

Results for 2006 Our heartfelt thanks to all who made possible a very successful nesting season through their hard work, and thank you for your summaries. The results this year made for very encouraging reading, the bluebirds seem to have seized the opportunity afforded by the long, warm and dry spring and summer to make the most of the breeding season. We had 700+ more fledges than were reported in 2005! More and more monitors find themselves able to record nesting success and fledges, and the valuable information they provide is giving us a better view of population trends.

Remember, if you haven't reported in the last two years or more, and wish to become active again, please ask Bob or Evelyn to place you back on the kit mailing list. A summary of the years results, as well as a list of all those who were able to send monitoring records is found at the end of this newsletter.

Boxes, boxes. We may be facing a shortage of boxes in the near future. We assume that there are hundreds and hundreds of boxes out on abandoned lines throughout the southwest. If you know of any such lines, or have ceased to monitor yours, we ask for your assistance in recovering useful nest boxes. First, please check with Bob Andrews to make certain that the line is indeed unmonitored. Then, either remove the boxes yourself and bring them into Bob, or contact Bob or myself (Barry) for assistance. Any help you can give us in this regard will be much appreciated.

New Members: We welcome **Rene LeGal & Joy Dornian** (Souris), **Janet Gross** (Mayfair Colony), as well as **Ross Hamilton** and **Jose Maatel** of Brandon. The latter two are working under the tutelage of Barbara Robinson and Vern Gilbertson, respectively. As well, **Isabelle Smith** (Brandon) has reactivated her line. We encourage all bluebirders to be on the lookout for new

members - we can never have too many nest box monitors! Please keep an eye out for likely candidates, and encourage them to join us in this captivating and ideal family pursuit.

Retired: **Jack Webb** will no longer be turning out his well crafted nest boxes for our use. Over the years his contribution to our cause has been enormous, and we wish him a happy "retirement", and good health. **Shirley Neudorf** (Souris) has given up her line after 14 years of monitoring. Her past reports have been much appreciated. **Ina Slimmon** (Oak lake) has also relinquished her line after many years of valuable service to bluebird conservation. Our thanks and best wishes go out to both of these ladies.

In Memoriam: Our sympathies are extended to Ruth and family on the passing of her husband **Dr David Stewart**, one of the founders of the Friends of the Bluebirds. His wise council will be sorely missed.

Notes from the Lines: **Barb & Ray Pettinger** were again very busy banding in 2006. Working on 3 separate lines they were able to band 157 Mountain and 17 Eastern Bluebirds, along with 31 Tree Swallows. **Karla Stouffer** reported a Close Encounter of the Grouse Kind with a Sharp-tail nesting right beside one of her nest boxes. We expect her to fully recover from the shock. **Vern Gilbertson**, following up on a technique suggested by **Bob Andrews**, found that removing nest box lids in the fall and replacing them the following spring solved the deer mouse problem on his line. A method well worth considering. **Margaret Yorke** and **Millie Reid** had one Eastern nest with 11 eggs! It appears that two successive clutches were laid in the box without an intervening "burial" of the first clutch. Four birds fledged from the second clutch of five eggs. **Doug** and **Genella MacIntyre** experienced a large infestation of deer mice, and entirely too much

attention from cattle. If you also have had cows molesting your boxes, check with Bob Andrews for information about the side mounting boxes he has assembled into kits...they work! A small number of teams (the **Danards, Andrews and MacIntyres** had suspected triple nestings of Easterns. **Barbara Robinson** adds that she has had a similar situation arise in the late 1980's. Such nesting activity is quite common in the southeastern USA, but probably very rare in our area. A result of the unusually long season? **Joe and Grace Slawinsky** as well as **Roy Gwiazda** and **Edie Evans** were fortunate enough to have seen flocks of Eastern Bluebirds in late September/early October.

Dwight Carkener of Brandon forwarded a lovely letter full of reminiscences stretching back to his time as a student in Nora Lane's Grade One class and his time as a Brandon Junior Birder under John Lane. Remember, we love to read about any experiences you can share with other members.

