



Friends of the Bluebirds

Summer 2018 Newsletter

NEW! Friends of the Bluebirds Merchandise

With the launch of our new logo last year, it seemed only reasonable to put it to good use. So, we have worked with Regent Custom Cresting and Leech Printing to develop first batch of products: caps and window decals! The first orders were filled last season and the merchandise looks great! As a club, Friends of the Bluebirds decided on light gray caps with a simplified logo on the front, and three inch round stickers to be used in home and vehicle windows. Cap orders will be placed following the spring meeting of each season on a paid-to-order basis. The caps will be ready for pick up at fall meetings. Window decals will be available year round.

Cap: \$18.00 (including tax)

Decal: \$2.00

Cap + Decal: \$20.00

Orders can be placed with Erica Alex prior to May 31st, in order to have your caps by the fall meeting. Payment of cash or cheque is accepted. We hope that these products are useful to you both in the field and in promoting the name and efforts of the Friends of the Bluebirds club, Happy Bluebirding!



Visit Our Website!

With great thanks to Linda Pearn and Pivotal Elements Web Design, we would like to introduce the Friends of the Bluebirds Website!

Here you can find information about the clubs history, bluebirds, nest boxes and nest monitoring, as well as photos and comments and stories from club members.

We encourage all to visit and use the website, give us your feedback we'd love to hear it!

Tell your friends and direct anyone who enquires about bluebirds and the club to our page, the link can be found below:

mbbluebirds.org

From the Archives

Bluebirds in a Chimney

On June 19th, 2016 Barry Hammond and Mary Mathias had two up close encounters with bluebirds, in one day! Their home near Inwood, MB has a Selkirk chimney (silver pipe) and on this day they heard a “rattle, rattle” from inside the chimney and out popped a bluebird! Not 20 minutes later, “rattle, rattle” and out popped a second bluebird! “Although we are not expert birders, I was very sure we has never seen birds like these around the house previously. After viewing the first bird, I consulted a couple of our bird books and was convinced that it was a male Eastern Bluebird. It’s back was an incredible shade of deep blue and there were reddish tints on its underside. Both birds flew off when we released them and to my knowledge, never returned. Our home is at the intersection of Road 98 North and Road 1 east, near Inwood. We travel on highways 7 and 17 from Winnipeg to this property and have never seen bluebird nesting boxes on these routes. I believe there are some on highway 8.

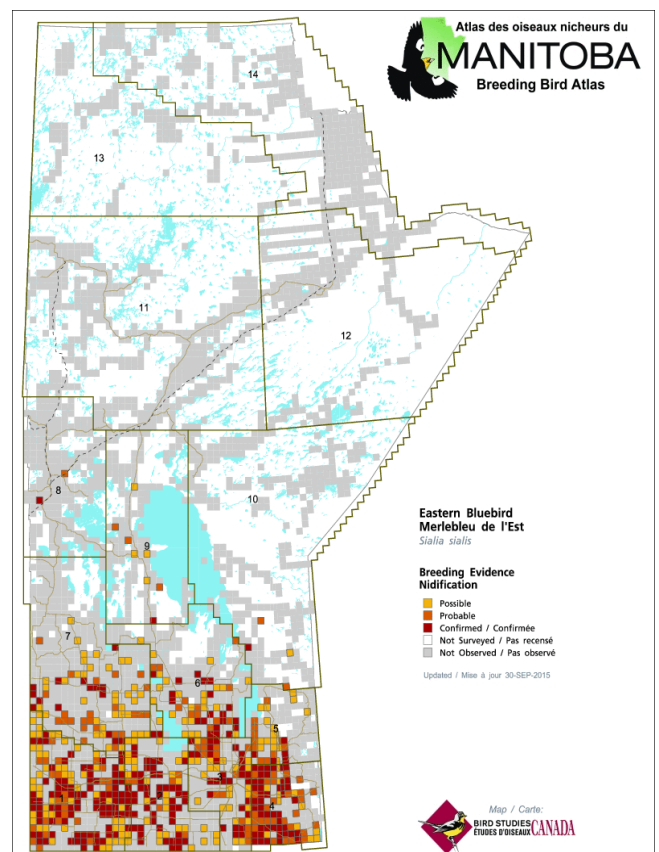


In October of 2016, an Eastern Bluebird explored what the northern reaches of Manitoba had to offer!

“Hello Friends of the Bluebirds, I am located in Flin Flon Manitoba and saw this Eastern Bluebird in my ornamental apple tree. Should this bird be this far north?”

- Tyler Abrahamson

Christian Artuso of the Manitoba Breeding Bird Survey (and many Manitoba birding conservation projects) offered that Eastern Bluebirds often breed around the Pas, and that this was likely a case of fall dispersing. There have been a couple vagrant records at Thompson and Churchill over the years.



