BLUEBIRDS FLY!

$2.50 per issue
suggested donation

California Bluebird Recovery Program's newsletter

– assisted by Mt Diablo Audubon Society
– an affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society

for the encouragement and conservation of cavity-nesters – especially bluebirds – anywhere in the West

West Nile Virus a Big Concern in CA Woodlands

by Thomas Scott, Natural Resources Specialist
excerpts from "oaks 'n' folks"
publication of Integrated Hardwood Range Management Program at UC Berkeley

West Nile Virus has swept across North America in the past several years, spreading from New York to the woodlands of southern California. By the end of the 2004 summer, the virus had been detected in all the counties of California.

For wildlife, the disease defies superlatives: it has been the largest, fastest, naturally-dispersed disease outbreak to ever occur in North America. West Nile Virus has killed the widest range and greatest number of wildlife species ever recorded in North America; ranging from cold-blooded bullfrogs to high-metabolism hummingbirds, from bats to elephants. The US Center for Disease Control has logged over 240 species with known mortalities, but it's a reasonable assumption that all vertebrates exposed to the virus have suffered some level of mortality.

The virus was found in riparian woodlands of the San Gabriel and Santa Ana Rivers in the fall of 2003, but by the end of August 2004, it had spread through all of California's hardwood rangelands. Approximately 98,000 dead birds were reported to the California Department of Health Services (CDHS) and local agencies, primarily from suburban communities.

Estimating Deaths Caused by West Nile Virus

Almost all reported bird deaths were suburban-dwelling species; however, even these city bird deaths appear to be dramatically under-reported. If we assume that half of the bird deaths in woodland suburbs were reported to CDHS, then last year West Nile Virus killed at least 2 million birds in oak woodlands. This is an optimistically low estimate ... but even at 2 million deaths, the West Nile Virus epizootic represents the largest mortality event ever recorded in California Hardwood Rangelands.

In 2005, we can assume that the virus will still be present at low levels in almost all woodlands ... impacts to bird and wildlife populations continue for at least three to four years. The abnormally high amount of surface water may facilitate mosquito populations increasing the probability of further West Nile Virus infections. We may see continuing outbreaks any place where there are sufficient densities of mosquitoes and vertebrate hosts. Heat seems to be the key in rapid outbreaks; the sharpest peaks of dead birds occurred in the hottest months of summer. Relatively cool temperatures along the coast coincide with lower dead-bird reporting rates.

Protecting Ourselves

West Nile Virus is having a remarkable impact on woodland wildlife. We should consider ourselves lucky that its system of transmission exposes relatively few humans to its devastating consequences. If you need to be in areas with high numbers of mosquitoes, use repellents and clothing to protect your skin from bites. The best advice is to limit your exposure to mosquito bites, to stay healthy, and try to avoid unnecessary stress.

Find Scientific Articles on Easy Internet Site

Bluebirders who wish to examine scientific papers on bluebirds or other bird species now have free access to research published in some of the leading ornithological journals. The information can be found on the internet at http://elibrary.unm.edu/sora.
The site includes the following titles: *The Auk* (1884-1999), *The Condor* (1899-2000), *The Journal of Field Ornithology* (1930-1999), *The Wilson Bulletin* (1889-1999), *Pacific Coast Avifauna* (1900-1974) and *Studies in Avian Biology* (1978-1999). *The North American Bird Bander* will also be available in the near future.

Unhatched Eggs and the Power of Citizen Science

Education Chairperson, Karen Lippy, writing in *Bluebird Trails & Tales**, calls attention to the Citizen Science project of Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.Information from nestbox monitors in all parts of the country is solicited for further study of increasing occurrence of unhatched eggs laid but deserted by Bluebird pairs. One monitor has reported a total of 26 eggs laid in one season in one box, none of which hatched or even showed any sign of development.

Cornell is anxious for your input to help in answering the many questions that are arising on this subject. Visit http://birds.cornell.edu/birdhouse. The network has 50,000 records on cavity nesting birds but they do want more.

*(Fall 2004, Bluebird Society of PA)

Bluebirds Attack . . . . . Mirrors!

Letters from our monitors

Art Middleton writes ...

Here is an interesting problem that I have encountered and would appreciate any help that you may be able to pass along. I'm puzzled the behavior of a pair of Bluebirds who have built a nest in the birdhouse #2 across the road from our driveway in Woodside.

