

NABS Awards 2012

Once again, NABS is pleased to honor the dedicated work of bluebird and native cavity-nesting bird conservationists. Each year the Awards Committee welcomes you to submit nominations for those who have worked tirelessly through the years for our cause. The following individuals received national recognition at the 35th Annual NABS Conference hosted by the Southern California Bluebird Club in Newport Beach, California, in October.



Sherry Linn and Dick Purvis

Dick Purvis – Lifetime Achievement Award for his Outstanding Contribution in all facets of Bluebird Conservation

Dick Purvis began installing bluebird boxes in Orange County, CA in 1984 when it was estimated there were only eight pairs of Western Bluebirds in the county. He worked hard to entice the bluebirds to come down from the distant hill areas and back into the urban landscape. While doing so, he encouraged and educated untold numbers of future bluebird enthusiasts. He invented a lifter basket, the “Purvis Lifter,” to install hanging boxes in trees in cemeteries, golf courses, and parks.

Dick has made presentations to thousands of residents from school kids to seniors in nursing homes and continues to mentor young folks in hands-on proper bluebird trail management. One of the conference highlights was the introduction of Alex Krebs by Dick. Alex is an Eagle Scout and Hornaday Awardee (the Scouting equivalent to an Olympic Gold Medal). Under Dick’s tutelage Alex quickly learned about the life cycle of bluebirds,

their plight due to habitat loss, and how they could be encouraged to nest in artificial cavities. He went on to conduct his own studies and worked to create habitat and safe nesting sites within the county. He engaged his fellow scouts and it was a pleasure to listen to this young man’s ardent desire to do more. Alex’s presentation was a wonderful way to segue into the surprise presentation of the NABS Lifetime Achievement Award to Dick Purvis.

Fledging tens of thousands of Western Bluebirds since those early years, Dick currently monitors more than 400 bluebird nestboxes. In 2011 he fledged 2,317 Western Bluebirds from 430 nestboxes on 10 trails over a 2-county area. His “production” of Western Bluebirds is unsurpassed by any other trail monitor in the entire state of California.

Dick has been active in both the California Bluebird Recovery Program and NABS for decades. He was a founding member of the Southern California Bluebird Club in 2006 (SCBC now has a contact list of over 350 bluebird enthusiasts) and is one of three members who were guests on a California television show *California’s Gold* that aired on PBS.

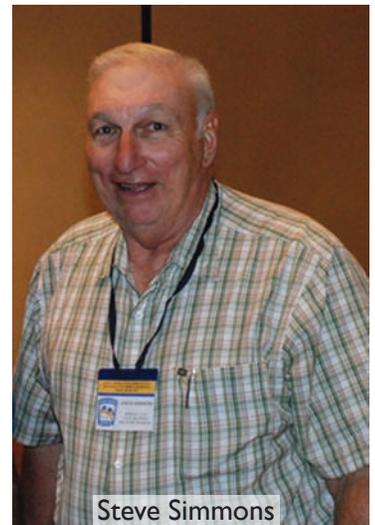
Thank you Dick for being such a positive influence in our lives as we continue to learn more each year about our beautiful bluebirds!

Steve Simmons – Lifetime Achievement Award for his Outstanding Contribution to Native Cavity Nesting Bird Conservation

The accomplishments that brought Steve to where he is today began over 40 years ago while he was a high school woodshop teacher in Merced, California. To many he has been called

a hero of conservation. His tireless, self-funded efforts have added well over 84,000 birds to our skies.

His interest was first awakened by Wood Ducks and their breathtaking beauty and an awareness that they



Steve Simmons

were in dire need of nestboxes. He started in 1974 building and putting up 60 Wood Duck nestboxes. Since that time he expanded into many different species of cavity nesters including bluebirds. It has been said that he has broken all known North American records for nestbox data collection. At one time he monitored as many as 1100 nestboxes. The California 2011 statistics show Steve monitoring 723 nestboxes and fledging 3,629 cavity-nesting bird species of which 230 were Western Bluebirds. In recent years Steve has become intrigued with Burrowing Owls and assists in creating artificial burrows to ensure these small ground cavity nesting birds will continue to have safe nesting habitat. He is passionate about his unpaid volunteer work.

Steve was interested in the scientific side of his monitoring activities so he started banding birds. He has now banded over 35,000 birds which include waterfowl, raptors, and passerines.

In addition to providing nestboxes, Steve often speaks to nature groups and young people about his activities. He has brought scores of people into an interest in nature. How many new conservationists has he introduced into a lifelong love of nature?



Dave Cook (left) and Lee Pauser

Lee Pauser – Award for Outstanding Contribution to Bluebird Conservation

As a retired systems engineer/programmer for IBM's Research Lab, Lee was introduced to bluebirds and nestbox monitoring in Santa Clara County in 2002. Shortly after his first outing he decided he'd like to pursue this new volunteer activity but probably never envisioned that it would be the start of a new career,

but this is exactly what occurred.

