



Ontario Eastern Bluebird Society

2014 Spring Newsletter ~ Editor Bill Read

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The AGM is set for Saturday, March 22 at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Burlington, Ontario. See the program on page 2 for details.

Can you say **polar vortex**, this according to our weatherman David Philips is the weather system that resulted in the extreme weather we have had this winter. It has been a very cold winter with storms extending well into the central United States. The extreme cold and ice will have made it difficult for overwintering bluebirds in Ontario and those that migrated into the US. I fully expect to see lower numbers of adult bluebirds this spring. The Waterloo University Weather station reported that 2013 was the wettest year on record going back 99 years.

December 2013 was a cold snowy month with below average temperatures throughout most of Eastern North America. December's temperature at 1.6 degrees Celsius below average was the coldest December in 10 years. The ice storm on December 21-22 in Southern Ontario was particularly nasty with a lot of damage to tree limbs that broke under the weight of the ice. It extended into areas much further east of Toronto. Many thousands of homes lost power, some until well after Christmas. There was a 2 day melt on December 28th and 29th that melted most of the ice from the trees. This was followed by extremely cold weather on January 5th and 6th. On Monday January 6 with the wind chill it was -39 Degrees Celsius. On January the 7th the temperature only got up to -18.7 degrees Celsius. Schools were closed because of the cold. Overall January 2014 was 3 degrees Celsius below the long term average. It seemed colder because the last two Januaries were 3 degrees above the long term average. January's snowfall was average but because we have not had a reset where it melts it seems like a lot more. February has also been much below seasonal.

Overwintering Eastern Bluebirds seem so far to have made it through this as many have been sighted after these weather events. This kind of weather has a greater impact in the spring than it does in the winter. There is still at this time a good supply of edible berries like buckthorn, sumac and Asian Bittersweet which are usually gone by the spring. Bluebirds also consume winter active insects like cutworms and small black spiders which they depend on more in the early spring when all the edible fruit is gone. The heavier than

usual amounts of snow accumulation have made this type of insect feeding difficult.

The bluebirds in Chris Earley's pictures (in this newsletter) were eating Asian Bittersweet.

The ice storm in the spring of 2003 was particularly nasty and longer lasting. The ice covered the ground making it impossible to find insects. Many dead adult bluebirds were found in nest boxes after this weather event that lasted into early April 2003. Don Wills found 12 dead adults and I found 3 in nest boxes after the storm. There were many reports of dead Eastern Bluebirds found in nest boxes caused by this weather event both in Ontario, New York State and across most of Eastern North America. The 104th (2003-2004) CBC showed a decline of 34.7 % from the previous year. Within 3 years they had rebounded and surpassed the total counted on the 103rd CBC before the 2003 ice storm. This was made possible by an absence of disruptive weather events and a legion of bluebirders with predator proof nest box trails. We will have to wait until the next CBC to gage the impact of this winter on the bluebird population throughout North America. **I always write about the weather as it has the greatest impact on both adult survival and breeding success.**



Chris Earley

OEBS AGM Agenda March 22th, 2014.

8.30— 900 am	Registration – Wayne and Linda Buck	11.05-11.50	Kristyn Richardson – Artificial Structures for Barn Swallows
9.00-9.30am	President’s Report and introductions – Bill Read	12.00-1.30 pm	Lunch
	Business Meeting	1.30- 2.25 pm	Badgers in Ontario – Josh Sayers
	Slate of executives for 2014- Tom Kott	2.25- 3.00 pm	Coffee Break and viewing of bucket raffle items
	Membership Report-Anne Davidson	3.00- 3.30 pm	Nest Boxes- Show and Tell – open discussion
	Treasurer’s Report –Anne Davidson	3.30- 4.00 pm	Bucket Raffle – Tom Hunt
	Announcement of Conservation Award – Bill Read		
9.30-10.15 am	Member nest box reports		
10.15-10.45 am	Coffee Break and viewing of bucket raffle items		
10.45-11.05 am	Is it Time to Focus on Cavity Nesting Species other than Bluebirds? – Bill Read		

BUCKET RAFFLE
If you have an item for the bucket raffle please bring it along to the meeting.

