

2019 BLUEBIRD NESTBOX SURVEY RESULTS

The Oklahoma Wildlife Diversity Program has been requesting information from those who monitor bluebird nestboxes since 1985. Through this citizen science effort, the Wildlife Diversity Program uses the information to better understand the use of nestboxes by cavity nesters and to provide a “peek” into the breeding activities of these birds. We are so thankful to the participants that take the time to help the Eastern Bluebird and other native cavity-nesting birds and for the information they share with us. For the 2019 breeding season, 12 nestbox survey reports were received. The number of nestboxes monitored in 2019 was **173**, representing nine counties. Table (1) provides a ten year comparison (2009-2019) of survey results. Please note that the comparison focuses primarily on Eastern Bluebird breeding activities.

The following species attempted nesting in nestboxes in 2019: **Eastern Bluebird (169), Carolina Chickadee (9), Carolina Wren (9), Bewick’s Wren (6), House Sparrow (3), and Tufted Titmouse (1).**

The House Sparrow was again an unwelcome species on the list as noted by the 3 nesting attempts reported. However, not one chick fledged out of the 3 nesting attempts! 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 Eastern Bluebird. Monitors reported at least **550 Eastern Bluebirds fledged from 158 clutches**. Figure (1) is a map of Oklahoma showing bluebird data by county for the 2019 breeding season. Included are the number of monitored nestboxes and the number of fledged bluebirds reported by county.

The data, based on submitted reports, reflects the Eastern Bluebird breeding success rate of **3.5** fledged per clutch for 2019 which is slightly below the 10-year average (2007-2017) of fledged/clutch for the Oklahoma Bluebird Nestbox Survey (3.67) . This is still good news!

The total number of fledged bluebirds reported to the Oklahoma Bluebird Nestbox survey since 1985: 65,277

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

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Counties Reporting	18	12	9	9	11	12	10	9	6	8	9
Reports Submitted	35	25	13	12	15	19	13	14	10	10	12
Species Using nestboxes	9	10	7	6	8	8	7	6	5	7	6
# Nestboxes Monitored	566	471	284	268	286	408	165	168	138	160	173
Nesting Attempts	483	318	223	191	189	260	171	228	145	170	169
Clutches	419	286	213	176	176	248	159	194	159	160	158
# Eggs	1892	1321	929	771	730	1111	762	889	741	703	705
Eggs/Clutch	4.5	4.6	4.4	4.4	4.1	4.5	4.8	4.6	4.6	4.4	4.5
# Chicks	1409	1017	688	597	561	903	649	760	621	586	598
Chick/Clutch	3.4	3.6	3.2	3.4	3.2	3.6	4.1	3.9	3.9	3.7	3.8
Chicks/Eggs	74%	77%	74%	77%	77%	81%	85%	85%	83%	83%	85%
# Fledged	1406	963	658	560	469	867	614	700	540	534	550
Fledged/Clutch	3.4	3.4	3.1	3.2	2.6	3.5	3.9	3.6	3.4	3.3	3.5
Fledged/Eggs	74%	73%	71%	72%	64%	78%	81%	79%	73%	76%	78%
Fledged/Hatched	99%	95%	96%	94%	74%	96%	94%	92%	87%	91%	92%

2019 UPDATE

We would very much like for you to use the updated form available online at:

<https://wildlifedepartment.com/wildlife/wildlife-diversity-program/Oklahoma-Nest-Box-Trails-Project>

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" and a summary is provided in the monthly e-newsletter, *The Wild Side*. If you have not subscribed to this free newsletter you may do so at: <https://wildlifedepartment.com> and go to the left hand side of the home page to enter your email address and then you can select "Wild Side" from the list of publications.

One really great resource online for information on bluebird nestbox monitoring is www.sialis.org. It is all about bluebirds and there is even a pictorial representation of the different ages of the chicks in the nest. I think you will enjoy the website. Additionally, Dennis Martin (Payne County) has had success with the Sparrow Spooker (see information at the link below) and wanted to share the information with you: <http://www.sialis.org/sparrowspooker.htm>.

The Oklahoma Bluebird Society offers more specific information about bluebirds in Oklahoma through 2 meetings per year and a newsletter. For meeting and membership information, check out www.oklahomabluebirdsociety.org or follow them on Facebook.

One more tool for your toolbox is the Nestwatch app from Cornell University. The app has lots of features including digital record-keeping and GPS mapping.



