

second broods appear to be attempted by this species in these northern regions.

Again this season we observed several unusual occurrences on our nestlines: nestbox #516, on the C.P.R. just east of Sidney, was home for a litter of three Red Squirrels (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*), but the mother moved her family to safer quarters after we took the young from the nest to photograph them. Deer Mice (*Peromyscus maniculatus*) usually take over the nest boxes in the autumn, but in June, 1969, we found a Deer Mouse nest in nestbox #544, which only a week earlier had been in the possession of a pair of Eastern Bluebirds. Three bluebird eggs were found intact under the mouse nest. Nestbox #88, smashed to the ground by vandals, was occupied in this unusual position by a pair of Mountain Bluebirds and a set of five eggs laid. We replaced the nest atop a fencepost, but were obliged to leave it on its side so as not to spill the eggs. The family was safely raised.

On at least six occasions this year we found mated pairs of Mountain Bluebirds quietly perched on the high wire along a road, with no possible nest available. As soon as we took a nestbox from the car they showed an excited interest, and in every case the nest was scarcely nailed up before the male was at the entrance. Is it possible that these are locally-raised birds, with no instinct to go farther north in spring migration?

Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) which have never been an important statistic in our nestbox totals, showed a marked increase this season, nine nestlings being listed. The last three starling nests found held families of dead young. Possibly this species is finding it difficult to cope with natural enemies in the wild and the parent birds are falling victims to predators while food-hunting for their young.

During the Easter vacation, 1969, we ran a new nestline north from Brandon, then east past Minnedosa

and through Neepawa to Gladstone, then south to Austin on Highway No. 1. A total of 100 nest boxes was set out and we later listed nine Mountain and three Eastern Bluebird nestings, which is an excellent start for a new line. This brings our total of nestboxes to 2100, but we estimate that 100 of these are no longer active for one reason or other.

Nesting totals for 1969

Mountain Bluebirds (first broods)	350
Eastern Bluebirds (first broods)	65
Tree Swallows (estimated)	1200
House Wrens	25
House Sparrows	20
Starlings	9
Deer Mice	35
Red Squirrel	1

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER IN THE KANANASKIS VALLEY

by William J. Merilees, Biology Department,
Selkirk College, Castlegar, B.C.

One mile south of the Trans-Canada Highway on the Kananaskis to Coleman Forestry Road one Red-headed Woodpecker was seen on June 27, 1969. The bird, in full adult plumage, was sitting on a roadside fence post. No other individuals of this species were seen, though a brief search was made.

Salt (*The birds of Alberta*, second edition, 1966) gives the closest record as 20 miles west of Turner Valley, approximately 30 miles south-south-east. Although this not an exceptional record, it is worth documenting as the range and status of this species may be changing.

APOLOGIES!

We are sorry that we had to raise the membership fee and we hope you won't think of dropping the Blue Jay. Use tear-out page and renew promptly and urge others to join us.