Whenever we or our neighbors stop our cars in the driveways to retrieve the mail from our mail boxes, this Bluebird pair comes racing across the road from their nest; they perch on our mail boxes and then fly around our cars to see their reflections in the windows or mirrors as if they are trying to find a friend or a lost colony of Bluebirds.

This situation has been going on for several days, much to my consternation, as I would prefer them staying home in their nest making eggs like their cousins in bird house #1 up the road. The male Bluebird seems most anxious to see his own reflection, while the hen flies about him trying to woo him. I hope she doesn't get disgusted with him and abandon the entire egg making process, as it is my responsibility as a monitor to encourage the growth of the Western Bluebirds in the Woodside area.

What can be done to get these silly birds back into the mood to hatch some eggs?

Howard Rathlesberger replies:

I believe the male is merely defending his turf – a phenomenon of all bird species. He sees his mirror image as an intruder. You might try an experiment during this display: walk over to the nest box and look in it. See if he'll fly back to confront you. We've seen this at Filoli in the visitors' parking lot. There are several active boxes close by and people have noticed the same kind of activity, especially directed to side view mirrors on cars.

Frederick L. Pilot writes:

(Frederick included pictures of a Bluebird sitting on and fluttering around a mirrored 'gazing ball' in his yard.)

This guy (the Blue) seemed to want to get in the house on Friday and seemed very tame around me. There's one pic of him with his mate on the gazing ball, which fascinates him.

Hatch Graham replies:

Hi Fred: Great pictures! This is Spring and the ardent male, full of testosterone, is ready to fight off any rival near his sweetie. Unfortunately, there's this handsome dude – almost as good-looking as himself – that lives in that round, silver, ball-shaped house. So he's got to attack him whenever he sees him. He's obviously a rival cause his girl stays close by. It's okay though when he can sit on him, or when his lady sits beside him.

Your gazing ball doesn't fascinate him at all, it's his rival who lives in it that's totally hateful, though.

(A number of people have given up having nestboxes around because the males will attack their front windows, mirrors on their cars, hubcaps, etc. Often, in their attacks, they defecate--which some sensitive people can't abide. Their loss.)

A Word from Program Director Don Yoder:

We would especially like to receive short notes from County Coordinators giving us your current e-mail addresses. Convenience in contacting you is often very helpful – and it's cheaper than USPS. Thanks for your help.

Please remember: Your nestbox reports are due by October 1.

California Bluebird Recovery Program

Founded in 1994, supported by Mt. Diablo Audubon Society and affiliated with the North American Bluebird Society, CBRP is "for the encouragement and conservation of cavity-nesters—especially bluebirds—anywhere in the West."

CBRP is non-profit, has no paid staff, and is supported entirely by the efforts of volunteers and donations accepted by the Mt.Diablo Audubon Society on CBRP's behalf.

CBRP members had located and reported on more than 4,000 nestboxes by the end of 2001, with more than 17,000 cavity-nesters fledged—nearly half of them western and mountain bluebirds.

CBRP welcomes membership from the public who wish to support its program, and especially seeks those who will place appropriate nestboxes in the proper habitat, faithfully monitor the birds' progress through the nesting season, and report yearly on the results.

CBRP can furnish nestbox plans, a monitoring guide, forms for monitoring and reports, technical advice through a network of county coordinators, and sometimes the nestboxes themselves.

Membership, which includes this sometimes quarterly newsletter, is available for a donation of $5 or more made payable to "MDAS-Bluebirds" and mailed to CBRP, 2021 Ptarmigan Drive #1,Walnut Creek, CA 94595. Donations are tax deductible.

California Bluebird Recovery Program

Don Yoder
Program Director
2021 Ptarmigan Dr. #1
Walnut Creek, CA 94595
(925) 937-5974 vox
(925) 935-4480 fax
cbrp@value.net
BLUEBIRDS FLY!
Patsy Kahl
Editor
kahl@woodsideca.com

Urban Bluebirds

by R. L.Purvis

This paper was presented to the Western Society of Field Ornithologists in November 2002. This is its first official publication.

Populations of many species of cavity nesting birds are declining in North America. Major causes are competition of introduced non-native bird species, reduction of nesting habitat by urbanization, and widespread usage of harmful chemicals.

