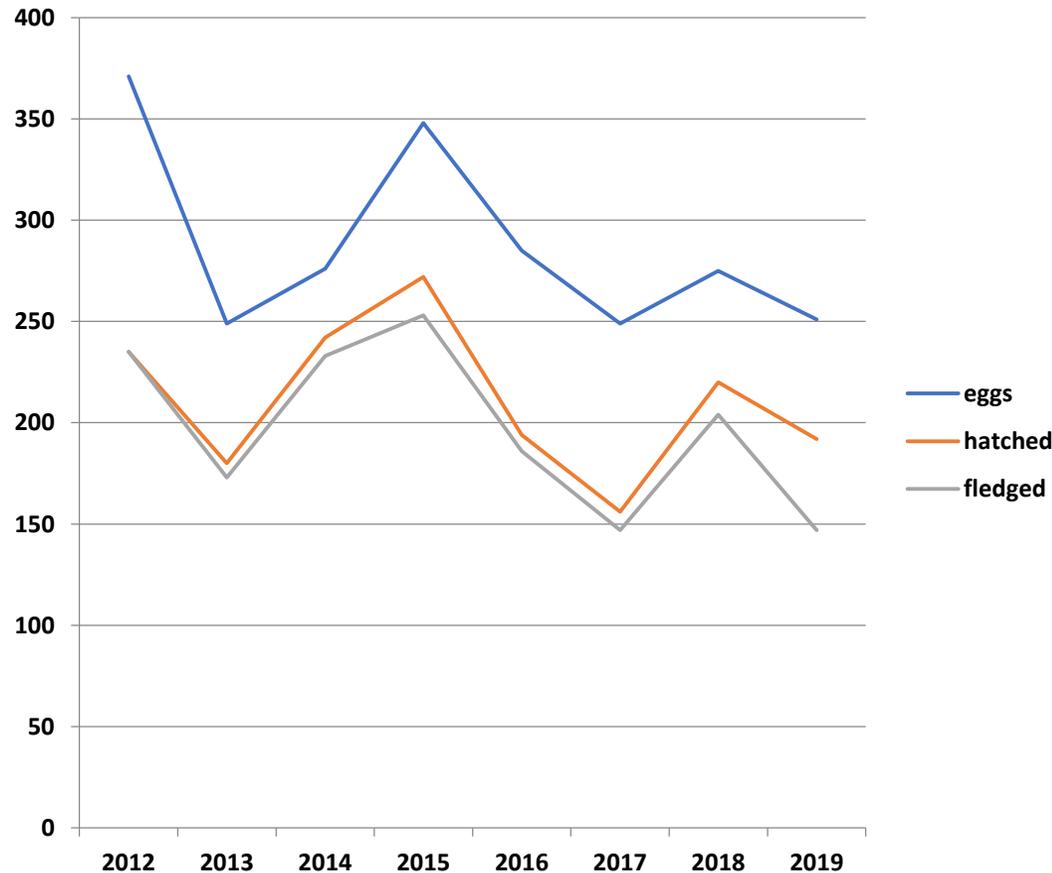


2019 on the Turkey Creek bluebird trail



- 71 nests with 251 eggs. 147 fledged.
- That's a lot of bluebirds, but all totals are down.
 - For 3rd year in a row, April got really cold. April nests are usually the most successful, but most failed last spring.
 - Predation by wrens was as prevalent as usual. Wrens got ahead of us and nested in several boxes.
 - Quite a few boxes on the West trail were old enough that they slid down the poles, eliminating them for bluebirds.
- On the other hand, bluebirds seem to be adjusting the nesting season. Many successful late nests in July and August.
- A spectacular new team began monitoring the West trail.
 - Kay, Diane, Kaylee (and often Logan) will again monitor Turkey Creek bluebirds in 2020!
 - Together, we did the best job of monitoring every box every week that we have EVER done!

Winter activity, preparations for 2020 Season



Note: this was a visiting bird-bander. We don't catch birds!

- Inventory revealed a need to replace PVC boxes and those that slide down the pole, in addition to the usual handful of boxes that the weather damages, totaling 25 boxes.
 - Ron agreed to build 10 boxes, as in most years.
 - Tim stepped up to purchase materials.
- Another pair of neighbors volunteered, just to be part of the Turkey Creek experience!
 - Jim and Diane Stevens built and decorated 15 cedar boxes with wood-burned designs.
 - They also plan to help install new houses and become part of the trail team after Diane retires.
- At least 5 Turkey Creek neighbors joined Mary Lou in the snow to help with the Audubon Christmas Bird Count last December – finding more birds than before, including red-headed woodpeckers and a rare lark sparrow!

Turkey Creek bluebirds join national records



- We continue to report our birds to Bluebirds Across Nebraska and Ebird.org. The ongoing Turkey Creek bird list totals 84 species.
- This year for the first time, we have certified to join Nestwatch.org. By submitting our data to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, we can more fully report eggs, hatches and fledges than on the ebird site.
- Linda has also enrolled 9 Turkey Creek sites into Audubon Climate Watch, a new project to monitor birds twice annually, focusing on bluebirds, nuthatches and chickadees.

Thinking like a bird: ethics at Turkey Creek



- As we monitor bluebirds through the season, we begin to notice
 - insects and spiders for their nestlings
 - Flowers and trees that attract insects
 - Hawks that sit on nearby trees
- We design boxes for their safety
 - Mounted on slick poles that snakes and raccoons can't climb, never on fences
 - Located near food sources and away from predator habitat
- We watch the progress of their nests
 - Remove used nests to discourage mites and parasites
 - Keep wrens busy collecting sticks so they can't bother other nests
 - Monitor quietly and not sooner than every 4 days
 - Count the days after hatching to avoid opening when fledglings could fly too soon.
- We never endanger birds for our own goals
 - Use recorded sounds and attractants very sparingly
 - Avoid leaving a trail to hidden nests that predators can follow