OEBS Annual Eastern Bluebird Field Trip- This year’s trip is on **Sunday, May 25th, 2014**. We will meet at **9am** at the **Orchard Home apple orchard**. The farm is located 1 concession north of St. George on Howell Road. See the home page of our website for more details. www.oebs.ca . Please confirm by email info@billreads-books.com or phone 1-519-620-0744 Bill Read

2014 Birdathon- Sylvia VanWalsum has again agreed to be our representative at Birdathon. A sponsorship sheet will be available at our March 22 AGM. Last year Sylvia raised \$945 of which 236.25 goes back to OEBS. Thanks for your continued support and to all those who supported Sylvia.

Is it Time to Start focusing on Other Cavity Nesting Species?

Bluebirds have increased substantially in North America since a post settlement population low point in the early to late 1950’s. This is also a time when the European Starling population in Ontario was at its peak. According to the conservation group **Partners in Flight** the current **North American population** of Eastern Bluebirds is **19,000,000**. The Western Bluebird is estimated to be **4,500,000** and the Mountain Bluebird at **4,600,000**. It is hard to believe there are that many bluebirds, they are much more common in the Southern U.S. The population in **Ontario** based on point counts from the last Breeding Bird Atlas published in 2005 is pegged at **40,000**. Much of these increases are due to the legions of bluebirders who monitor predator proof nest box trails throughout North America and for the most part favourable weather. Eastern Bluebirds peaked in the late 1800’s at population levels that would never have been present pre-settlement. The population estimates listed below are from the **Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory website** and list the **Canadian Population estimates**. (Chart on page 3)

See article in the journal *Bluebird* - Winter 2013-2014 Vol 36 No 1 Pages 20-21. **Gillihan, Scott W. 2013. Which Cavity-Nesting Birds Need Help?**



Chris Earley

The wonderful bluebird pictures in this newsletter were taken by Chris Earley (Interpretive Biologist/Education coordinator) at the Arboretum in Guelph on January 27, 2014.

Member Nest Box Results for 2013

David Hampton our 2012 conservation award winner had another good year with **86** bluebirds fledged from his 18 year old trail of 64 boxes in Dufferin County. David is in an area where there are no House Sparrows. We should all be so lucky. Weather and Cats were listed as the presumed cause of any nest failures.

Vianne Ninness reports from the London area that a female Bluebird was in one of her boxes but failed to lay any eggs. Bluebirds were around in the fall and 1 was spotted on January 15th, a good winter record.

Delores Hamilton near Freelon fledged **33** bluebirds from her trail of 26 nest boxes. Delores commented that the bluebirds were late arriving allowing other birds to occupy the boxes. A total of 56 Tree Swallows also fledged, 10 bluebird eggs were lost to House Wrens. She hopes to modify some of her boxes to discourage the aggressive House Wrens.

Dorothy Hayley and **Audrey Cook** fledged **47** bluebirds and 9 Tree Swallows from 12 pairs of boxes on their 9 year old trail in Lanark County, all on metal poles with predator baffles. Only 1 second nesting was recorded which affected the number fledged. There were 5 dead young and 5 unhatched eggs. Boxes are checked weekly. Ants were a problem in some of the boxes, they can be stopped by putting a small amount (1 inch high all the way around) of automobile grease around the pole at the bottom. Ten boxes were lost, some stolen and the others removed to make way for solar farms.

John Powers had a successful year with **114** bluebirds fledged from 152 eggs. Thirty one eggs did not hatch. John uses T-bars with a cone guard and grease on the 162 nest boxes on his trail. He had 21 pairs and 114 fledged- $114/21 = 5.43$ fledged young per pair. No white EABL eggs were found. Early arriving Tree Swallows took a lot of the boxes leaving fewer for the bluebirds. This combined with House Sparrow problems and wasps in some boxes meant lower production but overall still a very good year. Tree Swallow's fledged 345 young.

