

Bluebirds: 2023 End of Season Recap

It's time to look back at the Vredenburgh and Durr road nesting season. I would call it "The year of the Mountain Bluebird." Mountain bluebirds fledged 252 chicks on the Vredenburgh, breaking the old record of 209 set back in 1987. In addition, Mountain bluebirds in the Durr road boxes fledged 75 chicks, bringing the total number of fledglings to 327! Western bluebirds fledged 354 chicks, White-breasted nuthatches fledged 4 chicks and House wrens fledged 4 chicks as well (that is quite a decline from the previous year). In addition, the Durr road boxes produced 8 Violet-green swallow fledglings. Total fledglings of all species for both trails are 703 birds. It was a great year for bluebirds!

Of course, nothing is perfect and as you can see, the first 14 boxes fledged no birds. This is an unfortunate trend. None of the boxes in the first part of the trail are in the burned area. Box 13.1 was lost to firefighting equipment creating fire lines. All the burned/destroyed boxes were replaced, and most did quite well. I left the burned boxes highlighted in red for reference. Two of the burned boxes (14 and 16) were re-located to a part of the trail that was also burned, and they did well. So, we are thinking about moving two more boxes out of the troubled area and into a more productive area next year, provided there is room for them.

I'm sure you've all heard the saying, "It takes a village to raise a child." Well, it takes a village to have a successful Bluebird trail as well. We have a great team of volunteers that have made this trail a success. Many thanks to Vredenburgh monitors Nancy Born and her "Team Blue Jeans" (formerly Brad's Blues): Hannah Born, Caroline Calvillo, Jim Newhouse, Leslie Smyer, Adam, Kristina, Ian, and Hunter Newhouse; Terry and Dale Critchlow, Becky and Dick Drew, Martha Fleming, Jan and Judy Gano, Sara and Ron Montgomery and Deborah Severtson-Coffin. Thank you to Richard Repp and Sue Wright for monitoring the Durr road boxes. Thank you as well to Randy Poulson and Morris Howland (and friends) for making us new boxes.

Finally, thank you to two people I consider co-chairs: Richard Repp and Joe Zook. Richard, despite giving up his position as chair, has continued to contact sponsors about box payments and has helped me by keeping track of the box payments and sponsors as well. In addition, he has been an invaluable source of information and assistance with my nemesis: the Excel spreadsheet. I'm getting better, thanks to his patience and helpful guidance. Joe is a wonderful, helpful trail monitor and in addition, helps with box repair and this year, with box replacement. With the help of Dale and Terry Critchlow, we replaced all 22 boxes that were destroyed in last year's fire.

If you have any questions about this report, the box that you sponsor or anything else about the trail, please contact me via email: gadzooks7@charter.net. Until next year – Karen Zook