In 1984 I began putting up nestboxes for bluebirds. At that time it appeared that there were only about five to ten pairs of bluebirds nesting in Orange county and none of them in the residential or urban areas. A few were nesting in the foothills and natural areas of Orange County such as O'Neil, Caspers, and Featherly Regional Parks. Nesting was dependent upon weather conditions. During very dry years nesting occurred only at much higher mountain elevations.

Western Bluebirds are resident in all of California and usually nest at cooler higher elevations. Their preferred habitat is lush green mountain meadows where there are often creeks or ponds and plentiful insects. In Southern California they are common nesters in the nearby mountains at elevations of four to six thousand feet.

Western Bluebirds are migratory. During the winter they move to lower elevations and even south into Mexico. They are not as predictably migratory as the other two species of bluebirds but generally just wander down to warmer locations where insect food is available. They are found in winter in Southern California urban areas at parks, golf courses, and cemeteries where they find "lush green meadows" with lots of insects. Winter temperatures are ideal with the average daily maximum temperature in the 60's in central Orange County.

Bluebirds are strongly attracted to nesting cavities. They can be seen entering and inspecting cavities at all times of the year. They often roost in cavities at night which gives them some protection from the weather and predators. When spring comes, if they have a suitable nesting cavity in a suitable "meadow" with plentiful food, some few may stay and nest rather than return to the mountains. In this manner a bluebird population may start in a previously unoccupied area. Once established at a location, the adults and their young tend to return year after year until the location has reached it's maximum possible population.

A pair of Western Bluebirds produce an average of about six young per year. About half of the nesting pairs will have a second nesting in one season. I have found that in a new location, population increase will be about 40% per year. This indicates that of the two adults and six young that were at the location the previous year, only about three return. Although some may wander to other locations, the implication is that only three or four make it through the winter. Survival of less than half per year sounds very low yet an increase of 40% per year means that in a very short time the carrying capacity of a location will be reached.

The carrying capacity of a location is not primarily determined by the available food. Western Bluebirds are territorial against their own species during the nesting season. They will not allow other bluebirds to get nearer than about 150 yards from their nestbox. This means that each pair of bluebirds requires about 5 acres for their home territory.

My first nestboxes were put up at Featherly Regional Park in 1984. Even in nearly natural places like Featherly, nesting cavities are very scarce. That first year there were two Western Bluebird nests in my boxes. That success inspired me to expand to other nearby locations. Each year bluebirds nested farther and farther into the urban areas of Orange County. In this the 18th year of the nestbox effort, my goal of getting bluebirds to Huntington Beach Central Park has been achieved. Central Park is about 20 miles "as the bluebird flies" from Featherly Park. My observation is that with available nestboxes, bluebirds can be expected to expand about one or two miles per year. This is by no means a limit. I have had nesting occur as far as eight miles from the nearest known previous location. To get successful bluebird nest results in urban areas requires that several serious problems be overcome:

By far, the most serious enemies of cavity nesting birds are House Sparrows and European Starlings. House Sparrows are not restricted to nesting in cavities but will nest anywhere if necessary. A shortage of nest cavities will not affect their reproduction success. I have seen them nesting in a 5' tall isolated bush at a roadside desert rest stop. House Sparrows are found anywhere there are people. They are not present in unpopulated wilderness areas. Therefore they do not have any effect on cavity nesting birds in

Urban Bluebirds, *cont.*

uninhabited areas. Even though agricultural areas do not have a large human population, many agricultural practices are very attractive to sparrows because of the abundance of food. There are huge populations of sparrows around cattle feed lots for example. Where there is agriculture or people, there are sparrows which compete with native cavity nesting species. They are very aggressive and fierce and almost always prevail over even larger native birds. About one out of every three households in North America feeds birds. Nearly all of them feed the seeds and grains which House Sparrows prefer. Near households which feed sparrows, it is nearly impossible to have bluebirds. Some bluebirders have promoted educational efforts in these neighborhoods advocating feeding only niger thistle and sunflower seeds to birds. These efforts have proven to be very effective.

I have found that there is no defense against House Sparrows. Whenever one starts nesting in one of my boxes, I take the box down and place it in some other location. If the nesting material is removed, they will rebuild again and again and never give up. Up to 10% of my boxes are taken over by sparrows each year. Many of them destroy an active bluebird nest to take over the box. Sparrows destroy the eggs and even kill the bluebird young and adults. There are some urban areas which have few or no House Sparrows.