Pat Duncan and **Rob Cook** fledged **47** bluebirds from their 4 year old trail of 80 nest boxes in Simcoe County near Barrie. Seventy of the nest boxes are of the Dorrie design and 10 are Coker boxes. No double broods were recorded from the 10 pairs of bluebirds. All nest boxes are on metal poles that are greased. A total of 84 Tree Swallows also fledged from these boxes.

Henry Miller writes the following report from Rainy River – The late spring of 2013 had quite an effect on the start of the nesting season. The First week of April saw temperatures as low as – 8 degrees Celsius and snow depths of 53 cm covered the ground. Tree Swallows arrived on April 26 when warming occurred. Cold weather returned after two

CANADIAN POPULATION ESTIMATES

Eastern Bluebird	260,000
Western Bluebird	70,000
Mountain Bluebird	1,000,000
Chimney Swift	80,000
Common Nighthawk	80,000
American Kestrel	500,000
Boreal Owl	not available
Prothonotary Warbler	not available
Eastern Screech Owl	10,000
Northern Saw Whet Owl	not available
Tufted Titmouse	400
Downy Woodpecker	3,000,000
Hairy Woodpecker	5,000,000
Red Headed Woodpecker	8,000
Purple Martin	200,000
Great Crested Flycatcher	590,000
Tree Swallow	9,000,000
Barn Swallow	5,000,000
Cliff Swallow	5,000,000
Bank Swallow	1,400,000
White Breasted Nuthatch	460,000
Black Capped Chickadee	20,000,000
House Wren	13,000,000
Carolina Wren	1400
House Sparrow	13,000,000
European Starling	12,000,000

North American Bluebird Society Fact Sheets

NABS has produced a number of fact sheets on monitoring, HOSP control etc. They can be downloaded from the NABS website as PDF's. I have included the one on *Getting Started With Bluebirds* with this newsletter.

NABS Membership

The OEBS is an affiliate member of the North American Bluebird Society. NABS is pleased to extend a SPECIAL Affiliate Plus (A=) membership rate of \$15 USD per year that will see you receive 4 issues of the journal **Bluebird**. It is a very informative journal and I recommend taking out a membership.



Chris Earley

days and the swallows disappeared. I couldn't find any dead ones; perhaps they returned to warmer conditions in Minnesota.

On May 8 I saw my first pair of bluebirds which is three weeks later than usual. On May 25 a warm front from the south finally moved in and the bulk of most migrant birds rode the air currents to our area.

With fewer Tree Swallows bluebirds had little trouble locating available nest boxes. More Tree Swallows came later.

Overall both species produced more fledglings per trail than other years. Most trails had very little predation with two exceptions. All nests in boxes near the LaVallee River were destroyed probably by raccoons. Another trail suffered I suspect from pesticides as for the first time the large fields nearby were planted with corn. With the help of the junior members of the Sportsmen's Club 147 boxes were constructed to replace the aging 15-20 year old boxes which were beginning to fall apart. Three new trails were established by new volunteers, one in Miscampbell, one at Harris Hill near Lake of the Woods (130 miles from Fort Francis) and one in Alberton Township near the Cranpit Bogwalk. No bluebirds nested in these new trails but a pair was spotted near Harris Hill. Most boxes are located on side roads with little traffic.

Overall **186** bluebirds fledged from this trail of 360 nest boxes in Rainy River District. Henry monitors 241 boxes and volunteers the other 119. Some boxes monitored by volunteers did not send in their reports which would have added to the total fledged. Tree Swallows also had a good year with 555 fledged.

Elizabeth Kellog manages 100 nest boxes at three different locations in the Port Hope area. At the Darlington Nuclear Power Plant (36 boxes) there were 38 nests of Tree

Swallows and 1 House Wren nest; 126 Tree Swallows fledged from this site. At the Ontario Power Generation site near Wesleyville (52 boxes) there were 42 nest attempts by Tree Swallows with 56 young fledging. At least 28 of these nests were depredated by raccoons. The poor productivity was directly due to the depredation of the nests. Plans are in place to make all boxes predator proof for the 2014 season. There were 16 House Wren nest attempts. At the Alderville Black Oak Savana site (22 boxes) 9 nests were initiated by Eastern Bluebird, 23 by Tree Swallows and 5 by house wrens. A total of 33 bluebirds, 38 Tree Swallows and 6 House Wrens fledged. This site is located on the Alderville First Nation Nature Reserve located south of Rice Lake near the town of Roseneath. In 2011 Elizabeth had a recovery of a banded bluebird from this site (banded in 2010 as a nestling) recovered in North Carolina on February 19, 2011.

