

Are yours in?

# FLOCKS OF ANNUAL REPORTS ARRIVE

Does it indicate a better season than usual? Or are our members simply tired of being cajoled by their County and Trail Coordinators?

For whatever reason, we're pleased with the quick response from many members and supporters. Well before the last bluebird had fledged, we had an annual report in hand from **Chuck & Karin Lowrie** of Pine Grove in Amador County. No bluebirds this year but the Oak Titmouse surprised them. Though it only fledged 2 chicks it

was their first. Neighbors got the bluebirds and by June 15, the Lowries knew their season was over and their report was in. Summarizing on completion is a good rule.

Some of you seem to wait for our summer newsletter to get your form and this year, your editors were overwhelmed with other business and failed to get the issue out in a timely manner. Those of you who waited will find the Annual Report form enclosed. Rest assured we want your report but it must be returned immediately.



*\$2.50 per issue  
suggested donation*

## BLUEBIRDS FLY!

California Bluebird Recovery Program's *newsletter*

—sponsored by National Audubon Society-California  
—an affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society

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

## Winter projects for the builders

Each year we have new members. They can be divided into several categories. Some wish to have one or two nestboxes that they can observe from their living room or kitchen window for their personal enjoyment.

Some wish to affect the dwindling population of cavity-nesting birds and develop trails of nestboxes in public parks, along highways, or around major business campuses.

A few innovators enjoy experimenting with new designs to attract nesting birds, to protect them from predators, or to improve productivity.

Over the years much has been learned by hobbyists. Books and newsletters like this one try to pass on the information. In this issue, we reprint considerable information for the newcomers. You oldtimers will forgive us for repeating the obvious. We hope you find it worthwhile.

## IT'S NOT TOO EARLY TO PUT UP YOUR NEST-BOXES FOR NEXT YEAR

Our program director, **Don Yoder**, sent this message for our Fall 1998 issue. It's advice worth heeding and worth repeating.

"We continue to emphasize—but sometimes don't succeed in practicing—the importance of getting nestboxes placed and made available early in the season. Early January and February—even December—can be houselooking time for some species. When the migrating birds reach your area is probably too late for you to start thinking about putting out boxes if you want to attract early arrivals. Your particular climate, weather, and yes, even altitude can be influential in box picking time. Males probably want to poke around and make some selections before the females show up. But if he can't do his work because there are no choices available, it could be a poor reproductive year for all concerned."

## Local newspaper recruits new members

When the *Village Life* newspaper of El Dorado Hills ran a front page feature entitled "It's for the (blue)birds" featuring the California Bluebird Recovery Program, the response was immediate. County Coordinator **Hatch Graham** was inundated with e-mail and phone calls from folks wanting information, nestboxes, and asking to join CBRP.

The article featured longtime member **Claudette Wilson**, and a large color photo of **Annemiek Storm** showing off a nestbox with 6 bluebird chicks begging for food.

To date, Hatch has delivered and helped erect nestboxes for new members **Myrna Kohl, Jere Bashinski, Rita & Kyle Yates, Jennifer Randolph,** and **Sarah Macchia**. Still others are planned in the next month for **Evelyn Rudolph, Florence Tanner, Steve Davies,** and **Susan Kost**.

## Which way should my nestbox face?

CORNELL ANSWERS OLD QUESTION

Nestbox landlords have had theories about nestbox orientation. The birds don't give us much advice since they nest in almost any cavities no matter which way they face.

Here in California, a lot of attention has been paid to avoidance of afternoon sun since obvious losses have occurred from overheating—especially with second broods. Placing nestboxes in the shade of a tree, on the northeast side of a power pole or simply facing northeast has often been favored for that reason.

With early broods in the cool springtime, the advantage of catching the morning sun has also been a favorite theory to prevent hypothermia on cold, wet days.

The **Birdhouse Network**, a part of Cornell Lab of Ornithology's cavity-nesting study, looked at a population of 2,935 nesting attempts by Eastern Bluebirds to gain some insight into the question of preferred nestbox orientation.

In this study, considering birds from the Southeast to the Northeast U.S., stretching from Latitude 35 North to 45 North, a clear pattern emerged. The northeast facing boxes clearly produced higher nesting success the farther north you go. In the deep South, there is little difference shown. Nor was there markedly better survival from the heat in the South where one might think heat would be a greater factor.

So the conclusion would seem to be that the early morning warming is the most important factor—at least in the eastern United States.

Humid conditions in the U.S. South may affect these results compared to the drier climate found in California but that is mere speculation.

For California nestbox-tenders, the Northeast orientation would still be

## NATIONAL FOREST MONITORS NEEDED MORE THAN EVER

County Coordinators and members: don't forget our Memorandum of Understanding with the **US Forest Service**. If you are in, near, or have access to National Forest land you will be welcomed in your quest for nestbox sites by staff members—rangers, biologists, et al. They are fully apprised and supportive of our Program, which extends their efforts for resource protection and management. They are ready to work with you in establishing trails and exchanging records and information about your results. Available land is almost unlimited—reliable monitors are needed.

A corollary of this opportunity is the need for nestboxes in timberland decimated by recent forest fires. Tremendous loss of habitat has resulted in a shortage of natural cavities. Nestboxes placed along the edges of open areas should be well and gratefully received by many species of cavity-nesters. We have been told that "the birds are there" but no cavities are available.

a recommended strategy.

Boxes located with afternoon shade are still recommended. And lacking that, a cardboard sunbonnet or parasol to protect the nestboxes in exposed locations may be warranted.

We noted last summer that **Ligia Moran** in El Dorado set her garden sprinkler on a low mist below her nestbox located in direct sunlight. The microclimate provided by the cooling mist was not unlike the misters used on vegetables in supermarkets. Heat rising by convection from the ground beneath was noticeably cooled. Of course, monitors with large trails in rural areas will have to do without such niceties. Here the sunshades are a useful tool.

## California Bluebird Recovery Program

Founded in 1994, supported by National Audubon Society-California 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 2000, with more than 15,000 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 quarterly newsletter is available for a donation of \$5 or more made payable to "MDAS—Bluebirds" and mailed to CBRP, 2021 Ptarmigan Dr #1, Walnut Creek, CA 94595. Donations are tax-deductible.

### California Bluebird Recovery Program

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**BLUEBIRDS FLY!**

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# Nestbox design: which kind should you build or buy?

By Don Yoder—reprinted from our Autumn 1998 issue

## Nestbox Design

Members have asked for thoughts on use of top-opening boxes vs side- or front-openers. Both types are in widespread use and have enthusiastic advocates. The bird doesn't care so it boils down to the monitor's preference and convenience.

Natural cavities develop at any elevation so a bird will delight in finding a box at any height if it meets his minimum needs. Most boxes are hung for the convenience of the monitor: anywhere between waist and head height affords easy inspection while standing on *terra firma*. But for protection of the birds some will choose a higher location which may require a ladder for each inspection. Other equally avid and successful monitors use elevator poles or box lifters to raise boxes for the safety of the occupants.

We digress. Here are considerations on box openings and some advantages and disadvantages.

### Top-Openers

Two considerations in top-opening boxes are leakage of rainwater and secure closure. The back of the top should fit under a cleat, have a rubber hinge or some other method to prevent water from seeping into the nest.

The top can be held shut by a screw, a latch or a wire bail over the top with the ends inserted into the sides of the box. And box builders will have numerous other methods of lid attachment. Tell us how you do it on your boxes.

I believe that opening the top of a box is less likely to flush the female off of her eggs and so disturb her concentration than opening from the side. I need more than average light inside the box, so, personally, I use a

flashlight. It fixes the bird's attention.

I find this especially true of bluebirds and you will enjoy having a beady black eye staring up at you while she stays quietly in place. It's another matter for titmice, however; opening the box often triggers a hissing, spitting, threatened attack, calculated to deter any intruder. This alone makes it fun to find these little guys as residents.

Thorough cleaning of a top opening box usually requires lid removal and detachment of the box from its mounting post. But entire removal gives an opportunity to check for wires digging into tree trunks.

### Side- & Front-Openers

These may have the pivot point at top or bottom. Such openings are convenient for cleaning either Standard or Peterson boxes; and, as is often the case, if a hen starts a second nest before you have cleaned the old one out, you can simply remove the old nest by pulling it out from under the new one. Top pivots may obscure viewing at the top of high nests such as the House Wren's.

