

# EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL NESTBOX REPORT FROM BRANDON, MANITOBA

MRS. JOHN LANE, 1701 Lorne Avenue, Brandon; MISS MAMIE McCOWAN, 1415 Eighth Street, Brandon and MRS. R. H. PATMORE, 1261 Thirteenth Street, Brandon, Manitoba.

"The Friends of the Bluebirds" were busy again in 1978. As usual, two meetings were held in the home of Mrs. John Lane, the co-ordinator. At the March meeting the "Friends" had the opportunity to update their nestlines on topographical maps, to take a supply of nest boxes, where needed, and to receive forms for recording their observations for 1978. Results and experiences were discussed at a fall meeting. Reports were brought to this meeting or sent in to Mrs. Lane. The records submitted were used in compiling the following report.

In 1978, 90 new boxes were set out, bringing the total to 4840, and a number of old boxes were rebuilt or replaced. As in 1977, the stock of nest boxes and extra tops was plentiful at all times due to the excellent work of Mr. W. Forsyth and Mr. John Plum.

The Eastern Bluebird population was down in 1978. In the Camp Hughes area, where she monitors 140 nest boxes, Mrs. Barbara Robinson reported only five nestings of Eastern Bluebirds and says, "I feel sure the drop in Eastern Bluebird nestings must be attributed to the past two very cold winters experienced in their wintering area in the south-eastern states where considerable mortality resulted."

Mrs. Robinson reported that on 30 May, nest box No. 482 was occupied by Mountain Bluebirds with 8 eggs.

Her report also states that House Sparrows were down from 13 nestings in 1977 to only 2 in 1978, which she attributes to her moving the nest boxes lower on the posts. House Wrens, however, took over most of these same boxes and occupied 8 of them compared with only 3 House Wren nestings in 1977.

Mr. Jim Spear, Russell, Manitoba, also reported House Wren nestings are increasing, showing a count of 6 nestings in 1978 but only 2 in 1977.

Mr. Spear tends extensive nestlines and besides his specific records he makes these general comments. "It was a good year and very little sparrow trouble. Had more wrens, by the way. An interesting note about nest No. 4481 which started with a Mountain Bluebird as occupant with one egg. Then a House Sparrow took over and had 5 eggs with the Mountain Bluebird egg. I left them and the sparrow hatched the bluebird egg and the bluebird left the nest with the sparrows. There were no Eastern this year but the Mountain bluebirds were good. The all over average per nest fully feathered would be 5."

A good example that moving entire lines of previously House-Sparrow-infested nest boxes to a new area brings good results, was proved by Cliff Findlay's (Shoal Lake) experiment with 29 such boxes moved to St. Lazare community pasture area in 1977. In 1978 he had 24 nestings of





*Friends of the Bluebirds" May Tucker and Betty Shankland repairing a house in the Deleau-Oak Lake area. The Farm Paper*

Mountain Bluebirds, 15 of Tree Swallows and only one House Sparrow.

In the Lauder, Grande-Clairiere area, Alice and Perry Hopkins report-

ed no black flies in 1978. Excellent results with Mountain Bluebird nestings and of special interest were two broods of Eastern Bluebirds in nest No. 352. They found the first



Table 1. OCCUPANCY IN NEST BOXES 1978

Occupant	Number of Nestings
Mountain Bluebird .....	552
Eastern Bluebird .....	10
Tree Swallow .....	355
House Sparrow .....	104
Starling .....	4
House Wren .....	47
Mice .....	15
Squirrel .....	4
Chipmunk .....	1

nesting with 6 young on 22 May. On 2 June young had left the nest. On 25 June there were 5 Eastern Bluebird eggs and 9 July there were 5 young. By 28 July they had left the nest. The Hopkins monitored 105 boxes and visited them 5 times between 22 May and 16 August, when they cleaned them all.

1978 saw the Brandon Junior Birders active again. Mrs. Lane and four Juniors monitored the Brandon-Carberry nestline. Also, with Mr. Ken James as volunteer driver, Dave Randall and two Juniors spent valuable time in late July and early August in maintenance of the Kenton, Hamiota and Miniota lines. The total of 81 boxes had not been attended since 1975. Most of these nest boxes were filled to the top. However, one Eastern Bluebird and 7 Mountain Bluebirds were found as occupants with young. All nest boxes are now in readiness for 1979.

Mamie and Helen McCowan, who check a nestline in the Kemnay-Beresford area, wonder: "Do wrens drive out bluebirds and Tree Swallows?" They report a total of 4 House Wren nestings. Nest box No. 1435 was occupied by Mountain Bluebirds with 5 eggs on 16 June; on 3 July the box was filled with a House Wren's twig nest. and No. 1530 was occupied by a Tree Swallow's nest

with one egg on 21 June, and on 7 July contained a House Wren's nest with one egg.

This report has been made possible through the work of "The Friends of the Bluebirds" from Boissevain — Mr. and Mrs. W. Moncur; Carberry — Mr. and Mrs. Bob Anderson and family; Glenboro — Mr. Peter Sawatzky; Hartney — Mr. and Mrs. Perry Hopkins; Headingly — Mr. and Mrs. Carl Gompf and family; Killarney — Mr. and Mrs. Barry Danard, Mr. Lloyd Powell, Ruth Goerzen; Miami — Mr. and Mrs. Dale Robinson; Neepawa — Mrs. Fred Murray, Don, Ken, Mac and Mary Murray, Mr. Ed Sage, Mr. and Mrs. W. G. Moger; Newdale — Mr. and Mrs. Roy Everitt; Oak Lake — Mr. and Mrs. C. Penner and family; Pratt — Mr. and Mrs. Les North; Russell — Mr. and Mrs. Jim Spear; Shoal Lake — Mr. Cliff Findlay; Souris — Mr. and Mrs. Art Michie; Wawanesa — Mr. and Mrs. Ed. Robinson, Mr. Lloyd Paulson; Brandon — Mrs. Barbara Robinson, Dick and Hazel Patmore, Daisy and Muriel Patmore, Margaret, Helen and Mamie McCowan, Betty Shankland, May Tucker, John and Marion Robinson, Ken James, Dave Randall, Ken Leslie, Mr. W. Forsyth, Mr. John Plum, Steven McFarlane, Martin McFarlane, Ken Burton, David Voorhis, Frank Brammall, Esther Brammall, Mrs. John Lane.