



Mountain Bluebird Trails Conservation Society

Shell Helps Out Again!

Mountain Bluebird Trails Conservation Society is pleased to announce it has recently received \$1,588.94 from the Shell Canada Community Service Fund. "The funds have been awarded to recognize and support Shell Canada employees in southern Alberta. Employee Max Goodfellow and retired employee Fred Wishneski regularly volunteer as members of Mountain Bluebird Trails (MBT). Their monitoring consists of checking the boxes for nests, eggs, nestlings, and fledglings, as well as predation. They also have Environment Canada banding permits to band the adults and nestlings. "The money will be used to purchase a PowerPoint projector which will be an invaluable addition to our presentations and training seminars," says Ken Mackintosh, vice-president of MBT. Ken Mackintosh also mentions that this Shell Fund enabled MBT to purchase a Global Positioning System unit in 2001 and a computer and printer in 2003.

"Shell believes that contributions of time, effort, and caring to not-for-profit organizations benefit the entire community. Through the Community Service Fund, we recognize the support Shell people who give personal time to not-for-profit organizations on a regular, volunteer basis," says Gina Ockey, Shell Canada Public Affairs. "We have supported Shell volunteers through the Community Service Fund for over 30 years. In 2005, Shell Canada granted \$515,000 to over 375 not-for-profit organizations across Canada."

The late Duncan Mackintosh of Lethbridge started Mountain Bluebird Trails in the Lethbridge area, beginning with 100 boxes in 1975. MBT now extends across the province from the Medicine Hat/Cypress Hills vicinity to the Crowsnest Pass, and from Nanton south to the US border. MBT has over 3,000 nest boxes, monitored by about 100 members. Since inception, they have fledged over 67,700 Mountain Bluebirds.

Information about the Community Service Fund and Shell's other community investment programs is available at www.shell.ca/community.

MBTCS Contact Information:

President:

Vice President:

Treasurer:

Secretary:

Directors:

P.O. Box 401 Stn. Main
Lethbridge, AB T1J 3Z1

Joe Michielson 345-4777

Fred Wishneski

Duncan Rand

Eleanor Thomson

Ken Mackintosh 345-5806

Lynn Bell

Max Goodfellow

Gwen Tietz

Master Permit/Band Manager Stats/

Newsletter Editor: Gwen Tietz 553-2780

Volume Seven ~ Spring 2007

Editor: G Tietz



"Banding Workshop Information Seminar"

Saturday, March 31st, 2007

10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

#C, 2825 2 Ave South

Lethbridge, AB

Saturday, April 14th, 2007

10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Basement, MD of Pincher Creek

753 Kettles Street

Pincher Creek, AB

\$10 fee (lunch & refreshments)

Limited Seating!

Mentors needed!

RSVP: 553-2780

Don't miss out!

“2007 Banding Workshop Information Seminar Topics”

- 1) **The Bander’s Code of Ethics**
- 2) **History of Banding (& MBT Society)**
- 3) **Why Band Birds**
- 4) **Permit Issue**
 - Types of Banding Permits
 - Special Authorizations
 - Responsibilities of Permit Holders
 - Permit Suspension & Revocations
- 5) **Handling Birds – Limitations to your permit**
- 6) **Preventing Bird Injuries and Fatalities**
 - Weather
 - Special Interest: Brood Patches
 - Bird Numbers & People on Hand
 - Injuries and their Causes
 - Minor Cuts & Scrapes
 - Problems with Legs
 - Wing Strain
 - Shock
 - Tail Loss & Feather Damage
 - Eye Damage
 - Causes of Death
 - Predators
 - Hemorrhage
 - Heat Exhaustion/Heat Stress
 - Cold Exhaustion/Cold Stress
 - Natural Causes
 - “Exploding Nestlings”
 - Treatment of Injured Birds
 - Release
 - Rehabilitation
 - “Jolting”
 - Amputation
 - R & R
 - When & How to Euthanize
 - Disposition of Dead Birds
- 7) **Processing Birds**
 - The Essential Basics
 - Band Fit & Size
 - The Band Numbering System
 - Banding Pliers & Other Equipment
 - Banding a Bird
 - When & How to Remove a Band
 - Banding Nestlings
 - Banding Adults
- 8) **Record Keeping**
 - Field Notes
 - “Band Manager”
 - Recovery Information
- 9) **Prevention of Injuries & Diseases to Banders**
 - Diseases & Disorders

Volunteers Needed!