With either type, the monitor views the nest at eye level and right in the bird's face, rather than from a superior position with a top opener. It seems to me, this may be more disturbing to the bird and cause more frequent departures from the box. And, depending on the box height, may require depressing the side of the nest or use of a mirror to look for eggs or young. How disturbing this may prove to the adult bird, present or not, is not really known.

Which design is better? Add your comments to what we have offered here. Our mail box is large and ready to receive all such comments.

## Support our benefactors



Founded in 1978, the **North American Bluebird Society (NABS)** is a non-profit organization determined to increase the populations of the three species of bluebirds on this continent. Inasmuch as the populations of these birds have diminished due to the maladroitness of human beings, as well as natural disasters, the society strives to explain the importance of preserving native cavity-nesters.

The society works within the bounds of effective conservation to study obstacles impeding bluebird recovery and to promote ideas and actions which might reduce their effect.

Membership is \$15. NABS's mailing address is PO Box 74, Darlington, WI 53530.

## National Audubon Society



There are local chapters of the **National Audubon Society (NAS)** in all fifty states, Guam, and Latin America. In California there are over fifty local chapters. Chapters have newsletters, monthly programs, and field trips to local areas of interest.

To join NAS, contact your local Audubon Chapter, or call NAS-California at (916) 481-5332. National dues are \$20 for new members, and include a bimonthly magazine as well as membership privileges in your local Audubon chapter.

Shortage of snags?

## Are woodpeckers trying to use your nestboxes?

By Keith Kridler

Why do woodpeckers damage low-mounted nestboxes when they normally use cavities very high in trees?

Because there is a shortage of cavities in the area of your nestboxes or there is a shortage of trees rotted to the point where the woodpeckers can hollow them out. Or, perhaps there is an over abundance of European Starlings, or larger woodpeckers are driving smaller ones out of a territory as soon as a cavity is prepared.

I have watched starlings sit for weeks as a pair of Red-bellied Woodpeckers hollowed out a limb in a tree in my yard, and then drive off the woodpeckers. (*Red-bellied Woodpecker is closely akin to our Acorn Woodpecker in California.—Ed.*)

If these birds are attacking lowmounted nestboxes, then they could be desperate for either a nesting or roosting cavity. The two are different, roosting cavities usually just big and deep enough to hold a single bird, and constructed in the fall.

To check for starling problems, build and install a couple of woodpecker houses on telescoping poles that go up about 10 feet. You can mount them on trees if you use a safe ladder.

Use a 1 3/4" hole for mid-sized woodpeckers. If you have flickers, those birds will enlarge it themselves. Put a handful of wood chips or very coarse sawdust (even pine bark mulch works well) in the box instead of fine sawdust or shavings. Sawdust and shavings from a planer will get wet and moldy, turning just plain nasty by fall! If starlings find this box, you have a problem area! Consider a trap-and-remove program for starlings.

Make the woodpecker boxes from slab lumber if possible, and try to use

pieces that are two inches thick because the woodpeckers will strip the inside walls for making chips. Make the box from soft wood, if possible.

Check for local one-man band sawmills in your area. They often will cut your logs for about 25 cents a board foot, or will give away slabs or even No. 3 knotty lumber for your nestboxes. Cut around the knots and you have No. 1 premium for your project!

If we lose our woodpeckers, we will have a huge problem for secondary cavity nesters, like bluebirds!

You can protect the entrance hole on your nestboxes with a guard of some kind, to prevent enlargement, but then, very often, the squirrels and woodpeckers will enlarge a ventilation hole or vent slot to try to fulfill their drive to raise a family.

If you were trapped in blizzard conditions, would you break into a vacant heated house to save your children or grandchildren? Cavity nesters face a blizzard every day in the form of chain saws, imported pests, urban sprawl, natural disasters, and more.

(Keith Kridler writes from his home in Texas. This article originally appeared on the Bluebird-L e-mail network and was reprinted in Bluebird.)



**CATS INDOORS!**

THE CAMPAIGN FOR SAFER BIRDS & CATS

## HOW TO REDUCE THE SIZE OF YOUR BOX'S ENTRY HOLE

Bill Singley of Rescue, in El Dorado County still figures the Acorn Woodpeckers have plenty of oak trees for nesting and, moreover, unlike his Blues, can make their own cavities. So when the woodpeckers began to enlarge holes in his bluebird boxes way back in '98, he took action. After all, these woodpeckers weren't even trying to nest in them. Mostly they were using them to store acorns or to occasionally roost at night.

So Bill called his local plastics supplier and was able to get 3"x3"x1/8" squares of polycarbonate plastic (used for bullet-proof "glass") with precise 1 9/16" holes drilled in them and four small holes in the corners for screwing them in place. It takes several years for woodpeckers to enlarge these.

Bill hasn't had any woodpecker damage since.

### DEBATE ON SIZE OF ENTRY HOLE CONTINUES

The standard size hole for bluebirds stood at 1 1/2" for 25 years. Then monitors in Mountain Bluebird country agitated for 1 9/16" owing to the slightly larger size of their bird. Since they also have some Western Bluebirds in the northern plains, many wanted to standardize all bluebird boxes to 1 9/16". Easterners objected and so did some westerners, particularly in Oregon, asserting Starlings could squeeze into 1 9/16".

Now James Smith of Illinois, writing in *Bluebird* asserts "...I have built approximately 150 boxes [with 1 5/8" holes]...By monitoring 100 boxes over 5 years I state that starlings cannot enter a 1 5/8" entrance hole... Maybe we have fatter and bigger starlings than the rest of the country..."

## CATS INDOORS QUESTIONNAIRE

Cats Indoors!, a project of the **American Bird Conservancy** and the **U.S Humane Society**, wants your help. Please reply if you or your organization has some positive information.

1. How many pet cats have been brought indoors, either by you or because you convinced other people to do so?

2. How many stray or feral cats have either you, or someone you supported, humanely removed from the outdoors, either from your yard, your community, or from a park or wild-life habitat?

3. Are you working on an education campaign in your community? If yes, are you working by yourself or with a coalition?

4. Are you working towards getting cat ordinances passed in your community? If yes, were you successful? If you were successful, what kind of ordinance was passed?

5. Are you working to get an existing cat ordinance enforced?

Send your replies to:

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## SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA CATS INDOORS! CAMPAIGN

In August, ABC received a \$3,000 grant from **The Sierra Club Foundation** to initiate this campaign in partnership with **Golden Gate Audubon Society (GGAS)**. **Alan Hopkins**, former president of GGAS, is leading the campaign. The grant is used to purchase and distribute campaign materials to all interested groups and elected officials in the Bay Area.

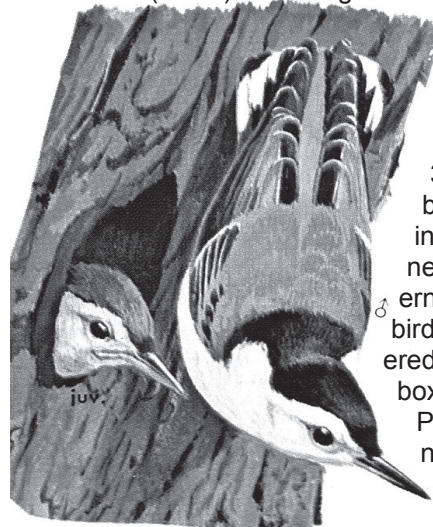
Coalition building will continue over the next several months, and additional funding is being sought to expand the campaign.

## Spotlight on our cavity-nesters

### White-breasted Nuthatch

*Sitta carolinensis*

There is no published information on the use of nestboxes by White-breasted Nuthatches (WBNU) according to the authors of the monograph No. 54 of *The Birds of North America*, 1993. These statements surprise us. Perhaps what we publish are not considered scientific papers. Let us help them out.



In California, we reported 12, 27, 33, 30, and 25 nesting attempts by White-breasteds from 1996 through 2000, fledging on average 3.79 birds per attempt from nestboxes designed mainly for the Western Bluebird. Considering the thousands of birds we reported, this can still be considered a low number. Most were in hanging boxes or boxes attached to tree trunks.