These include golf courses, cemeteries, and green belts where there is no picnicking. Even many public parks, particularly the larger ones, are relatively free of sparrows. Some sparrow preferences seem to lessen the pressure on bluebirds. House Sparrows seem to prefer colonial nesting places such as palm trees and the tile roofs of fast food outlets where they find plentiful food. Solitary nesting out in an open field separated from people's homes is much less attractive to them.

European Starlings are found everywhere that sparrows are and in addition are found in wilderness areas. They are much more aggressive and fierce even than sparrows. Because of their persistence and ganging up, they usually prevail over even kestrels, flickers, owls, and ducks. Since they are larger than bluebirds, their negative effect on bluebirds is almost completely eliminated in nestboxes by making the entrance hole too small for them. Entrances with diameters of 1-9/16" or less completely stop starlings. They remain a major factor in the reduction of natural cavities available for native species even in wilderness areas.

Nearly all of our native cavity nesters are territorial particularly against their own species. If a snag has several cavities, a bluebird may nest in one and keep all other bluebirds away. The other cavities are available for other species. On the other hand, House Sparrows and European Starlings are colonial nesters. They will use all cavities in a location and leave none for other species. House Sparrows are the most significant predator on urban bluebirds but the second most significant predator is people. In public urban locations, nestboxes must be inaccessible to people or nesting will be disrupted and boxes stolen. Even though I take extreme measures to protect them, I have lost 27 boxes to people this year. Many of those had active nests in them.

Another problem in urban parks and golf courses are the irrigation systems. In our dry climate, lawns are often sprinkled daily. The sprinklers are large high pressure ones which may shoot heavy streams of water as much as 15 feet in the air. Until I devised a method to get the boxes higher, nests were often soaked with water resulting in nest failure.

The solution to many of these problems is the "hanging" nestbox. Hanging nestboxes are the only reason that urban nestboxes for bluebirds are practical. Nest- boxes are built with a sturdy wire hook attached to the roof. The hook can be placed over a tree branch so that the box is too high for people or water sprinklers. Boxes must be monitored often or they will quickly become useless. Ideally, monitoring should occur at least once a week during the nesting season. The boxes must be easily reached by the monitor. I have designed a "Lifter" which allows the boxes to be raised to a branch or lowered to the ground in seconds. The lifter is a box into which nestboxes easily fit. The lifter box is connected to a long handle such as a pool cleaner tool handle which can be sixteen feet long when extended. With this device, a person can place boxes up to 22 feet high. The lifter box is attached to the handle with a swivel so that the nestbox always remains horizontal when being raised or lowered. This allows for safely checking active nests without harm to the eggs or chicks.

Orange County is one of the smaller counties in the state. Two thirds of the county is urbanized and the remaining one third is dry chapparal. It would seem to be one of the less attractive locations in the state for bluebirds. Nevertheless, nearly all of the parks, golf clubs, and cemeteries in the county now have nesting bluebirds. In 2001 over 3700 Western Bluebirds were fledged. This exceeds the reported bluebird production of many states. It was forty-eight percent of the reported bluebird production in all of California in 2001. The volunteer

(URBAN BLUEBIRDS, cont.) bluebird work in Orange County has proven that there is huge unexploited habitat for bluebirds in urban areas.

An example is Rose Hills Memorial Park in Whittier. It is ideal bluebird habitat of more than 2000 acres. There are no House Sparrows. It is a sufficient area to support 400 nesting pairs of bluebirds with an annual production of perhaps 2400 birds. Currently it has 25 nestboxes all of which are used by bluebirds. I have been maintaining or observing several test locations outside of Orange County in Long Beach, Cerritos, Lakewood, Whittier, Hacienda Heights, La Puente, Canoga Park, Diamond Bar, Arcadia, Altadena, Pasadena Chino Hills, Pomona,, Redlands, & Riverside. All have nesting bluebirds. The results of the nestbox program in these locations indicate that urban areas throughout California are prime locations for bluebirds.

###

Author R. L."Dick" Purvis gave us a glimpse at what preceded his current avocation for bluebird recovery:

"I lived on a one horse farm in the hills of north Georgia when I was a boy. There I learned to love nature and the outdoors. One of my most memorable activities was hanging a nesting gourd and being thrilled by a pair of bluebirds using it for their nest.

