

INTERPROVINCIAL RECOVERIES OF MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRDS AND TREE SWALLOWS, AND A CALIFORNIA RECOVERY OF A TREE SWALLOW

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Often, migrating Mountain Bluebirds and Tree Swallows return to near their nesting sites in subsequent seasons. Calgary area banders have found that a bird banded as an adult may even return to the same nest box it used the previous year, or usually at least within five km. They have found that birds banded as nestlings disperse and are more likely found further away in subsequent years than those banded as adults, but often within twenty four kilometres of their natal site. Occasionally, a bird will get off track and return to a different province. A few birds which have done this are described below.

Mountain Bluebirds:

8051-54109, a Mountain Bluebird was banded as a nestling in 1993 by Jim Speer, near Shellmouth, MB, just east of the Sask. border west of Riding Mountain National Park, and recovered as an incubating female in a nest box east of Priddis, AB by Andrew Holder, a subpermittee of Don Stiles, on June 13, 1996. This is the first band recovery from Manitoba to Alberta. The recovery location is 890 km. straight west of the banding location.

This prompted an examination of the recoveries of Mountain Bluebirds to determine whether there were any other "interprovincial" recoveries. Table 1 and Figure 1 show four other "interprovincial" recoveries recorded from 1970 to 1994

found in data supplied by Canadian Wildlife Service. One moved from SK to MB, one from SK to AB, and two moved from AB to SK.

Distances varied from 155 km (near Provost, AB to east of North Battleford, SK) to 680 km (near Viking, AB to east of Melville, SK). Three were recovered alive in nest boxes and two were found dead. All of these birds except the first one in Table 1 were banded as nestlings, then travelled south on migration and returned to another province one or more years later. The exception, 1091-36438 was banded as an adult female by Lorne Scott on May 24, 1973 near Grenfell, SK, and was captured in a nest box near Souris, MB on June 21, 1973, a surprising distance of 200 km from where banded.

A Mountain Bluebird, 991-05960, recovered in Vancouver, BC, (Lat-Long 49 10', 123 00') on Aug. 10, 1987, is not listed in Table 1. A phone call to the band recoverer, revealed that he was a long distance trucker, and the banded bird had been found dead by his son on the flatbed of his truck while it was being cleaned. He had recently hauled a load of prefabricated log houses from Cochrane, AB to Vancouver. This bird was banded by Marijke Jalink, a subpermittee of Don Stiles, on July 13, 1987 near Millarville, AB (Lat-Long 50 40', 114 20'). After it fledged, it is speculated that the bird flew about 50 km north



Tree Swallows

Wayne Lynch

to Cochrane or vicinity where it was hit by the truck. It then travelled to Vancouver on the truck bed and was recovered on August 10.

Tree Swallows:

Only two Tree Swallow interprovincial recoveries were found in the Canadian Wildlife Service data up to 1992. One banded in Saskatchewan was recovered in Manitoba, and one vice versa. One of these, 520-49136, was banded as an adult in 1958 and recovered in 1960, making this bird at least three years old. The second, 880-41966, was banded as a nestling by Mary Houston

on July 7, 1977 near Pike Lake, SK, and recovered near Altamont, MB after hitting a power line in August 1977. Presumably this bird had already begun its migration.

A California Tree Swallow Recovery:

121-85793, a Tree Swallow banded as a nestling by George Loades, a subpermittee of Don Stiles, on July 8, 1995 on his Jumping Pound bluebird trail southwest of Cochrane, AB, was recovered alive in a mist net at the Modoc National Wildlife Refuge in north-eastern California on April 12, 1997. (See Table 1 and Figure 1) This is the

Table 1 - Interprovincial Recoveries of Mountain Bluebirds and Tree Swallows banded in the Prairie Provinces, and a California Tree Swallow Recovery

Bander	Band No.	Age*	Where Banded		Date	Recoveries		Age	How***	Distance (km)	Degrees
			Lat.-Long.	Loc.		Lat.-Long.	Loc.				
INTERPROVINCIAL MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRDS											
R.L. Scott	1091-36438	F	50 10', 103 00'	SK	73/05/24	49 40', 100 20'	MB	73/06/21	1	33	200 105 SE
M.I. Houston	1101-44809	L	52 10', 106 50'	SK	73/06/14	52 10', 110 20'	AB	75/07/13	2	33	240 270 W
J.C. Finlay	891-17637	L	53 00', 112 00'	AB	82/06/15	50 50', 102 40'	SK	83/05/18	1	0	685 107 SE
R.S. Johnson	991-22912	L	52 10', 110 20'	AB	88/06/02	52 40', 108 10'	SK	92/06/06	4	0	155 68 NE
J. Speer	8051-54109	L	50 50', 101 30'	MB	93/06/20	50 50', 114 10'	AB	96/06/13	3	33	890 270 W
INTERPROVINCIAL TREE SWALLOWS											
R.R. Taylor	520-49136	Ad-u	50 10', 98 10'	MB	58/07/27	50 30', 101 50'	SK	60/05/30	3	33	265 280 NW
M.I. Houston	880-41966	L	51 50', 106 40'	SK	77/07/08	49 20', 98 30'	MB	77/08/xx	0	54	640 113 SE
A CALIFORNIA TREE SWALLOW RECOVERY											
D.J. Stiles	2121-85793	L	51 00', 114 30'	AB	95/07/08	41 20', 120 30'	CA	97/04/12	2	89	1175 208 SW
*Age: L - Local, unable to fly						***How Codes					
F - Adult Female						0 - Found Dead (2 mb, 1 ts)					
Ad-u - Adult, sex unknown						33 - Caught in nest (3 mb)					
- For adult birds, age at banding is assumed to be 1 year old.						54 - Struck wire (1 ts)					
**xx - Date unknown						89 - Trapped and Released (1 ts)					



Figure 1. Interprovincial Recoveries of Mountain Bluebirds and Tree Swallows, and a California Tree Swallow Recovery. ► - Mountain Bluebirds. ■ - Tree Swallows

first Tree Swallow banded in Alberta that has travelled southwest on migration. All 16 previously banded in Alberta have been recovered to the southeast^{1,2}. One factor in this may be that this bird was banded in the foothills southwest of Calgary, one of the more westerly locations in Alberta where banding is done.

Ronnie L. Ryno, Assistant Manager at the wildlife refuge reports that they capture Tree Swallows in April and early May in mist nets, most of which later nest nearby in nest boxes. Also of interest in his letter: "during March and April we often get cold spells when the temperatures will drop into the low teens (°F), this usually results in dozens or even hundreds of dead Tree Swallows around their roost sites, especially if the cold weather lasts a few days and/or is combined with snow." This is another indi-

cation that weather plays a big factor in bird migration. Another Tree Swallow recovered in Nebraska, at much the same latitude as the above, died due to severe weather².

1. Stiles, D.J. and M.I. Houston. 1994. Distant Travels of Tree Swallows of the Prairie Provinces, 1968-1992. *Blue Jay* 52:206-212.

2. Stiles, D.J. 1997. Recoveries of Mountain Bluebirds south of 49° Latitude, and a recent Tree Swallow. *Blue Jay* 55:48-52.