

PV/SB Audubon Bluebird Nest Box Project Job Description

(updated 10/2012)

Summary

The following provides guidelines and information for the Project Coordinator and Volunteers who maintain the [12-Box Bluebird Trail](#) at Harbor Park. Both Western Bluebirds and Tree Swallows use the nest boxes. All boxes are now [paired](#) - in six locations within the W/SW area of the park. Pairing prevents the boxes from being taken over by Tree Swallows; i.e., a Tree Swallow will defend the adjacent nest box from other Tree Swallows but they really don't mind Bluebirds as neighbors. Therefore pairing allows "Equal Opportunity" for both species.

Training and Certification

Nest box volunteer monitors should review and pass the NestWatch Program's short [Nest Monitoring Certification Quiz](#). (You must create an account and sign in.)

Nest Box Monitoring

- ⑤ Adhere to the [Nest Monitor's Code of Conduct](#) as stipulated by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's [NestWatch Program](#)
- ⑤ Start monitoring the nest boxes at the beginning of March each year and continue through July. Note that the breeding season may be shorter or longer depending on the availability of food, etc.
- ⑤ Monitor on a weekly basis.
- ⑤ Log your findings as you visit each nest box, using [this form](#).
- ⑤ Send your findings to the PV/SB Audubon Webmaster for updating the [Bluebird Nest Box Project Website](#) and NestWatch.
- ⑤ Use the Chapter's [Pole and Basket Lifter](#) to un-hang and re-hang the nest boxes in the trees. *(Note that raising and lowering the pole and basket containing a nest box requires a moderate amount of upper body strength.)*
 - Make sure the [wire hooks](#) are [bent](#) at an adequate angle to avoid the nest box falling from the tree branch. Check the bend each time you monitor the nest boxes.
 - The height of the nest box should be at least 15' above the ground.
 - Ideally the entry holes should face S/SE.
 - We have recently modified the basket assembly by inserting a piece of cardboard [vertically inside the basket](#) to prevent a bird from getting caught between the box and the wire mesh of the basket while trying to exit the box during the lowering or raising process.
- ⑤ Monitoring tools include gloves, a putty knife, and a container of food-quality diatomaceous earth for mite control (a plastic condiment bottle with a nozzle tip works well). See the [first paragraph](#) in the Links and Resources area of the [Sialis Website](#) for more information on mite control.
- ⑤ To prevent [premature fledging](#), do not open the nest box past the 12th -13th day of hatching. You may listen for sounds (peeping) of the young in the box, and look for the presence of adults near the nest box and log that information.

Public Relations

We've created the following aids for furthering Public Relations at Harbor Park by providing information about this Project, and hand them out to Park visitors who express interest in what we're doing and/or who seem receptive to receiving information:

- ⑤ A Bluebird Nest Box Project Business Card, including a Spanish translation:
[Front Back](#)
- ⑤ An informative [flyer](#) about the Project.
- ⑤ A [flyer](#) describing the dangers of Easter Grass to nesting birds.

Nest Box Maintenance

- ⑤ If you have problems with a nest or if pests (ants, mites, wasps, etc.) are discovered in a nest box, take the appropriate action per the instructions in the [Problems and Solutions](#) section of the [Sialis Website](#).
- ⑤ Remove any and all [Easter Grass](#) you may find woven into a nest and dispose of it in a covered trash container.
- ⑤ Once the young have fledged, clean out the nest box for the next tenants by removing the flattened nest and discarding it in a trash can or some distance away from tree with the nest box.

Equipment and Supplies

- ⑤ The Chapter has three sets of Poles and Basket Lifters in the custody of the following people:
 - ⑤ Dan Lee and Nancy Feagans (Harbor Park Primary Monitors)
 - ⑤ Liz Kennedy (Back-up)
 - ⑤ Martin Byhower (Chadwick School Bluebird trail)
- ⑤ Laminated labels with the following wording are attached to the bottoms of each of the 12 Harbor Park Nest Boxes:

This nestbox is part of the Harbor Park Bluebird Recovery Project.

If found, please contact the PV/SB Audubon Society:

310-974-2666 or email nancy@pvsb-audubon.org

Thank you for your help in supporting this project!

- ⑤ If additional or replacement equipment is needed, it may be purchased for a nominal fee from Dick Purvis, Regional Coordinator for the California Bluebird Recovery Program. Dick's contact info is: Dickersly@aol.com or 714-776-8878. The Chapter will reimburse you for these expenses.
- ⑤ If you need additional or replacement nest boxes, Dick is the source for these as well.

Additional Resources for Information and Help

- ⑤ [Nest Monitoring How-Tos](#)
- ⑤ [Sialis Website](#)
- ⑤ [The Bluebird Monitor's Guide](#)
- ⑤ [Stokes Bluebird Book](#)

Technical Note: All communication associated with this Project is in electronic format (i.e., .rtf, .doc or .pdf file) for ease of distribution via email and placement on the Chapter's website.