



# Checking the Bird Boxes

Project 702 RM Bluebird  
Nestbox Monitoring

# Hays MN Project 702

## Bluebirds

**Scientific Name for Eastern Bluebirds:** *Sialia sialis*, Family: Turdidae (Thrushes)

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**Why:** Charming birds, both in appearance and behavior, found to be in decline in the 1950s due to introduction of the English House Sparrow in the 1850s and the loss of old wooden fence posts with their accompanying cavities.

**Solution:** Form Bluebird trails across the country with nest boxes in appropriate habitat at least 100 yds apart.

**Project involves** any or all of building, maintaining, monitoring, and reporting data (to Cornell NestWatch) on nest boxes. It encompasses Field Research, Research Management, and Direct Outreach. It can be independent or shared. Any reported data goes to the Cornell Nestwatch online site.

**Monitoring equipment needed:** small telescoping mirror, bar soap, small brush or scraper, small notebook, index cards or the NestWatch field app for smart devices.

**Nest Box Requirements:** proper sized entrance hole, minimum floor area, minimum distance from floor to entrance opening, well shaded and ventilated for Texas, easily opened for monitoring and cleaning, baffled against predators.

**Attractions:** Open land, water, food is primarily ground dwelling insects and berries. They will come to meal worms and suet.

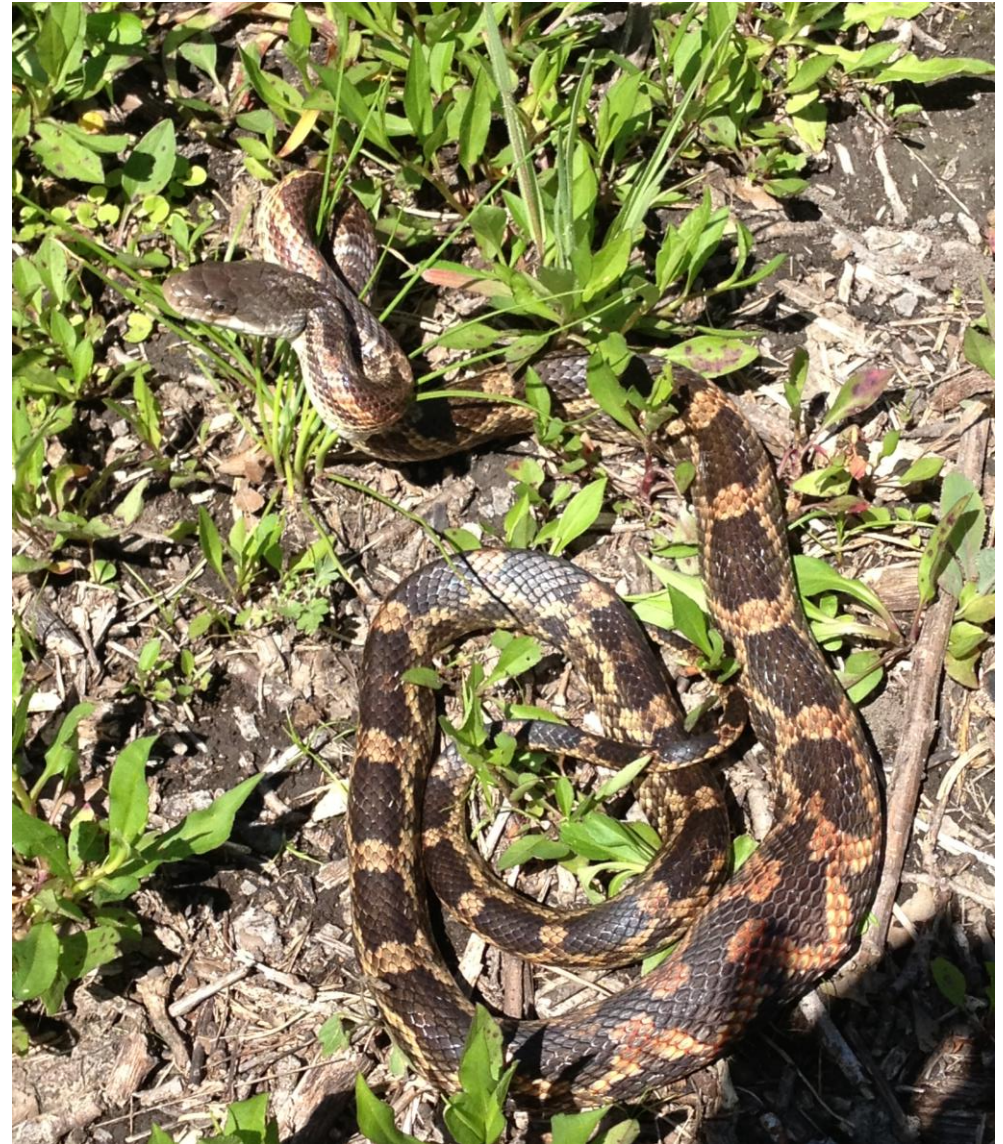
**Season:** Nesting in Texas occurs from February thru July.

