

TWENTIETH ANNUAL NESTBOX REPORT FROM BRANDON, MANITOBA

MRS. JOHN LANE, 1701 Lorne Avenue, Brandon, Manitoba R7A 0W2, and BARBARA ROBINSON, HAZEL PATMORE, MAMIE McCOWAN and BETTY SHANKLAND.

The "Friends of the Bluebirds" had another busy and interesting year in 1980.

Dr. R. C. Rounds, Department of Geography, Brandon University, introduced Mr. Hugh Munro, honor graduate of Brandon University during the March meeting held in the home of the co-ordinator, Mrs. John Lane. In the spring of 1980 Mr. Munro began a multi-faceted study on our bluebird nestlines towards a Master's degree at the University of Manitoba. With the co-operation of the "Friends of the Bluebirds" and with the use of records from the files of the late John Lane, an excellent start has been made.

Dr. Rounds and Mr. Munro have already written papers concerning fertility in albinistic eggs, a review of hybridization, and variation in clutch sizes. The first paper has been accepted by "Auk". The others have been submitted to scientific journals.

On 21 September the "Friends of the Bluebirds" met to present their reports for 1980. Some interesting observations were recorded.

Barbara Robinson (Camp Hughes and South Shilo lines) reported two successful hatchings in the same box of Mountain Bluebird white eggs — first clutch of 5 eggs and second of 4 eggs. Mr. and Mrs. Perry Hopkins of the Hartney area reported 6 Mountain Bluebird white eggs hatched in box No. 610. Betty Shankland, monitoring

the South Griswold line, had 5 Mountain Bluebirds hatch from white eggs in nest box No. 4181. On Old No. 1 Highway to Carberry, Hugh Munro reported two successful hatchings of Mountain Bluebirds from white eggs, 5 young in box No. 800 and 5 young in box No. 4344A.

Barbara Robinson's report also noted three nestings in natural cavities, one of the Eastern Bluebird in the Camp Hughes area and two of the Mountain Bluebird in the South Shilo area.

Peter Sawatzky (Carberry-Glenboro line) reported two unusual incidents. On 29 May, in nest box No. 612, he found 3 dead young Mountain Bluebirds and 3 eggs. There had been no nest built. Eggs had been laid on the bare wood of the box floor. Also for 29 May (nest box No. 929 containing 6 young Mountain Bluebirds), Peter's report reads, "One young with deformed bill, criss-crossed (like crossbills). The bird seemed quite healthy, but smaller than other young in nest."

The reason for many instances of dead young of Tree Swallows found in several areas is not known. We suspect prolonged rain resulting in lack of food or prolonged drought before the rain. There were a few reports of dead young Mountain Bluebirds.

On 3 July the Brandon Junior Birders, for the first time, watched

carrion beetles at work in three separate nest boxes (No. 23, No. 45 and No. 43) where dead young of Tree Swallows were found. This was on the low road to Shilo from Brandon.

On this nest line Black-capped Chickadees were found nesting in box No. 22 on 18 June. Barbara Robinson had one nesting of Black-capped Chickadees on the South Shilo line.

The summary of occupancy in nest boxes during 1980 is in Table 1. It is of interest that a nesting of the Northern Flying Squirrel was reported.

The major nestings of the Eastern Bluebird occur in sandy country, such as Barbara Robinson's Camp Hughes and South Shilo areas where she reported 21 nestings and in Hartney South where Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Thomas reported 7 nestings.

The largest total of Mountain Bluebird nestings on our extensive miles of nest lines was found in Mr. and Mrs. Jim Spear's area (Russell, Shellmouth, Churchbridge and valley). Mr. Spear reported 152 nestings of Mountain Bluebirds. Some of these, a small flock, were so tame they flew to Mrs. Spear and perched on her head.

On 28 September the beautiful sighting of a flock of 40 to 50 Eastern Bluebirds in fall migration near Treesbank was reported by Betty Shankland and party. Near the same

locality on 14 September they had seen a mixed flock of some 40 Mountain and Eastern Bluebirds.

This report is made possible by the volunteer work of the "Friends of the Bluebirds": from *Boissevain* — Mr. and Mrs. W. Moncur, Charles Reid; *Carberry* — Mr. and Mrs. Bob Anderson and family; *Erickson* — Mr. and Mrs. Keith Johnston, Melvin and Shirley, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Koping; *Forrest* — Mrs. G. S. Parsons and 4-H Girls Glenda Parsons, Sharon Hansen and Melanie Miller; *Glenboro* — Peter Sawatzky; *Hartney* — Mr. and Mrs. Perry Hopkins, Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Thomas; *Headingly* — Mr. and Mrs. Carl Gompf, Jim and Jean Robson; *Killarney* — Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Powell, Mrs. Vera Turner; *Miami* — Mr. and Mrs. Dale Robinson; *Miniota* — Mr. and Mrs. Jack Hanlin and grandchildren; *Napinka* — George T. Watson; *Neepawa* — Mrs. Fred Murray, Don and Ken, George Mossop; *Newdale* — Mr. and Mrs. Roy Everitt, Mr. and Mrs. Oran English; *Ninette* — Mr. and Mrs. Monroe Wright; *Oak Lake* — Rob and Heather Penner, Mr. and Mrs. Evan Baillie; *Russell* — Mr. and Mrs. Jim Spear; *Shoal Lake* — Cliff Findlay; *Souris* — Mr. and Mrs. Art Michie; *Tilston* — E. J. Jones; *Virden* — Mr. and Mrs. John Turton; *Wawanesa* — Ed Robinson; *Winnipeg* — Robert

Table 1. OCCUPANCY OF NEST BOXES IN THE BRANDON, MANITOBA AREA IN 1980.

<i>Occupant</i>	<i>Number of nestings</i>
Mountain Bluebirds	694
Eastern Bluebirds	41
Bluebirds not identified as to species	6
Tree Swallows	506
House Sparrows	111
House Wrens	40
Starlings	2
Black-capped Chickadees	2
Mice	9
Squirrels	2

Burch; *Brandon* — Mrs. Barbara Robinson, John and Marion Robinson, Mamie, Helen and Margaret McCowan, Hazel Patmore, Daisy and Muriel Patmore, Barbara Robertson, Dr. and Mrs. Richard Rounds and family, Mr. John Plum, Mr. W. For-

syth, Linda Muzyka, Marlene Brechka, David Randall, Ken James, Ken Leslie, Betty Shankland, May Tucker, Mrs. John Lane and Junior Birders Steven and Martin McFarlane, David Senchuk, David Voorhis, Heather Horton.



Mountain Bluebird nest and eggs.

Gary Seib

CALGARY AREA BLUEBIRD TRAILS — 1980

DON STILES, 20 Lake Wapta Rise SE, Calgary, Alberta T2J-2M9.

This article gives results for 1980, the second year in which members of the Calgary Field Naturalists' Society have been monitoring Harold Pinel's Calgary Bluebird Trail.^{1 2} In addition, results are given for trails of Andrew Stiles, Blake Stillings and a new section of trail west of Longview monitored by Kay Morck. The drop in houses monitored on Harold Pinel's trail from 309 last year to 205 this year

was due to dropping of certain sections which had primarily House Sparrows and Tree Swallows but no bluebirds, and also the incorporating of 55 houses into Blake Stillings' trail for convenience in counting.

Our schedule:

1. March or early April — Set up new houses. Cleaned out old houses and sprayed with a 10% creolin solution.