Starting with a single trail, Lee's interest has grown into monitoring 344 nestboxes that are occupied by 13 different species and include nestboxes for Western Screech-Owl and Barn Owl. His nestboxes have now fledged 1000+ bluebirds and nearly 2500 other cavity-nesting bird species. In 2001, Lee was among the top ten producers of nestbox fledglings in California.

Santa Clara County has morphed from an agricultural area of world importance into Silicon Valley, a highly urbanized area where land is at a premium of sometimes millions of dollars an acre for development. As a result, habitat for resident bird species has taken a real hit. The Western Bluebird, commonly known as the Orchard Bird, had not nested in Central San Jose in recent memory. Important raptors such as the Barn Owl, American Kestrel, and Western Burrowing Owl were becoming increasingly rare. Borrowing from the playbook of Dick Purvis and his Orange County group, the Cavity Nesters Group was formed to coax the Western Bluebirds down from the foothills where they had retreated due to development by gradually moving the location of new nestboxes down into the valley floor. Lee Pauser has been a very important part of the WEBL "coaxing" team. By setting up extensive box trails in the southern part of Santa Clara County he pushed the population down slope and North toward San Jose. About three years ago, Lee and his wife Janna noticed a Western Bluebird in a downtown San Jose Park and immediately set up boxes there. The result was the Western Bluebird nesting in downtown San Jose for the first time in recent memory. The effort took 13 years to accomplish.

Dave Cook (NABS Board member and San Jose resident) stated that "their Cavity Nesters Group is generally divided into monitors and box builders, but Lee decided to build his own nestboxes. As a carpenter, I was really pleased and surprised at the quality and innovation of Lee's boxes. Our box builders manage a group of volunteers with little or no carpentry experience who mass produce the nestboxes for our trails and other uses. Lee used his talents to help set up box production at a whole new level of consistent quality. Lee also manufactures high quality owl, kestrel, and Wood Duck boxes. He has also designed video cameras to be used in these boxes for the purpose of remote monitoring. IBM and the City of San Jose use his boxes and cameras for monitoring at sites in Santa Clara County."

Lee has been active in partnering with local companies and organizations so that he could obtain permission and cooperation for his extensive nestbox monitoring projects. These include the City of San Jose and Santa Clara Parks Departments, Cinnabar Hills Golf Club, and the IBM Research Facility. Lee has shared his nestbox knowledge to train volunteers. He has also partnered with other knowledgeable monitors statewide to widen his own base of information and share his expertise.

Lee's background in computer engineering has been put to good use in the collection and interpretation of nestbox data. For example, he has been able to use temperature, weather, and rainfall data to chart nestbox failures/successes. This type of information has been very helpful for understanding nesting trends.

Nomination information for the various categories is available on the NABS website.

Nominations are now being accepted for next year and must be submitted by June 30th, 2013.

President's Awards were given to two very deserving men who have served on the NABS Board of Directors for many years and who have always actively participated in more than one facet of the organization at all times.

Dan Sparks was acknowledged for his years of exceptional dedicated service to NABS as Director, StoreFront Manager, and vital "Frontline Office" voice of NABS. (Greg Beavers accepted in Dan's absence.)

Dan has continuously served on our Board since 2005 and was again re-elected for another one-year term at the recent election. When we underwent some major changes in 2006, Dan stepped in and has taken on a very heavy load for NABS ever since. Dan handles our StoreFront filling orders that come in by mail, phone, or PayPal. He makes himself available by phone for three hours a day (and often more) from Monday through Friday and handles all the queries that come in from our "info@" mail address off the website. He is our interface for Membership and Facebook, and serves on the Finance, Speaker's Bureau, and Website Committees. I do not know of any person who is more dedicated to bluebirds and NABS than Dan Sparks. His hard work continues to be essential to NABS's success and it is with gratitude

we thank him for his staunch support of all things bluebird.



Sherry Linn and Greg Beavers

Greg Beavers was acknowledged for his years of dedicated service to NABS on the Board of Directors and his exceptional performance as Treasurer and head of Finance.

Greg left the Board this fall after serving seven years. Although his work meant travelling and being away a fair amount, Greg always kept records up-to-date and found time to not only Chair the Finance Committee, but also to participate in the monthly Board conference calls and on the Grants and Awards Committees.

Not having been trained as an accountant nor working in that field, Greg took on the Treasurer position as a "trial" in 2006 to see if he liked it and could handle the job. He has served NABS well over those years and leaves us with a very good fiscal standing. Greg has seen us through an audit, kept us current in financial reporting with both federal and state (Indiana) revenue offices, and annually ensured our filing was done with the State of Maryland where we are incorporated. His prudent oversight of our books and "watching the pennies" has helped us remain strong as we continue to endure tough economic times in both Canada and the US.

Greg continues to work within the Finance Committee to ensure a smooth transition and will remain an active member for Grants and Awards. Please join me in wishing Greg all the best as he leaves to follow other pursuits both bluebird and otherwise. Thank you for your dedicated years of service Greg, it has been a pleasure to serve NABS with you.