

WHY BLUEBIRDS BECAME A CONCERN

The story of the nest box project starts with the decline of the Eastern Bluebird due to the introduction on the East Coast of House Sparrows (formerly called English Sparrows) in 1851, and European Starlings in the 1890s. These non-native birds spread very quickly across the United States and Canada and became the worst avian enemies of the Eastern, Mountain and Western bluebirds because they competed aggressively for nesting cavities in trees, most commonly in those that are dead or dying. The challenges to bluebirds intensified by the removal of dead trees in the ever-expanding urban and suburban landscape. In response, concerned bird enthusiasts took advantage of the increasing availability of lawns and started providing nest boxes to boost bluebird populations.

In 1978, the North American Bluebird Society (NABS) was founded in Maryland under the leadership of Dr. Lawrence Zeleny and affiliates and various bluebird clubs sprung up throughout the United States. At last count, this effort has spread to 29 states and 4 Canadian provinces. The original NABS affiliate in California is the California Bluebird Recovery Program (CBRP) based in Cupertino.

Thanks to this national nest box project, bluebird populations are now strong across their natural ranges and are currently listed as a Bird of Least Concern. Continued human support is necessary to sustain them.

THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BLUEBIRD CLUB

Our organization was formed in early 2007 by a small, dedicated group of volunteers whose mission is to help bluebirds survive in Orange County. We are a member of NABS, are a 501 (C) 3 non-profit with no paid staff or overhead costs. We depend entirely on donations. Membership has grown dramatically in terms of the number of active monitors, nest boxes installed, and the number of new generations produced each year.

Our actions now include advocacy for the safe retention of dead trees. This is a means of working toward a long-term, more sustainable solution to the loss of natural nesting habitat for all cavity nesting birds as well as reducing the number of birds dependent on artificial cavities. This branch of our mission is called The Cavity Conservation Initiative. More information about this effort can be obtained at: CavityConservation.com

The SCBC meets the first Saturday of every month (except for an occasional cancellation) in the Community Room at the Irvine Ranch Water District offices at 15600 Sand Canyon Avenue in Irvine. Monitors meet monthly to share their experiences, learn from each other and benefit from educational programs provided by members and guest speakers.

More information and resources can be found at: socalbluebirds.org

WHY WE REPORT YEARLY TOTALS

Monitoring gives the statistics we need to see how the bluebird population is faring. Using a "Nest box Record" sheet each week, we count the nests, eggs, and chicks and estimate how many chicks fledged. After the last fledgling has left and the nest box is clean, we send results, both successful and unsuccessful, to www.cbrp.org via an on-line program or report them to www.socalbluebirds.org or another monitor.

Whether you have a single box in your backyard or monitor a trail of boxes, we encourage this very important step in helping bluebirds.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

1. A booklet on how to monitor nest boxes can be found at the California Bluebird Recovery Program site: www.cbrp.org/documents/monitor_guide.pdf
2. An excellent book covering everything about bluebird monitoring is The Bluebird Monitor's Guide by Berger, Kridler and Griggs. It has pictures of chicks day by day to age 14 days which is very helpful. It also shows nests of other cavity nesting birds for use in identifying mystery nests. This book is out of print but a used copy can be found on Amazon.
3. A beautiful book for children (and adults), The New 2009 Children's Bluebird Activity Book, is available from <http://mountainbluebirdtrails.com/>
4. Websites: www.socalbluebirds.com <http://cbrp.org/> <http://sialis.org>
5. Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Western North America

CONTACT US

If you are in the vicinity of southern California the following monitors welcome you to call with questions:

SOUTH ORANGE COUNTY:	Jim 949-527-1994	Sully 949-461-0938	Gillian 949-412-0588
NORTH ORANGE COUNTY:	Susan 714-525-2428	Jo-Ann 714-538-4224	Bob 714-528-5082
CENTRAL ORANGE COUNTY AND LA COUNTY:		Dick 714 -776 -8878	
RIVERSIDE COUNTY:	Erin 951-683-7691		

Please save this information for reference and pass it along to the next owner of this nest box.