



By Peggy

BLUEBIRDS FLY!

California Bluebird Recovery Program Newsletter

—Assisted by Mount Diablo Audubon Society —
An affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society

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www.cbrp.org

“For the encouragement and conservation of cavity-nesters — especially bluebirds — anywhere in the West”

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THREE BLUEBIRDERS HONORED

We know how much monitoring and helping the bluebirds means to us. We meet people on our trail who are amazed to see our boxes, nests, eggs, and the Western Bluebirds. Occasionally, the appreciation by others is expressed more formally than what we encounter on our trails. Three CBRP bluebird monitors received formal recognition this year. It would not be surprising to learn that other monitors have received such honors.

It is good to hear that our volunteer work is appreciated by individuals and organizations outside our bluebird enthusiast groups. We are pleased to recognize three of our fellow enthusiasts who were recognized this year.

LEE PAUSER NOMINATED FOR VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Hi all!

I attended the volunteer appreciation banquet for Santa Clara County Parks tonight and I wanted you to know that our own **Lee Pauser** was nominated for two awards: Volunteer of the Year and The Director's Award. Although others took home the awards (in one case at least, an entire organization won the award), it demonstrates the Parks Departments gratitude that Lee would be nominated for such prestigious awards. Congratulations, Lee! I know that we in the Cavity Nester Recovery Program are quite aware of how great your contributions are and I wanted everyone to hear what this other organization is saying about you!



Talk to you soon.

Mike Azevedo



The Director's Chair

The current nesting season is rapidly coming to an end. It seems to end in late July here in Santa Clara County and the migration has already started. Please remember to enter you nest-box results into the on-line data base: <http://www.eichlerrealtor.com/birds3/>. If you need assistance contact your county administrator or me.

The California Audubon/CBRP nestbox grant program is alive and well but underused! Grants have been made so far this year to The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society for construction of nestboxes for their educational program and to an individual trail monitor also in Santa Clara County to expand his trail. There are additional funds available for any Audubon/CBRP member – link to <http://www.cbrp.org/Nestboxes.htm> for information.

Special thanks to the seventeen of you who collectively donated \$325 to CBRP so far in 2011 - see the contributor list elsewhere in this issue. If you would like to contribute more, many, many thanks! See the form on the last page of this issue.

Cynthia Berg, who created and maintained the CBRP on-line database software, will retire from this activity in January 2012. We are considering alternatives for reporting data for the 2012 nesting season and thereafter. I want to extend my thanks for her support over the past five or six years.

Dick Blaine - dick@theblaines.net

<http://cbrp.org> - CBRP Web site

<http://www.eichlerrealtor.com/birds3/>- CBRP On-line database

ORANGE COUNTY BLUEBIRD MONITOR DIES

We are sorry to report the death of an avid bluebirder and CBRP contributor, **Kent Berge** in Orange County. Kent died suddenly in May of this year. Kent announced at his last meeting of the Southern California Bluebird Club he attended in May that he was planning to expand his trails. Kent and his enthusiasm for his bluebirds and vintage cars will remain in our memories.

California Bluebird Recovery Program (CBRP) Board Members

Dick Blaine, Program Director — dick@theblaines.net

Dave Cook, Board Member — justdave50@earthlink.net

Georgette Howington, Asst. Program Director—
georgette@birdscape.net

Jim Semelroth, Editor,— jimsemweed@cox.net

Dick Purvis, Recruiting — dickersly@aol.com

MIKE CLAYTON HONORED

Birder **Mike Clatyon** was recently honored by the Orange County Senior Citizens Advisory Council for Outstanding Distinguished Service to the Senior Citizens of Orange County. The award was presentid by the Mayor of Mission Viejo. Mike monitors a trail very near The Norman Murray Center in addition to trails on golf courses and parks in and around Mission Viejo in Orange County. In June Mike sponsored a Power Point Presentation on Western Bluebirds at the center, then later took center visitors on a walk to his Oso Creek Trail near the center, where guests could observe the behaviors of the WEBLs around his nestboxes. Mike also has other trails at Coto de Caza. In addition to his bluebird trails, Mike organized and leads a Ukulele group at Murray Center with upwards of fifty strummers. Mike has long been an active birder working in desert enviroments with owls and raptors. Congratulations, **Mike Clayton**.