**Helpful Web Sites:** <https://texasbluebirdsociety.com/>; <https://nestwatch.org/>,  
<http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org/>; <http://sialis.org/>





# The Importance of Predator Baffles





# Checking the Boxes

Dripping Springs Ranch Park



Bob  
Adkins



Tina  
Adkins

# Nest Box 1 - Bewick's Wrens



April 12  
Partial Nest



April 16  
Adult on Nest



April 23  
6 Hatchlings



April 30  
6 Chicks



May 3  
6 Fledglings



DS1

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology

# Nest Watch

Where Birds Come to Life



## SITE DETAILS

Type: on post / pole or platform

Immediate Habitat within 1m: public park/green space

Immediate Habitat within 100m: public park/green space

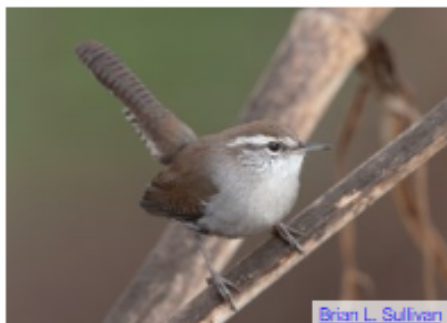
Elevation Above Sea Level: 1,300 ft

Nest Height Above Ground: 5 ft

Group Membership: [\[x\] DSRP](#)

Note: to delete a site, you must remove it from any Nest Groups and it must not contain any attempt data.

## ATTEMPT #1



Brian L. Sullivan

Bewick's Wren

Mar 25, 2019 — May 10,

Outcome: At least one hatched

### Attempt Summary

Visits	Clutch Size
15	6

First Egg Date

Apr 2, 2019

Date	Visits			Host Species			Status Codes				Cowbird Activity			More Information	
	Eggs	Live	Dead	Nest Status	Adult Status	Young Status	Management Activity	Eggs	Live	Dead	Observer	Comments			
2019-03-25	0	0	0	cn	aa	no	no				B&TA				
2019-03-29	0	0	0	cn	no	no	no				B&TA				
2019-04-02	3	0	0	cn	va	no	no				B&TA				
2019-04-05	6	0	0	cn	aa	no	no				B&TA				
2019-04-09	u	0	0	cn	ra	no	no				B&TA				
2019-04-12	u	u	u	cn	ra	no	no				T&BA				
2019-04-16	u	u	u	cn	ra	ny	no				T&BA				
2019-04-19	u	u	u	cn	ra		no	0	0		B&TA				
2019-04-23	0	6	0	cn	no	ny	no	0	0		B&TA				
2019-04-26	0	6	0	cn	no	py	no	0	0		BA				
2019-04-30	0	6	0	cn	no	py	no	0	0		BA				
2019-05-03	0	6	0	cn	no	fy	no	0	0		B&TA				
2019-05-07	0	0	0	cn	no	no	no	0	0		B&TA				
2019-05-10	0	0	0	cn	no	no	no	0	0		B&TA				
2019-05-10	0	0	0	cn	no	no	no	0	0		B&TA				

# Box 6 - Bluebirds at last!



April 30  
Grass Nest



May 3  
3 Eggs



May 7  
5 Eggs



May 13  
5 Eggs



May 20  
3-4 Hatchlings



May 28  
3-4 Nestlings



May 31  
3 Nestlings



June 4  
3 Fledglings



## Nest Box 6 - May 20



### Proud Parents Protecting Hatchlings



Male Eastern Bluebird

Female Eastern Bluebird



DS6



### SITE DETAILS

Type:	on post / pole or platform
Immediate Habitat within 1m	public park/green space
Immediate Habitat within 100m	public park/green space
Elevation Above Sea Level	1,300 ft
Nest Height Above Ground	5 ft
Group Membership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DSRP

Note: to delete a site, you must remove it from any Nest Groups and it must not contain any attempt data.