We still need your help! If you are an existing monitor OR a bander we are ***looking for mentors and trainers*** to assist with this continued effort. If you are interested please call us, we need help to grow and in our effort to maintain trails that currently are not maintained. Currently we have 500 bluebird boxes that need monitoring! ***Can you help us?*** Some of our very dedicated banders/monitors need your help! We have one trail that needs “temporary” maintenance and another that needs a permanent replacement monitor/bander in training. We have aligned a few of our members to train new members in effective trail management. ***Contact us if you can help!***



The Board of Mountain Bluebirds Trails Conservation Society wishes to thank you in advance for your continued support. In order to guarantee the future of our efforts we must comply with the strictly enforced regulations beyond our control. Establishing future membership and consistent data remittances has become a long term goal of the Society and is a requirement of the banding permit. We view uniform training methods as a successful solution. Feel free to contact us if you have questions.

MBT Board of Directors

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The warmer weather has got me itching to check out the condition of my bluebird trail to make sure all my boxes are ready for the return of the bluebirds. The trail is on the edge of the Oldman River, north of Tempest, on the east end of Ken Mackintosh's trail.

For those of you that don't know me, I'll do a little introduction. I'm Joe Michielsen, I grew up in central Alberta and moved to southern Alberta in 1981. I've been an 'outdoor' person all my life with an interest in wildlife. Ken Mackintosh and Al Kuzyk took me with them a couple of times when they were checking out their boxes, sparked my interest in 'bluebirding' and convinced me to join MBT. When Tom McIntosh decided he didn't have time to take care of his trail, I found my opportunity to get started in 2001 with Ken as my mentor. I became a director on the executive that fall and allowed my name to stand for president last fall.

I would like to thank the former executives for all their hard work for the bluebird cause. MBT is also fortunate to have a dedicated volunteer like Dave Friebel, who besides having his own trails also builds our boxes. For the past number of years the materials he uses have been donated by Pincher Creek COOP. Hopefully, in the next few years we can increase interest in bluebirding and get monitors and banders for established trails and add some new trails. We have seen some increased interest this winter and when we advertise for the upcoming workshops, I suspect we'll stir up a few more people. The workshops will be a great opportunity for people with experience to provide input, to mentor new-comers, and for fellow banders and monitors to get together for a day. The workshops will be held on March 31st in Lethbridge and April 14th in Pincher Creek.

MBT appreciates the continued support from Shell. This year's donation that went towards the purchase of a Power Point projector will benefit our workshop and any other talks members give such as at schools and to seniors. Under construction, and available to "speakers" is a generic PowerPoint presentation for your use. Please contact us if you have pictures or need to use this equipment.

Here's hoping everyone has a successful year of bluebirding - and the weather cooperates.

Sincerely, Joe



PLAN
For the Future

Donations Graciously Accepted

In order to cover the cost of the postage and newsletter productions we would like to request all those that receive it to donate. Mountain Bluebirds Conservation Society is a non-profit Society and we do issue receipts for amounts over \$10. Please mail your donation to:

**MBT
P.O. Box 401
Lethbridge, AB
T1J 3Z1**

Master Permit Changes ~ 2007

How does it affect you?

Formally the project known as "Mountain Bluebird Trails Conservation Society" was in the possession of a "master station permit" under the direction of a designated "responsible person", Gwen Tietz, in order to cover the project our group of banders and monitors encompassed. Along with this permit annually we must apply for Provincial Collection License and a Research Permit. We would then be licensed and allowed to capture and band locally at our nestboxes both Mountain Bluebirds and Tree Swallows. The "master station permit" permit was cancelled in October, 2006 with the issuance of a new "Personal Master Permit" to Gwen Tietz.

Why did this occur? The position of the "responsible person" under the "master station permit" was open for replacement for the past three years. None expressed interest in taking over the required statistical collection and remittance annually to the Banding Office, so the project could have collapsed after almost 30 years in operation. Requirements of the Banding Office denote "it is mandatory to have a "responsible person" under a "master station permit". Transfer of the previous permit is allowable only to a person deemed "trained & responsible".

What now? The new "Personal Master Permit" under the direction of Gwen Tietz was applied for primarily to encompass a new MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity & Survivorship) project. This project is currently in search of both funds and volunteers from the educational and public sector. A local land owner will allow access to river bottom land on a 5 year commitment basis. Understandably, training by qualified personnel is required to access the area.

In order to continue the MBT project Gwen Tietz made a further application to cover the activities of the previous "master station permit". The new groups will exist under an umbrella of the "Personal Master Permit" under Gwen Tietz and will be known collectively as the "Belly River Banding Projects".