JIM SEMELROTH GIVEN SPIRIT OF VOLUNTEERISM AWARD

OneOC presented Bluebirder **Jim Semelroth** with a Spirit of Volunteerism Award in April 2011 at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim. *OneOC* is an organization that has honored volunteers in Orange County for thirty-five years. It is co-sponsored by the Orange County Register. Jim monitors forty nestboxes in parks and golf courses in the county. He has shown his Power Point presentation on Western Bluebirds to over 1700 citizens from pre-scholers to seniors in the past two years. He was nominated by Orange County Park Ranger, **Diane Wollenberg**. Jim is also active in the Southern California Bluebird Club, The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UC Irvine and Tapestry, a Unitarian Universalist Congregation. He is editor of our own newsletter, *Bluebirds Fly!*

About the California Bluebird Recovery Program Founder - Don Yoder; Emeritus - Hatch Graham

Our Mission

Enlist current bluebirders and recruit others who will help reestablish bluebirds to their normal habitat

- ◆ Locate preferred habitat for the placement of nestboxes suitable for bluebirds
- ◆ Secure monitors to care for the boxes and keep systematic records of the development of young birds during the nesting season
- ◆ Record and analyze all annual summaries of nestbox records
- ◆ Provide a forum (newsletter) through which fellow trail monitors can exchange information and secure help in solving problems encountered in the field.

Learn More

To learn more about the California Bluebird Recovery Program and other cavity nester conservation programs, visit the below web sites:

<http://www.cbrp.org>

<http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org>

<http://www.socalbluebirds.org>

<http://www.sialis.org>

If you are looking for a mentor, start by contacting the county coordinator in your county listed on page 12. You can also contact **Dick Blaine** (dick@theblaines.net) or **Dick Purvis** (dickersly@aol.com).

Please consider supporting our efforts. There is a donation form on the back page of this newsletter. Your contribution is tax-deductible and goes a long way in helping us conserve the bluebird population in California.

CALIFORNIA BLUEBIRD RECOVERY PROGRAM

2011 YTD CONTRIBUTORS

Contributions for year: \$325

Contributor	County	Contributor	County
Michael & Adrain Stark	Orange	Chuck Lowrie	Amador
Marilee Jensen	Sonoma	Ken & Lucille Morrison	Tulare
Westwood Presbyterian Preschool	Los Angeles	Kebi Brown	Mariposa
Patty Evans	Placer	S.M. Kernes	Orange
Feridum A. Doslu	Orange	Melvin C. Johnson	Riverside
Richard Willey	Santa Barbara	Carol Langford	Ventura
Constance Waddell	Pomona	Kurt & Evie Davis	El Dorado
Doris Allison	Amador	NABS	Indiana
Charles Lowrie	Amador		

NABS 2012 ANNUAL MEETING COMES TO CALIFORNIA

Please plan to attend the 34th Annual Bluebird Conference of the North American Bluebird Society October 4-7, 2012 in Newport Beach, CA. The conference is being organized and hosted by the Southern California Bluebird Club. The meeting will be held in the Radisson Hotel in Newport Beach about five minutes from the Orange County Airport.

Already workshops on Western Bluebirds, Mountain Bluebirds, Owls of California and field trips to local wetlands and wildlife areas are planned. The Keynote speaker will be **Laura Ericson**, writer and editor for the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Under the theme: *A Better World for Bluebirds is a Better World for All*, the conference will also focus on conservation and environmental issues.

