



CALGARY BLUEBIRD TRAIL — 1976

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In the spring of 1976, the Calgary Bluebird Trail was again prepared for the upcoming nesting season. The nesting boxes were cleaned out, disinfected with a creolin solution, and repaired or replaced, as required.

Each box was checked and the contents recorded four times between the third week in May and the first week in August. For the first time, a number of Mountain Bluebirds and Swallows were banded.

Of the 400 boxes, 55 were vandalized before nesting began, 6 after nesting started and only 9 were unoccupied on all visits, leaving 330 boxes used by birds. Excluding the 55 vandalized before the nesting season, 95.7% of the available nesting boxes were occupied. There were 425 bird nests and 1 Deer Mouse nest in the 330 boxes, some houses being used up to four times.

Table 1 analyzes the nesting success

Table 1. Summary of Nesting Success by Species, Calgary Bluebird Trail, 1976.
(Numbers in parentheses are losses from the previous stage.)

Species	Nests	Eggs Laid	Eggs Hatched	Young Fledged	Young
Mountain Bluebird	72	374	326 (48)	314 (12)	314
Tree Swallow	249	1433	1194 (239)	1115 (79)	1115
House Sparrow	100	434	135 (299)*	9 (126)*	9
House Wren	2	12	10 (2)	10 (0)	10
Boreal Chickadee	2	12	12 (0)	12 (0)	12
Totals	425	2265	1677 (588)	1460 (217)	1460

*Destroyed by author.

and losses for 1976. The average clutch size for Mountain Bluebirds was 5.19 and the Tree Swallows 5.76. In 43 nest boxes there were two or more broods by the same species -25 were House Sparrows, 15 Mountain Bluebirds and 3 Tree Swallows. Different species nested in the same box 36 times, as follows: sparrow then swallow, 12; sparrow then wren, 1; sparrow then bluebird, 1; swallow then sparrow, 2; bluebird then swallow, 19; bluebird then swallow then bluebird, 1.

The total losses for all species from

egg-laying to young leaving the nest was 805 (35.5%) of which 425 (18%) were House Sparrow losses due to destruction by the author. Losses for the other species were mainly the result of competition and egg infertility.

In 1976, 693 birds were banded which 84 were Mountain Bluebirds and 609 were Tree Swallows. This was the first year that Boreal Chickadees used the nest boxes. The nesting success in 1976 was similar to that of 1975 with a decrease of 9 fledged young in 1976.



Mountain Bluebird on nest

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