

## 2002 OKLAHOMA BLUEBIRD NEST BOX RESULTS

The number of nestbox trail reports received for the 2002 breeding season (40) reflected a decrease from the 2001 (47). The number of nestboxes monitored decreased (750) as compared to 2001 (797). Twenty-two (22) counties are represented for the 2002 breeding season which is a decrease from 2001 (25). Table 1 provides a list of nestbox trail variables from 1993 to 2002.

The top three species in frequency of nesting attempts and occurrence on trails were the **Eastern Bluebird**, **House Sparrow**, and the **Carolina Chickadee**. Over **99%** of nestbox usage was by Eastern Bluebirds and this species was reported on **100%** of the trails.

Eight (8) identified species were reported nesting in nestboxes. Nesting attempts by year is provided in Table 2. In 2002, the House Sparrow was again an unwelcome species on the list. However, none of the chicks fledged out of 76 eggs reported. Also reported this year was a nesting attempt by a European Starling (Comanche County) which laid 15 eggs but none hatched. This demonstrates how continual monitoring helps to alleviate competition from these non-native species. Congratulations!

As in previous years, not all nesting attempts were monitored throughout the breeding season, and therefore, the number of eggs laid, hatched, and young fledged represent the minimums for the species (Table 3). Monitors reported at least **1,980 Eastern Bluebirds** fledged from **625 clutches**. Figure 1 is a map of Oklahoma showing bluebird data by county for the 2002 breeding season. Included are the number of monitored nestboxes and the number of fledgling bluebirds reported by county.

The **total number of fledgling bluebirds reported** to the Oklahoma Nestbox Trails Project **since 1985: 44,970**.

TABLE 1. NESTBOX TRAIL VARIABLES FROM 1993 TO 2002

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Total Trail Reports	90	83	53	54	40	52	46	47	47	40
Total Nestboxes	1112	1401	1173	1108	1081	1142	963	871	797	750
Average Trail Size	12	17	17	18	27	22	20	18	15	15
Number of Counties	36	33	29	31	24	31	21	24	25	22

TABLE 2. NESTING ATTEMPTS BY YEAR

Species	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Eastern Bluebird	1087	1016	1072	1390	1075	879	686	<b>690</b>
Carolina Chickadee	125	48	59	53	36	47	49	<b>39</b>
House Sparrow	204	134	98	143	118	78	90	<b>70</b>
Unidentified Wren Species	10	0	5	7	12	5	11	<b>7</b>

Species	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Bewicks Wren	35	20	33	19	8	13	6	11
Carolina Wren	10	13	14	22	6	12	6	5
House Wren	13	5	0	6	3	3	2	1
Tufted Titmouse	18	17	41	45	31	71	20	18
White-breasted Nuthatch	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
Red-headed Woodpecker	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northern Flicker	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Great-crested Flycatcher	1	2	3	5	7	4	6	5
Prothonotary Warbler	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tree Swallow	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Phoebe	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
House Finch	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Eastern Wood Peewee	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	3
European Starling	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4

TABLE 3. NESTING SUCCESS BY SPECIES IN 2001

Species	Clutches Monitored	Eggs Laid Total	PC	Eggs Hatched Total	PC	Young Fledged Total	PC
<b>Eastern Bluebird</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>2785</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>2111</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>3.2</b>
Carolina Chickadee	37	199	5.4	167	4.5	153	4.1
Tufted Titmouse	18	108	6.0	95	5.3	94	5.2
House Sparrow	23	76	3.3	3	0.1	0	0
Carolina Wren	9	61	6.7	36	4.0	32	3.5
Bewick's Wren	14	78	5.6	44	3.1	43	3.1
Great Crested Flycatcher	5	27	5.4	24	4.8	24	4.8

PC = per clutch

## COMMENTS

Following are the comments provided by the trail reporters. My apologies if your comment is not reflected below. If I could not interpret handwriting, I did not record your comment. Thank you so much for taking the time to provide some thoughts, ideas, and concerns:

First time I have seen 6 eggs laid. All six lived and flew away. The last clutch was when it was very hot and one didn't make it. (Woodward)

The first unsuccessful bluebird year since 1990. Eggs disappeared in first attempt and eggs did not hatch in second attempt. All through female sat on nest approximately 4 weeks. (McCurtain)

This year was better than 2001. (Oklahoma)

We put up two new houses drilled into logs. Within an hour after it was up, the bluebirds were looking at it and nested. We didn't get any snakes but gave a neighbor a trap and she saved 2 boxes of bluebirds and caught 3 snakes. (Cleveland)

Has 2 clutches. Both laid in summer that appeared to be abandoned. I rarely saw adults. I replaced 3 old Lawrence Sawyer houses with new ones this year and the birds ignored them. (Oklahoma)

I found 3 dead bluebirds in boxes this year. (Probably killed by house sparrows.) (Muskogee)

Bluebird numbers were drastically down. We feed songbirds and all numbers were down 60 – 70%. (Woodward)

1- Mites developed in one PeeWee nest and one bluebird nest. Removed nest and dusted box with Sevin. 2- Removed 1 cowbird baby from wren nest. (Pawnee)

A snake ate 3 hatched babies. (Pottawatomie)

I found and threw out 10 cowbird eggs this season. Lost some due to freezing at beginning of season. (Beckham)

Had a fairly decent year, but not the best. Seems the Geronimo Road Elementary School trail still did not recover from the storm of 2001. We did have more Great-crested Flycatchers nest this year than previous years. (Comanche)

This was the worse year we've ever had with the annoying house sparrows. It seemed that a male house sparrow was continually chirping for a mate—all summer long! We tore out six house sparrow nests from our nest boxes and destroyed one adult male house sparrow, four adult female sparrows, and 28 house sparrow eggs during the course of the summer. (Pottawatomie)

I didn't have as many sparrows or starlings this year. This was a better year than last. (Sequoyah)

We raise mealworms and feed parent birds and their young. (Mayes)

Two nests with babies and hen disappeared. Babies were 1 week old. Snake? (Tulsa)

One nest had 7 eggs. (First time for us.) 18 of the 204 eggs were white. Even though we have had a bluebird trail for 17 years, we never get tired of “our birds”. It is a new experience each year. (Canadian)

Worst year yet—had cool temps and adequate rain. Frustrated bluebirds pecking on house windows almost daily. Had 2 normal, 1 dwarf eggs – abandoned. Five eggs gone – snake? Five eggs gone – nest not disturbed? Sparrows trying to build in on top of bluebird nests. Bluebirds left in July – usually have year-round. (Lincoln)

This was a bad year. Cowbirds parasitized several nests. About half the boxes stayed empty most of the season. (Pontotoc)

## **Wildlife Diversity Program**

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