Will you still receive bands and a sub-permit? Yes, if you received one under the "master station permit" you were transferred to the new "Personal Master Permit". You will continue to receive your sub-permit annually provided you meet the data remittance requirements of the Banding Office by the September 1st deadline.

What about the workshops? It is the mandate of the Banding Office to establish consistency in banding methods, techniques and collection of data for statistics. The workshops being offered are to educate us all on the existing methods, techniques and data collection requirements. Materials used at these workshops were provided to us by the Banding Office and the North American Banders Society.

The workshops are designed to attract new monitors, potential banders, mentors and trainers. Currently, we have over 500 boxes in southern Alberta that need monitoring! Some of our membership is finding difficulty in making time for their commitments and some can not make it out to clean even once a year. The bluebirds need our help!

How can you help? Come to the workshops and assist us in training the new wave of monitors and banders. Your knowledge is appreciated. We also need mentors to get new monitors and banders started, if you can make time to take someone under your wing, we need your services.

Inquiries? Call Gwen Tietz at 553-2780 with additional questions. Joe Michielson, President MBT, is also available at 345-4777.

One of MBT's Original Member Passes On

Late November, 2006 settles in with winter winds starting to howl as Mother Nature grips us with the cold breathe of winter.

In a quiet room in the Golden Acre Lodge in Lethbridge, AB, Mr. Ralph Erdman passes away. Ralph was 93 when he left us.

Some of our membership, myself included, remembers this kind and gentle man. When I met him he was in his 80's and still climbing the ditches to monitor his boxes. At that time he was training Duncan & Nancy Rand to take over his trail; both speak very highly of Ralph.

Ralph Erdman was recruited by the late founder Duncan Mackintosh in the 70's. He loved his time on the trail and would chat endlessly about his beloved bluebird and all the people he came to know with the same interest. Ralph attended every MBT meeting for as long as I have been involved, and his knowledge will be sorely missed.

It is with the most heartfelt sincerity we wish to extend the sympathies of the Board and general membership to Ralph's family and all those that were honored enough to actually meet him.

I personally still have a picture Ralph took of a male bluebird on my desk...we will miss you Ralph.

G. Tietz





Mountain Bluebird Trails Conservation Society

Overwhelming Response!

For the second year Mountain Bluebird Trails Conservation Society of Southern Alberta held the “**Banding Workshop Information Seminars**”. What an amazing response we had from the general public! **WOW!** On March 31st we held a workshop in Lethbridge and are pleased to announce it was “standing room only”. On April 14th the Pincher Creek workshop was also well attended.

Now we seem to have more volunteers than we have trainers and mentors. If you think you can help us next year we, MBTCS, would truly appreciate your assistance. All we need are people to take the “newbies” out on a trail and show them what it is to “monitor” a line of boxes.

Let’s not lose the wealth of knowledge that has become this kindred association of southern bluebirders! It is due to all the existing members that we actually have been able to achieve the continued efforts of increased bluebird populations. Help us maintain the existing bluebirds trails that some can no longer tend to. The goal is to make sure all boxes are cleaned several times a year, everything else is a bonus.

You may remember in the spring we pleaded for assistance in cleaning out over 500 boxes that would soon fall into disrepair as the members could not get to them in 2007. Happily I take great pride in informing you that all of these boxes have been cleaned and most are assigned to new members.

Sadly, we now have 2 new (smaller) trails that have come open of late. Can you help us in the spring? We need mentors and trainers in the worst way, if you feel you can help please contact us.

MBTCS Contact Information:

President:

Vice President:

Treasurer:

Secretary:

Directors:

P.O. Box 401 Stn. Main

Lethbridge, AB T1J 3Z1

Joe Michielson 345-4777

Fred Wishneski

Duncan Rand

Eleanor Thomson

Ken Mackintosh 345-5806

Lynn Bell

Max Goodfellow

Gwen Tietz

Master Permit/Band Manager Stats/

Newsletter Editor: Gwen Tietz 553-2780

Volume Seven ~ Fall 2007

Editor: G Tietz



“Annual General Meeting”

Saturday, October 27th, 2007

2:00 p.m.

1001 9 Ave South

Lethbridge, AB

Speakers:

Lloyd Bennett (LNS)

Informative Slideshow

\$5.00 donation appreciated

See you there!



RSVP: 553-2780/345-5806

Don't miss out!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The hot, dry summer made for a very different year on my bluebird trail. After an average first brood with many of my boxes used by swallows, I did not have any bluebirds that produced a second hatch. In one box I did have a full nest but no eggs were laid. A late first nest was taken over by House Wrens and they had removed the bluebird eggs.