"Soon my family moved to California and away from the country. I never forgot nature and bluebirds. I became an electronic engineer and worked in aerospace until retirement 12 years ago.

"Several years ago during a family picnic at a park in the foothills, I saw a pair of bluebirds nesting in an old sycamore snag. I was inspired to start building nestboxes and placing them around in Orange County. Now I can't stop."

Don Yoder's

NOTES FROM THE FIELD...

Gene and Jean De Silva Caggiano (San Diego) reported an interesting occurrence. After an evening of rain, Jean happened to glance at the box, and Mrs. BB dropped something on the ground. Her first thought was that a sparrow had invaded the nest and proceeded to throw the nestling out. When she investigated, it indeed was a nestling, however the bird that was on the peach tree limb, was not a sparrow, but Mrs. BB. Jean picked up the nestling (it was still alive) and brought it in the house. She wrapped it in a face cloth, put it in a basket, placed it on the heater, and fed it a mealworm after it was warmed. It was still curled around as if in the egg, but quite large. After a half hour, she put it back in the nest. She had not counted the nestlings, and though they were a week old she had not heard them peeping when they were being fed. There is a lot of noise with construction from the neighbors – a nail gun on a new roof, plus a jack hammer – going all day long. Jean wonders if that has something to do with their not peeping?

Later, with her husband's help, Jean reached in the nest, counted all the nestlings, and was surprised to find there were only five. Mrs. BB must have thrown that one out again, as the dogs were sniffing around the base of the nest box pole the other day. Who knows why this happened. Last year there were six eggs, and six offspring. Perhaps this one was a younger female that Mrs. BB decided she didn't need.

It is not a case of very late hatching and fledging of Western Blues that raised our total of fledged birds to new heights for 2004. **Sully Reallon**, Orange, (line 65, Page 1 of the Annual Report 2004) discovered that his 77 birds reported as fledged were far less than he had experienced. "Should have been 236," he said. Hatch is sorry for that variance and believes that a number of separate pages had come to him, making it more difficult to combine different trails on one line on the chart. And 12 ATFL also escaped from line 65. Thus, with Sully's help, you may modify totals for the year on columns CK-CL pg 6 to: WEBL 7283; ATFL 351; and a total fledged 13,842.

Sully joins the ten monitors who fledged over 200 and gets 6.41 fledges per box. That's a nice population increase for the State. Thank you, Sully. And thanks to every monitor who added to the counts included in the combined record.

Our inveterate Tree Swallow producer, **Jan Wasserman,** Ventura, has her project well up and running for '05, with second nestings also producing many eggs.

Furthermore, Jan with helpers Jeannette and Hal, on May 23 banded 131 nestlings. Jan figures it was "the highest number banded in a single day since this project began. We're very tired." We would think so!

Poet's Corner

Tradition According to OATI

Each fall, young ones
leave their family and set out
to find their own homestead—
to populate a new territory.

Tiny, plain gray, flitting
from bark to leaf,
gleaning bits of bugs,
small morsels of seeds.

Hanging from twigs
to search with beady eye
under curled leaves,
pecking and probing in crevices.

Harvesting berries from poison
oak, seeds from thistles,
catkins, and, oh, acorns!
Why else the oak titmouse?

She keeps track of her mate
and he with she
Tsicka-dee-dee rings
through the trees

Finally, a cavity in an oak tree—
a home— a hole in a rotten limb,
a broken branch, even a nestbox—
a dark, secure place for a nest.

Build the foundation—
dry moss for drainage.
Top that with twigs, leaves and grass.
Finish with fine fur from mice and rabbits.

And once her home is furnished
She and her beau will remain.
No migration, no nonsense.
A home is a home. It's tradition.

Hatch Graham, April 2005

Howard Rathlesberger Reports

San Mateo County Coordinator

The news is so good, we just have to share it! Here are some of the events, so far:

Ruth Cronkite reports a WEBL with 5 eggs in the Woodside Town Hall parking lot. This is a hanging box near the Sequoia Audubon office in the Woodside Museum building. The box faces west, a good place to watch and photograph the adult birds tending the young.

Our new monitor at Menlo Atherton High School, **Laurel Clohossey**, reports 3 WEBL nests with chicks, 2 nests totaling 12 chicks we banded in late April.

Anne Miller has WEBL's at Burgess and Circus Club.