CBRP members are encouraged to mark their calendars and attend the conference. Information will be updated regularly on the SCBC website, www.socalbluebirds.org and on the NABS

MOUSE ROCKETS

by

Georgette A. Howington

CBRP Contra Costa and Alameda Counties Coordinator

August 29, 2011

The memory of my first encounter with a deer mouse in a nest box still makes me laugh. It was years ago when my dear friend, **Don Yoder**, the founder of CBRP, and I walked the bluebird trails together. Don, as was his habit, tapped softly on the box with the end of his walking stick politely announcing his presence. He then unscrewed the side of the box, slowly opened the door and before I could blink, a brown blur rocketed full thrust out from the entrance hole landing on his hat. Beady moist eyes stared back at us. Big hairless ears quivered, her white underbelly heaved and tiny fingers gripped at the shirt cloth as she scrambled down Don's arm flailing herself wildly into the cover of dry, yellow grass.

Don didn't clean out the box. He said that it more than likely housed a litter and we would clean it out in the fall. That was Don. He didn't kill anything unless it had a vampire grip on his body. Deer mice and all the other little rodents, he said, provided food for snakes, owls, skunks, coyote and hawks plus they were very cute.

Since then, mouse houses in nest boxes are no surprise to me, plus I have experienced a few more mouse rockets! While I do not like sharing nest boxes with mice because the secondary cavity nesters have a housing shortage, I choose not to destroy mice litters. Instead I wait until the pups are gone and then, remove the nest as Don would have done.

Don was extremely careful to adhere to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines on how-to-safely- discard of deer mice nesting material. The reason for this is that deer mice are the main carriers of the Hantavirus infection. In California between 1993-2010 there were 42 documented cases. That's 2.5 people a year so it is not an epidemic by any means, but as monitors we need to be aware and protect ourselves.

The Hantavirus is contracted by breathing in contaminated dust particles made of dried urine, saliva or droppings. One can also become infected if bitten or from fresh urine or droppings. The virus causes a severe pulmonary infection in humans.

If you do find a mouse house in one of your nest boxes, be sure to:

1. Put on your mask. Monitors should always keep a mask in their kit and wear it when cleaning out nest boxes.
2. Use rubber, latex or nitrile gloves. (I normally use leather gloves to monitor but keep disposable gloves for cleaning)

(Continued on page 6)

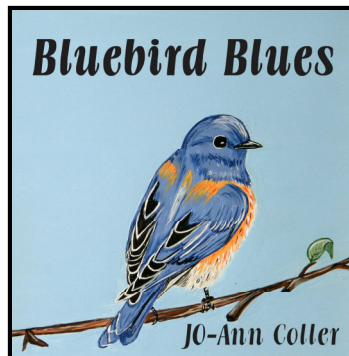
Mouse Rockets (Continued from page 5)

3. Do not stir up dust by sweeping. Instead lift the nest out using a spatula or paint scraper and set onto the ground some distance from the box.
4. Spray inside of the box with a light bleach solution (1 part bleach to 9 parts water- I carry a spray bottle in my pack when I monitor) and wipe out the box with paper towels moistened with the bleach solution. Place those in a plastic bag and tie off bag when done or brown bag to be burned later.
5. Before closing the nest box, be sure the inside is completely dry because the bleach solution could be harmful to birds.
6. Bury any dead mice.
7. Disinfect gloves and tools with bleach solution and soap and water before reusing.
8. Wash hands thoroughly. If on the trail use a disposable disinfectant towelette. I keep some of these handy in my pack.

On the trail, we monitors find ourselves in the throes of many different situations and challenges. While respecting the value of life, let's be sure to be cautious and protect ourselves from being injured on the trail. The next article I write will be one about the time I clipped red leaves for a floral design, brought them home, and later...found out they were poison oak. But that's a story for another day. **Georgette Howington**

JO-ANN COLLER PUBLISHES NEW BLUEBIRD BOOK

Bluebird enthusiast, **Jo-Ann Coller** has published a new book which tells the story of bluebird monitors helping the Western Bluebird thrive. Titled *Bluebird Blues*, the new book contains hand-painted pictures based on actual bluebird photography. Jo-Ann is donating all the proceeds of her latest book to the Southern California Bluebird Club in Orange County. Jo-Ann also hand paints full sized and miniature decorative nest boxes. Congratulations, Jo-Ann. To obtain a copy, contact joann1@socal.rr.com. Perfect for kids or grandkids.