Published studies show these nuthatches normally nest much higher than our nestboxes which are seldom more than 12' above the ground. In ponderosa pine WBNU nests were 25' to 30' up. In deciduous trees like our blue oaks, nests were from 15' to 60' up. Usual cavities are rotten holes in dead branches or woodpecker cavities in dead trees. Unlike other nuthatches, White-breasted is not believed to excavate its own hole.

Since their numbers are increasing (+4.1% according to the *Breeding Bird Survey*, 1997), special effort is probably not warranted but these fascinating birds are always welcome. If you want diversity, mounting nestboxes high on tree trunks would seem the best approach to attracting them.

They nest early (April) like the Oak Titmouse but the nuthatch is not nearly as neat. White-breasted's nest, built by the female, is a conglomeration of bark flakes, clumps of dirt, hair, grass, rootlets, hair-filled feces, even owl pellets and filter tips from cigarettes. The nuthatch may defend her nest by "bill sweeping" the entry with crushed insects including the blister beetle (Family: Meloidae) which exudes a noxious fluid from its joints that can actually cause blisters and is avoided by most birds and mammals.

The clutch consists of 5 to 10 (usually 6-7) white, creamy-white, or pinkish white eggs speckled and spotted with light red, reddish-brown or purplish-red. (Harrison, 1978.) The female incubates for 12 days.

Both male and female feed the young with any insect that frequents the woods. They often alight 6 or 8' above the nest and scurry head-first down the tree trunk to the cavity (or nestbox) with their beakful of food.

Little is known of their demographics. All young disperse from their birthplaces. About half fail to survive their first year, and another third succumb each year thereafter; thus their expected longevity, like many small birds, is about 4 years. There are exceptions, of course; the longest life span from a banded bird of this species is 9 years and 10 months. White-breasted Nuthatches are monogamous. Once they start breeding, most stay in the same territory and mate for life. A typical territory of woodland might be a circle about a quarter mile across (12 hectares or 30 acres); larger in semi-wooded sites.

During fall and winter, WBNU feed mainly on acorns, pine nuts, and other seeds. They "scatterhoard" food, never using the same cache twice, but placing their seeds and nuts in crevices of bark on tree trunks and the underside of branches. The food is often covered with moss or lichen, a flake of bark or piece of rotten wood, or even snow. —HG

See: Pravosudov, V.V. and T.C.Grubb,Jr. 1993 *White-breasted Nuthatch* In *The Birds of North America*, No 54. Philadelphia: The Academy of Natural Sciences, Wash DC: The American Ornithologists' Union

DON YODER'S **NOTES FROM THE FIELD**

In addition to tending nestboxes for cavity dwellers, **Helen Goforth**, Yuba, had the pleasure of seeing two red-tailed hawks fledge from their nest high in an oak tree. Back on earth bluebirds nested in boxes for the 2nd time in 4 years. Joy and excitement! But she is looking for some means to thwart the raccoons that raided both boxes. Anger and regret! (*We suggest—no, urge—the installation of Noel raccoon guards, made to extend not less than 8 inches from the box. To all who have been faced with the same problem see Page 12 for a simple pattern. Get 'em in place before the '02 season starts. They are effective and inexpensive. —DY*)



**Joe Lapoint**, Orange, had 16 boxes with eggs laid at some time during the season but with predators, unexplained egg disappearance, etc., the total production was just a bit below the previous year. Natural losses do occur but when they take place in monitored nestboxes we become more aware. Of course, we'd like to see zero losses.



Also in Orange, **Betty Lovejoy**, found 7 eggs, all of which hatched. Fearing overcrowding, with Trail Coordinator **Linda Violet**, they moved the youngsters to a larger 2-hole box, and fledged 7. A second box also hatched 7. Linda fostered a runt to a new family; the 6 and the little one in the new home all fledged: 7 more. The neighbors are taking note of "all the bluebirds flying around;" one neighbor bought a box to try his luck. Hope we get his report next August.



We probably can't blame it on the altitude but **Merle & Patricia Ruggles**, Placer, raised a bluebird family that

hasn't read the book. They report: "May 28—Pair first visited box; started building May 29. June 5—first egg laid; first egg hatched June 20. The other eggs hatched one day at a time." (*Now, see here—aren't they all supposed to hatch together and grow up together?* ) But with extra food offerings, fledging occurred on July 12—all together! A second trail had Tree Swallows and Ash-throated Flycatchers trying, but both couples departed before their families were grown.



On adjoining property **June Schellhaus**, Placer, had 5 varieties banded but least successful were the bluebirds on whom the 100° heat was especially hard. (*Perhaps some cardboard sunshades over boxes could just make the difference and give the protection needed. —DY*).



Two reports from **John & Sandra Turner**, Tuolumne: A new carport building was constructed 2 years ago and included a barn owl box in the high point of the roof gable. This year a first nesting occurred. The family did well, supported by a good supply of voles and gophers on 3 acres of oak-covered savannah. Two heat waves in May are believed to have been the cause of bluebird and Violet-green Swallow losses in nests. This should be called "Can you match this?" Violet-green Swallows hatched 4 and were attacked by bluebirds for over 3 hours. Sandra tried to drive the bluebirds away but the swallows eventually gave up; by next morning the swallow young were pecked to death by the bluebirds. (*We have read reports that swallows will defend bluebird boxes from predators where boxes have been paired for their mutual convenience. Con-*

*flict between the 2 varieties as just described is unknown here. —DY*).



**Larry Bodiford** had early-bird kestrels fledge 10 days before the first monitoring trip. Sometimes it's just hard to move fast enough.



**Joe Chandler**, Orange, has a choice of possible causes for fewer bluebird eggs from nestboxes wherein the nests appeared undisturbed: he suspects human tampering (*snakes don't usually leave a sign, either*) or a Cooper's Hawk that was foraging for food for their own young. A number of eggs just failed to hatch. (2001 egg count up, fledgings down).



A female bluebird died in the box on her eggs for **Raymond Fontaine**, Alameda. He believes the heat was responsible.



**Carol Hankermeyer**, Santa Clara, found a cold egg remaining after the nest was apparently raided. Careful replacement of the egg in the nest did not attract any further care by a missing parent.



**Kimberly Jones**, Santa Clara, thoroughly enjoyed monitoring the Stanford Dish trail; her pleasure must have been transmitted to the birds, several varieties of which presented her with a goodly number of fledglings.



Foreseeing the problems that high temperatures in nestboxes can cause, **Marion Kunkel**, Amador, placed a carefully made cardboard sunshade over the box and 6 fledged. But the 2nd sitting gave up after the thermometer hit 105° for several days in a row. Marion sent a nice

colored picture of her cardboard handiwork.



Nestboxes monitored by **Phil Leighton**, Santa Clara, didn't attract bluebirds but did provide housing for some smaller residents: Bewick's Wren and Oak Titmouse. A typical run of problems kept the final figures from reaching their potential. Next year?



**Phil Persons**, Santa Barbara, maintained 3 trails of which one is at an organic vegetable farm; that farm manager is eager to promote and support insectivorous birds. Some predators are not quite so supportive and caused some drop in potential final figures.



**LaVerne Hagel**, Calaveras, "We have a beehive of birds in our back yard! Guess the babies have all left their nests & came here to eat! Sure keeps the mother birds busy, feeding the kids. Many trips back & forth to the feeders, especially the nuthatches, so cute to watch! We have families of White-breasted Nuthatches, goldfinches galore, titmice, House Finches, sparrows! Add a few dove, bluejays, (sic) Brown Towhees & sapsuckers now & then! All so noisy but sure beats watching TV! No bluebirds in our yard, but all around us." (*LaVerne reports loss of one nest of 5, fully feathered.—No cause determined.*)



Tethered Hatchlings. No doubt it has occurred in the past for others but reports of a different nature have come from two observant operators: **Dick Purvis**, Orange, and **Bob Franz**, Ventura, this season: young birds tethered in the nest by ribbons of plastic raffia—a condition coincident with Easter when decorative nests are discarded or placed in inappropriate lo-

cations. Bands of the plastic become entwined with the birds' feet or feathers so they are unable to free themselves when fledging time arrives. This may also occur in parks that have lakes where quantities of monofilament lines are carelessly discarded by fishermen; the birds see this as likely nesting material, much to their misfortune.



