

Subject: Annual Report – Bluebird Project

Date: August 9, 2018

This year, I increased my number of boxes to 20, adding 4 boxes in Sisters, 1 at the High School, and 1 box at Kevin Smith's home.

Of the 20 boxes, 18 were used by bluebirds. Totals for the year were 67 Mountain Bluebird eggs, 56 hatched, and 54 fledged; Western Bluebirds laid 27 eggs, hatched 22, and fledged 16.

I banded a total of 119 bluebirds, all 37 of Carolyn Rochelle's and 82 of mine, an increase of 48 birds this year.

As Carolyn reported, she lost one box of nestlings to small black ants and I lost a box of four banded nestlings to large red ants. Neither of us has had a problem with ants in any of our previous years of monitoring bluebird boxes. For the first time since he started the Kestrel Program, Don McCartney lost a box of young kestrels to large red ant, so this was apparently a big, vicious ant year!

Weather was typical – cold early, which affected bug production and early nest construction and laying. Late in the year, we experienced some really hot days, which affected some of Carolyn's boxes but didn't seem to affect mine, although I only had two boxes with a second clutch, a decrease from previous year.

There are 14 boxes located 11 miles SW of Sisters. Box 15 and 16 are in Sage Meadow at my home in Sisters.

2 boxes were not used

4 boxes had second clutches

Totals: eggs laid 98, nestlings 63, fledglings 40 (all banded)

MOBL used 3 boxes with 10 fledglings

WEBL used 11 boxes with 30 fledglings

The flashing put on the trees last year did stop the chipmunks but did not stop ants. This is a new threat and other monitors have never had an ant problem in the past. Ants destroyed 5 nestlings and were working on eggs in another nest.

Many eggs disappeared. Many nestlings died. I think starvation was to blame. Several nest were never completed.

It is worrisome to see so few MOBLs. I would not call this a normal season. Hopefully next year will return to a successful outcome.