

Northwest Minnesota Community Nest Watch Project

2012 Minnesota Ornithologists Union Savaloja Grant Report

1. Name and address grantee:

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2. Project Goals and Benefits:

1. To create an opportunity for non-scientists to get outdoors and experience the thrill of scientific discovery – first-hand – by participating in bird-based, hands-on citizen-science field studies.
2. To create awareness of birds, bird conservation and opportunities for stewardship in rural communities. We will focus on building, installing and monitoring nest boxes (and creating/maintaining habitat) for Chimney Swifts, Eastern Bluebirds, Purple Martins and American Kestrels.

3. Where was the project conducted?

Thief River Falls	Crookston	Warroad	Greenbush
East Grand Forks	Hallock	Warren	Red Lake Falls

4. Project Accomplishments:

A-B. Public Programs on Cavity Nesting Birds/Nest Box Construction/Monitoring/Data Collection:

Agassiz Audubon presented the following project programs in 2012:

1. 4 evening programs each at 7 public libraries in NW Minnesota – Warren, Warroad, Hallock, Thief River Falls, East Grand Forks, Red Lake Falls, Greenbush
2. 4 evening programs at the Warren Senior Center and a birdwatching field trip at the Agassiz Valley Water Resources Project impoundment in Warren.
3. The Greenbush HRA Senior Center
4. 2-session community education program at Warren-Alvarado-Oslo (WAO) HS
5. one-hour program for every science student at WAO HS (all 7 the science classes)
6. 2 afterschool programs for the WAO 21st Century Program
7. 10-day summer enrichment “bird camp” for 21st Century program students at WAO Schools (led by a Bemidji State undergraduate and a University of North Dakota graduate student)
8. a class for WAO industrial arts students on constructing Eastern Bluebird nest boxes
9. 2 field experiences for WAO science students (Eastern Bluebird nest boxes).
10. 1- day field trip for the WAO Schools “summer science camp” (bluebird & kestrels)
11. 1-day field trip for the Stephen-Argyle-Central School “summer science camp” (bluebirds & kestrels)

12. Warren/Pennington County 4-H project day – (2 programs)
13. Northern Lights Boy Scout Council (Red River Valley) 2-day Environmental Camporee at Agassiz Audubon Center (over 100 scouts and adults) 6 programs
14. Community Nest Watch Project PPT programs presented to area organizations: Thief River Falls Christian Womens Club, Matrons Club (Crookston), TRF Rotary, Warren JayCees, Newfolden Lions, Warren Lions, Thief River Falls Lions, Golden Pioneers (2 programs and a field trip), Crookston Chamber of Commerce, Warren Chamber of Commerce, Northwestern Minnesota Horticultural Club, Warren 4-H Club, 2 Pennington County 4-H Clubs, Warren Girl Scouts, Warren Cub Scouts, Thief River Falls Master Gardeners, Warren Sportsmens Club, Stephen City Council, Warren City Council, Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers Watershed District Advisory Group, the TRF Spring Home & Garden Show

B. Nest Box Construction, Installation and Monitoring

1). **Eastern Bluebirds**: Agassiz Audubon delivered construction materials and schematics for WAO students to construct 50 bluebird boxes which were installed and monitored along the Warren – Snake River flood control diversion, at the Agassiz Valley impoundment, at the Audubon Center, in front of the Warren City Hall, at the Marshall County Courthouse, at the Marshall County fairgrounds and at the Marshall County Historical Society Museum. Agassiz Audubon worked with the Thief River Falls 4-H club to install 10 nest boxes at the Audubon Center. Bluebird Boxes were also installed at libraries in Warroad, East Grand Forks, Warren and Red Lake Falls libraries. Bluebirds nested in three boxes at the Agassiz Audubon Center (12 eggs and 12 fledglings). We had logistical challenges recruiting and organizing volunteers to install all 50 boxes in time for the 2012 season. However, we have volunteers lined up to monitor the boxes for the 2013 season.

2). **Chimney Swifts**: Agassiz Audubon provided training, construction materials and schematics for volunteers who constructed and installed two Chimney Swift towers in 2012. One in front of Warren City Hall (completed in September) and the other at Trinity Lutheran Church (completed in November) in Thief River Falls. Finding volunteers to construct the towers took longer than we anticipated – so the Towers were not “installed” in time for the 2012 nesting and migration seasons. Lowes (Grand Forks) has volunteered to construct and install towers (spring of 2013) - in the Lowe’s parking lot and at the Campbell Library in East Grand Forks.

3) **Purple Martins**: Agassiz Audubon collaborated with the Purple Martin Association of the Dakotas on a grant to purchase a Lone Star Alamo aluminum martin house w/pole. The Purple Martin Association of the Dakotas presented a workshop at the Northern Lights Boy Scout Camporee (hosted at the Audubon Center the first weekend in May). The Scouts installed the martin house at the Agassiz Valley impoundment across the street from the Agassiz Audubon Center. The martin house was monitored weekly. We had 3 tree swallow nests, 7 eggs and one fledgling. No Purple Martins nested in this box in 2012.

