

was guessed that it must have been a hungry owl. Someone mentioned the heavy crust of snow, more than one inch and sufficient to support a man at that time, and the likelihood that the owl had been unable to find its usual prey of small mammals. Clark felt strongly that the owl was driven by hunger to try to attack the pheasants.

Great Gray Owls have only rarely been known to tackle such large prey, though a Golden Pheasant is close to the body size of a Ruffed Grouse. In my experience Great Gray Owls have once only killed Ruffed Grouse, Spruce Grouse, and Sharp-tailed Grouse. The book *The Birds of Minnesota* makes

note of the fact that a Great Gray Owl entered a henhouse one December and killed two fowl.²

Clearly, the Great Gray Owl is capable of fierce action when hungry and one needs to keep an open mind about their capacity for occasionally attacking fowl, although mainly preying on small mammals.

¹NERO, R. W. 1980. Great Gray Owl — Phantom of the northern forest. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C.

²ROBERTS, T. S. 1932. The Birds of Minnesota. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.

TWENTY-SECOND ANNUAL NESTBOX REPORT FROM BRANDON, MANITOBA

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

In 1982 the nestbox project was carried out for its twenty-second year by the volunteer group "The Friends of the Bluebirds". These volunteers held spring and fall meetings and monitored boxes during the spring-to-fall period. Their field notes were submitted to the project co-ordinator, Mrs. John Lane. Data from these notes have been used in the preparation of this report.

A summary of nestbox occupants in 1982, is given in Table 1. Other creatures occupying boxes included mice, squirrels, and an Eastern Kingbird.

We noted a substantial increase in nestings of Eastern Bluebirds from 43 nestings in 1981 to 72 this year.

One cross breeding was reported by Earle Farley of Douglas, an Eastern ♀ x Mountain♂.

Earle also reported a magnificent flock of Mountain Bluebirds in fall migration. We quote from his observations: "On September 15, I was sowing fall rye in our pasture field. As I came to a corner I could see a large flock of Mountain Bluebirds, approximately 100 in number. They were feeding in the short grass and some on the fence — a wonderful sight. The next day when I drove up to the tractor and drill, I could see the bluebirds sitting on the tractor and drill and in the small trees nearby. They all moved to the trees as I came close. They stayed in the area most of that day."

A pair of Eastern Kingbirds nested in one of Earle Farley's boxes and three eggs were laid but they did not hatch. The entrance hole was large, the work of a squirrel that previously had occupied the box.

Table 1. OCCUPANCY OF NEST BOXES IN 1982.

<i>Occupant</i>	<i>Number of nestings</i>
Mountain Bluebird	662
Eastern Bluebird	72
Bluebird (not identified to species)	7
Cross Nesting Bluebirds (Eastern x Mountain)	1
Tree Swallow	661
House Sparrow	119
House Wren	62



House Sparrows

R.J. Long

On the average, not as many eggs were laid in a clutch by Mountain Bluebirds as in other years. Possibly the late cold spring was a factor.

In order to keep mice from overwintering in nest boxes, some members, when cleaning the boxes this fall, used a strip of plywood or screen netting to cover the holes.

Dr. Richard Rounds, Brandon University, reports that in 1982 a follow-up of the 1981 project, "Experimenting with micro-climate of artificial nest boxes", (See Blue Jay, 40(1):46-47) was carried out by Ewing Rae, a geography student at Brandon University. Twelve nest boxes were put out, four each of black, white and natural, near Souris, Manitoba. Nine complete nest cycles were monitored. Temperature and humidity were measured inside and outside boxes. Results are being analysed by computer.

Our main contributor of nest boxes, Mr. Raymond Gladden, built 261 boxes this year. Some of these have 1-9/16" entrance holes for experimentation. From time to time other "Friends" donated boxes — John Plum, Brandon; Mr. Howard Kneeshaw, Carberry; Mr. G. Stemmer, Minnedosa, and John Clark, Treesbank.

A master map of nestlines has been prepared by Ann Smith. This will be a continuing project.

Upon request, Norah Lane gave 11 bluebird slide presentations in southwestern Manitoba and one in Tantalton, Saskatchewan. These talks were hosted by Horticultural Societies, Scouts, Beekeepers and Hospital Aid Groups. Also there were two displays — one at the Westman Science Fair and the other at our City Hall Homecoming for Centennial program, which involved many of our "Friends of the Bluebirds".

Hazel Patmore and Norah Lane attended the 5th Annual Meeting of the North American Bluebird Society (NABS), November 5, 6 and 7, at Southern Pines, North Carolina. On field trips, new types of nest boxes were seen, and small flocks of Eastern Bluebirds were a delight. In the Longleaf Pine woods they were fortunate to see the rare Red-cockaded Woodpecker and the uncommon and local Bachman's Sparrow. Other new sightings for them were the Red-bellied Woodpecker and Brown-headed Nuthatch. An award in the name of John and Norah Lane established by NABS was presented to four awardees by Norah Lane.

An enlarged coordinating committee was formed and new leaders secured for the Brandon Junior Birders. Members of the coordinating committee are Norah Lane (coordinator), Barbara Robinson, Hazel Patmore, Mamie McCowan, Ann Smith, David Barnes and

Cliff Findlay. Bob and Jean Horton are the Junior Birders' leaders.

New members of The Friends of the Bluebirds include the following: *Alexander* — Mr. and Mrs. John Thiessen; *Baldur* — Jim and Irene Cramer; *Bethany* — Gerald Fischer; *Brandon* — David Barnes, Morley Brotherston, Raymond Gladden, Helen and Kris Larson, Kae Longrigg, Nancy McLennan, Garnet and Martha Northcut, Frank and Arleen Vegso, Eleanor Wilde; *Carberry* — Howard and Elsie Kneeshaw; *Dauphin* — Mr. W. J. Walley; *Kemnay* — Verda Topham; *Killarney* — Dr. David and Ruth Stewart; *Lyleton* — John Murray; *Minnedosa* — Mr. and Mrs. G. Stemmer; *Neepawa* — Barry Strohman, Cal Whelpton; *Rapid City* — Edie Evans; *Rounthwaite* — Graham Eagleton; *Treesbank* — John Clark; *Virden* — Patrick Cox. Junior groups added were Minnedosa Junior Gardeners and Rapid City Summer Recreation Group.

PRINCE ALBERT BLUEBIRD TRAIL REPORT — 1982

KIM HRUSKA, 841 - 22nd St. East, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan S6V 1N9 and
KEVIN ASCHIM, 1175 - 22nd St. East, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. S6V 1P2

This is a summary of results obtained from the Prince Albert Bluebird Trail during the 1982 season. The houses were monitored from 26 June through 24 July.

Early in 1982 we decided to reorganize our trail so that more of it would pass through grassland and pasture. Because of this our trail now is divided into two parts, one extending out to Red Deer Hill and St. Louis and the other to Round Lake and Holbein. This change certainly increased our

Mountain Bluebird nesting results, with a total of 14 nests, as well as decreased numbers of House Sparrows.

Prince Albert and district was fortunate this spring to have avoided most of the snow which much of southern Saskatchewan received at the end of May. Although the cold weather was probably responsible for the loss of one set of bluebird eggs which were laid early, and a delay in the Tree Swallow nestings by approximately one week, the rest of the results appeared normal.