

2014 BLUEBIRD NESTBOX SURVEY RESULTS

Nineteen (19) nestbox survey reports were received for the 2014 breeding season. The number of nestboxes monitored was 408, representing twelve counties. Table (1) provides a ten year comparison (2004-2014) of survey results. Please note that the comparison focuses primarily on Eastern Bluebird breeding activities.

The following species attempted nesting in nestboxes: **Eastern Bluebird (260), Carolina Chickadee (22), Tufted Titmouse (10), Bewick's Wren (7), Carolina Wren (5), Great-crested Flycatcher (4), House Wren (1) and House Sparrow (14)**. In 2014, the House Sparrow was again an unwelcome species on the list. However, **NOT ONE CHICK** fledged out of the 14 nesting attempts reported! This demonstrates how continual monitoring helps to alleviate competition from these non-native species. Congratulations! Monitors provided some ideas on their report forms on how to control the house sparrow. (See "Comments" Section)

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 Eastern Bluebird. Monitors reported at least **867 Eastern Bluebirds** fledged from **248 clutches**. Figure (1) is a map of Oklahoma showing bluebird data by county for the 2014 breeding season. Included are the number of monitored nestboxes and the number of fledgling bluebirds reported by county.

The data, based on submitted reports, reflects the Eastern Bluebird breeding success rate of **3.5** fledged per clutch for 2014, which is above the 10-year average of fledged/clutch for the Oklahoma Bluebird Nestbox Survey (3.24). This is good news!

The total number of fledged bluebirds reported to the Oklahoma Bluebird Nestbox survey since 1985: 62,039

TABLE 1. Ten year comparison of breeding success reported for Eastern Bluebirds using monitored nestboxes.

| | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
|------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------------|
| Counties Reporting | 21 | 28 | 21 | 15 | 19 | 18 | 12 | 9 | 9 | 11 | 12 |
| Reports Submitted | 51 | 71 | 48 | 31 | 39 | 35 | 25 | 13 | 12 | 15 | 19 |
| Species | 10 | 12 | 10 | 12 | 13 | 9 | 10 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 8 |
| # Nestboxes Monitored | 767 | 973 | 744 | 545 | 628 | 566 | 471 | 284 | 268 | 286 | 408 |
| Nesting Attempts | 110 | 734 | 754 | 386 | 467 | 483 | 318 | 223 | 191 | 189 | 260 |
| Clutches | 612 | 736 | 715 | 367 | 434 | 419 | 286 | 213 | 176 | 176 | 248 |
| # Eggs | 2676 | 3309 | 3253 | 1653 | 1885 | 1892 | 1321 | 929 | 771 | 730 | 1111 |
| Eggs/Clutch | 4.4 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 4.3 | 4.5 | 4.6 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 4.1 | 4.5 |
| # Chicks | 2165 | 2708 | 2519 | 1203 | 1609 | 1409 | 1017 | 688 | 597 | 561 | 903 |
| Chick/Clutch | 3.5 | 3.7 | 3.5 | 3.3 | 3.7 | 3.4 | 3.6 | 3.2 | 3.4 | 3.2 | 3.6 |
| Chicks/Eggs | 81% | 82% | 77% | 73% | 85% | 74% | 77% | 74% | 77% | 77% | 81% |
| # Fledged | 2092 | 2551 | 2317 | 1133 | 1530 | 1406 | 963 | 658 | 560 | 469 | 867 |
| Fledged/Clutch | 3.4 | 3.5 | 3.2 | 3.1 | 3.5 | 3.4 | 3.4 | 3.1 | 3.2 | 2.6 | 3.5 |
| Fledged/Eggs | 78% | 77% | 71% | 68% | 81% | 74% | 73% | 71% | 72% | 64% | 78% |
| Fledged/Hatched | 97% | 94% | 92% | 94% | 95% | 99% | 95% | 96% | 94% | 74% | 96% |

COMMENTS

Following are the comments provided by the nestbox reporters. Thank you so much for taking the time to provide some thoughts, ideas, and concerns:

- Looks like the Craig Hill trail did fine, but the boxes on West Range did not do so well. I believe the cutting of the Mesquite trees hurt the Bluebird population. (Comanche County)
- One Carolina Chickadee nesting attempt was ended by an unknown predator that ate the head of one of the adults and probably the eggs. (Osage County)
- I had 3 clutches of bluebirds with white eggs. I had a successful new approach to controlling house sparrows. I let them nest in a nestbox and then kept removing all but 1 marked egg. Females kept laying eggs for several cycles. This kept them tied up and I had no attacks on bluebirds or other birds. I will try this again next year. (Wagoner County)
- I still have a sparrow problem. I checked the houses at least once a week tearing out all sparrow nests. All bluebird houses were taken over by sparrows – the 2 nests I did have were in mealworm feeders. (Cleveland County)
- This was a strange year. We had two wildfires on the west and east of our house. The bluebirds were starting one nest, however after the fire they left. The wrens then moved in. I was checking damage and saw a bluebird fly into a hole in a dead tree. I got my ladder and they were building a nest. Also found another bluebird nest in another tree. They came to the water we had out but didn't use the boxes. (Woodward)
- The Van Ert Universal Trap available at <http://www.vanerttraps.com/products.htm> continues to be a valuable management tool. We captured 3 house sparrows (2 male, 1 female) with this trap placed in a bluebird box. After trapping house sparrows in this trap we placed the sparrows into the Deluxe Repeating Sparrow Trap (DRST) available from <http://www.sparrowtraps.net>. Using the live house sparrows we were able to lure an additional 13 house sparrows (11 male, 2 female) in the DRST. All house sparrows were destroyed. (Payne County)
- Bluebirds seem to only use certain boxes. Long screws had to be put in new box fronts to keep raccoons from opening boxes. Wrens didn't seem to lay eggs & hatch very often. When our children were young, and now the grandkids, so enjoyed watching the progress of the bluebirds as they lay eggs and as they hatch. (Pottawatomie County)
- We celebrated the 15th anniversary of our trail with our 758th fledged bluebird!! Good year and with a cooler summer our third nesting was good. (Beckham)
- As of 8-3-2014 a male bluebird is still sitting on a clutch of 4 eggs laid the first week of July. The eggs are white. We believe he may be one of a pair that produced 3 clutches of infertile eggs last year. These eggs were white and the nests were abandoned after several weeks. A 4th clutch of 3 white eggs hatched and 3 fledged in early August, probably also from this pair. We also used sparrow spookers after the first egg in a clutch was laid. (Oklahoma County)



