

## Bluebird Project 2019

### East Cascades Audubon Society

The Bluebird Project is alive and well. We currently have two trails, with two others (Sunriver and La Pine) not currently staffed, although boxes are in place. Carolyn Rochelle currently handles one of the trails about 11 miles south of Sister and my wife and I handle the other trail about 10 miles south of Sisters. Carolyn will be transitioning out of her route in 2020.

2019 was a difficult year for bluebirds. I will attach Carolyn's report to this one. Nesting started late following a late, cold spring. Birds started nesting and were then subjected to a week of abnormally cold weather, from which, I feel, they never really recovered. Perhaps the cold weather affected the insect populations? In 2018, I banded Mountain and Western Bluebirds from 32 boxes (mine and Carolyn's); in 2019 only 16 boxes. In 2018, I banded 116; in 2019, only 54. I had only two second clutches in 2019. One clutch of five WEBLs failed, with all birds dead. The other attempt, also WEBLs, fledged five young. The average in past years has been four to six second clutches. Nest attempts were made in only nine of 14 boxes this year. Normally, between 12 and 14 boxes are used by bluebirds. Hopefully, this is a one-year anomaly, and 2020 will be back to normal.

- Ken Hashagen

2019 Bluebird boxes report

Carolyn Rochelle and Bob Burke

Fourteen boxes are located 11 miles SW of Sisters. Box 15 and 16 are located at our home in Sage Meadow, Sisters.

We started checking boxes the 5<sup>th</sup> of April. A cold, wet spring saw few birds and nest building did not occur for another 4 weeks.

8 boxes were not used. There were no second clutches.

Totals: eggs 44, nestlings 25, fledglings 22. Eighteen birds were banded.

MOBL used 3 boxes with 7 fledglings

WEBL used 5 boxes with 15 fledglings

A grim year for the Bluebirds. Cold weather and lack of food brought few Bluebirds to the trail. Four unused boxes gave wrens, nuthatches, and swallows a place to raise young. There was the usual predation of eggs and death in the nest was probably due to starvation. A raccoon took eggs and killed an adult Bluebird at a box located in Sage Meadow.

Bob and I have been working with two people who are interested in monitoring boxes. Curtis Wilson and Gordon Wetzel joined us during the season. Next year we hope to rotate the visits to the trail.