

Results for 2011. Once again our thanks are extended to all those who sent in completed forms to help us summarize the success of our efforts. A complete list of all who submitted reports this year can be found on the next page.

Although the reduced number of reports makes conclusions difficult to compare with those of 2010, the success rates (refer to the next page) for both species are quite encouraging. The cool and wet spring weather had nesting delayed, often with larger clutches for the second nesting, the reverse of normal. Tree Swallow numbers appear to be climbing once again. As in 2011, the increased number of House Wren nests would seem to call for a change in box placement strategy on some lines. Although a protected (and thriving!) species, Wrens pose a definite threat to any bluebirds nesting nearby.

This year the total of unreported lines rose to 24, representing 554 boxes not accounted for. While some of these lines were undoubtedly not monitored due to overland flooding of ditches and roads, we have no way of knowing this unless teams report their situation to us in the fall. This raises an uncomfortable question: how many lines are simply abandoned or only very loosely checked? If your line isn't being monitored (for whatever reason), and you haven't found somebody to take over your boxes. Please consider returning boxes in good condition to Bob Andrews (and check with Bob before taking this step). Not only will this reduce the workload for Bob and his volunteer box-building crew, but addresses the fact that unmonitored lines are not thought to bring much benefit to bluebirds.

In Memoriam. Earle Farley, a founding member of the Friends, passed away at the age of 94. Although he had given up monitoring some time ago because of health concerns, he regularly turned up at our meetings to lend much valued moral support to the cause of bluebird conservation.

Retiring. Both **Barbara Robinson** and **Hugh Cowan** have retired from their nest box lines this year, and their contributions are gratefully acknowledged. Barbara is a founder of the Friends, and has in many ways been the leader of, and inspiration for, all of us who have tried to follow in her footsteps.

Although she is still very active assisting Bob with his monitoring activities, **Evelyn Andrews** is handing over treasurer duties to **Joan McTavish**. We are very grateful to both for their dedicated service. Joan has also volunteered to assist **Marg Hammell** with her lunch duties.

New Members. Two new teams joined our group this year, and we welcome **Luc & Donna Gamache** (MacGregor) as well as **Anita Haden** (Hartney).

Fund-raising. Once again game permits have been collected by members from various sources, and will be forwarded to

our purchaser for the benefit of our bank balance. Many thanks to all those involved. We would also like to thank **Carole & Murray Sangster** for generously donating their fine art print of Sage Grouse to a raffle that concludes at this year's spring meeting. Thank you as well to **Bert Perey**, **Sharon North** and **Herb Goulden** (courtesy of Manitoba Heritage Habitat Corporation) for their contributions to our door prizes.

Notes from the lines: **Ellen Blain** had one box damaged by a black bear, as well as red squirrel nests in two boxes, and flying squirrels in another in mid-May. Lloyd Stankey was occupied first by a House Sparrow, and then taken over by a bat (species undetermined) **Margaret Yorke & Millie Reid** experienced difficulties in accessing a number of boxes due to flooding and road closures, but made up for their disappointment by taking credit for several new duck families! **Ray & Barb Pettinger** also suffered a road closure leading to some boxes, but nevertheless carried out their annual banding program. They placed bands on 7 females and 46 young MOBL as well as 3 females and 39 young EABL. **Edith Parsons** came across an EABL nest with a clutch of white eggs (all hatched). **Brian & Lynne Manns** noted the toll that the cold and wet late June weather had on some of their bluebird young. **Bob & Jean Horton** continue to see habitat loss due to urban sprawl and changing agricultural practices. If this situation occurs on your line, don't hesitate to relocate your boxes in fresh territory. (as **Luc & Donna Gamache** have already undertaken to do). Always ask permission from landowners, before placing boxes and remember to send a fresh line map to **Bob Andrews** or **Ken Barclay**. **Roy Gwiazda & Edie Evans** had a close encounter of the porcupine kind, good thing Edie is still nimble on her feet! **Brian Burrows & Diane Chatwin** had both flying and red squirrels in their boxes this year, and noted bluebirds as early as April 7th. **Gerard Wade & Glenda Courchaine** experienced wasp problems within some boxes in August. This normally isn't a serious problem (in terms of numbers, not stings!), but rubbing bar soap on the underside of the lid may inhibit nest placement by wasps.

Wade & Glenda also had a concern relating to possible nest predators. If this is a concern of yours (especially if raccoons or cats are involved), check out Bob Andrew's new box design at the spring meeting on April 15th.