John DeCloet fledged 4 bluebirds from his one nest box in Norfolk County.

Dan and Manley Baarda had a good year with 63 bluebirds and 122 Tree Swallows fledged from their trail of 50 nest boxes in Lincoln County. A total of 100 bluebird eggs were laid (91 blue, 9 white) from 19 pairs. Expectations were high because of the number of pairs but as Dan said "you can't count your bluebirds before they fledge" House Sparrows and weather were recorded as the presumed cause of any nest failures. House Sparrow control is practiced.

George and Kittie Fells reported 8 bluebirds fledged for their trail of 41 nest boxes in Dufferin County. Some boxes were knocked down by cows and others were filled with ants and wasps. They had 12 nests of Tree Swallows and 4 of House Wrens.

Merri-Lee Metzger has taken over 54 of **Ken Reger's** nest boxes in Waterloo and Wellington Counties. In 2012 Ken fledged **678** bluebirds from this trail of 338 nest boxes. Ken would like to step back from the number of boxes he has monitored for the last 20 years and hand it over to someone else. Most of the boxes are located in farming areas and require constant monitoring to prevent House Sparrows from nesting or killing the Tree Swallows and bluebirds. The removal of some of the boxes may be another option as they quickly become less productive in areas with high House Sparrow density. Merri-Lee had an excellent year with 128 bluebirds and 137 Tree Swallows fledged from the 54 boxes she monitored. Sparrow Spookers were used along with nest removal to control House Sparrows. **Merri-Lee and Ken are looking for bluebirders who would be interested in taking over part of this trail or helping Merri-Lee with the monitoring.**

Long time OEBS members **David and Sharon Turner** had another good year with **42** bluebirds fledged from their trail of 44 boxes in Grey County.

The **Ottawa Duck Club** fledged **51** bluebirds from their trail of 69 nest boxes near Ottawa. Other nests included 8 House Wren, 31 Tree Swallow and 1 Black Capped Chickadee. Thirteen Tree Swallow nests were unsuccessful.

House Wrens were recorded as the number 1 presumed cause of nest failure. One pair of EABL laid 2 clutches of 5 eggs in the same nest box- none hatched.

Willie Moore had 5 young fledge from his trail of 8 nest boxes in Norfolk County.

Joe Kral had a record year with **187** bluebirds fledged from his 22 year old trail of 479 nest boxes located near Guelph Lake in Wellington County. A total of 31-33 pairs were represented on this trail which works out to $187/31-33 = 5.67-6.03$ fledged young per pair. A total of 1487 Tree Swallows, 55 House Wrens and 50 Black Capped chickadees also fledged from this trail. Joe lost 12 nest boxes that were smashed by humans during the Hillside Folk Festival. Wasps, House Wrens, blowflies and raccoons were recorded in that order as the presumed cause of any nest failure. Congratulations on a great season Joe. I know how much work is involved in managing a trail of this size.

Linda Bere in Middlesex County fledged 3 bluebirds from one nesting and also had one natural cavity nest. She also had a pair of Wood Ducks and 1 pair of Black Capped Chickadees fledge young successfully. The **Wood Duck Society** in Minnesota has an informative website and recommends all wood duck boxes be mounted on poles with metal cone guards to prevent raccoons from climbing and eating the hen or eggs. Have a look, it is a great site. Her bird bath had as many as 12 bluebird occupants at any one time. Make sure a bird bath is shallow enough so the birds can touch the bottom. Bluebirds will use a bird bath almost every day if one is available and this is a good way to view them. They can drown

in deep water bird baths, their feet have to be able to touch the bottom. I recovered 2 dead bluebirds in 1989 from a rain barrel on an adjacent property from my nest boxes where they had gone to drink, and once they got in the water were not able to get back out. To prevent this leave a piece of wood in the water that they can climb onto or provide a bird bath.