**Bob** also recites an instance of finding a stranded fiber cord, 10" long, with a piece of red rubber balloon dangling outside the hole. The cord was anchored in the usual nesting material inside.



Adding to youngsters' fledging difficulties, the same observers have experienced instances in which hatchlings became mired in the goo in the nest and unable to leave with the family for the big fledging ceremony. **Purvis** believes the condition in the nest may be brought about by the birds' diet. Normally feeding is on insects; occasional substitutions of berries when insects are in short supply could be the cause of the messy nest linings. Young birds' tail feathers become embedded & caked in the fecal material—possibly a result of crowding in a too-small nestbox as the birds grow. In one such case **Bob** found that a young bird's legs were also slightly deformed, making it impossible for it to grasp the top rail of a fence it targeted for landing upon fledging. This, too, may be a result of overcrowding in a "standard" sized box, having gotten pushed down among the peers as they grow.



Some ancillary comments may fit here for preventing such occurrences if possible—views upon which both of these reporters might agree: Use the full width of available lumber to produce the maximum floor size/

space for the hatchlings; Consider replacement of especially fouled nests with clean/dry material early in the birds' development stages such as you might do when a nest gets wet due to storms, sprinklers, etc. (*Cast one vote here for side- or front-opening boxes that are easier to clean than top-openers*)

Upon development of such conditions in a nest, supplying meal worms as a source of normal protein might ward off the juicy nest lining. (*Many birders probably do not consider supplying these morsels, but such supplements are always well received.*)

**Dick** believes that examining young birds in the nest, especially for deformations, is too labor-intensive to discover the rare occurrences. (*But watching for these conditions while you also check for blowflies might kill 2 stones with one bird.*)



From Amador County, **Ken Morrison** reports that bluebirds moved into a nestbox that had harbored Tree Swallows last year. The swallows arrived 9 days later; apparently removed the 4 bluebird eggs and started adding feathers and began laying eggs, so **Ken** paired the box with another about 20' away. The bluebirds accepted the new box and the swallows fledged 5 and the bluebirds 4 (from 6 eggs).



The highlight of **Ken's** year was the first use of one of his paired boxes in his patio. One box has been home for an Oak Titmouse pair for 3 years while the second nestbox stood empty. This year the titmice were back but were joined nextdoor by a pair of Western blues. The Morrisons were able to watch the whole process from their dining room table. Missus Blue built the nest in 3 days, laid 6 eggs, and with Pop, fed,

—continued next page

## MORE NOTES...

*continued from page 7*

raised, and fledged 6 chicks. "What fun!" says Ken.



**Paul & Dianna Brink** who had nuthatches & flycatchers last year could only comment, "☹️" for their 3 boxes this year.



In June **Sully Reallon** wrote about an unusual situation he had just experienced. He and **Dick Purvis** had seen a Mountain Chickadee at the El Toro Cemetery in Lake Forest, Orange Co, last winter. "Hoping to attract chickadees," he reports, "I hung a nestbox with a 1¼" entrance hole. Soon a pair of bluebirds took over this box and built a nest. (Must have been a tight squeeze.) I quickly enlarged the entrance to 1⅞" diameter. So far 5 bluebird chicks have fledged from this box."



On page 2 we mentioned the need to establish trails on National Forest land especially on forest fire perimeters. **Barbara Moore**, Placer, reminds us that two large forest fires burned in her area north of Hwy 80 this past summer. Heavy smoke had the highway closed part of the time. She reports "...fires made conditions extremely difficult for the birds this year for long periods of time. It was even difficult for me to monitor the boxes. Perhaps this is why we had fewer Mountain Bluebird tries this year. It is surely why I had a high loss of Tree Swallow young." (*We forget the problems a bird like a swallow has finding mosquitoes in a dense blanket of smoke.*) Barbara's efforts were duly noted in an article carried by the *Sacramento Bee* on October 4. Congratulations, Barbara; the birds also appreciate the attention directed to their plight.



From Orange Co, **Peter Wetzel** reports that losses were high this year. He lost Tree Swallows to ants and mites and the bluebirds seemed to have more infertile eggs than usual. (*Several monitors have had success dusting their swallow nests with diatomaceous earth available at most garden shops. The microscopic shards of silicon will dismember ants and mites with no ill effects on the birds. Powder the nest not the chicks.—Ed.*)



Also from Orange, **Lorri Mushok** says House Sparrows were a real problem. She twice found sparrow nests built over bluebird nests. They were gone after her visits. She twice had incubating hens who refused to budge from their eggs while she monitored. "A rare treat for me and my children who assist me," she says.



**CBRP** is grateful for gifts we have received for growth and furtherance of our efforts: A friend who wishes to remain **Anonymous** has newly joined the Program and made a cash contribution of \$1000. Needless to say, it will be used to the very best advantage to help broaden our efforts on behalf of bluebirds and other cavity nesters throughout the State. It is, indeed, a most generous gift. Thank you, Ma'am.



**Lesla McDonald-Chan**, Placer Co-Co, gave a slide program to a local group, a commitment made a year ago, and now has donated her **NABS** bluebird slides, Kodak slide tray, script and tape to **CBRP**. This too will be a very useful gift: we will forward it to any coordinator/member who wishes to present a slide show to an interested group. (There will be an insurance & postage fee of \$6.)



In Contra Costa, first-year trail builder **Suzanne Jones** finds herself in the midst of a housing shortage. Her first bluebird nestbox was being occupied within 45 minutes after it was hung. Four more boxes were occupied within a day by house wrens. Not to be crowded out, a Bewick's Wren built in a covered basket on the patio and fledged 5.



**Joan Jernegan**, Placer, enjoyed more of those sociable oak titmice  
*continued on page 12*

## WHAT IS THE BREEDING BIRD SURVEY?

When people quote statistics about increases and decreases in bird populations, they often quote the Breeding Bird Survey. Did you ever wonder how it was conducted? Here's the answer.

Developed in the Department of the Interior and currently conducted by the **Patuxent Wildlife Research Center** in the Biological Resources division of the Geological Survey, the *North American Breeding Bird Survey* is nationwide.

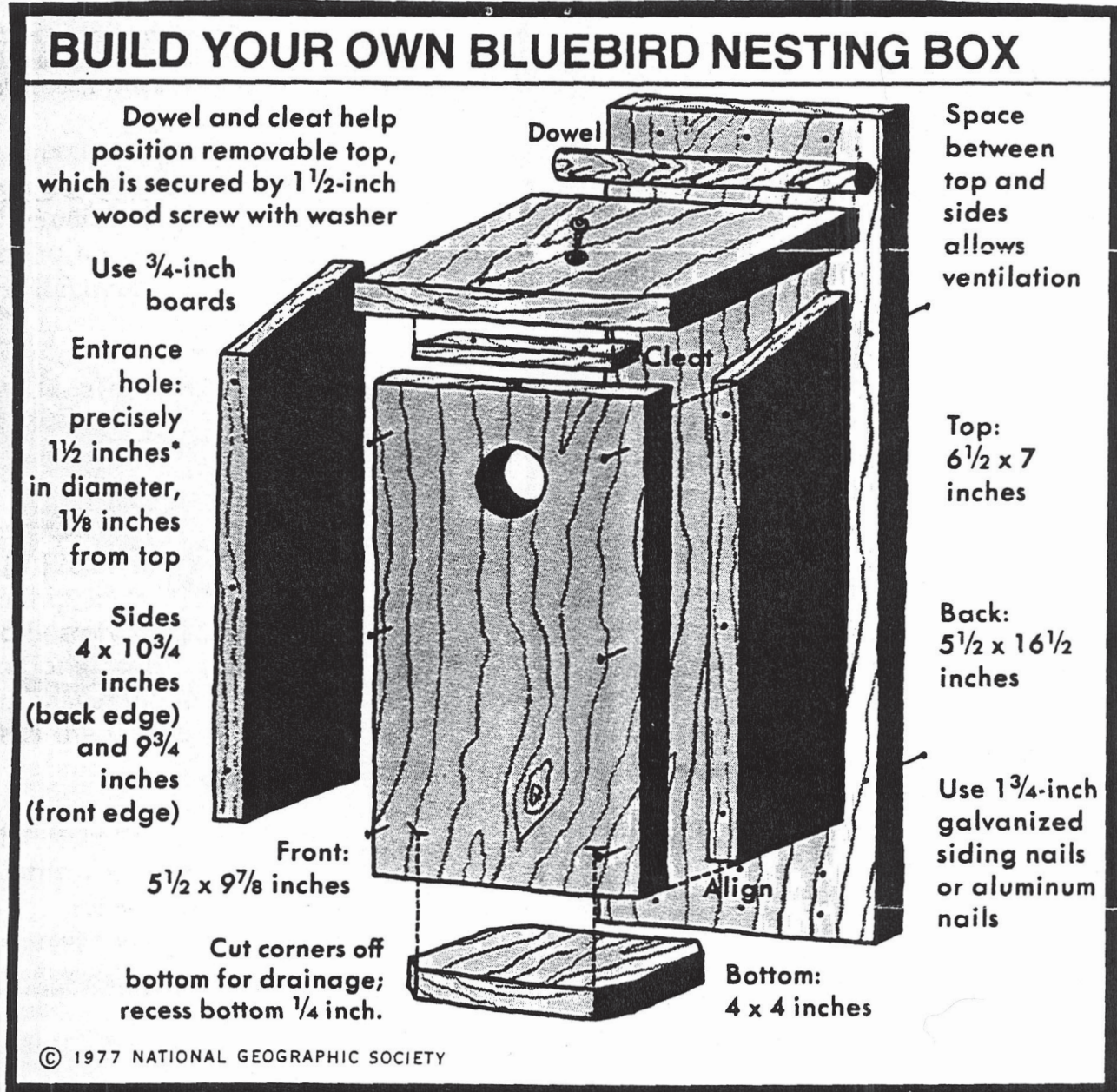
In California there are about 220 randomly selected survey routes. The same routes are run once each year in June.