Tree Swallow Woes: (a personal concern)

It has always bothered me that tree swallows are poorly regarded by many bluebirders, being dismissed as mere irritating competitors for the nest boxes we put out for bluebirds. They are, if viewed from the perspectives of ecological importance, interesting behavior and aesthetics, perhaps as worthy of our compassion as bluebirds themselves. Should we then be taking measures to reduce the effect their nesting in our boxes is having on bluebirds? Of course we can, and the setting up of double, or even triple boxes at a given site is the best way of doing that. In fact, because tree swallows are a fully protected species, any other interference with their nests, eggs or young is strictly illegal! I also think that when swallows dominate a line, the fault for this is sometimes with the human monitor, not the birds. The boxes may simply be in the wrong location for bluebirds. If your line gets mostly swallows (and you've tried doubling up boxes), try re-locating to better habitat. Should you feel badly if you get nothing but swallows? Well, tree swallows are cavity nesting birds, and I believe that, but for

our nest boxes, their populations might well be in trouble locally. In the meantime, try keeping detailed records of swallows as well as bluebirds, secure in the knowledge that , by helping swallows, you are doing a great deal of good.

A number of monitors have expressed concerns that, for reasons of health or time constraints, they aren't able to monitor their lines with any frequency. Here are some suggestions for those in that situation. First, monitor only bluebird nests each trip. In other words, a box occupied by tree swallows with eggs can be simply recorded as a "nest", and left at that, if you wish. Such boxes should be checked later in the season for cleaning out (or later broods of bluebirds). Secondly, allow me to paraphrase (Ann Smith) useful hints from Newsletter #1 :

The essential check for bluebirds is the one in the spring to make sure the lids are on and deer mice are evicted. A fall clean out is necessary to allow for a freeze out of parasites. If time is limited in the summer, a good deal of information can be gleaned from well timed visits. If you make your first check late May to early June, you'll find most bluebirds with their first brood, and most tree swallows starting to nest. A second visit early to mid-July should catch most of the second nesting of bluebirds. You may miss early or especially late nestings with this method, but it's better than the alternative - no monitoring at all!

NABS Convention: The 2007 North American Bluebird Society Convention will take place in Athens, Georgia on Sept. 20-23 this year. For further details check out the NABS web site.

Searching for more information?

The monitoring kit you receive is loaded with valuable, practical advice on maintaining and monitoring a bluebird nest box line. (lost your package notes and want a replacement? Contact Evelyn Andrews) Should you wish to expand your horizons or explore further the world of bird conservation please try the following web sites: "NABS" - THE source of information: www.nabluebirdsociety.org/

"Sialis" - A great site!

<http://www.sialis.org/index.html>

Loads of good links can be found here:

<http://bluebirdnut.com/links>

NatureNorth.com is the province of manitoba's online nature magazine

Check out this newsletter:

<http://www.virginiabluebirds.org/index.html>

(You'll need user name ("bluebird") and a password ("newsletter") to access the site.

And, for a different point of view, try:

The Tree Swallow Nesting Project

<http://www.treeswallows.org/>

As well, thanks to Ann Smith's generous donation, we now maintain a library of books and pamphlets related to bluebird conservation techniques. If you can't attend our meetings to select books yourself, feel free to send a note to Barry Danard asking for a list of publications available.

Website: Clarke Snell (cesnell@telus.net) has been very busy creating our very own web site, the work in progress can be seen at :

www.mts.net/~jbdanard/

Clarke welcomes any input from bluebirders to help build this site.

Incoming Newsletters: We have received copies of recent newsletters from The Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project (Oregon), the Southern Interior Bluebird Trail Society (British Columbia), and the Virginia Bluebird Society. These can be seen/signed out at the next General Meeting.

Annual Meetings: We hold two meetings a year, usually on the third Sunday of April and October, respectively. Our new venue in Brandon is at the Riverbank Discovery Centre, 1-545 Conservation Drive (directly across from the Corral Centre shopping complex). When you receive your invitations this year, please consider joining us for an afternoon of information sharing and refreshments. Some of the most experienced bluebirders in the country will be on hand to answer questions, and it's always nice to "recharge the batteries" by sharing experiences with other

workers in the bluebird conservation movement.