David Lamble fledged **66** bluebirds from his trail of 365 nest boxes in Wellington County. The percentage of fledged young (66) to eggs (124) was 53%. Fledged young (66) per pair (28 pairs) was 2.36. David had 159 successful nests of Tree Swallows, 3 of House Wren and 2 of Black capped Chickadee. There were 41 unsuccessful nests of Tree Swallows. A total of 63 bluebirds and 627 Tree Swallows were banded.

David also manages 118 nest boxes on a trail in Dufferin County that was formerly monitored by David Raynor and the late Shelly Anderson. Each box was checked at least 3X during the nesting season. A total of **142** bluebirds fledged. Other nests included 10 House Wren, 31 Tree Swallow and 1 Black Capped Chickadee. Banded individuals included 112 Tree Swallows and 127 bluebirds.

Your newsletter editor **Bill Read** fledged **280** bluebirds from 185 nest boxes in Brant County and Hamilton Wentworth. This is down from 380 in 2012. A total of 49-50 pairs were present or $280/49-50 = 5.60 - 5.71$ young per pair. An orchard that I have had nest boxes in since 1988 was sold and all the apple trees removed where in 2012 I fledged 59 young. The above combined with heavier than usual nestling mortality on first broods caused by cold weather resulted in lower numbers in 2013. All boxes are on T-bars or metal poles and heavily greased to stop predators from climbing. I am in the process of building another 60 boxes to be put up in the spring. Over 500 Tree Swallows also fledged plus 7 nests of House Wrens.



Chris Earley

One of our original members **Dennis Lewington** fledged **62** bluebirds from his trail of 84 nest boxes in Bruce County. One nest of 5 Great Crested Flycatchers and 148 Tree Swallows also fledged. House Wrens were listed as the number one presumed cause of nest failure.

Patricia Burgon fledged **4** bluebirds from her trail of 9 nest boxes in Grey County.

Don Wills had another successful year with **704** bluebirds fledged, the third year in a row with over 700. With 112 pairs this represents 6.28 fledged young per pair. Anything over 6 indicates a very good year. He also had 4 pairs of Prothonotary Warblers produce 20 young. Both hooded Mergansers and Wood Ducks nested at about a 70% success rate in 85 Nest boxes. When Don started Hooded Mergansers did not nest in his boxes, Don now estimates they make up 50% of occupied nest boxes as they move further north. Most boxes not occupied by bluebirds had Tree Swallows. Over the course of the season Don recovered 4 dead adults, 2 (Male and Female) that over wintered unsuccessfully, 1 Male killed by a House Sparrow and one found dead below a nest box. **On February 21 Don counted 10 bluebirds eating sumac on Mulligan Road near Carluke.**

Vicky Eaton and **Margaret Kalogeropoulos** manage a 13 year old trail of 120 nest boxes in Short Hills Provincial Park. This trail in Niagara was formerly monitored by **Felix Ventresca** and **Aurelio Munoz**. This trail fledged **113** bluebirds from 143 eggs (134 blue and 9 white) in 2013. A total of 26 pairs of bluebirds were present. Fledged young per pair was $113/26 = 4.35$. A total of 22 Tree Swallows and 11 house wrens also fledged.

Mary Anne Rose and **Karen Tufford** manage a trail of 60 nest boxes in East Brant County. A total of **39** bluebirds and 114 Tree Swallows fledged in 2013. Mary Anne commented that bluebird numbers were down and Tree Swallow numbers were up in 2013. Fledged young per pair was $39/10$ or 3.9 for bluebirds and $114/20$ or 5.7 for Tree Swallows. House sparrow control is practiced on this trail.