Each route runs along roads for 24.5 miles. Samples are taken in the early morning at half-mile intervals resulting in 50 stops per survey route. At the half-mile stop, a highly trained birder observes and listens for exactly 3 minutes, recording every bird seen or heard within a quarter-mile radius.

Based on the statistical plan of the surveys, the BBS should provide accurate trend data if enough of the target species is encountered. For example, the Western Bluebird has been counted enough in California to be statistically significant, the Mountain Bluebird has not.



# The original top-opener design still works well



## ZELNY DETAILS HOW TO FIT THE TOP BOARD

The top-opening box depicted here has long been one of the favorites of many bluebird monitors. It was first described in Lawrence Zeleny's book *The Bluebird—How you can help its fight for survival*, published in 1976.

In his book Zeleny wrote:

"It is worth taking a little extra care in fitting the top to the top-opening nesting box shown... The proper positioning of the cleat on the underside of the top board is especially important. It should be taken care of before the top is screwed in place and before the bottom

board is attached to the box. The top is held in place with the left hand and the cleat is held against the insides of the front and top boards with the right hand (which should be passed through the open bottom to the box). The top board is then carefully pushed out with the right hand and the cleat grasped and held in position with the thumb of the left hand. The position of the cleat on the top board is then marked with a pencil. Before the cleat is nailed to the top board it should be moved  $\frac{1}{16}$ " toward the rear of the board to allow for expansion (which may occur in humid weather or when latex paint is applied). Note that the length of the cleat is  $\frac{1}{16}$ " less than the inside of the box.

This is to allow for expansion and to prevent binding."

## "PLANS FOR A TOP-OPENING NESTING BOX:

- Use  $1\frac{3}{4}$ " galvanized siding nails or aluminum nails,  $1\frac{1}{4}$ " for dowel.
- Drill  $\frac{3}{32}$ " holes in dowel for easy nailing.
- With top in place, hold cleat in exact position by reaching through bottom of box before bottom board is attached.
- Cut  $\frac{3}{8}$ " off each corner of bottom board as shown."

# The side-opening design—preferred by many

## STANDARD NESTBOX DESIGN FOR WESTERN BLUEBIRDS

based on an original NABS design developed by Larry Zeleny

### Bill of Materials:

- 1 pc 1"x 8"x 6' board (cedar or redwood preferred)
- 1½" deck screws or 6d galvanized nails
- 1 scrap of 5/8" or ¾" plywood 9"x 9" square (roof)

### Equipment Needed:

- drill with 1½" bit and 3/32" bit (for predrilling)
- table saw or rotary saw
- screwdriver and hammer

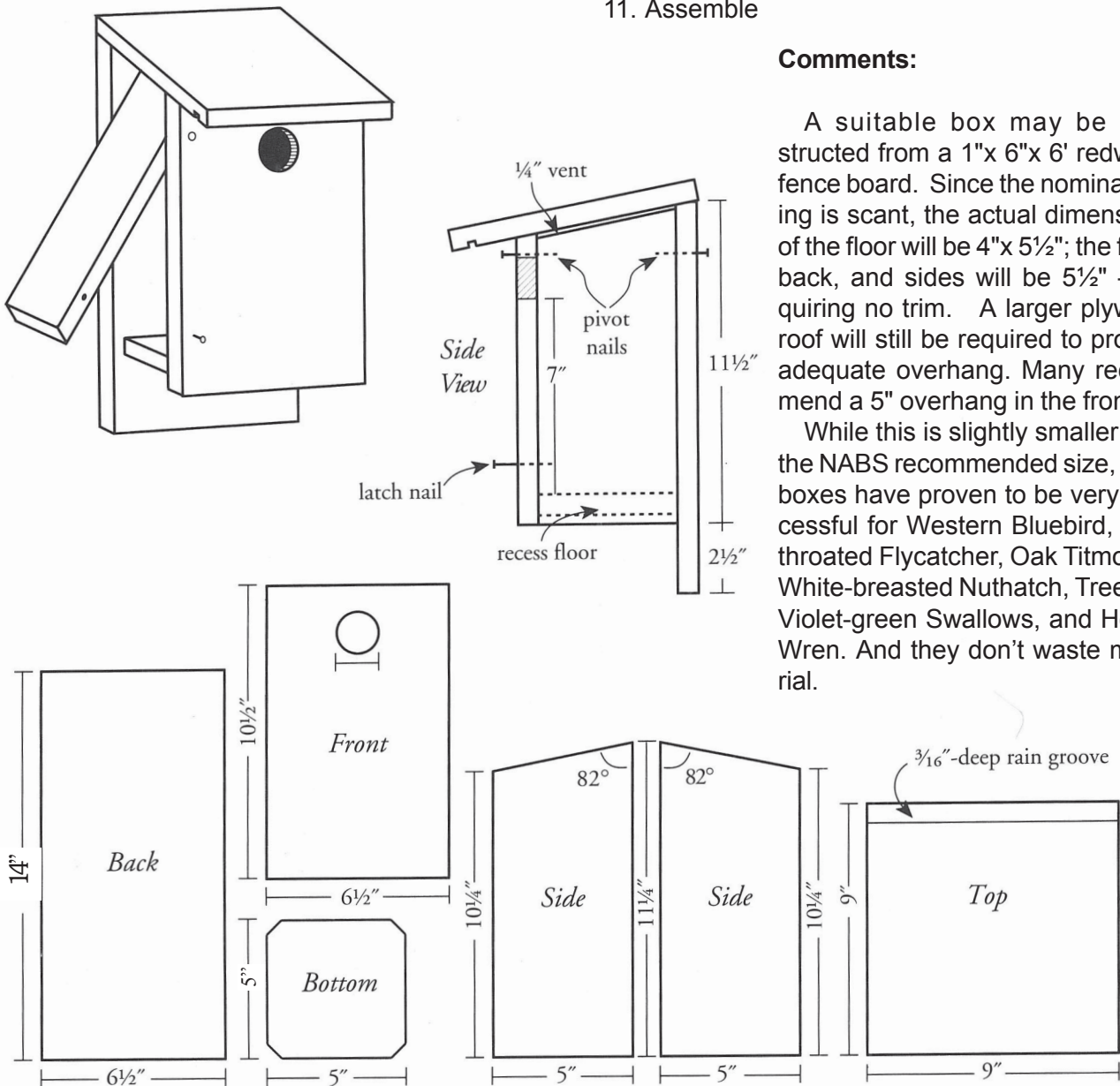
### Instructions:

1. Cut board at 24¾" for front and back
2. Rip width to 6½"
3. Cut remainder at 29" for 2 sides and bottom
4. Rip width to 5"
5. Cut front and back into lengths shown below
6. Cut bottom off at 5"; remove corners for drain
7. Cut 2 sides at 82° (or from 10¼" to 11¼")
8. Drill entry hole with 1½" bit
9. Predrill holes for screws or nails
10. Score front of roof for drip groove
11. Assemble

### Comments:

A suitable box may be constructed from a 1"x 6"x 6' redwood fence board. Since the nominal sizing is scant, the actual dimensions of the floor will be 4"x 5½"; the front, back, and sides will be 5½" —requiring no trim. A larger plywood roof will still be required to provide adequate overhang. Many recommend a 5" overhang in the front.