Barn Owlet rescued on AVCC golf course

Gillian Martin and Steve Perry

My nesting box duties on the Aliso Viejo Country Club golf course had a touch of excitement this Spring when a Barn Owlet fell out of a palm tree onto the fairway. After the “all’s well” from a veterinarian, I placed the owl back in a cardboard box under the tree from which it fell. That first evening the hungry owl left its box and hopped on top of the orange cones around it. Within an hour its family emerged from adjacent palm trees and made contact with it on the ground. All indications were that the owl was fed. By 11pm I made my way home holding onto a wad of worries about coyotes!

You can imagine my joy the next morning to discover the owl back in the box. That second evening it faced two great challenges in quick succession. A Red-shouldered Hawk attacked it, and knocked it on its back. What a sight to see the youngster immediately right itself and charge at the hawk! The hawk made a timid second attempt but gave up. I assume it was deterred by the owlet’s steady defensive posture.



I was not the only one watching this event, however. A crowd of American crows took great interest in the prospect of an easy meal and surrounded the owl. Ah! This was too much for me! At the risk of scaring the owl, I charged at the crows in my golf cart. All but one was deterred. It stalked the owl relentlessly. I guess I have to thank that persistent crow for motivating the owlet to make its way to a tree which it managed to climb up in short hops. On my third and final night of observation I had good indicators that the bird was being fed in its new location. I decided to relinquish the situation to Mother Nature. Oh, but the story did not end there.



A few weeks later the owl was found on the ground again after it was hit by a golf ball. This time, it could not fly. I was in Colorado at the time so another nesting box monitor, **Steve Perry**, skillfully captured and bandaged the owlet and delivered it to a local raptor rehabilitator. A broken clavicle and wrist was the diagnosis. When last we checked (August) our survivor was self-feeding and healing but not releasable yet. It’s caretaker, Susan Daggett, a raptor rehabilitator is hopeful. If eventually unreleasable, the owl will serve as a surrogate parent in captivity.

Now! If ONLY I could speak with that owlet’s mother and ask why she did not choose to nest in the Barn Owl boxes I installed for her!!

"MEXICAN BEARS" IN IDAHO?

By Bob Franz

His name is **Dave Richmond** and he lives in the Central Rockies of Idaho. I met Dave through an email program that I initiated through the Southern California Bluebird Club (SCBC) in 2011 that I called Outreach. The purpose of Outreach was to initiate communication with other areas of the country to trade information on how we each monitored bluebirds and to discover any significant differences. Dave was nice enough to respond and we have been trading bluebird trail tales ever since

Dave is not only a bluebirder but more specifically he is a Mountain Bluebirder and the Mountain Bluebird (MOBL) happens to be the state bird of Idaho. His experiences in monitoring a Mountain Bluebird trail are different from those of us who live in the much flatter suburbs and rural landscapes of southern California and I felt they were interesting enough to tell you about them.

Dave and a small number of nature lovers formed Rocky Mountain Blues that made and installed a series of nestboxes in and around Challis that is close to 140 miles north of Twin Falls. They started with only seven nestboxes in 1998 and the trail now numbers fifty-seven. Accordingly, as the number of nestboxes increased, so did the number of MOBLs - from just six in 1998 to a high of 124 in 2006.

Their MOBL trail is now roughly seven miles long and it takes Dave about three hours twice a week to walk the trail and to observe and record MOBL activities - an amazingly short amount of time when you consider that his trail encompasses the lower slopes of the White Cloud Mountain range in southern Idaho at elevations of over 7,000 feet!