Under the direction of **Joanne Fleet**, **Fern Hill School** in Burlington set up a new nest box trail on their property on the North Service Road. One pair of bluebirds attempted to nest but the female disappeared shortly after the young hatched, possibly the result of predation. Since all the boxes have predator protection it may have been an accipiter that grabbed the female outside the nest box. Very small young seldom die as they are brooded by the female. Eleven pairs of Tree Swallows nested successfully from the 20 nest boxes with 1 failure. Joanne's sister in law in Dundas, **Margaret Fleet** had 2 successful nesting's that fledged **9** bluebirds.

The **Halton Bluebird Club** had its best year ever with **54** bluebirds fledged. This 25 year old trail of 71 nest boxes

is located in Bronte Provincial Park in Oakville. All boxes are mounted on T-bars and are heavily greased at the start of the season. Many are also protected by a length of PVC conduit, plastic or metal pipe or stove pipe baffle. Only 2 attempted nesting's were unsuccessful. One nest with 3 young was predated possibly by a weasel. Bluebirds were present in the park all year long. **On February 13, 2014, 8 bluebirds were seen in the park, 5 males and 3 females.** The 54 young fledged from 11 pairs equals 4.91 fledged young per pair. They had 42 nests of Tree swallows with 233 eggs laid, 205 hatched and 196 fledged. There were 15 active House Wren nests. The following people were involved in this cooperative effort-Belinda Wagg, Bette-Ann Goldstein, Bill and John Karner, Bobbi Greenleese, Don Morrison, Floyd Elder, Irmgard Richter and Trevor Stock, Joyce LeChasseur, Kirsten Burling, Steve Garland, Tom hunt, Sylvia Van Walsum and William Poaps.

Bob Hunt and **Lorne Smith** monitor 794 nest boxes in Bruce and Grey counties. They estimate **416** bluebirds fledged from these boxes. They also recorded 265 nests of Tree Swallows and 11 of House Wren. They use a special box designed to keep the raccoons out. Each box is checked at least 3 times a season.

Kurt Frei and **Peter Rea** had another successful season with **79** bluebirds fledged. They have 123 nest boxes in Hamilton and 11 in Burlington. Ninety-two are Peterson, 21 are Dorrie (painted green -brown) and 21 are of different designs. Poles are greased to prevent raccoon predation. Boxes are checked once a week. A total of 17 bluebird pairs were present representing 4.65 young fledged per pair. 564 Tree Swallows and 38 House Wrens also fledged.

Kelly Person in Norfolk County has 2 nest boxes but so far has not met with success, maybe next year.

Kathy Sayeau also in Norfolk had 1 pair fledge 5 young from her trail of 5 nest boxes.

Don Arthurs had 3 pairs of bluebirds fledge 17 young from his trail of 20 boxes in Wellington County (Erin).

Long time bluebirder **Henry Bauer** fledged 14 young from his trail of 5 nest boxes in Welland. Two pairs of bluebirds were represented.

Lucille Coleman fledged **101** bluebirds and 140 Tree Swallows from her trail of 62 nest boxes located in south rural Niagara Falls. To prevent intrusion by House Sparrows eight of her nest boxes were relocated to other areas where sparrows would no longer be a problem. This is one way to deal with them; the other recommended by the OEBS is trapping and either relocating the House Sparrows or humanely euthanizing them. Lucille mentioned that some young succumbed to the heat. Heat is rarely a problem as bluebirds receive water from the insects they eat. Cold is the major cause of nestling mortality especially in early spring; for this reason the OEBS

recommends that all nest boxes be built without ventilation holes. Overall it was a very successful year. **Lucille is looking for someone who would be interested in assisting with the management of her trail. Interested individuals can contact the bluebird society through our website and I will pass it on to Lucille.**

Bob Burton and Joan Paget fledged **50** bluebirds from 63 nest boxes that they monitor in Haliburton. Fourteen boxes had bluebird nests; four of those had dead young in the nest. There were 18 nests of Tree Swallows (5 of 18 unsuccessful), 2 of House Wren and 1 of Black Capped Chickadee. Weather was listed as the # 1 presumed cause of nest failure

Herb Furniss manages a trail of 75 nest boxes on the Carden Plain in Carden Township, Kawartha County. **Don Parkes** worked with Herb from the beginning until problems with his knees forced him to cut back. Both Don and Herb were awarded the OEBS conservation award in 2003. Numbers were down in 2013 with only 60 fledged bluebirds.