What Eggs-actly is Going on Here?

As Bluebirders we know, before we have nestlings, we must have eggs. In most cases there are simple formulas for determining the identity of these eggs, blue means bluebird, white means Tree Swallow. But; what happens when things aren't always as they seem? Here's a quick and simple guide for the most common eggs, and their anomalies in your boxes.



Eastern Bluebird

Colour: sky blue

Average clutch size: 4-5

Average length: 2.7cm

Shape: Oval



Eastern Bluebirds: White Eggs

On uncommon occasions, bluebirds can lay eggs that lack their distinct blue hue. This can be the result of a genetic anomaly carried by the female, or poor nutrition during egg laying.

These can be mistaken for Swallow eggs, or perhaps another unknown species. In these cases it is important to note the presence of bluebirds near the box and the as well as egg and nest characteristics.



Mountain Bluebird: Large Clutch Sizes

The eggs of Mountain Bluebirds are very similar to the eggs of Eastern Bluebirds, but larger clutch sizes are more common in this species.

Mountain Bluebirds can often have clutch sizes of 6-7 eggs

On very rare occasions, pink pigmentation has been observed in this species.



Tree Swallow

Colour: white

Average clutch size: 4-8 eggs (often large clutches)

Average length: 1.4cm

Shape: slight oval, rounder than bluebird eggs

A Comparison of Bluebird nesting data for 2013 to 2017 - Reported by Friends of the Bluebirds

	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
# OF Lines reported:	41	40	50	49	41
Number of team Monitors:	30	28	38	37	32
Boxes					
empty boxes	175	133	189	201	194
boxes removed	NR	NR	NR	NR	11
Total # of boxes used:	1271	1267	1372	1394	1334
Total # of boxes:	1477	1389	1561	1595	1539
Number of nests					
Mountain bb	107	100	199	104	88
Eastern bb	546	566	446	547	371
Unidentified bb	39	69	90	47	87
Xnesting bb	3	1	6	0	0
Tree swallows	821	776	811	806	753
Wrens	68	40	57	77	52
Chickadee	1	3	1	1	1
Number of eggs					
Mountain bb	429	380	484	423	402
Eastern bb	2193	2361	2255	2197	1439
Unidentified bb	140	217	303	179	273
Xnesting bb	15	5	24	0	0
Tree Swallows	4092	3817	3973	3700	2502
Wrens	201	133	150	249	64
chickadee	NR	5	7	NR	NR
Number of successful nests					
Mountain bb	77	66	66	67	108
Eastern bb	407	443	403	396	314
Unidentified bb	24	33	48	27	60
Xnesting bb	3	1	1	0	0
Tree Swallows	598	576	628	621	404
Wrens	39	27	19	32	13
chickadee	1	1	1	1	1
Number of fledges					
Mountain bb	389	313	328	296	323
Eastern bb	1636	1809	1572	1600	1220
Xnesting bb	12	2	3	0	0
Unidentified bb	98	130	135	107	178

Tree	3265	2933	3141	2977	1803
Swallows					
Wrens	185	124	107	201	69
chickadee	5	7	NR	NR	
Mortality					
bb nests with dead birds	33	40	41	80	43
bb dead young	81	98	122	282	114
TRSW nest with dead birds	91	32	44	119	60
TRSW dead young	356	106	127	423	217
Success Rate (%) *					
Bluebirds	73.5	73.8	69.9	70.2	88.3
Tree	72.8	74.2	77.4	77.0	53.7
Swallows					

* # successful nests/ # nests
NR = NO REPORTS

From the Field

On [July 2nd](#) Ray and I checked bluebird boxes at our Wattsview line (southwest of Birtle) and found two young birds about 12 days old in this box. At the last visit the box had 5 eggs and the parents were nowhere to be seen. They were a good age to band but we needed to see the parents first. As Ray got back in the truck both parents suddenly appeared, a female Eastern and a male Mountain! And fortunately they were very obliging about posing next to the box.

It has been a few years since we have had a cross-nesting, but each time it has been a female EABL and a male MOBL.

- Barb and Ray Pettinger



Contact List

<p>Co-Chairperson: Herb Goulden Phone 204-728-8370</p> <p>Co-Chairperson: Gord Hammell Phone: 204-636-2433</p> <p>Treasurer: Colleen Barclay</p> <p>Secretary: Linda Boys</p> <p>Line Manager: Ken Barclay</p>	<p>Membership Coordinator: Carole Sangster</p> <p>NABS Liason: Barry and Judy Danard</p> <p>Newsletter and Promotional Merchandise: Erica Alex</p> <p>Data Coordinator and Webmaster : Linda Pearn</p>
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Special thanks to our newest executive members, thank you for providing the vital support the Friends of the Bluebirds needs to survive and thrive as an organization.