



Dedicated to studying, conserving and helping restore the natural range
of the Mountain Bluebird in southern Alberta.

Welcome,

It's spring at last, in some places, winter is holding on in areas to the west. Shelley and I cleaned out our boxes on April 9, near the Waterton Shell plant, and there was still lots of snow. We also saw quite a few bluebirds, so that's the good news.

At the fall AGM, we elected a new executive. They are:

President: Brian Coffey

Vice President: Ken Moore

Treasurer: Gwen Tietz

Secretary: Eleanor Thomsen (Gwen Tietz will cover off in her absence)

Newsletter /Website Editor: Brian Coffey

Trail Manager: Gerry Kylo

Master Bander/Director: Gwen Tietz

Directors: Lynn Bell, Ken MacKintosh, Gerry Kylo,
Joe Michielsen, Shelley Coffey, Jean Gregg.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Fred Wishneski who has served faithfully for so many years.

We are currently in the process of building our own website, which hopefully will be up and running by the end of May. Watch for it at www.bluebirdtrails.org.

We are also in negotiations to build partnership agreements with the Oldman Watershed Council, the Milk River Watershed Council and the Crowsnest Conservation Society. Details to follow.

***“Information
Seminar/Banding
Workshop”***

Saturday, April 23rd, 2011

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

Fish & Game building

1001 9 Ave South

Lethbridge, AB

\$10 fee (lunch & refreshments)

Limited Seating!

Mentors needed!

RSVP: 553-2780-Gwen

345-5806-Ken



Your Consideration Is Appreciated!

Some of you have practiced a method for many years that may not be in the interest of MBT 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. In the last two years of banding I have had to destroy quite a few “fatigued” bands in order to not cause possible stress or injury to a banded bird.

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 cannot be placed on a bird if it inhibits movement in any way, hence it is destroyed.

Happily, the bands received since 2006 are of a much better material from a new supplier so this problem should eventually fade with time.

Each of the MBT banders are 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 cannot be used. 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.

Gwen Tietz, master bander

DID YOU KNOW...

“Because only the female has a brood patch, she alone is capable of incubating the eggs. If she is killed or for some other reason permanently leaves the nest during incubation, the male cannot complete this initial phase of the young’s life cycle. A female will sometimes abandon a nest if she is disturbed, especially during the first 12 days or so of incubation. Never attempt to foster out the eggs to other nests. Simply clean out the nest for the bluebirds to start over again.”

*Myrna Pearman
“Mountain Bluebird
Trail Monitoring Guide”*

2011 Spring Banding & Monitoring Packages/Workshop

As usual, the Spring 2011 Banding & Monitoring Packages are distributed with this newsletter, except of course, the email edition. In the event that you might require additional bands throughout the season please contact Gwen at 553-2780 or 317-1252.

April 23rd is the date for this year's Banding/General Information Workshop in Lethbridge (see box on page 1). Please call Gwen if you wish to assist with the event. This has been an overwhelming success over the years, so plan to attend, even just to socialize with your fellow members! Our membership has grown significantly and we now need some help getting to all the new volunteers. If you would like to mentor a new monitor or bander, please contact Gwen.



Gwen will also be holding a banding workshop in Medicine Hat on June 25th.

Contacting us for replacement boxes



Another season is about to start and it is time to clean, repair and replace a few of those nesting boxes. You can contact the following people to obtain new boxes:

