

Results for 2007 A huge thank you to all who maintained their nest box lines through 2007 and took the time and trouble to submit a summary of their results. Your efforts and input are much appreciated, as well as vital to bluebird survival in our area. The numbers of fledges are down somewhat from 2006, undoubtedly due to the heat wave of mid-summer. Many monitors have reported losses of both bluebird and tree swallow young due to excessive heat. On a more positive note, a record number of boxes were monitored for nest success rates and fledgling numbers.

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. I would also like to thank Joan McTavish for her help in rounding up stray reports

New Members: We welcome Bob, Courtney & Kiera Keffen (Brandon), Mary-Anne Maendal (Pembina Colony, Darlingford) and Anne Wollman (Parkview Colony, Riding Mountain), as well as Gord Hammell and George Curry (both of Erickson - taking over Lloyd Stankey's lines) to our ranks. We thank them for joining us in our endeavors. May their nest boxes be filled with eggs & young!

Remember - 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:

Ed & Yvette Huzyk (Carberry) and Lloyd Stankey (Winnipeg) are leaving our active ranks, but are still amongst the Friends, and we value their continued membership.

In Memoriam: Charles Findlay (Shoal Lake)

passed away at the age of 95 this past summer. His lines were the forerunners of the ones that the Pettingers now monitor.

Notes from the Lines: Edith Parsons

(Minnedosa) reported an unusually fine season - no infertile eggs and all hatchlings fledged (47 new bluebirds)! Jack Bryer (Boissevain) noted a decline in EABL numbers on his line near Russell.

Larry Romaniuk (Winnipeg) is now the weather editor for the new Harrowsmith's Truly Canadian Almanac-check it out!

Doug & Genella MacIntyre (Brandon) as well as Ed & Yvette Huzyk (Carberry) reported increased mortality of birds, probably due to herbicide spraying.

Brian Burrows & Diane Chatwin (Miami) were visited by large migrating flocks of EABL during late Sept-Oct. The mild weather at that time seemed to prolong their stay, and Brian's bird bath was a temptation the bluebirds just couldn't resist.

Edie Evans reported that 2007 marked her 25th year as a nest line monitor. Congratulations Edie! A testament to the fascination of this pursuit. I wonder if others might, on their 2008 summary form, give us an idea of the length of their commitment? We'd love to know, and will share the information (unless you wish otherwise).

Bert Perey (Brandon), Barbara Robinson (Brandon), Linda & Gareth Boys (Rapid City),

Bob & Jean Horton (Brandon) as well as the Danards (Killarney) noted increased nestling deaths, amongst Tree swallows in particular, most probably due to the heat wave in mid-summer.

Janet Gross (Mayfair Colony, Killarney) used an imaginative approach to solving a problem caused by raccoons. She moved some eggs out of EABL nests that had been raided and placed them in two Tree Swallow nests. All 6 eggs subsequently hatched, and one group of 3 bluebirds fledged!

Does this ever occur naturally in the wild? Well, Barbara Robinson recorded a nest south of Shilo in

1989 with 5 Tree Swallow and 1 Eastern Bluebird young - all nestlings appeared to have fledged. **Ray & Barb Pettinger** (Shoal Lake) once again banded nestlings, a total of 95 birds (65 MOBL and 30 EABL). Both the Pettingers, as well as **Gerard Wade** (Brandon), experienced the shock of vandals attacking their lines this past season. The Pettingers had 28 boxes stolen in May, and Gerard had 15 boxes extensively damaged by fireworks. In both cases active nests with eggs/young were destroyed. If ever you should suffer losses due to vandalism (and many of us have) , please follow the course of action that Ray, Barb and Gerard did: They notified the RCMP of the event (if you have physical/photo evidence of the loss, be sure to take it to the police). Harassment or destruction of song birds and their nests is a FEDERAL offense (Migratory Birds Convention Act). and the RCMP may have to be gently reminded of that. Next, both teams wrote letters to the local newspapers outlining the problem. This latter action lets the vandals know that their actions have been noticed and reported, and several benefits might arise from this. Fortunately, events on the scale seen this summer are rare. Publicizing them can often help reduce their frequency.