### ATTEMPT #1



Beth Donald

Eastern Bluebird

Apr 30, 2019 — Jun 7,

Outcome: At least one

Attempt Summary

Visits	Clutch
14	5

First Egg Date

May 3, 2019

Visits	Host Species			Status Codes				Cowbird Activity			More Information		
	Date	Eggs	Live	Dead	Nest Status	Adult Status	Young Status	Management Activity	Eggs	Live	Dead	Observer	Comments
	2019-04-30	0	0	0	cn	no	no	no	0	0		BA	
	2019-05-03	3	0	0	cn	aa	no	no	0	0		B&TA	
	2019-05-07	5	0	0	cn	va	no	no	0	0		B&TA	
	2019-05-13	5	0	0	cn	aa	no	no	0	0		B&TA	
	2019-05-20	0	5	0	cn	va	ny	no	0	0		B&TA	
	2019-05-24	0	5	0	cn	va	fy	no	0	0		B&TA	
	2019-05-31	0	5	0	cn	fa	fy	no	0	0		B&TA	
	2019-06-04	0	3	u	cn	no	fy	no	0	0		B&TA	
	2019-06-07	0	0	0	cn	va	no	no	0	0		B&TA	

Bluebird Parents Remaining at Box 5 Nest Site – July 30  
After Brood 2 Fledged

Female Eastern Bluebird



Male Eastern Bluebird





# Breeding Summary Dripping Springs Ranch Park

## 2020 QUICK SUMMARY

6

Total Nest Sites

15

Total Nesting Attempts

68

Total Eggs

55

Total Young

49

Total Fledglings

## Year 2020

Site Name	Species	Outcome	1st Egg Date	1st Hatch Date	1st Fledge Date	No. of fledged	Max clutch size	Total live young	Unhatched eggs	Hatch Rate	Fledge Rate
DS1	Tufted x Black-crested Titmouse (hybrid)	At least one host young fledged	2020-03-29	2020-04-14	2020-04-26	6	6	6	0	100.00%	100.00%
DS1	Eastern Bluebird	At least one host young fledged	2020-05-02	2020-05-21	2020-06-01	3	5	3	2	60.00%	100.00%
DS2	Eastern Bluebird	At least one host young fledged	2020-06-15	2020-07-03	2020-07-18	2	4	2	1	50.00%	100.00%
DS2	Eastern Bluebird	At least one host young fledged	2020-04-28	2020-05-12	2020-06-01	4	5	4	1	80.00%	100.00%
DS2	Eastern Bluebird	At least one host young fledged	2020-02-28	2020-03-19	2020-04-05	5	5	5	0	100.00%	100.00%
DS3	Eastern Bluebird	At least one host young fledged	2020-02-29	2020-03-20	2020-04-06	5	5	5	0	100.00%	100.00%
DS3	Bewick's Wren	At least one host young fledged	2020-06-02	2020-06-18	2020-07-02	5	5	5	0	100.00%	100.00%
DS3	Eastern Bluebird	All young disappeared from nest before fledge date; reason unknown	2020-05-07				5				
DS4		No breeding behavior observed									
DS4	Bewick's Wren	At least one host young fledged	2020-04-04	2020-04-28	2020-05-08	6	6	6	0	100.00%	100.00%
DS4	Bewick's Wren	At least one host young fledged	2020-05-19	2020-06-05	2020-06-19	5	6	5		83.33%	100.00%
DS5	Eastern Bluebird	All young found dead in or nearby nest	2020-03-02	2020-03-20		0	5	5	0	100.00%	0.00%
DS5	Eastern Bluebird	At least one host young fledged	2020-05-13	2020-05-28	2020-06-15	5	5	5	0	100.00%	100.00%
DS6	Eastern Bluebird	At least one host young fledged	2020-06-02	2020-06-16	2020-07-01	3	6	4	2	66.67%	75.00%
DS6	Eastern Bluebird	No breeding behavior observed				0	0	0	0		

