

UPDATE #7 June 8, 2008

### **Super Site-Fidelity**

While banding Western Bluebirds at box RRE5 this morning, I looked up the leg band combination of the male (RG/S) and discovered he was born in 2006 in the very same box! This has happened with House Wrens at Diversion Dam, too. Incidentally, lots of WEBL pictures attached.

### **Ellen On Board**

And speaking on WEBL pictures (see attached), the recently graduate Ellen Engilis is now helping me band. Today we visited 5 nests belonging to 4 species and banded 21 nestlings, so all in all quite a good start!

### **Mite Watch**

Several nests of Tree Swallows have been swarming with bird mites upon opening them. There's no real trend in which sites are being affected. Birds at Mace and Picnic Grounds alike (the most and least densely occupied sites, respectively) have been affected.

There's always plenty of diatomaceous earth, and if you run out just let me know. I think ants might help take care of the problem, too, as they're often present in mite-filled boxes. Then again, they can turn on weekend baby nestlings. Who knows what really goes on in all of these arthropod-nestbox interactions?

For your reading pleasure, here's a link to a recent headline news story where a NY woman was quarantined for bird mites crawling out of...places on her body she'd rather not have them crawl out of...

"Bug-Bitten Woman's Worse Mitemare"

<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/story?id=5017197&page=1>

### **First Ash-throated Flycatchers Banded**

I've been looking forward to the first nest of ATFLs, which happened to be a group of 14 day-olds at Winters Park. ATFL nests don't smell that great to begin with, but this one was particularly ripe. One of the five chicks had succumbed and since been rotting underneath its brothers and sisters. The nestling-that-was-no-more removed, I banded the rest of the chicks, finding them generally cooperative. Only the heaviest chick bothered with bill-clacking. There are lots more of these guys still to be banded.

## Deformed Feet

A tree swallow with severely deformed feet found by Jonathan at Barbour Ranch. Down at Mace, I banded a tree Swallow that had one deformed tarsus (it was "kinked", or bent) and one good one. I hope this doesn't signal a trend.



17 d.o. female (left) and male (right) Western Bluebirds. Sometimes I get thrown by the intensity/extent of blue in the primaries, but only males have significantly blue primary and greater coverts. Special thanks to Ellen Engilis for getting manicure in preparation for photo shoot. (Russell Ranch, RRE5)



Definitive proof that color-banding does not decrease the palatability of Western Bluebirds. Does this mean something ate its leg? (McNamara)



A particularly aggressive, unbanded Western Bluebird. Watch out. (McNamara)



A freshly banded Ash-throated Flycatcher, 14 d.o. (Picnic Grounds)

STAY TUNED FOR FURTHER UPDATES!!