Since I started bluebirding in 1997, the most trouble that I encountered with predators was nestboxes taken over by House Sparrows and invasions by ants/wasps and mites. What would I have done when confronted with the devastation created by a large four-footed animal? That's what Dave had to contend with at the beginning of his trail when he discovered nestboxes being destroyed and MOBL eggs eaten by Black Bears. To try to outwit the bears, Dave made a small cake of peanut butter and laced it with cayenne pepper and red pepper flakes. He placed these cakes next to nestboxes as soon as MOBL eggs had been laid. This unique concoction worked fairly well at the start to discourage bear vandalism. But in the past few years, Dave found that the bears were no longer deterred by the hot cakes and he deduced that Idaho must have been invaded by some "Mexican Bears" who actually enjoyed them - as well as MOBL eggs

Move forward to 2011 when I contacted Dave and told him that in southern California we put hooks on our nestboxes and hang them from tree limbs ostensibly to place them above sprinkler system spray and prying eyes - and we have never had problems with Black Bears. Dave thought that hook/hanging nestboxes was worth a try to thwart the bears, so we sent him a Purvis Lifter and in 2011 he added hooks to forty nestboxes and the results are in - no Mexican Bears and no Black Bears either. **(Continued on page 11)**

(Cont. from page 10) I'm sure that when **Dick Purvis** designed the lifter and nestbox hook solution to placing nestboxes out of harms way, he never imagined that some day his invention would be instrumental in countering Black Bear predation of MOBLs in Idaho. So kudos for Dick and his lifter solution and to Dave for his resourcefulness in adapting his nestboxes to it. **Bob Franz**

Henry, the Bluebird

My neighbor called, and she had ants in the box. When we opened the box there was this little guy with about five ants on him and half of a shell stuck on his head like a hat. He wasn't too happy. He had just hatched a couple of hours earlier. No parents, a dead chick still in its opened shell and an unhatched egg. It was late in the day and we wouldn't make it to Wild Life Care in time. What to do? My neighbor said, "Hey, my mom has a box with three nestlings in it." So, we went and put the little guy in with them for the night. They were five days old and already about three inches big, so we were concerned. Henry was so small, I had to use a plastic spoon to get him out of his nest so as not to harm him. I could have fit three more of him in that spoon.

The next morning I went to get Henry from Henry Street. I took a deep breath and slowly opened the box and only the three large nestlings were there, but no Henry. I thought to myself bluebirds are kind sweet birds, but maybe the mother threw him out? I glanced at the ground and saw something struggling in the box. I thought for sure it was a worm, but no, it was Henry from Henry Street. He was tucked under a large wing. The babysitters took such good care of him, kept him warm and cozy all night long. I then took him on a long road trip to Gold Country Wildlife Rescue, where Dana said he'd be just fine. They put Henry and the unhatched egg in an incubator. The volunteers will raise him and release him. I hope to be there. Oh, the babysitters live on Henry Street, so that's why I named him Henry from Henry Street. **Tina Pavusko**

I have been blessed to be able to monitor bluebird boxes in Canyon RV Park in Anaheim for 10 years now. What a beautiful scene I came upon when I drove into a secured area of the park and the sprinklers were on. It was already warm at 8 a.m. and the sun was bright. I stopped and counted nine blue birds flying in and out of those sprinklers. What a refreshing sight! One that I will remember always and wish that I could experience again and again. Happy Trails! **Kappy Hurst**

Early results...but the polls aren't closed yet. About a third of my 56 boxes are still active (all but one are BB's). My initial take is that the BB activity is up about 30% over 4-yr avg., TS down about 20%. Second broods also seem to be down. The mite problem that has bedeviled me the last two years is virtually non-existent this year and I'm wondering if my Hot Shot test eliminated both the mites and the Tree Swallow nestings. Hmm, something to analyze when it's all over. And that's "howzitsgoin." **Tom Croom**