While this is slightly smaller than the NABS recommended size, such boxes have proven to be very successful for Western Bluebird, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Oak Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Tree and Violet-green Swallows, and House Wren. And they don't waste material.



# Up, up, and away—foiling predators by putting boxes out of reach

## CHANCE'S ELEVATOR POLE WITH STANDARD NESTBOX

modified by H. Graham

### Bill of Material:

- 1ea 5' section 1/2" EMT (conduit) pipe
- 1ea 4 1/2' section 3/4" EMT pipe
- 1ea 16d nail (locking device)
- 1ea standard side-opening nestbox (NABS after Zeleny) with back extension removed
- 2ea 2 1/2"x1/4" carriage bolts with nuts & washers
- 2ea 12" pieces of black tie wire (baling wire)

### Instructions:

1. Affix 1/2" pipe to back of nestbox with the 2 carriage bolts (predrill 1/4" holes in pipe and box)
2. With 1/2" pipe inserted about 2 3/4" into 3/4" pipe, drill holes through both pipes with 3/8" bit
3. Firmly attach 3/4" pipe to fencepost (wooden or studded-T) with wire
4. Orient holes in proper direction (away from prevailing storms)
5. Lock two pipes together with 16d nail
6. Mark pipes with marking pen to easily locate matching holes

### To Operate:

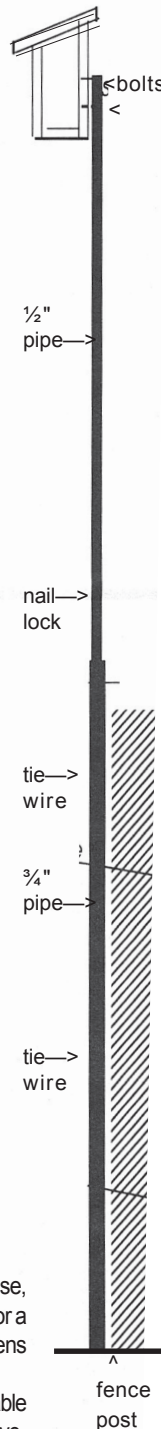
1. Remove locking nail
2. Slide upper pipe down into lower pipe
3. Open side-opening box, inspect nest, eggs, and chicks
4. Close box; record observations
5. Raise upper pipe and box until marks are visible
6. Lock pipes in place with nail

### Comments:

Few cavity-nesters are bothered by the raising and lowering. Bluebird, titmouse, and swallow hens take the ride up and down, often after being lifted off the eggs for a count or even after being banded and replaced on the clutch. Flycatchers and wrens usually leave the nest as it is approached in any case.

The advantage of this system is to gain the height above predators and still be able to easily monitor. Therefore the side-opening box is preferred because it will be at eye-level when lowered. A top-opening box is normally too high for this application.

Owing to the support of the lower pipe and the "splice" in the middle, the 1/2" pipe is quite sturdy. Several have survived 90mph winds in exposed places. While raccoons are known to climb 3/4" poles, the 1/2" pipe, when graphited, presents a formidable obstacle.



## out of reach

Since he first began in Orange Co in 1984, the single most important innovation **Dick Purvis** adopted was the hanging box.

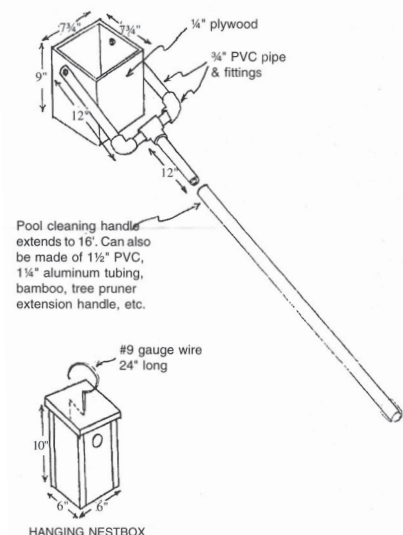
Rather than attach boxes to tree trunks where they not only attract predators but also vandals in the many parks and golf courses of his populous area, Dick hangs the boxes high up on a tree limb.

It takes the device shown below—a box lifter which is just a slightly larger box on swivels in a slingshot shaped holder. The nestbox stays upright as it is hoisted up into the tree.

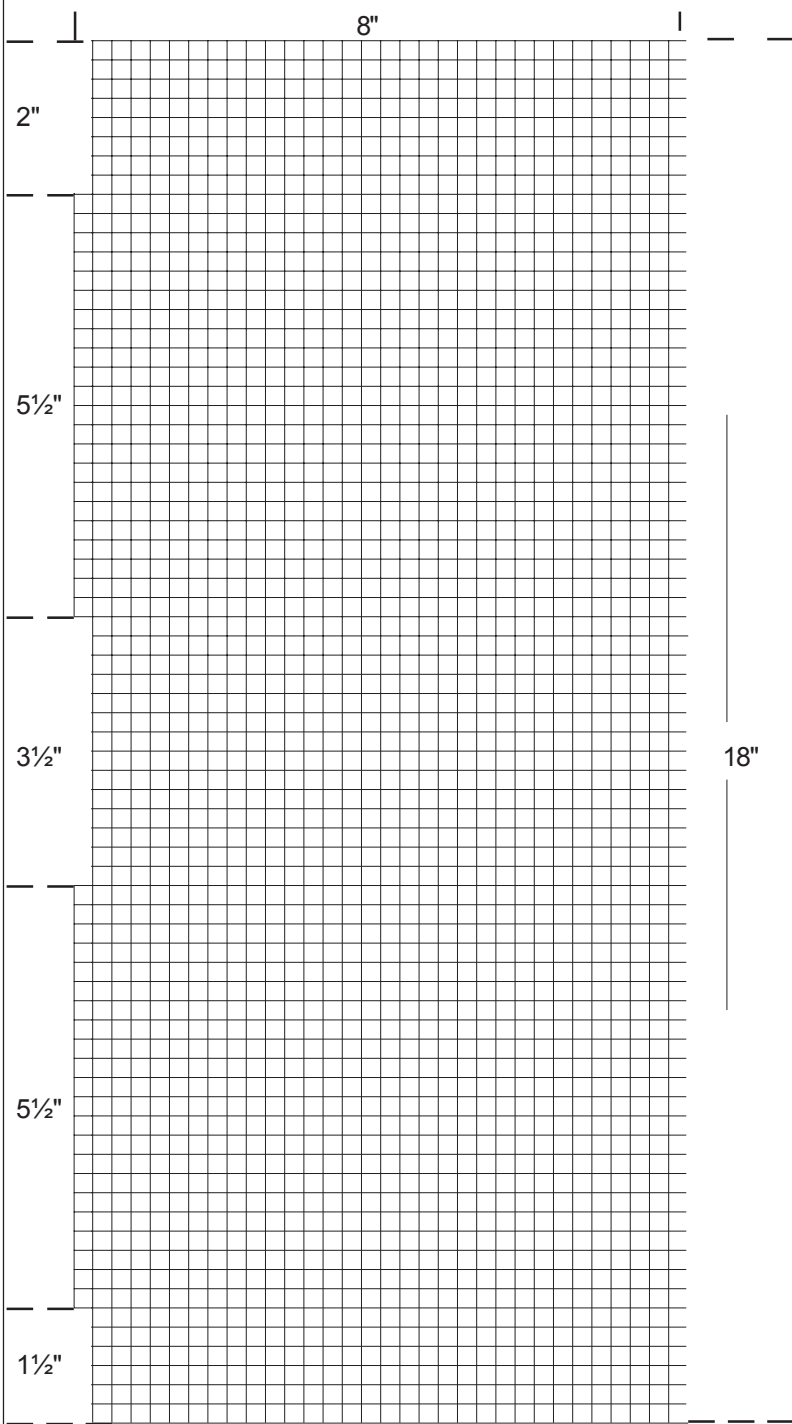
It's especially useful in public locations and the boxes experience few losses. The idea has spread to the also populous Bay Area where **Howard Rathlesberger** and his many trail coordinators use the same system in San Mateo Co.

