

CALGARY BLUEBIRD TRAIL — 1975

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Eighteen new bird houses were added to the Calgary Bluebird Trail in the early spring of 1975 bringing the total number of boxes along the trail to 400. As in the spring of 1974, all nesting boxes were cleaned out and sprayed with a creolin solution. Each nesting box was checked and the contents recorded four times between the third week in May and the first week in August.

Of the 400 boxes, 34 were vandalized before nesting began, 9 after nesting started and only 1 was unoccupied on all visits, leaving 356 boxes used by birds. Excluding the 34 vandalized before the nesting period, 97.3% of the available nesting boxes were occupied. There were 454 bird nests and 7 Deer Mice nests in the 356 nesting boxes, some houses being used up to four times.

Table 1 analyzes the nesting success and losses for 1975. The average clutch size for Mountain Bluebirds was 5.33 and for Tree Swallows 5.86. In 35 nest boxes there were two or

more broods by the same species — 27 of the boxes being occupied by House Sparrows and 8 by Mountain Bluebirds. Two species nested in the same box in 39 cases, as follows: sparrow then swallow, 18; sparrow then wren, 2; sparrow then bluebird, 1; swallow then sparrow, 3; swallow then wren, 2; bluebird then swallow, 9; bluebird then sparrow, 3; bluebird then wren, 1.

The total losses for all species from the egg-laying stage to the time that the young left the nest was 959 (39.5%) of which 463 (19%) were House Sparrow losses due to destruction by the authors. The major causes of the losses were (a) competition between species, especially Mountain Bluebirds and Tree Swallows, (b) road construction on a short stretch of the route, and (c) "blowfly" infestation of some young Tree Swallows.

In the final analysis, the success of the trail in terms of number of young that left the nests in 1975 was very similar to that of 1974, with an increase of 92 fledged young in 1975.

Table 1. Summary of Nesting Success by Species, Calgary Bluebird Trail, 1975. (Numbers in parenthesis are losses from the previous stage.)

<i>Species</i>	<i>Nests</i>	<i>Eggs Laid</i>	<i>Eggs Hatched</i>	<i>Young Fledged</i>	<i>Young Left Nest</i>
Mountain Bluebird	61	325	231 (94)	204 (27)	204 (0)
Tree Swallow	272	1593	1293 (300)	1225 (68)	1225 (0)
House Sparrow	110	463	155 (308)*	0 (155)*	0 (0)
House Wren	10	40+	40+ (0)	40+ (0)	40+ (0)
Black-capped Chickadee	1	7	3 (4)	0 (3)	0 (0)
Totals	454	2428+	1722+(706)	1469+(253)	1469+(0)

*Destroyed by authors.