## Year 2019

Site Name	Species	Outcome	1st Egg Date	1st Hatch Date	1st Fledge Date	No. of fledged	Max clutch size	Total live young	Unhatched eggs	Hatch Rate	Fledge Rate
DS1	Bewick's Wren	At least one host young fledged	2019-04-02	2019-04-17	2019-05-04	6	6	6	0	100.00%	100.00%
DS2		No breeding behavior observed									
DS3		No breeding behavior observed									
DS4	Bewick's Wren	No breeding behavior observed									
DS5		No breeding behavior observed									
DS5	Eastern Bluebird	At least one host young fledged	2019-06-18	2019-07-04	2019-07-22	3	3	3	0	100.00%	100.00%
DS6	Eastern Bluebird	At least one host young fledged	2019-05-03	2019-05-17	2019-06-06	3	5	5	0	100.00%	60.00%

Jacob's Well  
December 14, 2019



# Eastern Bluebird



Female Bluebird – March 3



March 3



March 9



March 15



March 24

# Feeding the Chicks



Male Bluebird – April 6

**March 31**



**April 6**



**April 13**



# Six-Week Summary - Box 1 Bluebird Nest Cycle



Mar 3 – partial nest

+ 6  
days



Mar 9 – no eggs

+ 6  
days



Mar 15 – 3 eggs

+ 9  
days



Mar 24 – 5 eggs

+ 7  
days



Mar 31 – 5 new hatchlings

+ 7  
days



Apr 6 – 5 growing chicks


+ 7  
days



Apr 13 – 5 fledglings

= 42  
days

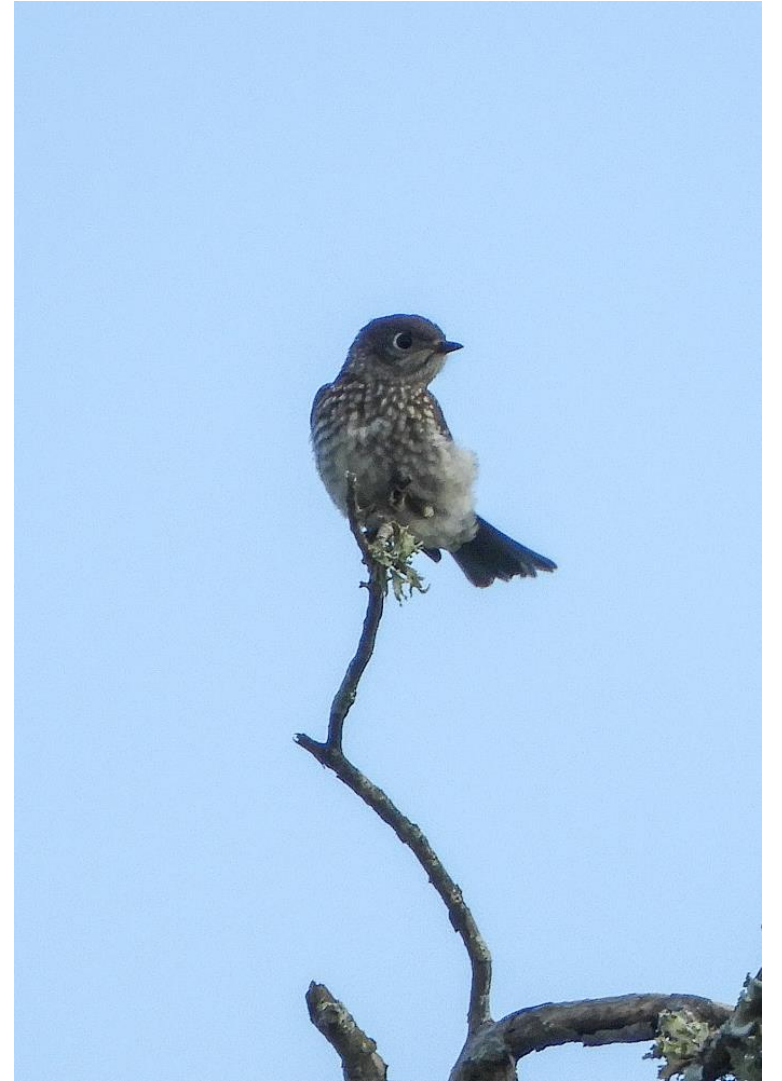


A photograph of two juvenile bluebirds perched on tree branches. The birds have brownish heads and backs with white underparts and blue wings. The background is a dense green forest with sunlight filtering through the leaves. A semi-transparent text box is overlaid in the upper center of the image.