Even in more rural areas they're found useful. After experiencing devastating losses to raccoons, **Hatch Graham** in Amador converted his 70-box trail to 50 elevator poles (see left) and 20 tree-hanging boxes. The only losses he's had have been from whip-snakes—not a problem in the cities.

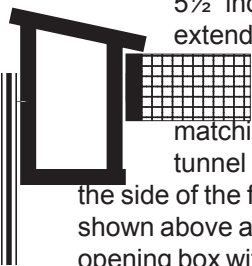
PURVIS'S HANGING NESTBOX & BOX LIFTER



The famous Noel Predator Guard



Constructed from 1/4" hardware cloth, the Noel Coon Guard has been used and improved over the years. Originally with a 5 1/2" inch projection, it is now recommended to extend a full 8" from the box to positively



exclude a raccoon from reaching into the hole. A 3 1/2" x 5 1/2" face board with matching entry hole is often used with the wire tunnel so the guard can be easily stapled to the side of the face board. The cutouts in the design shown above are for attaching to the sides of a front opening box with a 3 1/2" wide door.

More NOTES...

continued from page 9

than bluebirds but is happy with both. Now if they would try a little harder and go for second clutches, she would be elated. (Could it be their appraisal of the food supply prospects keeps them from doing it?).



**Jean Beaton**, Los Angeles, reports good results on one trail, but House Sparrow competition and 2 boxes stolen from 15' elevation on another reduced production. Seems it's always something.



**Dick & Lee McDowell** in Orange report reduced numbers of fledged birds, by approximately 30% on a golf course trail. New problems seem to turn up without warning: fire ants invaded several boxes, plus a "nasty little bug that's killing eucalyptus by the dozens." Several used nests contained berry pits, possibly indicating a shortage of insects for food.



Still an additional report of reduced production comes from **Woody & Jane Morf**, Orange. Increased numbers of unhatched/infertile/missing eggs caused materially reduced bottom line totals. An apparently inexperienced pair built 3 nests, one on top of another, and then abandoned the whole lot, accounting for 11 eggs lost.



**Richard Kempton**, Ventura, found unwelcome occupants of a box, with a mouse and 3 mummified bluebird chicks. The parents probably had to make a choice, and the kids lost.



A lot of Kern County residents at Pine Mt. Club have taken to bluebirding; with a good supply of (unmonitored and unreported) nestboxes in the area; perhaps that's why the 3 trails monitored by **Don Johnson** had a low occupancy rate. (Perhaps a few For Rent signs along the trails could attract more tenants —DY)



With reports received from 23 active trails in Santa Clara County, **David "Tex" Houston** has

continued on back page

# California Bluebird Recovery Program

## ANNUAL REPORT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Physical Location of Trail (or Name): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

No. Boxes: 1-Standard: \_\_\_\_\_ ; 2-Larger than Std: \_\_\_\_\_ ; 3-Smaller than Std: \_\_\_\_\_ ; Total: \_\_\_\_\_

No. Box pairs (2 boxes within 15 feet of each other): \_\_\_\_\_.

		1st Brood	2nd Brood	3d Brood	Total
Species:	No. Nests with 1 or more eggs:				
	No. Nests hatching 1 or more:				
Box Type No.:	No. Nests fledging 1 or more:				
	No. Eggs laid:				
	No. Chicks hatched:				
	No. Chicks fledged:				
Species:	No. Nests with 1 or more eggs:				
	No. Nests hatching 1 or more:				
Box Type No.:	No. Nests fledging 1 or more:				
	No. Eggs laid:				
	No. Chicks hatched:				
	No. Chicks fledged:				
Species:	No. Nests with 1 or more eggs:				
	No. Nests hatching 1 or more:				
Box Type No.:	No. Nests fledging 1 or more:				
	No. Eggs laid:				
	No. Chicks hatched:				
	No. Chicks fledged:				
Species:	No. Nests with 1 or more eggs:				
	No. Nests hatching 1 or more:				
Box Type No.:	No. Nests fledging 1 or more:				
	No. Eggs laid:				
	No. Chicks hatched:				
	No. Chicks fledged:				
Species:	No. Nests with 1 or more eggs:				
	No. Nests hatching 1 or more:				
Box Type No.:	No. Nests fledging 1 or more:				
	No. Eggs laid:				
	No. Chicks hatched:				
	No. Chicks fledged:				
Species:	No. Nests with 1 or more eggs:				
	No. Nests hatching 1 or more:				
Box Type No.:	No. Nests fledging 1 or more:				
	No. Eggs laid:				
	No. Chicks hatched:				
	No. Chicks fledged:				
Species:	No. Nests with 1 or more eggs:				
	No. Nests hatching 1 or more:				
Box Type No.:	No. Nests fledging 1 or more:				
	No. Eggs laid:				
	No. Chicks hatched:				
	No. Chicks fledged:				
Species:	No. Nests with 1 or more eggs:				
	No. Nests hatching 1 or more:				
Box Type No.:	No. Nests fledging 1 or more:				
	No. Eggs laid:				
	No. Chicks hatched:				
	No. Chicks fledged:				
Species:	No. Nests with 1 or more eggs:				
	No. Nests hatching 1 or more:				
Box Type No.:	No. Nests fledging 1 or more:				
	No. Eggs laid:				
	No. Chicks hatched:				
	No. Chicks fledged:				
Species:	No. Nests with 1 or more eggs:				
	No. Nests hatching 1 or more:				
Box Type No.:	No. Nests fledging 1 or more:				
	No. Eggs laid:				
	No. Chicks hatched:				
	No. Chicks fledged:				



# Call your coordinator if you need help—

Are you having problems identifying your birds? Are you having problems with wasps, blowflies, mites? Have your nestlings been abandoned? Are your nestboxes being invaded by House Sparrows? Your County Coordinators can give you advice and assistance, or have resources they can call on to help. Keep in touch.

