

# CANADIAN NESTBOX REPORT, 1981

Twenty-first Annual Report from "The Friends of  
the Bluebirds," Brandon, Manitoba

Table 1. Occupancy of Nesting Boxes in the Brandon, Manitoba Area, 1981.

Occupant	No. of Nestings
Mountain Bluebirds	727
Eastern Bluebirds	43
Bluebirds (not identified as to species)	12
Cross-nesting Bluebirds (Eastern x Mountain)	1
Tree Swallows	680
House Sparrows	178
House Wrens	54
European Starlings	2
Mice	60
Squirrels	8

Again the Eastern Bluebird seemed to be concentrated in the sandy areas of the Carberry and Lauder Sandhills. It is interesting to note that Mr. and Mrs. J.B. Thomas, Hartney, reported three boxes where two broods of Eastern Bluebirds were raised.

Another case of hybridization was reported, this one by Peter Sawatzky in box 677 on the Carberry-Glenboro line. A Mountain Bluebird female and an Eastern Bluebird male successfully raised six hybrid young.

A few unusual nests were found. Mrs. Elsie Duthie, Lauder, found Mountain Bluebirds nesting in a stack of rye bales. Mr. Gordon Hammell, Erickson, reported a Mountain Bluebird nest in a hole (made either by rats or a woodpecker) in the fascia board of the eaves of a barn where an addition was under construction. Despite the disturbance the bluebirds raised a family. Barbara Robinson, Brandon, found a nest made of cassette tape.

Betty Shankland had a particularly successful year on her line near Oak Lake resort. She had 51 nestings in the 28 boxes on her line, 35 nestings were Mountain Bluebirds.

Results of data submitted by dozens of volunteers were compiled by Norah Lane, Mamie McCowan, Barbara Robinson, Hazel Patmore and Ann Smith.

## Annual Report from Mountain Bluebird Trail, Lethbridge, Alberta.

This was a hard year for bluebirds throughout southern Alberta. Many more bluebird pairs used nesting boxes and more eggs were laid than last year, but only 13 more young were fledged. The cold, wet weather at the end of May and the first two weeks of June may have been the reason for the small increase. Boxes which last year fledged five and six young fledged only two or three this year. There were several clutches of seven, and six pairs fledged second broods. One pair raised a total of 13 young.

The Mountain Bluebird Trail report was compiled by Duncan J. Mackintosh.

Table 2. Occupancy of Nesting Boxes on the Mountain Bluebird Trail, Lethbridge, Alberta, 1981.

Nesting boxes available	598
Boxes used by bluebirds	.86
Bluebird eggs laid	359
Bluebirds fledged	260
Bluebirds banded	185
Sterile eggs	.99
Tree Swallow nests	.58
Tree Swallows fledged	.311
Successful Tree Swallow nests	.56
Tree Swallow eggs laid	336
House Wren nests	.13
Number of boxes used	157

## Calgary, Alberta, Area Bluebird Trail Report

Table 3. Occupancy of Nesting Boxes on Calgary, Alberta, Bluebird Trails, 1981.

Nesting boxes available	743
Number of bluebird nests	203
Bluebird eggs laid	1090
Bluebirds fledged	758*
Bluebirds banded	.46
Tree Swallow nests	432
Successful Tree Swallow nests	356*
Tree Swallow eggs laid	2336
Tree Swallows fledged	1757*
Tree Swallows banded	.96
House Sparrow nests	.59
House Wren nests	.9
Number of boxes used	682

\*estimated

Numbers of bluebirds in general were down from last year despite a warm early May. In some cases Tree Swallows took over boxes in which bluebirds had begun nesting, but overall Tree Swallow numbers were also down.

Some interesting incidents were recorded on the trails. Kay Morck watched a box in which the male of the pair had one leg which dangled uselessly. She watched him during the breeding season and noted that he had difficulty in getting in and out of the nesting box. It is remarkable, under the circumstances, that this pair raised eight young when five or six is the size of the average brood.

Ray Woods reported that someone pushed a large rock into one of his boxes which forced the sides apart.

When he removed the rock he found a female bluebird sitting on eggs. With the rock in place she had had barely enough space to get in and out. Although Ray repaired the box, later predation prevented a successful nesting.

Darlene Warbanski found a male bluebird in the second box she monitored east of Didsbury. It is worthy of note because males are not often found in the nest.

Material for this report was compiled by Don Stiles. ■

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