Nest Box Monitoring

This is without a doubt the most important aspect of bluebirding. There are two kinds of monitoring, **Active** and **Passive** management. **Active management** involves monitoring on a regular basis throughout the nesting season, say once a week as an example. This way, problems that arise during the nesting season can be dealt with quickly. Active management always results in much greater reproductive success. This can be measured in the number of bluebirds fledged and fledged young per pair. **The OEBS strongly recom-**

mends that active management be implemented on all bluebird trails. The idea behind bluebirding is to provide safe predator proof nest boxes for Eastern Bluebirds allowing them to fledge more young than they would in natural cavities. Having adequate predator protection on all your nest boxes makes monitoring a lot easier. The OEBS will not endorse a bluebird trail unless it has adequate predator protection.

Passive management involves setting up nest boxes and then checking and cleaning them out in the fall or in some cases not at all. Problems that arise during the nesting season are not dealt with. A sort of let nature take its course approach. In areas with high House Sparrow populations this can result in a trail filled with House Sparrows and not much else. When Tree Swallows or bluebirds attempt to nest in these boxes they can be killed by the House Sparrows. In many cases these trails actually do more harm than good to native cavity nesters and fledge very few native species. Unmonitored Wood Duck nest boxes will be occupied with starlings if not monitored regularly to remove them. The 250 nest boxes at the Tim Horton Camp south of Cambridge are an example of this kind of management. Only a few pairs of bluebirds nest on this trail.

The Ontario Eastern Bluebird Society strongly discourages this kind of management. We also recommend removing all nest boxes from trails that are no longer being monitored or have been abandoned.

Long time bluebirder **Ray Kiff** from Orillia had a successful year with **41** bluebirds fledged from 61 eggs. Ray monitors 50 nest boxes. A total of 73 Tree Swallows also fledged. **Leanore Wiancko** also from Orillia fledged **36** Eastern Bluebirds, 37 Tree Swallows, 14 House wrens and 6 Black Capped Chickadees from her nest boxes. Her results are posted on the Orillia Naturalist's Club website.

Henry Bauer from Fenwick in Welland County fledged **14** bluebirds from 3 successful nests. Henry also had 3 nests of Tree swallows. The 5 nest boxes that Henry monitors are on greased metal poles.

Ruth Anne Currie has 110 nest boxes on her trail in Grey County. She had 12 nest boxes that were used by bluebirds, 49 by Tree Swallows and 4 by house Wrens. Three inch door guards are used on all nest boxes.

Bob Majkut fledged **8** bluebirds from 3 nest boxes in Welland County. The other box was used by Black Capped Chickadees.

Lily Usik in Wentworth County fledged **9** bluebirds from 2 nests. Her 14 nest boxes are on greased T-bars. One black Capped Chickadee, 5 Tree Swallows and 3 House wrens also nested.



Chris Earley

Another long time member **Elwood M Jones** had a very successful year with **72** bluebirds fledged from his trail of 75 nest boxes in Northumberland County. Tree Swallow's nested in the other boxes. The 12 pair of bluebirds present represents 6 young fledged per pair. One nest of Great Crested flycatchers fledged 2 young. Another of many great years for Elwood's trail.

Adriano Borean had another successful year with **74** bluebirds fledged along with 168 Tree Swallows and 12 House Wrens. This trail of 75 nest boxes is located in Hamilton Wentworth. All the nest boxes are in groups of 2.

Wood Duck Alfie Stanevicius had three successful nests of bluebirds and many Wood Ducks and Hooded Mergansers.

Renfrew County bluebirder **Robert O'Donnell** fledged **27** bluebirds from his trail of 42 nest boxes. Robert has his boxes on greased poles. Six pairs produced $27/6 = 4.5$ young fledged per pair. There are no House Sparrows present in his area.

