

# Thinking Outside of the Nest Box: Students Engage with the Citizen Science Community to Help Birds

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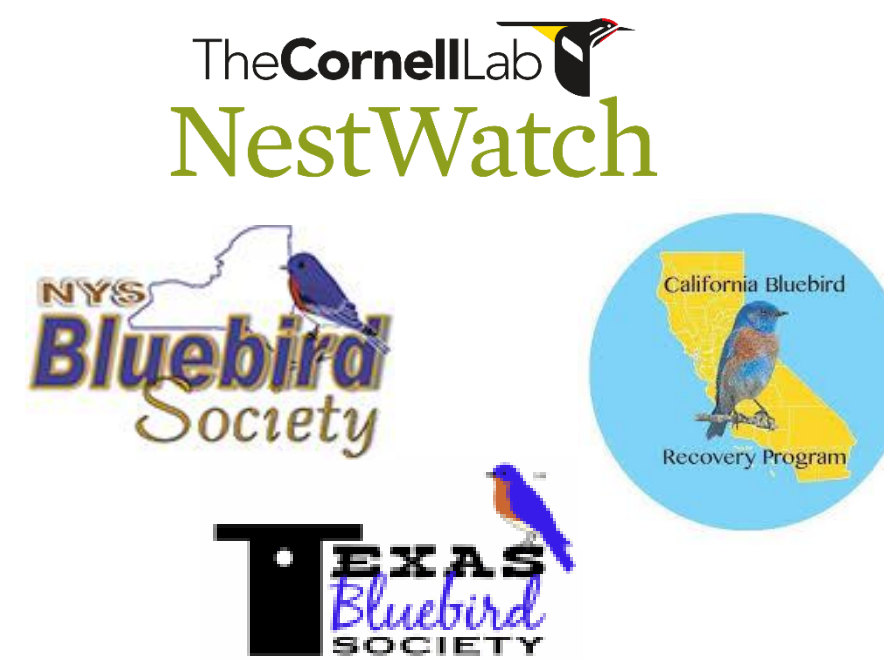
## Issue Statement

- Millions of dollars are spent annually by people attempting to assist wild birds, yet science-based recommendations for effective management are lacking
- Citizen scientists generate research questions but lack scientifically valid data on which to base decisions



## Our Focal Community & Partners

- NestWatch.org: An online community of citizen scientists
- State bluebird conservation societies



## Community-defined Research Questions

- Does management through supplemental feeding increase the reproductive success of cavity-nesting birds?
- Does removing old nests from boxes promote or interfere with future reproduction?
- How are changes in weather or regional climate (e.g., North Atlantic Oscillation, El Niño & La Niña cycles) related to nesting success?



The Engaged Cornell field team banding black-capped chickadee nestlings (left to right): Gates Dupont (Class of 2019), Joshua Goddard ('18), Giulia DiMarino ('19), and Anita Tendler ('19).

