

risks." He conceded that "we must also remain alert to all possible danger from their use," but he asserted that because of their benefits use of chemical pesticides is "a chance we must take."

Dr. Richard O'Brien, professor of entomology at Cornell, urged that chemical pesticides be expanded rather than frowned upon. E. H. Smith, also a professor of entomology at Cornell, called pesticides a boon to mankind. However, he did warn that although "There is no evidence that serious harm has yet been caused . . . neither is there evidence that continuation of our present practices will not cause harm."

At the end of the story reporting on this conference, the New York Times added another short news item with a small headline reading "Carrots Seized Here." It told of the seizure by Federal marshals of 30,000 pounds of carrots containing a residue of the insecticide, Endrin.

At this writing hearings on the proposed Fire Island National Seashore seemed to be very much a possibility. A few weeks earlier Federation member Robert Snyder, vice president of the Baldwin Bird Club, was among 11 citizens (members of the Citizens' Committee for a Fire Island National Seashore) who made a trip to Washington, D. C., where they presented their case to various senators and congressmen.

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FIELD NOTES

"Operation Bluebird," Warren County, Penna. Seventh Report — 1963

The winter of 1962-63 will go down in climatological history as the coldest of this century as far as Warren County, Penna. is concerned.

Although March and April were months of normal Spring weather with the Bluebirds returning in good numbers, the weather for the month of May reverted to the winter pattern with temperatures considerably below normal with a great deal of chilling wind.

As a result of these two periods of extreme cold weather, the numbers of young Bluebirds fledged dropped from an all time high of 432 in 1962 to 316 in 1963 — a decline of 26% — the second best year on record, however.

The same number of nesting boxes were under observation during 1962 and 1963 — approximately 100.

During 1963 — 70 boxes were initially occupied by Bluebirds with 318 eggs laid. 215 of these eggs hatched with 188 young fledged. 27 dead young were removed from the boxes.

During the initial occupancy in 1962, 62 pairs of Bluebirds laid 297 eggs of which 265 hatched and 265 fledged.

By comparison, the initial hatching success was 89% in 1962 and 68% in 1963. The fledging success was 100% in 1962 and 86% in 1963.

During 1963 — 43 boxes were used for second nestings by Bluebirds with 176 eggs laid of which 144 hatched and 128 young Bluebirds were fledged. 16 young Bluebirds died in the boxes. Thus during the more normal weather of June and July, the hatching success was 82% and fledging success 88%. This compares with 80% and 100% in 1962.

During the first nesting period of 1962, 62 pairs of Bluebirds averaged 4.8 eggs per nest compared to 4.55 eggs per nest in 1963 by 70 pairs of Bluebirds.

During both 1962 and 1963, the average number of eggs for the second nesting period was 4.1 per nest.

Since the Bluebirds' nests in 1963 were dusted and sprayed with a mild flea powder to control the larvae of the birdnest screw worm fly, the same as in 1962, we can only conclude that the adverse weather had a definite detrimental effect on the production of young Bluebirds.

The Bluebirds and I are grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Charles Neel for faithfully checking the Cherry Grove area which contains 26 of my nesting boxes. 71 Bluebirds were fledged in this section all of which were banded by the Neels.

A vote of thanks to Ted Grisez also for checking boxes and banding Bluebirds in other parts of my routes.

Wayne Yonkie has 76 nesting boxes on location. Preliminary figures indicate that at least 19 pairs of Bluebirds occupied his boxes with over 30 fledged.

Should the weather man cooperate in 1964 and should we be able to manage 170-180 boxes which will be available for nesting Bluebirds, we could conceivably fledge 500 Bluebirds.

W. L. Highhouse, 8 Fourth Avenue, Warren, Penna.

"In Jan. 1963 we published the results of the sixth Bluebird report by William Highhouse, and it seems worthwhile at this time to summarize the 7th season. While this area is not in the state, it is close to the border, and a similar study (which we hope someone will undertake) in N.Y. would probably produce similar results."

Editor's note.

Observations of Breeding Sapsuckers: Although the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*) occurs regularly around Cortland, New York, in migration, and is to be found as a summer resident at some of the higher elevations, it is generally thought to be a shy species that avoids human observers. I was therefore surprised when a pair of sapsuckers moved their family of three into our willows, where they set up a very convenient cafeteria for the fledglings.

These observations of the Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were made in 1962 at our home, in the hilly country just north east of Cortland (42° 39' N & 76° 07' 31" W) and where the surrounding elevations range from 1120 to 1920 feet. Our back yard (1160') is at the opening of a small gorge, cool and damp even on the hottest days in the summer. The sides and top of the ravine are covered with trees both coniferous and deciduous. The banks of the stream flowing from the gorge and bordering our yard are thickly lined with willows, oaks, maples and locust trees.

On July 31 a mewing cry came from the willows. This was repeated over and over, and since it was a new sound to me, I found myself leaving my kitchen chores to investigate. As I cautiously approached, a female sapsucker flew away. Then I saw she had left behind three young, each clinging to a good sized trunk. These young birds in their muddy-colored plumage, were completely indifferent to everything except the food before them. They just sat sipping the sap oozing from holes freshly opened in the bark and occasionally picking off an ant which was also attracted to the sap.

Later I learned that each morning the female came to the trees and opened new holes in the bark, and it was she who made the mewing call to bring the young to this place. After about ten days the young birds were a little more cautious and would move to the back of the trunk when anyone approached. These birds were so quiet all day long that our three cats continued a long standing habit of taking naps on hot afternoons on the cool earth under the trees with only an occasional curious glance at the dull birds perched within six feet above their heads.