing with newly installed boxes, most of them built and installed by volunteer, Ed Hepp.

Property owner
Sandy Willis and
volunteer
Amy Beth Jacobsen

Photo Credit
Ed Hepp



Longtime volunteer, Ellie Shipley - Photo Credit - Ed Hepp



Patty Sorensen with a newly installed box
at Knudsen Vineyard

Photo Credit - Ed Hepp



Volunteers
Richard &
Michelle Mueller

Photo Credit
Ed Hepp

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