

Another Great Year On the Bluebird Trail

This year saw the greatest use of the bluebird boxes ever along the Betsie Valley Trail. Forty of the fifty boxes were used and 27 of these were used by bluebirds. Another 11 were used by tree swallows, one by a house wren and one by a chickadee. Tree swallows enjoyed an 82% nest success rate fledging an estimated 36 young. The bluebird nest success rate was only 54%, but as there were 27 nests they still managed to produce an estimated 58 young bluebirds. The lone wren nest was successful, but the only chickadee nest was not.

One house was removed as being beyond repair while 2 others were still repairable. Hopefully all three of these houses will be back in action again next year.

Keith Westphal



Frankfort Elementary School



House Wren

Wren House Project

Benzie Audubon awarded the Frankfort Elementary School a \$500 mini-grant for a creative ceramics project designed to inspire environmental awareness. Forty-eight students participated in this project, each designing and constructing a wren house at the high school ceramics studio.

Wes Blizzard, Chair of Benzie Audubon's Mini-Grant Committee, instructed the students as to the proper dimensions and particular needs of nesting wrens, as well as the best locations for wren houses.

With the guidance of Wes and art teacher Eileen Millard, the students used clay and various stains and glazes to waterproof their creations. Their wren houses were creative and interesting, and their parents were also thrilled with them! And, of course, all the wrens in Benzie County were happy with their new homes.

-- Wes Blizzard

I believe this is a Wood Turtle (if wrong, please let me know). They spend the summer away from water and return in the fall. This one was basking along the Betsie River on the last warm sunny day of the fall.

Nominating Committee Report

According to its bylaws, Benzie Audubon Club's board is made up of ten members, and the term for each board position is two years. Half of the positions become open each year, and new board members are elected at the Annual Meeting. This year's nominating committee was made up of board members Sally Cook (Publicity) and Char Ester (Membership). Their job was easy because the persons now holding the five open positions were all willing to sign on for another term.

The open positions and current office holders:

President – John Ester

Secretary – Paula Dreeszen

Programs – Judy Macey (Judy has served one year in this position.)

Publicity – Sally Cook

Mini-Grants – Wes Blizzard (Wes has served one year in this position.)

Additional nominations from the floor to fill these five positions will be very welcome. The Board meets every two months to discuss club business and to plan programs and activities. If you have an interest in serving on the Benzie Audubon Board, please tell one of the board members. The other five positions (Vice President, Membership, Treasurer, Field Trips, and Conservation) will be open next fall at the Annual meeting.



Wood Turtle