Thanks to all who shared their experiences and thought with us this year. Remember, we love to read about any experiences you care to share with other members.

Premature Fledging : A Cautionary Note:

Remember that there are times when it is dangerous (to the birds) to open the lids of nest boxes. On average, Eastern Bluebird nestlings take 17-19 days to fledge, and Mountain Bluebirds 17-21 days. The young should not be examined after 12 days post hatching for EABL, and 14 days for MOBL. However, these figures are not written in stone, and if in any doubt whatsoever, err on the side of caution and leave the nest alone until the young are fledged. Why? If the young are disturbed after a certain age, they may flee the nest in fear. However, they are NOT ready to live outside the protection of the nest, even with

the help of the parents. Returning them to the box, if you can catch them, may not help. Having "fledged" once, they tend to leave again before really ready and often meet a sad end. If you check boxes every 2-3 weeks, you can be fairly certain of knowing what stage the young are at. If you sample less frequently you may be faced with the dilemma of not knowing what might be in the box you wish to check. One solution, if used with care, can solve this problem. If you are using a top opening nest box only, plug the nest box opening with a rag, and very cautiously slide the lid open just enough to peek inside. If the young birds are looking up at you or otherwise appear restless, it's time to carefully secure the lid, quietly remove the nest hole plug and beat a quiet retreat! This technique should at least allow you to confirm that eggs have hatched, and perhaps obtain a count of young. Front opening boxes pose a real problem in this regard, I wouldn't recommend opening them unless you are quite certain of the age of the nestlings beforehand.

These precautions usually don't apply to Tree Swallows, whose young are much more tolerant of disturbance.

Searching for more information?

If you need to replace any of the information sheets that were included with your original monitoring kit, contact Evelyn Andrews for copies of the following (please include a SASE along with your request):

"RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BLUEBIRD NESTLINE OPERATORS"

"FACT SHEET"(Life Cycle Information / Determining the Age of Nestlings / Problems and Predators)

As well, two excellent web sites for bluebird information are:

"NABS" - THE source of information:

www.nabluebirdsociety.org/

The site now gives plans for the Noel cat / raccoon guard. Field tests of this in the Killarney and Ninette area in 2007 show this barrier has great promise.

Do consider joining this organization. We are an affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society,

and individual membership brings you their quarterly *Bluebird* journal, a fine resource.

"Sialis" - A great site!

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

There is now a link at this site devoted to "control" of House Wrens. Since wrens are a protected species (their nests, eggs and young may not be legally disturbed), and since their presence often spells disaster for bluebirds nesting nearby, the hints found at this site may be very important to any monitor faced with rising numbers of wren nestings on their line. There are even plans for wren "barriers" on nest boxes!

Also, do feel free to avail yourself of the many books and pamphlets in the Anne Smith Lending Library available at our annual Spring and Fall meetings.

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.

Web site: Clarke Snell continues to update our web site: www.mts.net/~jbdanard/. He can be reached with suggestions at (cesnell@telus.net) Clarke welcomes your input.

Incoming Newsletters: We continue to receive copies of excellent 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. Your attendance is much appreciated and enjoyed.

Outreach/Publicity: Do you ever give talks on bluebird conservation to school or community groups? If you feel the need for audio-visual

support feel free to inquire about borrowing any of the video / DVD presentations that we have shown at our meetings. Contact Barry for details.