TRAIL TALES

Two recent stories from my Encinitas Ranch Golf Course Trail. Late Friday June 10, 2011, I was leaving the golf course after checking on a nest box at the rear Lake area. I was about 400 feet across a lawn area not intending to check a nest box that I had seen earlier that morning. Suddenly there was a male bluebird within a few feet on a sprinkler case. As I gave him a casual greeting he flew up and hovered right in front of me. Then he moved a few feet to my left, which was the direction of his nestbox, and suddenly his mate flew in next to him and hovered also, both looking at me as to make sure they had my attention! Then they slowly moved toward the direction of their nestbox, still hovering and watching me as to make sure I followed. They probably had seen that I was carrying a small container of mealworms, because when I finished cautiously following them because of possible flying golfballs, it became apparent that both their chicks in box and six already-fledged young in the tree were all hungry and quickly grabbed up the mealworms. I was, needless to say, amazed at how these two birds recognized me at a distance and knew how to guide me to their nestbox tree with the mealworm food! This incident reminded me how the Disney people show birds and other creatures doing amazing things in their animated classic stories. This same family of bluebirds a few days later were on the ground feeding on mealworms. I was just a few feet away watching them when suddenly they froze looking far in the distance at a small speck in the sky. Within a second the parents and fledglings disappeared into their tree, utterly quiet including the nestbox chicks! It was a Cooper-sized hawk that came in like a jet fighter with its wings folded in, landed in the middle of the bluebird tree, ignoring how close I was! Even waving my arms and yelling at it didn't seem to worry it a bit! I think it had seen all the bluebird family disappear into that tree and was going to have itself a meal soon. There happened to be a tennis ball near a fence so once I threw it a couple of times at the hawk, it finally was distracted enough to leave. By the way, this was the same family of bluebirds whose first photographed set of six turquoise eggs were in the Audubon newsletter, *The Lagoon Flyer*, May 2011, with the bluebird article they asked me to write. I am also very much interested in how the Barn Owls are doing in our areas. Encinitas Golf club had me help them place one Barn Owl box already, and there seems to be a growing interest in N. San Diego in helping the Barn Owls with nest boxes. Best To All! **Marty Marino**

My two boxes in La Mancha park got off to a great start as well, with each box producing three fledgelings about mid-May. The second nestings for each of those boxes has ended in tragedy, I believe: I found one nest fully built and abandoned, with a pile of blue feathers below it in the grass. The second nesting box, that had a mother sitting on five eggs by June 19, was abandoned as well by July 3rd, with the five eggs still unhatched and yet another pile of bluebird feathers on the ground below nearby the box. We have a very healthy community of hawks in our neighborhood and I quite fear they are the culprits. Very sad.

Becky Scholten

TRAIL TALES

Tale of an Unusual Trend

Each of the past fourteen years I've looked forward to March Madness, the competing of Western Bluebirds and Tree Swallows for nesting cavities on my 55-box trail in Yorba Regional Park, Anaheim, California. When I started with about 39 boxes in 1998, all the occupied boxes had bluebirds in them. By 2000 I noticed competition develop with tree swallows with about 8% of the fledged population being swallows (now up to 47 boxes). The swallow population has steadily trended upward with 46% of the fledglings by the end of the 2010 season (still more boxes, now up to 55).

This year, with the season about half over (mid-June), I'm seeing a strong reduction of nesting tree swallows. I've fledged 68 bluebirds vs. 26 swallows (27%). More importantly, I only have four boxes with nesting tree swallows right now, an amazing low number. If I project what I can reasonably expect from all my boxes for the rest of the season, based on what's in them right now, the tree swallow population will be at about 18%. So, what's going on? Did a very wet spring disrupt their normal breeding habits? Will they arrive in greater numbers later in the season? Is it a general decline in population? Global warming? I'll update *Bluebirds Fly!* in the next issue.

Tom Croom

Orphans

I had a nestbox with several chicks, and when monitoring one morning in late May, I found the female adult dead in the nest with the live chicks. I was scheduled to fly to Canada the next morning, so I called my friend for advice. He said I couldn't raise them and suggested what had worked before in Orange County; take the box of orphans and place it near a box with chicks of the same age and hope the other pair would adopt them. I left for Canada for a week, and when I came back, I checked on the two boxes hung side by side. The adult pair had indeed adopted the second pair, but apparently had abandoned their own chicks. The net result was four fledged chicks and two dead chicks. Plus two, a decent gamble. **Free Clarke**

We had two female and three male bluebirds in our backyard, so we put up a bluebird nest box in the backyard and one on the front porch, hoping for two couples. Instead, the dominate female drove the other away and made a nesst in the backyard box. None made a nest in the front box. However, before the backyard fledglings left the nest, the backyard mother began building a nest in the front yard box where she raised five more young. No bluebird attempted to build a nest in the clean, empty backyard box. **Walter Burch**

My property in Tuolumne county has had fair success this year with about half my boxes going unused. The heavy rainfall didn't seem to help. Egg clutches seemed smaller. **Ron Smith**

TRAIL TALES

How Many Eggs Is Too Many?