This coupon was presented to one of our bluebird trail monitors and reporter. The comment from the trail reporter was, "My family thinks I need help." (Cleveland County)

2015 UPDATE

There is a new and improved survey form to use to submit your 2015 results. Form is available online at: http://www.wildlifedepartment.com/wildlifemgmt/citizen_science.htm

You can attach the completed form to an email to Melynda.hickman@odwc.ok.gov or you can submit your data online at the same link listed above.

Please use this form to record the results of your bluebird nestbox monitoring **and discard any older forms you may have.**

Annual reports are posted on the OK Dept. of Wildlife Conservation's website under "Citizen Science" as well as a summary is provided through the monthly e-newsletter, *The WildSide*. If you have not subscribed to this free newsletter you may do so at:

<http://www.wildlifedepartment.com/wildlifemgmt/wildside.htm>

THANK YOU ONE AND ALL!

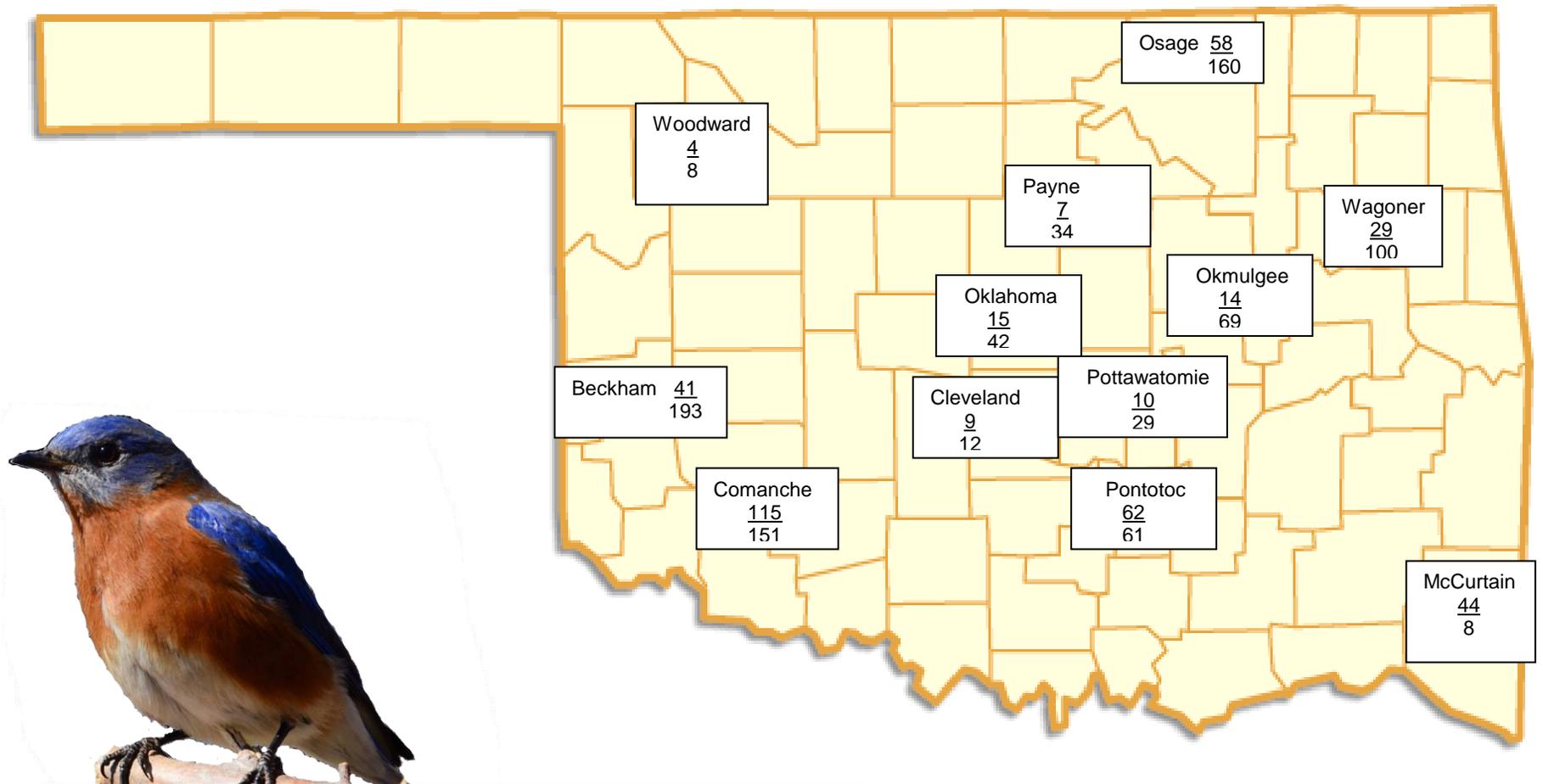


Figure 1. 2014 Bluebird Nesting Results

The top number is the number of nestboxes monitored;

Bottom number is the number of bluebirds fledged