## Juvenile Bluebirds

Vicinity of Box 1

May 4



Juvenile Bluebirds

May 12



Black-crested Titmouse

April 22 - Building the nest





# Black-crested Titmouse Nest Cycle



**Apr 27** – 5 eggs



**May 5** – 6 eggs, adult in box



**May 12** – 5 newborn chicks,  
adult in box



**May 20** – 5 chicks, 1 egg  
unhatched



**May 25** – Both parents feeding fledglings



**May 25** – 5 fledglings



**June 2** – removed nest and 1  
unhatched egg



Fledge Day – First Flight

Ash-throated Flycatcher



**Apr 13 – no eggs**

**Apr 22 – 6 eggs**

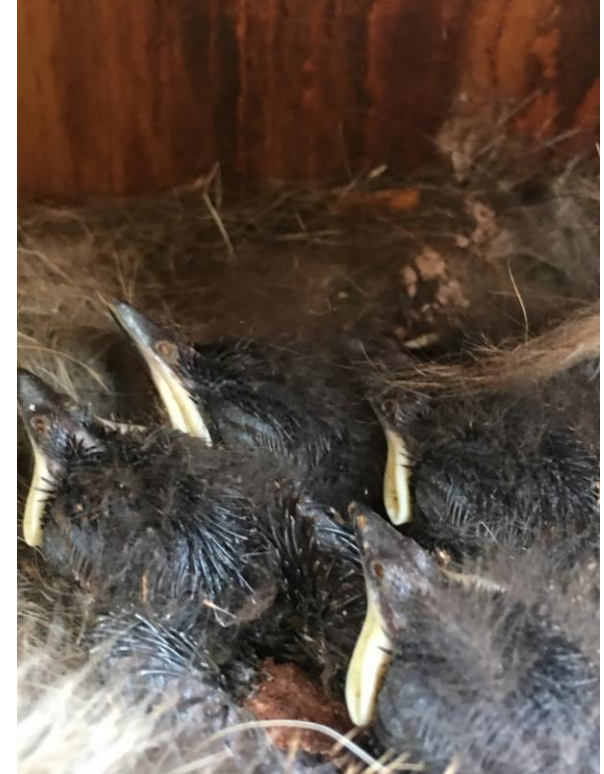
Ash-throated Flycatcher  
Nest Cycle



**Apr 27** – Adult in nest box with 6 eggs



**May 5** – 5-6 chicks



**May 12** – 4-6 fledglings



# Bewick's Wrens



**Mar 16** – partial nest



**Mar 23**– partial nest



# Carolina Chickadee Nest Cycle



**Apr 6** – adult on nest with 7 eggs



**Apr 20** – 5-7 hatchlings



**Mar 30** – moss nest with feathers, no eggs



**Apr 27** – 4+ nestlings



**May 4** – 6-7 fledglings



# Jacob's Well – 2019 Data



Bluebird Boxes and Natural Nest Cavities	March				April				May			
	8-Mar	16-Mar	23-Mar	30-Mar	6-Apr	13-Apr	20-Apr	27-Apr	4-May	12-May	19-May	26-May
Box 1 - Bluebird Across dry creek, natural grassy area								Partial Bluebird nest material	Full Bluebird nest, 3 eggs 2 Juvenile Bluebirds in tree at Box 1	5 Bluebird eggs, adult in the box	1 Bluebird hatchling, 4 eggs, adult in the box	2 Bluebird chicks, Adult flew in and hovered, landed in adjacent tree
Box 2 - Bluebird, Black-crested Titmouse Across dry creek, natural grassy area	Full Bluebird nest, no eggs, adults in/out of box	3 Bluebird eggs	5 Bluebird eggs, Male Bluebird in box	5 Bluebird eggs, adult not in sight	4 Bluebird babies visible, adult in the box	4-5 Bluebird fledglings	4 Bluebirds fledged, 1 egg unhatched, removed nest	Partial moss nest	Full moss nest with hair, 6 eggs, probably Titmouse	6 Titmouse eggs	6 Titmouse nestlings	6 Titmouse chicks
Box 3 - Black-crested Titmouse Path from Nature Center to JW, natural grass	Moss nest with hair and paper, no eggs	3 Titmouse eggs?	7 Titmouse eggs, Adult Titmouse in box	Adult Titmouse stayed on nest, did not disturb	6 Newborn Titmice visible, adult in the box	5-7 Titmouse fledglings	5-7 Titmouse fledglings ready to fledge	5-7 Titmice fledged, removed nest	Full moss nest with hair, no eggs	Adult Titmouse on nest, remained in box	5 Titmouse hatchlings	5 Titmouse chicks
Box 4 - Chickadee, Ash-throated Flycatchers Adjacent to Nature Center, open grassy area		Partial Bewick's Wren nest	Partial Bewick's Wren nest	Wren nest now has moss, hair, and feathers - no eggs	Chickadee adult sitting on nest, 6 eggs	Chickadee adult in box, 6 eggs	Chickadee adult in Box, 4-6 nestlings	4-6 Chickadee nestlings	6 Chickadee Fledglings, ready to fledge	6 Chickadees fledged, removed nest		2 Ash-throated Flycatchers building a new nest, no eggs