June Flora reported 5 WEBL nests at Encinal School.

Lane Eubank recovered a WEBL hen 150 ft. from where he banded her last year.

The Bluebirds have again returned to the **Williams'** property in Woodside. There they get a special treat, mealworms, and do they love them!

The golf courses are doing their usual activities. **Pat Watters**, at Menlo Country Club has 9 WEBL pairs nesting so far and the usual WBNU.

Robin Smith, at Sharon Heights golf course has 5 WEBLs so far. CBCH and OATI are doing well. She also monitors a new trail of 9 boxes at Holbrook-Palmer Park in Atherton.

Sue Carder, at San Mateo Central Park has many Chickadees and Titmice ready to be banded and a nest of 7 OATI's in her backyard.

In Menlo Park, the new trail at SLAC (Stanford Linear Accelerator) has 3 WEBL nests and the Holy Cross Cemetery has 4 boxes with OATI hatched chicks and 2 CBCH's. Reports are that there's a Barn Owl nest with 4 young ones in a large tree near the South Gate at Filoli!

Richard Rhodes, the Audubon biographer, will have a paperback version of his "John James Audubon" book ready for sale in October/November. We hope to have a Sequoia Audubon event to meet him later this year. I received a hard cover copy as a Christmas gift and found it exciting and fascinating, a good read.

It looks like there'll be 6 of our group traveling to Asheville, NC for the North American Bluebird Society convention May 19-22. Besides Jean and myself, the Grandfields and Anita and Don Marquis will be attending. We'll plan on having a general meeting some Sunday afternoon after we return to give a report.

Wishing you all great success with your boxes.

Long Live the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker!

For anyone who hasn't heard: a discovery on February 11, 2004, but kept secret until April 29, 2005 (for the bird's protection) has confirmed the survival of the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker, the largest known variety of woodpecker in the U.S. The bird was believed to be extinct, its last sighting having been 60 years ago. Word of the confirmed discovery was finally released after several government and independent agencies had set aside $10 million for habitat protection, research and law enforcement. The latest sightings were in the Cache River National Wildlife Refuge in Arkansas. Word of the bird's continued existence exploded over the internet and delighted conservationists throughout the nation. The bird is approximately 20" in length and has a wingspan of nearly equal dimensions.Originally it was known to be a resident in some twelve states in the Mississippi River Valley. Destruction of its timberland habitat is blamed for the apparent total disappearance of the species. New searches now are being directed at locating breeding members of the species, and protection of vast areas of remaining habitat.

INDIVIDUAL NESTBOX RECORD

California Bluebird Recovery Program

Name

Year

Box design name (see nestbox sketches)

Mailing Address

Nestbox faces: _____

Distance to nearest tree:_____

Distance from nearest nestbox: _____

Entry height above ground: _____

floor dimensions: _____"x_____"

entry above floor: _____"

[Note: the shaded information on this form is for your use. If you have extensive trails, you may find it useful to keep track of locations, etc.; or to report to others for special requests.]

Physical location of box or trail if other than above (No PO Boxes, please).

County

Box Support (circle one): Wooden Post Metal Post Tree Stump Building Hanging Box Other:_____

Predator guard: Extra Thick Entrance Five inch Roof Overhang Sheet Metal Gd. Hardware cloth porch Other:_____

Geographic information:

Latitude_____ °____ '____ " N
Longitude_____ °___ '____ " W

Habitat (circle best description): Grassland Pasture Orchard Fence Row Cultivated Field Forest-Pasture Edge Suburban Building Site Wetland Oak-Savannah Brush-Pasture Edge Other:_____

Elevation:_____'

7½ minute USGS Quadrangle:

Date of visit	Check made by	Is nest present?	No. of eggs	Est. Date of hatch	No. of young	No. fledged	Bird Species	Comments: (recent weather, condition of young, parasites, predation, banding, box repair needed, encroachment of woody vegetation, observations, etc.)

Note: This form provides additional space for recording nest data and comments on the reverse side.
There is also space for your annual totals for this nestbox.

Please consolidate your data on CBRP Form 2 (Annual Report) and return it at season's end to your County Coordinator or to: CBRP, % Don Yoder, 2021 Ptarmigan Drive #1, Walnut Creek, CA 94595-3506.