The Essex County Field Naturalists Club Bluebird Committee members fledged **113** bluebirds from 181 nest boxes. This represents 39 trails with 1-27 nest boxes. **Don Bissonnette** coordinates this effort. Most T-bars are greased, a few have stove pipe baffles. A total of 416 Tree Swallows fledged from 88 nests. Number of pairs represented was 38 (successful nests only) or 2.97 fledged young per successful pair.

In Centre Hastings County **John** and **Janet Foster** fledged **10** bluebirds from 2 pairs and 108 Tree Swallows. A Black Bear predated 1 Tree Swallow box. They have maintained a trail since 1987 and are original members of the OEBS. Cold weather was a factor resulting in some nestling mortality.

Dan Welsh from Freelon in Hamilton Wentworth had his best year ever; 58 pairs produced **348** fledged bluebirds. This works out to $348/58$ or six young per pair. Dan did not keep track of Tree Swallows but said that nesting's were the most he has ever had.

The **RARE Charitable Reserve** in Cambridge fledged **21** bluebirds and 91 Tree Swallows from this trail of 33 nest boxes. This trail is managed by Anne McLagan with help from Bill Read. A major overall was undertaken in 2013 to make sure all nest boxes had predator protection and were monitored on a regular basis. All 7 boxes on Preston flats had to be removed because of a Deer Mouse infestation, the results of not monitoring. Stove pipe guards were placed on nest boxes along with cone guards to stop climbing predators, a small amount of grease was applied to the bottom of the T-bar to stop climbing ants. Ants had infested over half the boxes. These initiatives resulted in a very successful year.

All bluebird nests were successful representing 4 pairs or 5.25 fledged young per pair.

Chris Lyons from Port Hope had a successful year with **167** bluebirds fledged. Chris's nest boxes are located in Northumberland County. A total of 64 pairs made nesting attempts but three periods of cold wet weather and House Wren predation resulted in 44 nest failures. Failure of pairs to have second broods also affected his total. Chris had 170 successful nests of Tree Swallows (down from around 200 in 2012) 1 nest of 5 American Kestrels and 14-15 successful Wood Duck nests. Overall a good year.

Bryan Wyatt fledged **36** bluebirds, 307 Tree Swallows, 16 Black Capped Chickadees and 39 House Wrens from the 160 nest boxes he manages at the Guelph Arboretum (87) and the Turfgrass site (73). Bryan notes that there was a significant increase in predation by wrens this year with 8 nests destroyed. Three other losses were attributed to cold weather. One dead ASY female EABL was found in a nest with young.

Ruthven National Park near Cayuga is the location of a very successful nest box trail of 175 nest boxes that are monitored by Christine Madliger and Chris Harris. This is also the site of a bird banding operation run by Rick Ludkin and Nancy Furber. Christine banded 563 Tree Swallows- 64 adults and 499 nestlings. Of the nestlings, 484 fledged. A total of 61 bluebirds were banded, 2 adult females and 59 nestlings. Of those, **49** EABL nestlings fledged. This is down considerably from 2012 when 117 bluebirds and 649 Tree Swallows fledged. Some late nests were not included in this total. Most boxes are paired and all have cone guards with greased poles. A weasel managed to get into 2 boxes and eat the young Tree Swallows before it was killed on the highway. There is probably a lot more predation by weasels than we realize. It is almost impossible to guard against weasels as they can jump onto the box. In 1989 I opened a nest box and discovered a weasel eating an adult male bluebird.

Gerard Powers fledged **274** bluebirds from 334 eggs (308 blue and 26 white) on his trail of 198 nest boxes in Grey County. This is down from the record 331 in 2012 but still an excellent year. The number of white eggs declined from 49 (12.4%) in 2012 to 26 (7.8%) this year, still an unusually large percentage. Forty five pairs of EABL were represented $274/45 = 6.08$ young per pair. A total of 495 Tree Swallows fledged from 80 nests. Gerry also had 5 nests of Black Capped chickadees and 3 nests of White Breasted Nuthatches. These boxes have a 1 1/8 inch opening and are hung in trees. Weather and European Wasps were noted as the biggest problems.

The above nest box trails resulted in close to **5000** fledged bluebirds, congratulations to all.