

Friends of the Bluebirds Spring Meeting
April 22, 2018 **Riverbank Discovery Centre, Brandon**

The spring meeting of the Friends of the Bluebirds was held at the Riverbank Discovery Centre in Brandon on Sunday, April 22, 2018. Members present: 36 (We also have several regular members and several new members who were unable to attend.)

Chairman Gord Hammell called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm and welcomed everyone. In the absence of Linda Boys, Donna Gamache acted as secretary.

Agenda: had been previously mailed to everyone, and a few copies were available.

MOTION: Herb Golden/Carole Sangster -- that the agenda be approved as presented. Carried

Minutes: also previously mailed out and copies distributed

Motion: Herb Golden/Linda Pearn -- that the minutes be adopted as distributed. Carried

Herb reported that he has 14 boxes on hand. Call him if you want some. He has used most of the \$500 grant received from Manitoba Naturalists Bluebird Fund for building materials.

He also mentioned that the **Nature Conservancy is looking for shorebird monitors**. There will be a workshop May 23-25th at Jiggins Bluff (near Oak Lake). This monitoring will be mainly around Oak Lake and Whitewater Lake.

If interested, or for information, contacts at: miglecia@manomet.org
or rebekah.neufeld@natureconservancy.ca

Herb and other members mentioned that **strings, baler twine and horsehair** can sometimes be problems in bluebird nests, as the birds can get their feet caught in them. If you see some of these when checking your nests, remove them or cut them to prevent problems.

Treasurer's report: Colleen Barclay

Receipts and expenditures were reviewed. Balance is: \$962.30

Line Report: Ken Barclay

There is a bluebird line south of Carroll that needs someone to take it over. Ken reported that the wire meshes that go over the hole to stop raccoons work well.

Several members reported dead fledglings in boxes. These were probably due to other causes (not raccoons), perhaps spraying of fields causing a lack of insects for the birds to eat.

Monitoring Data Report: Linda Pearn (info also shown on website)

She has reports for 44 lines (32 teams) in 2017. There were 1291 boxes used (with a success rate of around 73% for both bluebirds and tree swallows.) She has also been comparing mountain vs. eastern bluebirds, and it appears that mountain bluebirds had more of their eggs that hatched and fledged, but she will do further checking on these numbers. Linda has maps that show where many of the lines are and which variety of bluebird. Of the 44 lines, 13 had mountain bluebirds.

Herb thanked Linda for her double duty work (monitoring data plus the website)

Membership Report: Carole Sangster

She did a lot of update on the membership list, by e-mail and telephone. There are still 8 she has not been able to check. There are 87 entries on her list (120 individuals). Of these, 23 are 'friends' only, without boxes, and 12 have been removed from the list.

Library Report: Colleen Barclay

Books and magazines can be borrowed and returned at the next meeting.

NABS Report: Barry Danard

Barry was absent but had reported that due to insufficient numbers he had not sent any old licenses lately. He will send more when numbers warrant it.

Website report: Linda Pearn

Since the website was started there have been 20,000+ visitors. She still has \$125 credit there as she has not needed more help. Some members' email addresses were removed to prevent unwanted correspondence, and a few comments had to be removed.

Hats and Decals: Erica Alex

She will send another order for these if members wish to order them. (here by fall meeting)

Friends of the Bluebirds on-line Yahoo group: Erica -- Nothing new there.

Newsletter: Erica -- It will be sent out shortly.

MOTION: Edith Parsons/ Edie Evans --- to adopt all the reports. Carried

There was a short discussion about Permethrin which is useful for repelling wood ticks, but is restricted in Canada, and you can no longer get it mailed from the U.S.

Next Meeting: October 21st, 2018

Motion to adjourn: Murray Sangster

Door prizes were drawn for and handed out. After a break for coffee and snacks, we listened to our **guest speaker: Melanie Dubois "The Buzz on Bees"**

She is a scientist from Operation Pollinators and explained about the decline in Manitoba native bees (approximately 218 kinds in Manitoba). These have declined between 60 and 95% in recent years, particularly due to the use of neonicotinoids (a class of pesticides which is very toxic to insects.) This decrease is important as a factor for bird mortality.

Minutes Taken by Donna Gamache, in the absence of Linda Boys.