Standard size___
Larger size ____
Smaller size ___

Box Number:

INDIVIDUAL NESTBOX RECORD (continued)

California Bluebird Recovery Program

Date of visitby	Check made present?	IsNum-nest of	Est. ber of eggs	Num-Date of hatch	Num-ber fledged young	Bird ber	Species	Comments: (recent weather, condition of young, parasites, predation, banding, box repair needed, encroachment of woody vegetation, observations, etc.)
Annual Totals: Number of Attempts (Nests with eggs)							species 1	←Transfer this data (added to the same from other nestboxes) to the ANNUAL REPORT (**CBRP** Form 2)
Annual Totals: Number of Attempts (Nests with eggs)							species 2	

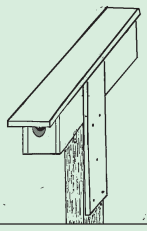
Additional Comments:

Record this nestbox's design on the front of the form

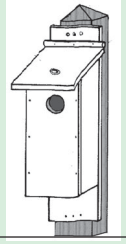
The number below and on the other side is the one you have assigned to this individual box.

Box Number:

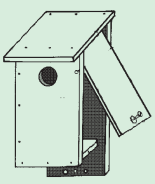
Tree branch box



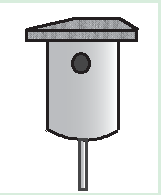
NABS top opening



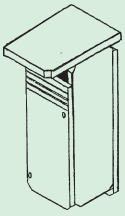
NABS side opening



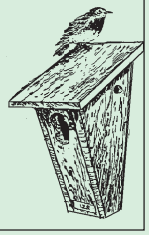
PVC pipe



Slot box



Peterson V box



⇦ *The original issue did not have the back side of CBRP Form 1 which has been redesigned to provide room for two broods. Of course a third brood can be added by hand,*

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Getting 'Wired'

For those 'techies' and progressives among us, paper records have a way of piling up and getting lost. Meanwhile, we've been invited to join the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society in their efforts to start a web page. The web site would describe activities, share information and problems, and provide the reservoir into which Annual Nestbox results can be deposited for consolidation in the CA Annual Report. It would enable monitors in both groups to record their results on that web page, either at the end of the season or progressively throughout the year.

We'll get you more details as the program develops. The hope is to have it up and running during the current calendar year.

For those of you not connected to the web, never fear! Your hard copies will still be valid and much appreciated.

Some Closing Thoughts on Blues

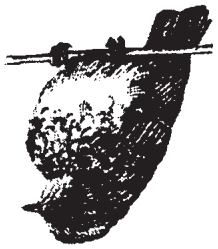
Don Yoder, Program Director

There is a lot of Life in Dead Trees and their value is considerable. The bark alone shelters hosts of insects that can be a real food source for many hunters during all kinds of weather. When the tree finally falls due to decay it will further enrich the soil on which it lies.

Others share these thoughts and we quote from The Hole Story, Quarterly News of the Oklahoma Bluebird Society, Volume 8, Issues 2 & 3. According to their writer "Over 550 species of birds, and 300 species of mammmals and reptiles benefit from snags for food, nesting and shelter. Only 30 bird species are able to make their own nest holes in trees. Another 80 animal species depend on previously excavated and natural tree holes for their nests.

"Primary cavity nesters frequenting my yard include downy, hairy, red-bellied, and pileated woodpeckers, yellow-bellied sapsuckers, and yellow-shafted flickers. Secondary cavity nesters include red-breasted and white-breasted nuthatches, tufted titmice, chickadees, Carolina and Bewick's wrens, great crested flycatchers, and of course bluebirds. Some of these birds use my nestboxes, but their variety and abundance is truly due to the many natural cavities in the trees – living and dead – in and around my yard."

Favored food sources for Western Bluebirds are insects in good supply. When cold weather closes down the major insect supplies, birds are forced to either seek other food material or move to new areas. At such times seeds and berries become food staples and enable some birds to remain in their summertime territories throughout the winter. Nestboxes may provide winter shelter and often may be used as motels for a number of overnight guests, conserving and sharing body heat. The droppings that accumulate in these boxes can provide raw material from which we can learn what kinds of seeds the birds have eaten. Scraping the material from the roosts and planting it can reveal the favored plants from which they came and indicate birds' favorite food sources. Planting them can produce new crops of wintertime food favorites and enable the blues to remain in your area through the next winter.



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BLUEBIRDS FLY!

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