Families really enjoy building nest boxes for bluebirds at Wildlife Expo. (ODWC)



Pictured above is one of the nest boxes monitored by Dennis Martin (Payne County). His Sparrow Spooker can be seen above the nest box. Below the nest box is a western rat snake ensnared in a snake net trap. According to Mr. Martin, this snake was the third to be caught trying to enter this nest box in a 9-hour period. This and later-caught snakes were successfully extracted and released about 1-mile from the trap site. Mr. Martin states that he cannot recommend these netting traps because it takes a diligent nest trail keeper to stay abreast of the snakes being caught and making sure they are released in a timely fashion so as not to be injured or killed by the stress of being caught.
(Photo: D. Martin)

THANK YOU ONE AND ALL!

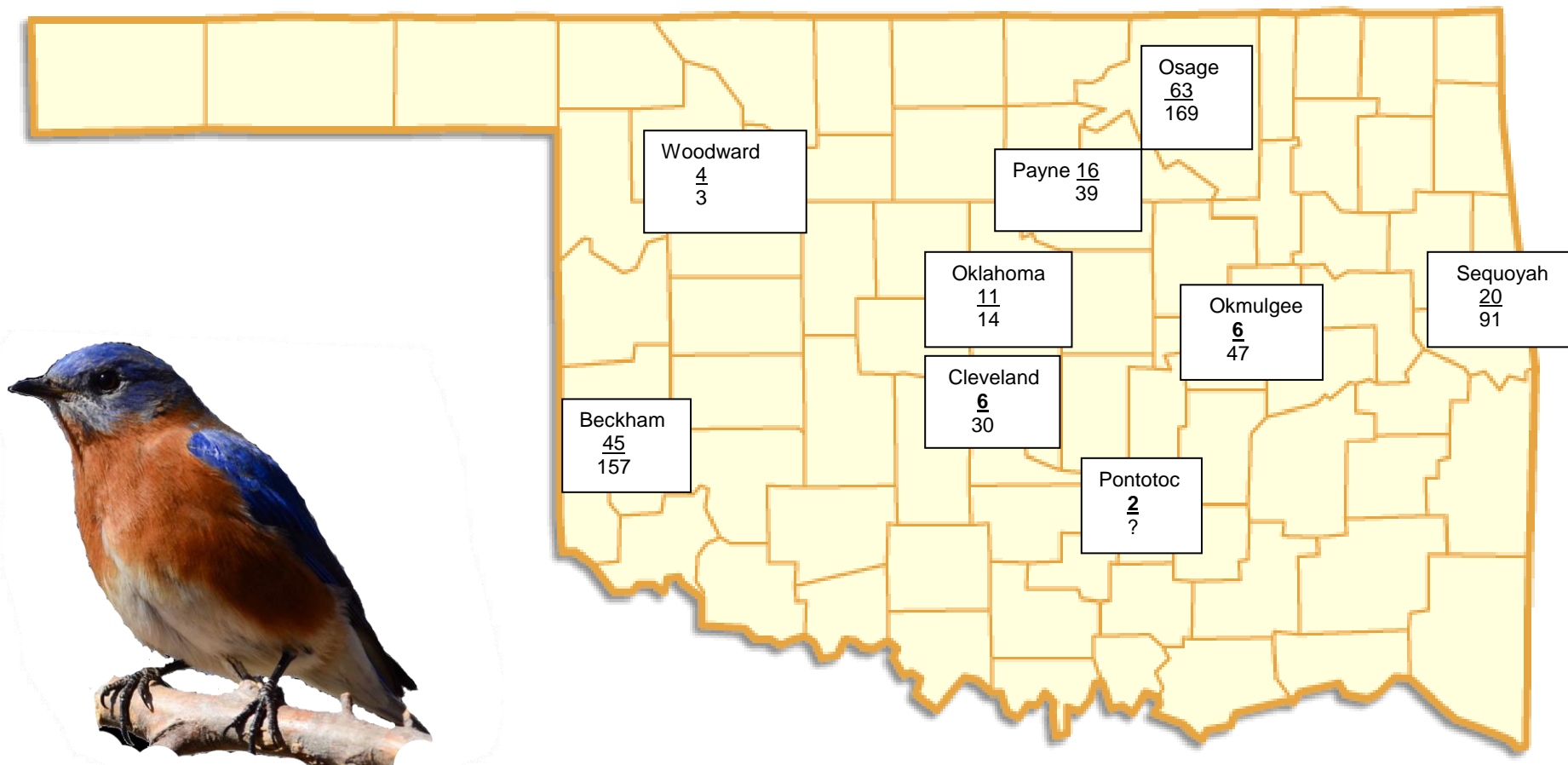


Figure 1. 2019 Bluebird Nesting Results by County

Top number is # of boxes monitored;
Bottom number is # of bluebirds fledged