Most bluebirders know that the usual clutch size for western bluebirds is five. Most also know that sometimes we find six, and on more rare occasions, seven. But in 2007, I had a much more rare occurrence when I found a nest with eight eggs! And to make this clutch even more rare, only three of the eggs were blue, the other five were white!. Although all eight hatched, only three nestlings survived. My records do not indicate what happened to the missing five nor do they show the egg-shell color of the three survivors.

Flash forward to 2011 and to the Diamond Bar Golf Course (DBGC) in Los Angeles County just north of Brea. DBGC contains 21 nestboxes and I monitor them weekly as part of my Wednesday trail. Early in the nesting season, I had no idea that events inside nestbox #6 were to become quite unusual, but they did.

The unusual sequence of events started on April 28 when I found three eggs. On May 11 one was missing. On May 18, one more was missing leaving only one egg.

Then on May 25, I counted eleven eggs! They were stacked up like cannon balls and to make sure my first count was correct, I counted them twice - yep, eleven! How did this happen? One possibility is that there were two female mates to the one male and that they each laid five or six eggs making the total count of eleven.

What to do? I was sure that it was unlikely that all eleven would hatch, and even if they

did, surely a few would starve. And legally I can't really remove 6 eggs and destroy them. So how do I increase the odds that all eleven eggs become nestlings?

I decided on a sort of compromise, I checked my records of the other nestboxes at DBGC and found one close by - nestbox #11 - whose clutch of five eggs was about the same age as those in nestbox #6 - so I removed three eggs from #6 and added them to #11. I didn't like the looks of eight eggs stacked up in both nestboxes, but this was the solution I decided on. What a shock it must have been when female at #11 swooped inside and found eight eggs!

Does this story have a happy ending? Not really; the results were very disappointing as only four nestlings in each nestbox survived to fledge - for a total of 8 out of 16. I hope that the bluebird parents were not mad at me, but it really was their fault for cramming eleven eggs into one nestbox.

And so the answer is - yes, eleven eggs in one nestbox is too many. **Bob Franz**

The pair in my front yard are spoiled with free meal worms every morning. With four nestlings two weeks old, they are doing their job hunting down food other than the freebies. The male appeared with an orange carrotwood seed in his beak. He tried to grab some big mealworms, but the seed kept his beak open so he couldn't pick up the mealworm feast. After about twenty tries, he gave up and deposited the carrotwood berry into a nestling's yap, then came back for the freebies. **Jim Semelroth**

TRAIL TALES

Things definitely started late for me but they are going late; as of this morning, I have four boxes with young no more than three days old. These are smaller clutches--mainly four eggs. I even have one nest with only a pair of eggs and young. Looks like I shall be working into August which I think is a record. Don't have records in front of me, but I think all these are second nestings.

Have one box which I dropped early in the season breaking all the eggs. The pair started again immediately and successfully fledged that clutch---and they recognize me as the one whole killed their first eggs--they attack me every time I approach and I can't blame them. This morning two of the four eggs of their third attempt have just hatched--don't know yet whether the other two are viable. I am very careful not to drop that box and they are very committed to driving me away. **Peter Wetzel**

I took a box down expecting to find chicks. Instead of just the parents scolding me I had four angry birds bombarding me and flying into my face. I peeked into the box to find two chicks huddled into a corner. I quickly closed the door and proceeded to lift it back onto its branch. One of the chicks jumped out of the door and fluttered to the ground. The second chick jumped out as soon as the box was hung. Unfortunately, neither chick could fly. All four of the adult birds were still flying at me and scolding. They each checked out the two chicks on the grass. I took the box back down, caught the chicks with my hands and plopped them back into the box, blocking the door to keep them

in. After sitting with them for a few minutes I uncovered the opening and they stayed inside. After re-hanging the box I left a handful of worms and stayed to watch all four adults feed the chicks. I'm guessing that two of the adults were from their first brood.