HELP NEEDED: Please consider volunteering for positions on the Coordinating Committee. We urgently need folks to step up for a variety of positions, and the more volunteers we receive the lighter the work load for all. More details will be revealed at the spring meeting, or you can contact Bob, Ken or Barry & Judy at your convenience.

2011 NABS Annual Convention. Looking for a fall birding adventure? The 35th annual NABS conference is taking place in California this year, hosted by the Southern California Bluebird Club. Complete conference information is online at the interesting and informative site www.socalbluebirds.org.

New bluebird book for children: "Magic Summer of Bluebirds", (Buffalo Creek Press , ISBN 9781885534194) Cost is 16.95US from <http://magicsummerofbluebirds.com>. Simply Google the book name for lots of information and reviews.

2010 Monitors. The following teams submitted reports this past year. A few other teams were unable, for a variety of reasons, to summarize their results but were kind enough to report that fact. They are not listed here.

Bob & Evelyn Andrews, Ken & Colleen Barclay, Ellen Blain, Jack Bryer, Brian Burrows & Diane Chatwin, Hugh Cowan, Judy & Barry Danard, Rick Dillabough & Joanne Brooking, Bev Dunlop, Don & Diane Falloon Edie Evans & Roy Gwiazda, Lyall Franck, Vern Gilbertson, Herb Goulden, Janet Gross, Anita Haden, Gord Hammell & George Curry, Rick Hayward, Brian Johnston, Bob Keffen, Tamara Kemp & Miguel Boulet, Luc & Donna Gamache, Herb Goulden, Dan & Michie McIntyre, Phil MacMillan, Lynne & Brian Manns, Bridget & Arnold McPhaden, Mary-Anne Maendal, Lorie Mitchell & Piet Van Dijken,, Sharon North, Edith Parsons, Bert Perey, Colette & Ken Pierce, Ray & Barb Pettinger, Ashley & Dave Randall, Carole & Murray Sangster, Hazel Skinner, Lloyd Stankey, Harold Stewart, Cindy Wright, Margaret Yorke and Millie Reid.

Odds 'n' ends.(courtesy of *Bluebird*, the official journal of the North American Bluebird Society). "Admittedly, the introduction of European Starlings to North America was an unmitigated ecological disaster. Even so, when an online

video of a swooping flock of starlings (in Ireland) started being passed around the internet recently, a lot of North American bird enthusiasts help but ooh and aah at the beauty. The video, shot by artists Liberty Smith and Sophie Windsor Clive, captures thousands of starlings as they swoop and swirl before settling in for the night. The phenomenon, known as *murmuration*, looks for all the world like a school of fish moving in unison." View the video at <http://islandsandrivers.co.uk/>

Contacts. Do you have questions, concerns or suggestions? We always welcome new ideas for the newsletter as well as meeting agendas. Feel free to contact any of the following: Bob & Evelyn Andrews (727-8985(andy208@mts.net) or Ken & Colleen Barclay(728-3154, kcbarc@hotmail.com), Barry&Judy Danard (523-8258, jbdanard@mts.net)

This is the last newsletter that I will produce as your chairperson. Both Judy and myself have enjoyed working on the coordinating committee of the Friends, and are very grateful for having the opportunity to serve all our members. We wish to express our gratitude to our partners on the committee, past and present, for their dedicated work, and express our best wishes to them as well as to the new executive members in the years ahead.

Although we are retiring from our organizing positions, we are still deeply committed to our bluebird lines, and look forward to seeing all of you at future bluebird meetings.
Barry & Judy Danard

2011 NESTING DATA SUMMARY
(numbers in brackets reflect changes from 2010 data)

	Mountain Bluebirds	Eastern Bluebirds	Unidentified Bluebirds	X-breeding Bluebirds	TOTALS	Tree Swallows	House Wrens	House Sparrows	Black-capped Chickadees
Total Nests	150 (-95)	498(-120)	126(-17)	0	774(-239)	979(+4))	88(+19)	n/a	n/a
Successful Nests *	125(-60)	386(-73)	53(0)	0					
Fledglings **	440 (-439)	1508 (-371)	188 (-6)	0	2136 (-769)				
Fledges per nesting attempt*	2.9	3.0	1.5	0					
success rate of nests (as a %) *	83.3	77.5	42.1	0					

(* = based on 1494 monitored nests) (** = based on 725 monitored nests)