

A YOUNG BIRD ENTHUSIAST

by Lane Harris, age 8, Kindersley

My mother will help me with this letter as I am only in grade three and eight and one-half years old. I write to tell you of my summer adventures with birds.

On June 21st I got up at 3:30 a.m. and travelled with my mother and friend on a breeding bird survey. We saw or heard 997 birds representing 47 different species.

I also recorded 17 nests on a nesting bird survey. Of these the most interesting was a Swainson's Hawk. We visited the nest in May and found 3 eggs ten feet up in the crotch of a poplar tree. My mother took pictures each trip 'til August 16th, when only one of the three birds remained. This one left the nest soon after this date.

This is the first year I have helped with bird work, and I am already looking forward to next year.

TENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BRANDON JUNIORS' NESTING PROJECT

by John Lane and Vern Bauman,
Brandon, Manitoba

Our 1970 nestbox report features a marked jump in the Eastern Bluebirds, *Sialia sialis*; a mysterious malady that attacked and killed many partly-fledged Mountain Bluebirds, *Sialia currucoides*; important extensions of our "satellite nestlines"; and a start on a banding program with 1300 Mountain and over 300 Eastern Bluebirds banded during the nesting season.

After their usual slow start, Eastern Bluebirds appeared in surprisingly large numbers at our nestboxes, due largely to the new Trans-Canada Highway nestline, running east to a point beyond MacGregor, Manitoba. We found that the farther east we went on this line the more plentiful the Eastern Bluebirds became, and the scarcer the Mountain Bluebird. None of the latter species was found in our nestboxes east of Austin, Manitoba.

In an area roughly bounded by Griswold and Oak Lake on the north and by Souris and Hartney on the south, first-brood baby Mountain Bluebirds died by the nestful from some cause as yet undetermined. Between 40 and 75 nestboxes were affected with an estimated loss of 200 to 350 bluebirds. Only Mountain Bluebirds were affected, and we found no evidence of this malady in second-brood nestings. Insecticide poisonings are suspected.

In 1969 Ed Robinson of Wawanesa, Manitoba, offered to set out and care for 35 of our nestboxes, and in 1970 he took another 15. Also this year the Rev. H. Dykman of Kenton, Manitoba, set out 50 of our boxes, and two Souris, Manitoba, men, Stan Giles and Art Michie, built and set out 50 nestboxes in the Souris area. All of these nestboxes bear our numbers and all are included in our yearly totals. Giles and Michie are already planning further extensions to their satellite nestline.

On the other hand, we were obliged to abandon the "Brandon-Gladstone-Austin" nestline set out during the winter of 1968-69. House Sparrows, much in evidence even in 1969, the first year of operation, were found in 1970 to have occupied over half the 100 nestboxes that comprise this nestline. Last year we listed nine Mountain Bluebird and three Eastern nestings from this nestline; this year we found just one certain nesting of the Mountain Bluebird, and none of the Eastern species. We are salvaging many of the nestboxes from this line, and propose to set them out on a new line running between Carberry and Glenboro, Manitoba.

From an estimated 2400 nestboxes in operation during the 1970 season, we list the following results:

Nesting totals for 1970

Mountain Bluebird (first broods)	435
Eastern Bluebirds (first broods)	113
Tree Swallow (estimated)	1200
House Sparrow	69
House Wren	30
Starlings	14
Deer Mouse	27
Red Squirrel	1