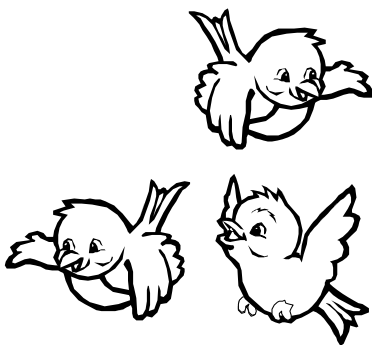
On July 13th, I decided to get out early because it was going to be another hot one. I was hopeful that my trail would have the 2nd broods of eggs in the boxes. The first few boxes were empty except for the swallow 'leftovers'. I then came across several boxes with dead fledgling swallows – one or two of many of the broods had died just before they fledged. Of course, as I traveled, I watched for my bluebirds to show that the next box would be occupied, but I only saw one pair of bluebirds. I thought, finally, I had a pair with a 2nd brood but instead they were near the box that had been taken over by wrens. I wondered why there were no bluebirds and before I reached my last box I had it figured out. No food! I had not seen or felt a single insect the entire walk.

The landowner did report later in the summer she had a brood of bluebirds at her bird-bath. I thought with the number of dead swallows I removed from the boxes that perhaps it was fortunate the bluebirds hadn't tried to rear a second brood.

As far as the Mountain Bluebird Trails organization is concerned, we had a very successful year attracting new interest in helping monitor and take care of the existing trails and adding new boxes on new trails. A poor year for the bluebirds is part of nature but we now have new members interested in helping provide nesting boxes to increase the population of our beautiful, insect-eating bluebirds. I know the 'old' members were kept busy as mentors. I thank them for taking the time and the new people for helping our efforts to provide homes for our bluebirds.

Please try to make it to our Annual General Meeting. We have an interesting guest speaker lined up and we'll have time to discuss bluebirds etc during the refreshment break. Bring a friend!

Sincerely, Joe



Volunteers Needed!

We still need your help! If you are an existing monitor OR a bander we are **looking for mentors and trainers** to assist with this continued effort. If you are interested please call us, we need help to grow and in our effort to maintain trails that currently are not maintained. **Can you help us?** Some of our very dedicated banders/monitors need your help! We have one trail that needs "temporary" maintenance and another that needs a permanent replacement monitor/bander in training. We have aligned a few of our members to train new members in effective trail management. **Contact us if you can help!**

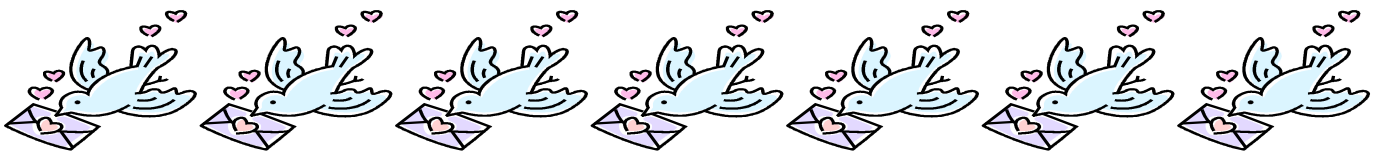
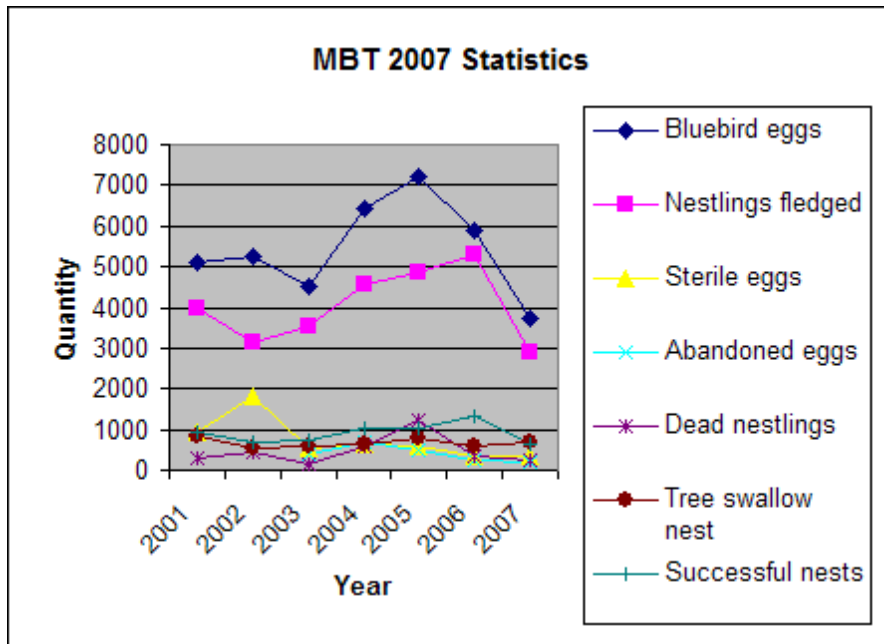