Ken Mackintosh, Coaldale
(403) 345-5806

Joe Michielsen, Coaldale
(403) 345-4777

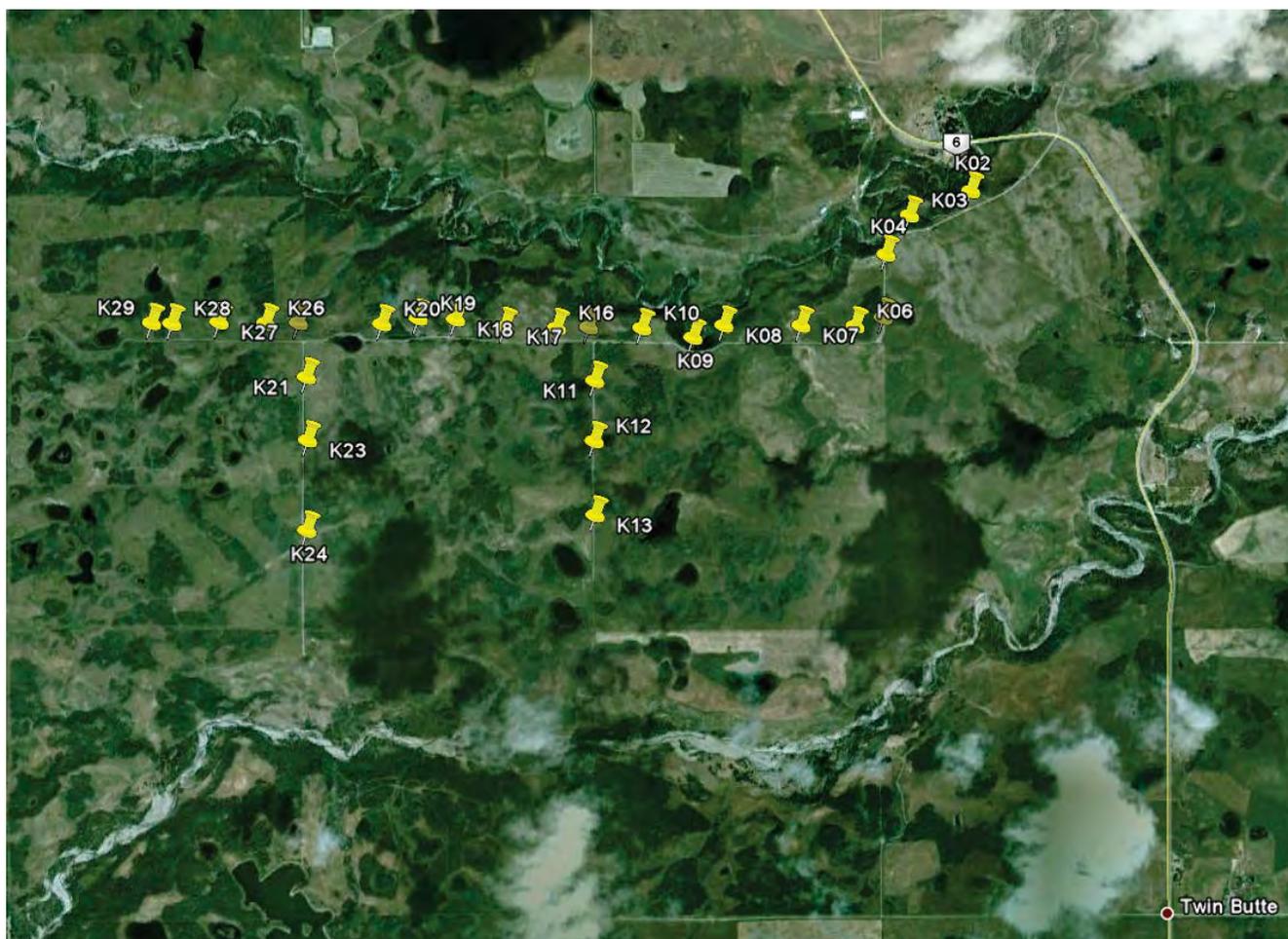
There is no charge to members for boxes.

Trail Management

Our members, like everyone, lead busy lives so we always need experienced people, mentors, to go out with new monitors and banders to show them maintenance requirements and proper handling techniques. Just as importantly, we need to know where all of our trails are and who's maintaining them. You know what you're doing but we, as an organization, might not. Sometimes members will move away or abandon their trails for any number of reasons and forget to let us know. That leaves trails unmaintained.

Gerry Kylo has taken on the task of upgrading our trails database. We would very much like everyone to give Gerry a call (327-0120) or an email (gkylo@shaw.ca) and let him know who you are and where your trail is. Gerry will then create a map from Google Earth (as in the image below) if he has enough information. We plan to put images of all our trails on the new website. Gerry has a GPS unit which can be borrowed to locate your box locations and he is very knowledgeable in the use of it.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with Google Earth, it is a free, safe download from Google (www.google.com/earth/index.html). It's an amazing program and a great way to see the earth, plan trips or just waste time on the computer in the name of science.





Dedicated to studying, conserving and helping restore the natural range of the Mountain Bluebird in southern Alberta.

MBTCS Arrives in the Digital Age

In October of 2010 we resurrected our website with a dedicated address and a new look. The new site can be accessed at 'www.bluebirdtrails.org'. In the past, we were part of a larger website and it was sometimes hard for people to find us. Now we have a name that reflects exactly who we are. My thanks to all who contributed to this project.