2007 Monitors: The following members were able to submit Summary Forms for this past season: Bob & Evelyn Andrews, Clayton Baumung, Ellen Blain, Linda & Gareth Boys, Jack Bryer, Brian Burrows & Diane Chatwin, Barry & Judy Danard, Bev Dunlop & Dave Uhrnyiuk, Edie Evans & Roy Gwiazda, Lyall Franck, Vern Gilbertson, Herb Goulden & Ross Robinson, Janet Gross, Bob & Jean Horton, Ed & Yvette Huzyk, Bob, Courtney & Kiera Keffen, Doug & Genella MacIntyre, Bridget & Arnold McPhaden, Mary-Anne Maendal, Lynne & Brian Manns, Delia Milne, Edith Parsons, Colette Pierce, 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, Joan Switzer, Gerard Wade, Anne Wollman, Margaret Yorke & Amelia Reid. A total of 38 teams were active this past season.

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

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD	820	755	491	716	563	466	331	385	286	165	199	222	242
EASTERN BLUEBIRD	265	403	289	527	439	349	378	395	400	193	217	361	446
UNIDENTIFIED BLUEBIRD	170	182	142	218	221	212	261	262	217	92	184	162	135
X-NESTING BLUEBIRD	4	2	4	10	5	4	7	6	2	10	3	12	5
TOTAL	1259	1342	926	1471	1228	1031	977	1048	905	460	603	757	828
TREE SWALLOW	1100	1215	1207	1240	1214	1243	1262	1213	1317	841	1032	791	935
HOUSE WREN	184	154	168	138	92	103	112	106	77	89	59	40	70
HOUSE SPARROW	34	20	35	62	42	51	37	51	98	53	28	8	33
B-C CHICKADEE									1			3	2
RED SQUIRREL									10	2		6	1
FLYING SQUIRREL									2		2		2
TOTAL BOXES	2471	2641	2586	2650	2554	2561	2734	2584	2184	1585	1924	1900	1914
MONITORED LINES	61	68	65	67	59	67	70	62	61	48	56	50	51

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	2007
MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRDS	446	689	817	661
EASTERN BLUEBIRDS	338	523	1040	955
UNIDENTIFIED BLUEBIRDS	55	228	277	245
X-NESTING BLUEBIRDS	36	13	41	12
TOTALS	875	1453	2175	1873

% OF NESTS (reported) THAT WERE SUCCESSFUL

	2004	2005	2006	2007
MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRDS	75.5	87.7	89.5	82.1
EASTERN BLUEBIRDS	65.8	75.6	79.4	65.4
UNIDENTIFIED BLUEBIRDS	21.3	47.2	65.7	49.5
X-NESTING BLUEBIRDS	100	80	91	40

AVERAGE FLEDGES / NESTING ATTEMPT (data base as above)

	2004	2005	2006	2007
MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRDS	3.23	3.63	4.1	3.5
EASTERN BLUEBIRDS	2.34	3.05	3.4	2.5
UNIDENTIFIED BLUEBIRDS	0.89	1.85	2.7	2.3
X-NESTING BLUEBIRDS	3.6	2.6	3.7	2.4

TOTAL NUMBER OF BOXES MONITORED FOR SUCCESS AND FLEDGLING COUNTS:

2004 : 358
 2005 : 492
 2006 : 613
2007 : 1460

FRIENDS OF THE BLUEBIRDS SPRING MEETING APRIL 20, 2008

TEASURER'S REPORT

Book balance	October 21, 2007	\$613.54
Bank balance	October 21, 2007	\$613.54

RECEIPTS (Fall meeting)

Donations re lunch	\$75.10

Total receipts	\$75.10
Balance	\$688.64

DISBURSEMENTS

Brandon Riverbank Inc. (rent of multi-purpose room -\$80.00, audio visual equipment-\$20.00, tax \$1. 00)	\$101.40
Nest box supplies (Bob Andrews)	\$ 40.93
Coffee urn (Vona Cochrane)	\$ 56.49
Blank counter cheques 2 @ \$1.00	\$ 2.00
Total disbursements	\$200.82
Balance	\$487.82

Book balance	October 21, 2007	\$487.82
Bank balance	October 21, 2007	\$487.82

Number of shares held at Westoba Credit Union (34th & Victoria) 1 @ \$5.00

Respectfully submitted,

Rona Cochrane (Treasurer)