COUNTY	COORDINATOR	STREET	CITY/STATE/ZIP	PHONE VOX	PHONE FAX	EMAIL
<b>Alameda</b>	Ann Kositsky	1090 Miller Ave	Berkeley, CA 94708	(510) 527-5091		aipa@pacbell.net
	Raymond A. Fontaine	P.O. Box 92	Livermore, CA 94551	(510) 447-0213		
<b>Amador</b>	Penny Brown	20624 Parkside Dr	Pine Grove, CA 95665	(209) 296-3849		penny@cdepot.net
<b>Butte</b>	Emily Harbison	3536 Butte Campus Dr	Oroville, CA 95965	(530) 895-2449		deb@cin.butte.cc.ca
<b>Calaveras</b>	La Verne Hagel	466 Thompson Lane	Copperopolis, CA 95228	(209) 785-2363		
<b>Contra Costa</b>	Shirley&Warren Engstrom	232 Tharp Drive	Moraga, CA 94556	(925) 376-4695		wlese@juno.com
	Oscar Enstrom	1932 Golden Rain Rd	Walnut Creek, CA 94595	(925) 952-9261		bigol@lanset.com
<b>El Dorado &amp; Amador</b> Georgetown Divide	Hatch Graham	P.O. Box 39	Somerset, CA 95684	(530) 621-1833	(530) 621-3939	birdsfly@innercite.com
	Viola Sampert	5655 Hollow Ln	Greenwood, CA 95635	(530) 333-0318		
<b>Lake</b>	Jeannette Knight	PO Box 152	Cobb, CA 95426-0152	(707) 928-5250		
<b>Lassen</b>	Edward Bertotti	470 413 Wingfield	Susanville, CA 96130	(530) 257-3774		
	Mike Magnuson	PO Box 767	Chester, CA 96020	(530) 258-2141		
<b>Los Angeles</b>	Tom Rickman	PO Box 2017	Susanville, CA 96130	(530) 257-2151		
	Doug Martin	13066 Sherley Street	Sylmar, CA 91342	(818) 367-8967		
<b>Madera</b>	William Rihn	PO Box 1648	Coarsegold, CA 93614	(209) 683-3052		
<b>Marin</b>	Ruth Beckner	15 Portola Avenue	San Rafael, CA 94903	(415) 479-9542		
	Meryl Sundove	37 Greenwood Bch Rd	Tiburon, CA 94920	(415) 388-2524	(415) 388-0717	
<b>Mariposa</b>	Lawrence Punte	9443 Banderilla Dr	LaGrange, CA 95329	(209) 852-2559		
<b>Modoc</b>	Charles Welch	PO Box 825	Alturas, CA 96101	(530) 233-4534		
<b>Napa &amp; Sonoma</b>	David Graves	1500 Los Carneros Ave	Napa, CA 94559	(707) 257-0843		
<b>Nevada</b>	Walt Carnahan	12821 Bradford Dr	Grass Valley, CA 95945	(530) 273-4599		walt@oro.net
<b>Orange</b>	Dick Purvis	936 S Siet Place	Anaheim, CA 92806	(714) 776-8878		Dickersly@aol.com
<b>Placer</b>	Lesia Chan	9720 Oak Leaf Way	Granite Bay, CA 95746	(916) 791-4529		habitat@jps.net
<b>Plumas</b>	Patricia Johnson	PO Box 767	Chester, CA 96020	(530) 258-2141		
<b>Riverside</b>	Melissa Browning	10154 Beaumont Ave	Cherry Valley, CA 92223	(909)845-9266		
<b>San Bernardino</b>	Glen Chappell	1923 Abbie Way	Upland, CA 91784	(909) 981-1996		Chappell@CHS.Chaffey,K12.CA.US
<b>San Diego</b>	Rosemary Fey	PO Box 1245	Borrego Spgs,CA 92004	(619) 767-5810		
<b>San Joaquin</b>	Thomas Hoffman	10122 E Woodbridge Rd	Acampo, CA 95220	(209) 369-8578		thoffman@lodinet.com
<b>San Luis Obispo</b>	Judith Burkhardt	8560 El Corte	Atascadero, CA 93422	(805) 466-3272		burkhardtspaul@thegrid.net.3.
<b>San Mateo</b>	Howard Rathlesberger	230 Ridgeway	Woodside, CA 94062	(650) 367-1296	(650) 369-4788	HJRath@aol.com
<b>Santa Barbara</b>	Richard Willey	4172 Vanguard Dr	Lompoc CA 93436	(805)733-5383		willey@utech.net
<b>Santa Clara</b>	Garth Harwood	5901 Pescadero Crk Rd	Pescadero CA 94060	(650) 879-0724		GarthHar@aol.com
<b>Santa Cruz</b>	Nanda Currant	530 Amigo Road	Soquel, CA 95073	(408) 462-3703		hearth@cruzio.com
<b>Sonoma</b>	Mike Crumly	23555 Hwy 21	Sonoma, CA 95475	(707) 996-7256		
<b>Sutter</b>	Kevin A. Putman	2884 Coy Dr	Yuba City, CA 95993	(530) 755-1480		dputman@syix.com
<b>Tehama</b>	Pete Flower	331 Oak Street	Red Bluff, CA 96080	(530) 527-0392		
<b>Tulare</b>	Peter C. Morrison, MD.	325 So. Willis	Visalia, CA 93291	(209) 733-1154		
<b>Ventura</b>	Jan Wasserman	1158 Beechwood St	Camarillo, CA 93010	(805) 987-3928		bandlady@west.net
<b>Yuba</b>	Kevin A. Putman	2884 Coy Dr	Yuba City, CA 95993	(530) 755-1480		dputman@syix.com
<b>All Other Counties</b>	Don Yoder	2021 Ptarmigan #1	Walnut Creek, CA 94595	(925) 937-5974	(925) 935-4480	cbrp@value.net



## Find out more about your birds—have them banded

When you have determined your estimated hatching date, call a bander if one is near. Schedule permitting, the bander may be able to band the adult incubating the eggs and/or the nestlings a week or so after they pip from the eggs. Banding helps us learn about the site fidelity of the adults, the dispersal of the chicks, longevity, and other elements of population dynamics.

Amador & southern El Dorado	Hatch Graham	(530) 621-1833	birdsfly@innercite.com
El Dorado	Susan Yasuda	(530) 644-2324	syasuda@fs.fed.us
Northern El Dorado	Dave Delongchamp	(530) 333-2304	selkaijen@jps.net
Los Angeles	Walter Sakai	(310) 434-4702	sakai_walter@smc.edu
Mendocino & Lake	Janet King	(707) 462-3277	kingfarm@sonic.net
Orange	Christine Mukai		cmukai@chambersgroupinc.com
Placer & northern Sacramento	Dee Warenycia	(916) 786-5056	warbler5@aol.com
San Francisco Peninsula	Howard Rathlesberger	(650) 367-1296	HJRath@aol.com
Solano & Yolo	Melanie Truan	(530) 750-3825	mltruan@ucdavis.edu
Sutter & Yuba	Kevin Putman	(530) 755-1480	dputman@syix.com
Ventura	Jan Wasserman	(805) 987-3928	bandlady@west.net

**\*ALPHA CODES FOR COMMON CAVITY-NESTERS**

ATFL=Ash-throated Flycatcher  
 BNOW=Barn Owl  
 CBCH=Chesnut-backed Chickadee  
 HOSP=House Sparrow  
 EUST=European Starling  
 MOBL=Mountain Bluebird  
 MOCH=Mountain Chickadee  
 TRES=Tree Swallow  
 VGSW=Violet-green Swallow  
 WEBL=Western Bluebird  
 WBNU=White-breasted Nuthatch  
 WODU=Wood Duck

Anyone desiring to band who can commit 2 or 3 days per week is encouraged to contact Hatch Graham.

# More NOTES FROM THE FIELD

—continued from page 12

compiled totals of 862 songbird fledglings and 5 raptors; 8 trails are presently unreported and are being vigorously pursued. Tex and CBRP are anxious to obtain those figures as well as any others from unreported landlords. All will help the totals when finally tabulated.



With 22 boxes, **Gordon & Peggy Young**, San Luis Obispo, had great prospects in one of their most prolific nestboxes—7 eggs in 2 tries each—all hatched and ready to fledge—but catastrophe struck in the form of a (probable) masked bandit who took mother bird and all of the fledglings. It was a first year of exposure to both Oak Titmice and Bewick’s Wrens, both of which are declining species and need all the help we can give them.



**Irv Tiessen**, a bird rancher in Alameda County, may have produced a different variety of bird in the latest nesting season. At least he is buying a new hat to fit—and crowing about the 76.7% increase over last year in numbers of bluebirds fledged. If that’s not inspiring enough, he has been granted access to another “800+ acres of prime habitat...plus an ATV to monitor with” when he learns to drive it. *(If we could get him moved to a National Forest he could stretch his wings and swell the population further. -pd)*

**YOUR ANNUAL REPORTS WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR ONLY TEN DAYS MORE. THE REPORT FORM IS ON PAGES 13-14. HURRY!**

# The Poet’s Corner

## THE BIRD-BANDER

must answer for the fragile legs on which he plies his silver bracelets, license plates to tag his charges down through time, a signature, a lifeline. Next year, or the next, if again he holds these same wings folded in his palm, he’ll feel the flutter like a pulse and read the band, and say “this bird has flown a dozen miles from that low ridge across this canyon to be caught this morning, a moment in my hand.” And then he releases it again to sky, to fly where even he can’t catch it.

*Taylor Graham  
first published in Cranial Tempest  
Vol. 2 No. 5 (2001)*

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**BLUEBIRDS FLY!**  
California Bluebird Recovery Programs  
Newsletter  
Vol 7, Nos. 2&3, Summer-Fall 2001

Please send correspondence to address on page 2

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