Over the next couple of pages, I'm going to show you how to navigate the new site and some of the features we've built into it. We've tried to keep everything as small as possible to avoid delays in loading the pages. So I encourage even those of you with dial-up internet to give it a try.

Below is the 'home page' and a little bit about us.

"Annual General Meeting"

Saturday, Oct 29th,
2011

@ 2:00 p.m.
Fish & Game
building
1001 9 Ave South
Lethbridge, AB

\$10 fee (lunch &
refreshments)
Limited Seating!
Mentors needed!

RSVP: 317-1252
(Gwen)
345-5806 (Ken)

Mountain Bluebird Trails Conservation Society

About Us Mountain Bluebirds Newsletters Downloads Photos Statistics News Links Contact Us Site Map

About Us

Mission

As a group we are dedicated to studying, conserving and helping restore the natural range of the Mountain Bluebird in southern Alberta.

History

The Mountain Bluebird Trails Conservation Society (MBTCS) has been active for over thirty years and was started by the late Duncan Mackintosh. Members have been successful in studying, conserving and helping restore the natural range of the Mountain Bluebird in southern Alberta. With countless volunteer hours, thousands of bluebirds have been banded and tracked. Thousands of bluebird boxes or houses have been constructed and put up for homes for nesting bluebirds. These bluebird boxes have been erected in groups called "trails", and range within Alberta from the BC border to the Saskatchewan border and in the north from Nanton all the way to the U.S. border. Some trails of the MBTCS have even become a part of a unique event, the Trans-Continental Bluebird Trail.

Conservation

Restoring the range of the Mountain Bluebird in southern Alberta has definitely been a success. The dwindling number of birds was and still is partially due to predation from raccoons to humans. Adverse weather

Search
To search, type and hit enter

Pages

- **About Us**
 - Executive
 - Member Information >>>>
 - Banders – protected documents
 - Monitors
 - Trail Management
- Mountain Bluebirds
 - Conservation
- Newsletters
- Downloads
- Photos
 - 2010 Conference
- Statistics
- News
- Contact Us
- Links
- Site Map

Contact
info@bluebirdtrails.org
Admin

Getting around the website

Inside the ovals are the 'navigation tabs'. Either one works, they're both the same. The only difference is that the top 'navigation bar' has 'drop-down' menus, where the one on the right side shows all menu items all the time.

What you see below is the newsletter archive page. To view any of these older newsletters, just click on it and it will open in a new window. The only requirement for viewing these files is that you must have the free Adobe Reader installed on your computer. A link to the Adobe site can be found on our 'downloads' page. If you don't have it and want some help getting it, call or email me.

All of the forms, statistics, reports, etc on this site require the Adobe Reader, as do a lot of files on the internet. Adobe Reader files (PDF) are very compact files and are safe to view.



Mountain Bluebird Trails Conservation Society

[About Us](#) [Mountain Bluebirds](#) [Newsletters](#) [Downloads](#) [Photos](#) [Statistics](#) [News](#) [Links](#) [Contact Us](#) [Site Map](#)

Newsletters

An archive of past newsletters, in PDF format.

- [Fall 2002](#)
- [Spring-Fall 2003](#)
- [Spring-Fall 2004](#)
- [Fall 2005](#)
- [Spring-Fall 2006](#)
- [Spring-Fall 2007](#)
- [Spring-Fall 2008](#)
- [Spring-Fall 2009](#)
- [Spring-Fall 2010](#)
- [Spring 2011](#)

- [AllisonBeckerReport](#)