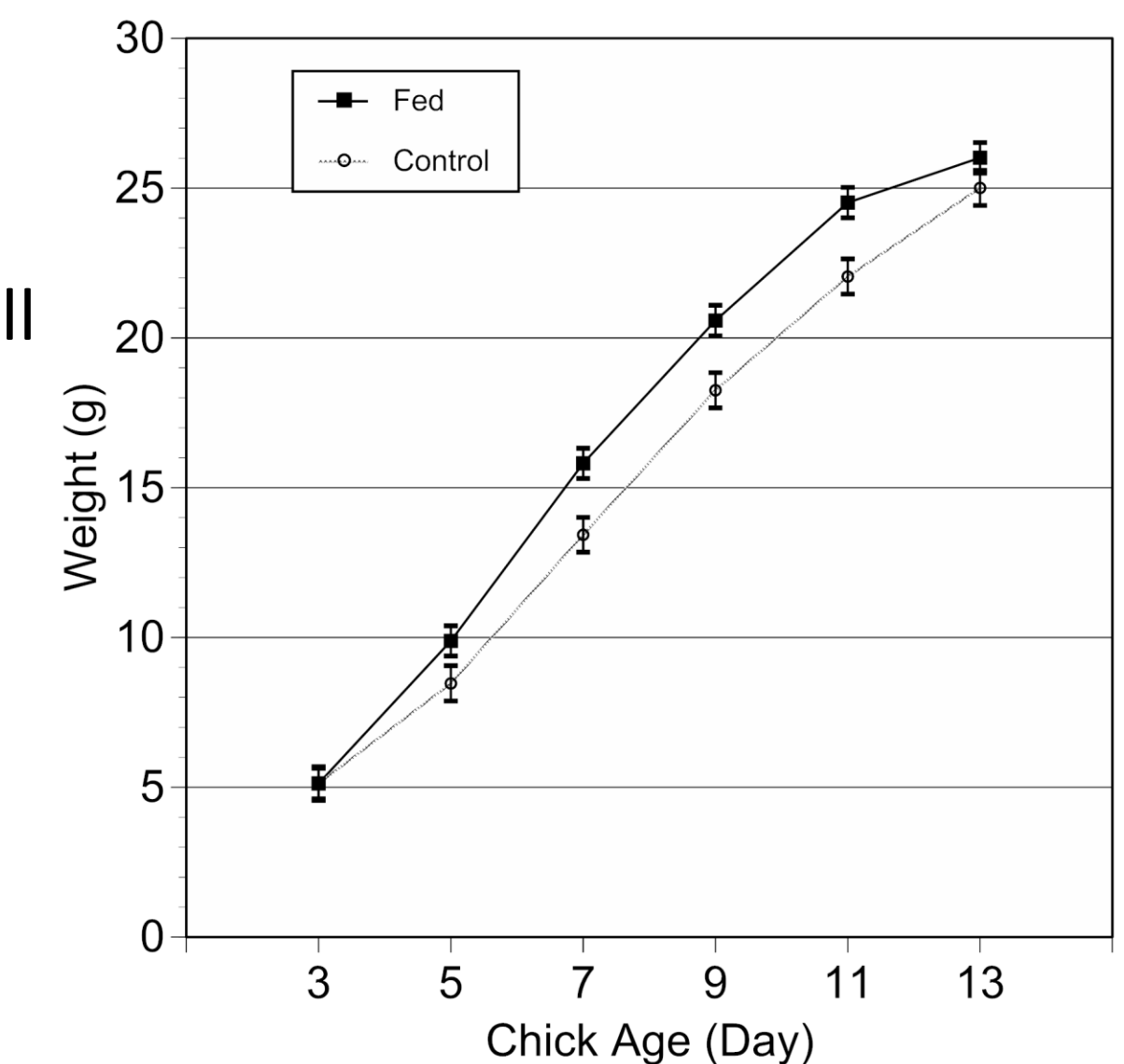
## Methods

- Install 120 nest boxes in Ithaca area
- Design & implement controlled supplemental feeding experiment
- Monitor boxes daily
- Quantify nest success, chick growth rates, and survival
- Survey literature & analyze NestWatch data
- Write blog posts to update the focal community about research results



## Preliminary Results

- Bluebird chicks in fed nests grew faster
- No difference in overall fledging success

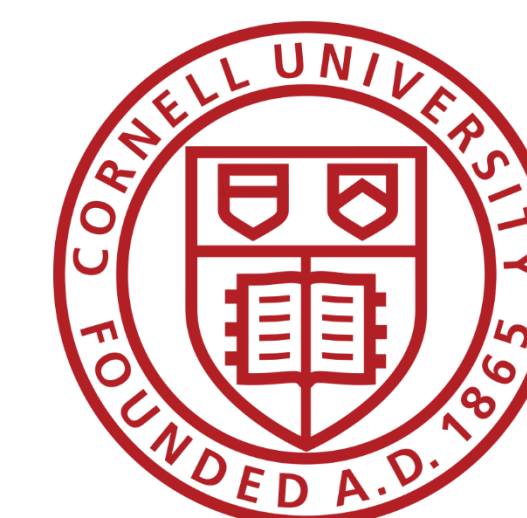


## Looking Forward

- Test various methods for engaging with the focal community via the web
- Science communication via blog posts and multimedia interpretations of peer-reviewed literature



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The Cornell Lab of Ornithology

