

# the WILLET

Beaverhill Bird Observatory

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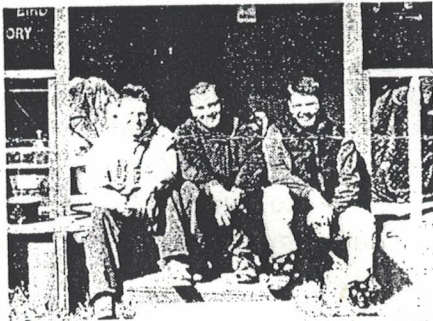
## Annual General Meeting

November 23, 1999

7:30 p.m. at the

John Janzen Nature Center

Meet the summer's staff and hear about the banding results, interesting sightings, and lab renovations. One position on the board remains vacant for a Fundraiser and we are always looking for new members and volunteers interested in our group.



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### Home Sweet Home

by Al DeGroot

On the north end of a ¼ section of rangeland stands a 15-acre mixed woodlot of spruce, aspen and birch. The trees are large and old, the place has never been cut. Near the southern edge of this oasis, stands an 80 foot white spruce which holds a stick nest in it's branches, 50 feet above the moss covered ground. This nest was first discovered in 1992 when it was home to Red-tailed hawks. The following year it sheltered a family of Great Horned owls. The nest was again occupied by Red-tails in '95, but failed, with the death of one of the adults. Great Horned owls moved in for 2 years, raising 3 young in '97 and 2 young in '98.



It had been 3 years since Red-tails had last nested at the site and since owls do not add any nesting material to the nest, it was showing it's age. By the end of the summer in '98 there was only a small portion of the original platform left. That September the remaining nest was replaced by a wire basket, secured to the trunk and branches of the spruce. The basket was filled with the material of an old magpie nest and the interior bowl was lined with the remains of the original nest.

On March 22<sup>nd</sup> of 1999 a Great Horned owl settled in for the season. The owl was checked again on March 29<sup>th</sup>, and she was sitting low on the nest, covering eggs (continued on page 2)

## Home Sweet Home (Con't.)



April 5<sup>th</sup> came and the nest was empty. The reason was sitting on the branch beside the nest. The Red-tails had arrived and claimed ownership. The owl had been evicted. After adding more branches and sticks to the nest, the hawks settled in and successfully raised 3 young.

With the nest now reinforced with a wire basket, it will be capable of many more years of service to these two species of raptors, at least for as long as the woodlot remains standing.

## Beaverhill Area Bluebirds

by Elson Olorenshaw

If you build them they will come!!!  
Of course you have to learn to put them in the right habitat.  
Bluebird nest boxes that is!!

I started my Bluebird trail north of Beaverhill Lake in 1995 but that year I could just as well have called it my Tree Swallow trail because 243 young Tree Swallows (*Tachycineta bicolor*) and seven House Wrens (*Troglodytes aedon*) successfully fledged. I then sought professional help and accordingly moved many boxes to grazed pasture locations. This paid off as noted below:



Year	Mountain Bluebirds			Tree Swallows		House Wrens	
	Nests	Renest	Young	Nests	Young	Nests	Young
1995	0	-	0	57	243	1	7
1996	6	0	31	106	497	0	0
1997	14	2	68	127	695	6	20
1998	15	11	111	136	708	4	22
1999	25	7	120	142	694	8	37

It seems that there is an increase in nesting Mountain Bluebirds (*Siala currucoides*) each year!!! Was this due to my fledged young returning to the same territory to nest? Were the same adults returning to the same boxes? Were any of the adults banded by other trail operators? In order to answer these and many other questions it was decided that I would begin in 1998 to band the fledglings and any adults that I could catch at the boxes. Of course this would be as a subpermittee of the Beaverhill Bird Observatory.