Box 5 - Black-crested Titmouse Path from parking lot to JW, open grassland		Some moss in the box	Additional moss nest, 2 Chickadees protecting the box	7 eggs, Adult Titmouse in the box	7 eggs, Adult Titmouse in the box	3 Newborn Titmice, 4 unhatched eggs, adult Titmouse in box	Adult Titmouse in the box, 4+ nestlings	Nest appeared to be empty, started to remove nest, but 5 fledglings in the nest	5 Titmice fledged, removed nest			
Box 6 - Bewick's Wren Adjacent to Parking, some juniper		Bewick's Wren nest, no eggs	Bewick's Wren nest, no eggs	Bewick's Wren nest, 3 eggs	Bewick's Wren nest, 6 eggs	6 eggs	5+ Nestlings	4-6 Fledglings	4-6 Bewick's Wrens fledged, removed nest		Note: removed 2 scorpions from box	
Box 7 - Ash-throated Flycatcher, Wren North 40, mix of juniper and oak		A small amount of moss	A small amount of moss	Wren nest with cedar on top and feathers, no eggs	Wren nest with cedar on top and feathers, no eggs	Wren nest, lots of hair on top that is new, no eggs	6 eggs, look like Ash-throated Flycatcher	Adult Ash-throated Flycatcher in box, 6 eggs	2 Newborn nestlings just out of eggs, 4 eggs	Noel guard torn off by predator, Flycatcher nestlings predated, Wren nest started	1 Wren egg	Bewick's Wren adult in box with 6 eggs
Box 8 - Wren North 40, mostly juniper			Partial Wren nest	Wren nest, no eggs	Wren nest, adult in box, no eggs	Wren nest, 1 egg	Wren nest, 1 egg	Wren nest, 1 egg	Wren nest, 1 egg, removed nest	Partial Wren nest	Partial Wren nest, unchanged	Partial Wren nest, unchanged
Box 9 - Black-crested Titmouse Near guard shack, natural grass		Partial nest mostly moss, some hair, no eggs	6 Titmouse eggs, with snake skin	6 Titmouse eggs	4-5 Newborn Titmice, 1 egg, Adult in the box	4-6 Titmouse fledglings, adult Titmouse in box	4-6 Titmouse fledglings, ready to fledge	4-6 Titmice fledged, removed nest	Partial moss nest	Moss nest, some additional material, 6 Titmouse eggs	6 Titmouse eggs, nest seems incomplete	6 Titmouse hatchlings
Dead Tree Woodpecker Hole - Path across from Box 5								Possible Titmouse in and out of hole		Ash-throated Flycatcher pair feeding nestlings	Ash-throated Flycatcher pair feeding nestlings	



# 2021 Volunteer Opportunities

## Charro Ranch Park – 2 nest boxes

- Bonnie Tull is the contact
  - Phone number = 512.663.2092
  - Email = [bonehead.tull@gmail.com](mailto:bonehead.tull@gmail.com)

## Blue Hole - 8 nest boxes

- Easily walkable – takes a little more than an hour

## Patsy Glenn – 2 nest boxes

- A bit more walking because one of the boxes is on the far edge and not accessible by vehicle (maybe 1/8 mile)
- Christine Byrne is the contact for Blue Hole and Patsy Glenn
  - Phone number = 512.924.7866
  - Email = [texasbyrnes@yahoo.com](mailto:texasbyrnes@yahoo.com)





If you are interested in volunteering for  
Project 702, reach out  
to any of us

Bonnie Tull – Charro Ranch

Betsy Cross – Jacob's Well

Tina Adkins – Dripping Springs Ranch Park

Christine Byrne – Blue Hole & Patsy Glenn

Thank You!