The Board of Mountain Bluebirds Trails Conservation Society wishes to thank you in advance for your continued support. In order to guarantee the future of our efforts we must comply with the strictly enforced regulations beyond our control. Establishing future membership and consistent data remittances has become a long term goal of the Society and is a requirement of the banding permit. We view uniform training methods as a successful solution. Feel free to contact us if you have questions.

MBT Board of Directors

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Boxes available	2085	2088	2062	2162	1907	1629
Successful nests	676	756	1026	1024	1331	655
Bluebird eggs	5274	4522	6453	7237	5900	3739
Sterile eggs	1810	530	660	579	363	352
Abandoned eggs		405	684	503	241	189
Dead nestlings	462	132	596	1230	352	264
Nestlings fledged	3145	3529	4545	4866	5296	2914
Adults banded	148	116	106	154	77	92
Nestlings banded	2148	2507	2701	2583	3149	1663
Recoveries	73	62	96	103	77	45
Tree swallow nests	535	568	623	788	609	675
Wren nests	14	20	18	49	22	29
Sparrow nests	30	34	36	39	63	54
Stolen/vandalized	35	32	57	52	27	140
Used twice	149	492	302	428	306	216

Band Issuance	MOBL
No/bands issued/2007	3411
No/bands USED/2007	1757
Bands returned in 2007	1654
No/bands issued/2006	4948
No/bands USED/2006	3526
Bands returned in 2006	1422
No/bands issued/2005	5254
No/bands USED/2005	3122
Bands returned in 2005	2132
No/bands issued/2004	3810
No/bands USED/2004	3073
Bands returned in 2004	737
No/bands issued/2003	4467
No/bands USED/2003	2623
Bands returned in 2003	1844
No/bands issued/2002	3838
No/bands USED/2002	2307
Bands returned in 2002	1531
No/bands issued/2001	4107
No/bands USED/2001	2880
Bands returned in 2001	1227
No/bands issued/2000	4358
No/bands USED/2000	3324
Bands returned in 2000	1034



Your Consideration Is Appreciated!

On a side note, some of you have practiced a method for many years that may not be in the interest of others in the future.....if you remove bands provided from the strands provided, “pre-open” them and place them in/on an independent “container” prior to use you may not be aware of the unintentional weakening of the band. If you do not use these bands and rework the band, a second time, in order to return them at the year end you have stressed the material in the band.

Most of you will notice the poor material of the bands provided to us in 2006 by the banding office. When these bands in particular are opened, closed and reopened multiple times they rarely close properly. Remember, a band can not be placed on a bird if it inhibits movement in any way, hence it is destroyed.

Each of our banders is provided with ***complete and new*** packages each year. All “left over” bands on strands returned are used the following year by two banders. “Used” defective bands are reported as destroyed and can not be used. Hence, until the banding office can rectify the reported issues with the poor material, please do try not to revert to the previous methods considered a time saver.

Band supply is of concern and all of us wish to continue to band in the future. Please help us reduce the amount of destroyed bands to insure all of us the right to band in the years to come.

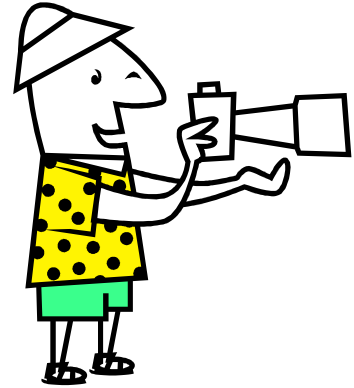
Thanks once again for all your tireless efforts.



Donations Graciously Accepted

In order to cover the cost of the postage and newsletter productions we would like to request all those that receive it to donate. Mountain Bluebirds Conservation Society is a non-profit Society and we do issue receipts for amounts over \$10. Please mail your donation to:

**MBT
P.O. Box 401
Lethbridge, AB
T1J 3Z1**



Calling all Photographers!

MBTCS is accumulating pictures and videos to create a PowerPoint template for the use of Education and Informative Presentations.

Do you have photos or videos that others could use for educational presentations?

We will have a copy of the template for all MBT speakers as soon as we can. Call us or email your pictures and videos to:

mtnblue@telus.net

Thanks for your help!