1998 - banded 111 young and six adult mountain bluebirds.  
1999 - banded 115 " " 11 " " "

In 1999 an attempt was made to determine if any of the adults near the boxes wore bands and it was disappointing to not see one. However, year 2000 is bound to be an improvement and I look forward with keen anticipation to the 35 original bluebird nestings that will surely occur come the month of May.

BBO WISH LIST: Screen door for lab.	Laptop computer.	Single mattresses for bunks.
Books: The Sparrows of the United States and Canada (Risings)	Finches and Sparrows (Clement et al.)	



# Report on the Bander Training Workshop and the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network (CMMN) Meeting at Delta Marsh, MB. September 1999

by Lisa Takats

This fall I was thrilled to attend the 1999 Bander Training Workshop and the CMMN Meeting held at Delta Marsh, about 1 hour outside Winnipeg, Manitoba. This was the second bander training workshop I have attended, and I once again learned much from it. We studied molt limits and the Pyle book for two days, and looked at both dead and live birds. The banding at Delta Marsh picked up as we arrived and they had a good variety of bird species for us to work with. Brenda Dale, Canadian Wildlife Service Edmonton, has been organizing these workshops for a few years now, and has streamlined the event making it a very enjoyable learning experience, as I believe all participants agreed with.

The CMMN meeting was well-attended by designated stations (\*), and many others interested in becoming part of the network.

\*Beaverhill bird Observatory, Alberta

\*Delta Marsh Bird Observatory, Manitoba

\*Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Alberta

\*Innis Point Bird Observatory, Ontario

\*Last Mountain Bird Observatory, Saskatchewan

Brier Island Bird Migration Research Station, Nova Scotia

Tadoussac Bird Monitoring Station, Quebec

\*Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory, Alberta

\*Long Point Bird Observatory, Ontario

\*Mackenzie Nature Observatory, British Columbia

\*Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory, Ontario

Some of the topics covered included: migration timing and trends, stable isotopes, Latin America training program, animal care, cooperative research, band manager, stop-overs vs. migrants, Canadian Landbird Monitoring Strategy, Partners in Flight, B.C. monitoring, and sexing Yellow Warblers.

Bird species seen on my trip include:

American White Pelican	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Great Horned Owl	Myrtle Warbler
Pied-billed Grebe	Merlin	Northern Flicker	Northern Waterthrush
Western Grebe	American Coot	Yel.-bellied Sapsucker	Orange-crowned Warbler
Tundra Swan	Greater Yellowlegs	Hairy Woodpecker	Palm Warbler
Canada Goose	Sanderling	Downy Woodpecker	Tennessee Warbler
White-fronted Goose	Spotted Sandpiper	Barn Swallow	Wilson's Warbler
Snow Goose/Blue Goose	Solitary Sandpiper	Blue Jay	Yellow Warbler
Mallard	Upland Sandpiper	American Crow	Fox Sparrow
Northern Shoveler	American Bittern	Black-capped Chickadee	Harris Sparrow
Gadwall	Double-cr. Cormorant	White-breasted Nuthatch	Lincoln's Sparrow
Redhead	Great Blue Heron	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Chipping Sparrow
American Wigeon	Long-billed Dowitcher	Brown Creeper	White-cr. Sparrow
Lesser Scaup	Forster's Tern	Winter Wren	White-thr. Sparrow
Canvasback	Ring-billed Gull	American Robin	Slate-colored Junco
Blue-winged Teal	Herring Gull	Swainson's Thrush	Rusty Blackbird
Ruddy Duck	Franklin's Gull	Hermit Thrush	Brewer's Blackbird
Bufflehead	Bonaparte's Gull	Cedar Waxwing	Common Redpoll
Wood Duck	Rock Dove	European Starling	Pine Siskin
Northern Harrier	Mourning Dove	American Redstart	American Goldfinch
Red-tailed Hawk	Belted Kingfisher	Common Yellowthroat	House Sparrow
Northern Goshawk	Nthn. Screech Owl	Mourning Warbler	