Search

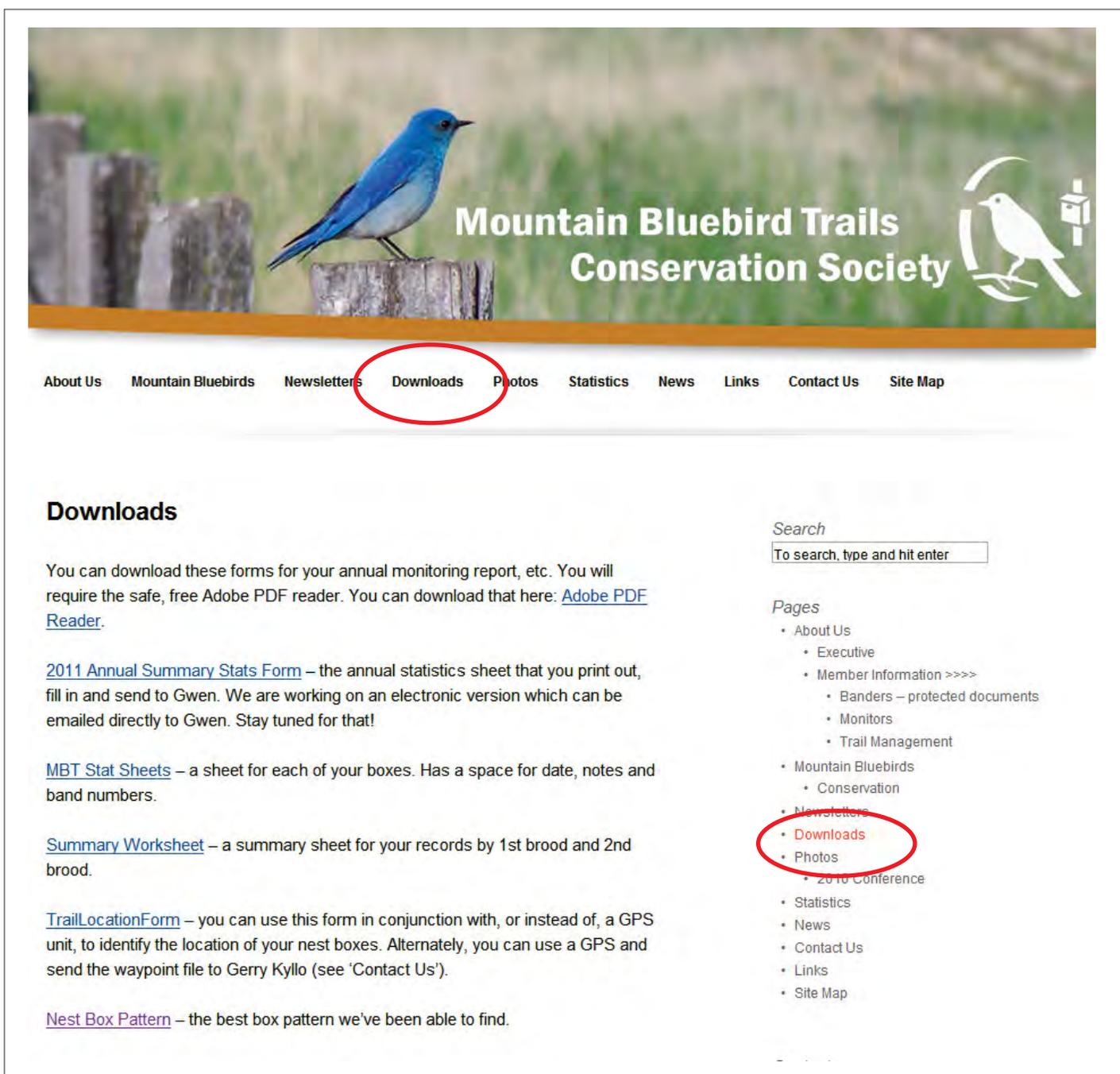
Pages

- About Us
 - Executive
 - Member Information >>>>
 - Banders – protected documents
 - Monitors
 - Trail Management
- Mountain Bluebirds
 - Conservation
- **Newsletters**
- Downloads
- Photos
 - 2010 Conference
- Statistics
- News
- Contact Us
- Links
- Site Map

Getting around the website

This is the 'download' page, where you can view or print any of the work sheets listed below. This is also where you can download and install the free Adobe Reader which is needed to view 'pdf' files. We've also added a pdf version of the blueprint for construction of a bluebird nest box.

To view any of these files, simply click on the underlined text. Monitors and banders will continue to receive their statistics sheets in the mail from Gwen, but in the event that you need another copy of the sheet, simply open it from here and print it (color printer not required).



The screenshot shows the website's header with a bluebird on a fence post and the text "Mountain Bluebird Trails Conservation Society". The navigation menu includes "About Us", "Mountain Bluebirds", "Newsletters", "Downloads", "Photos", "Statistics", "News", "Links", "Contact Us", and "Site Map". The "Downloads" link is circled in red. The main content area is titled "Downloads" and contains several links to forms and documents, each with a brief description. On the right side, there is a search box and a "Pages" sidebar menu. In the sidebar menu, the "Downloads" link is also circled in red.

Downloads

You can download these forms for your annual monitoring report, etc. You will require the safe, free Adobe PDF reader. You can download that here: [Adobe PDF Reader](#).