Jo-Ann Coller

In response to your request for your research on white bluebird eggs, I'd like to share my information.

I monitor a bluebird trail of thirty-five boxes in Whittier, CA (Whittier Narrows Regional Park).

In early May box #11 was claimed by House Sparrows and I quickly removed their nest. I removed a second attempt to their nesting and on June 10th. I placed the nest box (hanging nest box) in an adjacent Sycamore tree to discourage the House sparrows. On June 30th. I found five white bluebird eggs, both the male and female were present in the tree, flying nervously as I monitored. I returned on July 8th to find five young about six to seven days old. Both parents later returned with food for their young. This is the only nest box that I have found white eggs in. **Susana Guerrero**



(If you have stories or statistics on white bluebird eggs, please send them to blubrds@bellsouth.net).

California Bluebird Recovery Program County Coordinators

County	First	Last	City	Home#	Email
Alameda	Georgette	Howington	Pleasant Hill	925-686-4392	Georgette@birdscape.net
Amador	Doris & Bill	Allison	Plymouth	209-245-3135	allison1932@att.net
Contra Costa	Georgette	Howington	Pleasant Hill	925-686-4392	Georgette@birdscape.net
Los Angeles	Dick	Purvis	Anaheim	714-776-8878	dickersly@aol.com
Marin	Ruth	Beckner	San Rafael	415-479-9542	jabeck1924@cs.com
Mendocino	Michael & Marybeth	Arago	Fort Bragg	707-962-0507	mambarago@mcn.org
Merced	Steve	Simmons	Merced	209-722-3540	simwoodduk@aol.com
Orange	Dick	Purvis	Anaheim	714-776-8878	dickersly@aol.com
Placer	Heath	Wakelee	Granite Bay	916-797-4536	towa1@cs.com
Riverside	Erin	Snyder	Riverside	951-683-7691	snyder@rcrcd.com
Sacramento	Vicki	Butler	Sacramento	916-448-8030	butlerrowe@sbcglobal.net
San Bernardino	Glen	Chappell	Redlands	909-794-3470	
San Diego	Martin	Marino	Encinitas	626-826-4336	martin.marino@sbcglobal.net
San Luis Obispo	Paul & Judy	Burkhardt	Creston	805-438-4491	tinhornranch@sbcglobal.net
San Mateo	Margaret	Gabil	San Mateo	650-572-9709	mgabil@me.com
Santa Barbara	Richard	Willey	Lompoc	805-733-5383	dick.willey@verizon.net
Santa Clara	Mike	Azevedo	Fremont	510-792-4632	levinbluebird@comcast.net
Shasta	Larry	Jordan	Oak Run	530-472-3131	larrytech@frontiernet.net
Solano/Yolo	Melanie	Truan	Davis	530-754-4975	mltruan@ucdavis.edu
Sonoma	Mike	Crumly	Sonoma	707-996-7256	mikec@freixenetusa.com



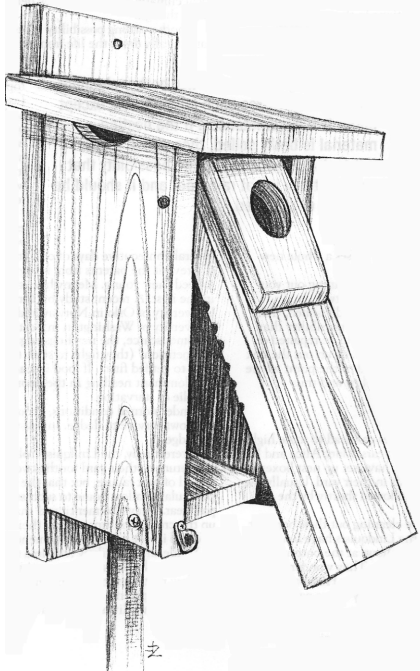
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