2006 Monitors: The following members were able to submit Summary Forms for this past season:

Bob & Evelyn Andrews, Clayton Baumung, Ellen Blain, Jack Bryer, Brian Burrows & Diane Chatwin, Barry & Judy Danard, Bev Dunlop & Dave Uhryniuk, Edie Evans & Roy Gwiazda, Lyall Franck, Vern Gilbertson & Jose Maatel, Herb Goulden & Ross Robinson, Janet Gross, Bob & Jean Horton, Ed & Yvette Huzyk, Evelyn Jorgenson, Rene LeGal & Joy Dornian, Doug & Genella MacIntyre, Bridget & Arnold McPhaden, Lynne & Brian Manns, Edith Parsons, Bert Perey, Ray & Barb Pettinger, Barbara Robinson, Dale & Joan Robinson, Larry Romaniuk, Bill Sandercock, Murray & Carole Sangster, Hazel Skinner, Joe & Grace Slawinsky, Isabelle Smith, Lloyd Stankey, Karla Stouffer, Joan Switzer, Gerard Wade, Roy & Lorna Wallis, Margaret Yorke & Amelia Reid.

Future Meetings & Directions:

Are there particular topics you would like to see discussed at future meetings, or covered in the newsletter? Do you have suggestions to improve the operation of our organization? Any of the following members of the Coordinating Committee (see below) would welcome your ideas!

Contacts: Do you have : questions, concerns, or suggestions? Contact any of the following:

Bob / Evelyn Andrews : (727-8985),

andy208@mts.net

Vona Cochrane : 727-2986, vcoch@mts.net),

Barry / Judy Danard: 523-8258, jbdanard@mts.net

Barbara Robinson : 728-4029



	NUMBER OF NEST ATTEMPTS												
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD	901	820	755	491	716	563	466	331	385	286	165	199	222
EASTERN BLUEBIRD	337	265	403	289	527	439	349	378	395	400	193	217	361
UNIDENTIFIED BLUEBIRD	220	170	182	142	218	221	212	261	262	217	92	184	162
X-NESTING BLUEBIRD	5	4	2	4	10	5	4	7	6	2	10	3	12
TOTAL	1463	1259	1342	926	1471	1228	1031	977	1048	905	460	603	757
TREE SWALLOW	1164	1100	1215	1207	1240	1214	1243	1262	1213	1317	841	1032	791
HOUSE WREN	211	184	154	168	138	92	103	112	106	77	89	59	40
HOUSE SPARROW	28	34	20	35	62	42	51	37	51	98	53	28	8
B-C CHICKADEE										1			3
RED SQUIRREL										10	2		6
FLYING SQUIRREL										2		2	
TOTAL BOXES	2691	2471	2641	2586	2650	2554	2561	2734	2584	2184	1585	1924	1900
MONITORED LINES	68	61	68	65	67	59	67	70	62	61	48	56	50

NOTE: We have records similar to the above going back to 1981, feel free to write / email Barry for the data .

TOTAL FLEDGES (reported)

	2004	2005	2006
MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRDS	446	689	817
EASTERN BLUEBIRDS	338	523	1040
UNIDENTIFIED BLUEBIRDS	55	228	277
X-NESTING BLUEBIRDS	36	13	41
TOTALS	875	1453	2175

% OF NESTS (reported) **THAT WERE SUCCESSFUL**

	2004	2005	2006
MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRDS	75.5	87.7	89.5
EASTERN BLUEBIRDS	65.8	75.6	79.4
UNIDENTIFIED BLUEBIRDS	21.3	47.2	65.7
X-NESTING BLUEBIRDS	100	80	91

AVERAGE FLEDGES / NESTING ATTEMPT (data base as above)

	2004	2005	2006
MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRDS	3.23	3.63	4.1
EASTERN BLUEBIRDS	2.34	3.05	3.4
UNIDENTIFIED BLUEBIRDS	0.89	1.85	2.7
X-NESTING BLUEBIRDS	3.6	2.6	3.7

TOTAL NUMBER OF BOXES MONITORED FOR SUCCESS AND FLEDGLING COUNTS:

2004 : 358

2005 : 492

2006 : 613