[2011 Annual Summary Stats Form](#) – the annual statistics sheet that you print out, fill in and send to Gwen. We are working on an electronic version which can be emailed directly to Gwen. Stay tuned for that!

[MBT Stat Sheets](#) – a sheet for each of your boxes. Has a space for date, notes and band numbers.

[Summary Worksheet](#) – a summary sheet for your records by 1st brood and 2nd brood.

[TrailLocationForm](#) – you can use this form in conjunction with, or instead of, a GPS unit, to identify the location of your nest boxes. Alternately, you can use a GPS and send the waypoint file to Gerry Kylo (see 'Contact Us').

[Nest Box Pattern](#) – the best box pattern we've been able to find.

Search
To search, type and hit enter

Pages

- About Us
 - Executive
 - Member Information >>>>
 - Banders – protected documents
 - Monitors
 - Trail Management
- Mountain Bluebirds
 - Conservation
- Newsletters
- **Downloads**
- Photos
 - 2010 Conference
- Statistics
- News
- Contact Us
- Links
- Site Map

Getting around the website

As you navigate around the website you will find pages with past years' statistics, links to other birding websites, photos from our 2010 conference and a contact page. There is also a news page where you can add (through the webmaster) events or MBTCS related information.

This is your website. It's been designed with your needs in mind. If you see something that needs to be fixed, let us know. If there's something missing, let us know.

DID YOU KNOW...

There are 9,865 species of birds alive today (that we know about).

Of these, 1,227 species are considered threatened with extinction, 838 species are near threatened, 7,735 species are considered to be of least concern, and 65 species lack the data to determine their status. 133 species of birds are known to have gone extinct since 1500. There are also four species of birds that are classified as extinct in the wild. The last living members of those species survive only in captivity.

We all know that bluebirds, like all wise creatures, leave this country when summer's warmth starts to fade. Here's an image of what happens when one of these little guys gets caught in a sudden weather change. Not a happy camper !!!

Photo from Gerry Kylo



Trail Management

To All Trail Monitors

I've mapped most of the trails in our area. A lot of the GPS readings are 10+ years old, so they may not be too accurate.

We don't need exact locations, only close, so someone else could find the boxes if you were unable to look after them.

We have a GPS receiver to lend out to get the coordinates. I'd like to have all monitors contact me and I will send you a map of where I think your trail is and then you can check it. Send me any corrections and I will update the maps.

Thank you
Gerry Kylo, Trails Manager

gkylo@shaw.ca
430-327-0120



Map of GPS points on a bluebird trail near Waterton Park.

2011 Statistics

Greetings Monitors & Banders!

Once again I have to thank everyone for all the hours for volunteer work in the field and compiling your stats for the 2011 year. Wow! The weather was a wild one, eh? I know that the impact on the bluebird population was very apparent as a second brood was almost non-existent. It may comfort all to know that I learned from the MBT Montana Conference in Fort Peck on the weekend of September 23-25, that not only our area suffered with odd weather. Our southern affiliates had almost 5 times more snow in eastern Montana than is the norm! Not only were the birds affected but also most mammals took a population hit due to lack of food.

The stats were slow at coming in this year for the last few remitters. This seems to happen every year and it holds up the production of the Fall newsletter that announces the Annual General Meeting. Please try your hardest to get the bander's and more importantly the monitor's report in right away in the beginning of September. I so appreciate it. Each year I also have some reports from monitors come in after October and the meeting. This skews our stats a little.

The board of MBT has taken on new members this past year. The evolution of our society has come so far in the last 22 years since I stumbled into volunteering. We have a new wonderful committed board, please do make a point of coming to the AGM on October 29th. Gerry Kylo is the new trail manager and he has put considerable effort into continuing to catalogue those trails of yours. Please call him if you think your trail has not been added to the database. This can be very important if we have to temporarily or permanently assign your trail to another person. Thanks so much, Gerry!

Cheers,
Gwen Tietz, Master Bander

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Bluebird eggs	7237	5900	3739	2483	3286	3049	1904
Nestlings fledged	4866	5296	2914	1891	2447	1824	1510
Sterile eggs	579	363	352	187	296	289	366
Abandoned eggs	503	253	189	213	284	327	120
Dead nestlings	1230	352	264	219	259	608	152
Tree swallow nest	788	609	675	482	716	506	511
Successful nests	1024	1331	655	405	578	436	317