4) **American Kestrels**: Audubon at Home Program Manager, Ron Windingstad donated 10 kestrel nest boxes to the project. In mid-March PKM Electric Cooperative installed 10 “retired” electric poles at the Agassiz Valley impoundment and the Agassiz Audubon Center and loaned us a stepladder for monitoring. Agassiz Audubon provided the flashing (predator baffle). Agassiz Audubon’s student intern from Bemidji State monitored the boxes and modified/improved the box construction. We had a total of 6 eggs in 2 nests: 5 in one box, 1 in the other – which had been abandoned. Summer science campers (and adults) from WAO and SAC participated in monitoring the boxes. On June 21, Tim Driscoll (the Urban Raptor Project in Grand Forks), assisted by Dr. John Loegering (University of Minnesota - Crookston) banded 5 nestlings. Summer bird campers from WAO participated in the banding process and got the opportunity to handle the birds under Tim’s guidance.

News reporters from WDAZ-TV, the Crookston Times, the Warren Sheaf and the Thief River Falls Times covered the kestrel banding event.

D. Project Publicity

Agassiz Audubon submitted news and calendar releases to the following media at least monthly:

Grand Forks Herald	Crookston Daily Times	KSRQ 90.1 Thief River Falls
Thief River Falls Times	WDAZ-TV (Grand Forks)	Warren Sheaf
East Grand Forks Exponent	Greenbush Tribune	Red Lake Falls Gazette
Kittson County Enterprise	Baudette Region	Northern Light
KROX - Crookston	North Star News	Stephen Messenger
KCAJ – Wild 102 Roseau	KTRF – Thief River Falls	The Northern Watch
Warroad Pioneer		

The kestrel box story received a lot of coverage because our electric coop was involved and also because we arranged to have the birds banded. It appeared in the PKM News (customer monthly magazine), the Minnkota Messenger (MinnKota Electric Power Coop customer newsletter) and Electric Co-op Today (a monthly publication of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association).

<http://www.ect.coop/efficiency-conservation/environmental-stewardship/co-op-audubon-waiting-for-kestrels/41870>

www.wdaz.com/event/article/id/14283

Please see the attached pdf file of newspaper clips for examples of some of the publicity the project received.

We also placed news and information about the Community Nest Watch Project on our website and on our Facebook page.

E. Program Participation

More than 600 people participated in the Community Nest Watch program in 2012 – attending lectures and presentations and volunteering to construct and install nest boxes. Countless others were made aware of the programs and cavity nesting birds through the media stories.

Project Budget

a. donations, equipment loans and volunteers:

- 1 15-foot stepladder – PKM Electric Cooperative (loan)
- 1 Garmin GPS unit – Ben Gubrud (loan)
- 10 18-foot “retired” utility poles (PKM)
 - Shingles for kestrel box roofs (Lowe’s - Grand Forks)
 - Straight Mast Forklift – City of Warren (loan)
- 10 cedar American Kestrel nest boxes – Audubon At Home Program
- 3 programs – Purple Martin Association of the Dakotas (staff time and mileage)
- 160 hours Volunteer time & mileage: Ben Gubrud – Bemidji State University
- 36 hours Volunteer time & mileage: Jessica Shahan – University of North Dakota
- 6 hours Volunteer time & mileage: Tim Driscoll, Urban Raptor Project, Grand Forks
- 6 hours Volunteer time & mileage: Dr. John Loegering, UM – Crookston
- 32 hours Volunteer time: Bill Blackburn, Audubon Minnesota
- 2 hours Volunteer time: Lee Pfanmuller, Audubon Minnesota
 - Project manager time and mileage
 - maps – NW Regional Development Commission
 - kestrel box & bluebird box location maps
 - Warren street map w/ buildings & homes (for pre-existing nest box locations)
 - maps - Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers Watershed District
 - Agassiz Valley Water Resources Mgmt Project and Snake River Diversion
- 5 “Chimney Swift Towers” (book) @ 12.95 each (donated by Audubon at Home)
 - Chimney Swift Tower construction materials and volunteer labor – Trinity Lutheran Church

b. Project Revenues \$4,901

- \$ 1,100 Minnesota Ornithologist’s Union grant
- 500 National Audubon Society Collaborative Funding grant
- 1,200 Warren Community Fund (10 binoculars, 1 spotting scope and one tripod) grant
- 483 Purple Martin Conservation Association grant
- 473 Agassiz Environmental Education Board grant
- 1,000 NW Minnesota Foundation grant
- 145 Agassiz Audubon Society

c. Project Expenses: \$4901

- 893 Chimney Swift Tower construction materials - Warren Tower
- 966 Lone Star Alamo Aluminum Purple Martin Nest Box and pole – Agassiz Valley
- 663 50- Poles & Predator Baffles for Bluebird Nest Boxes
- 517 Construction materials for 50 Bluebird Nest Boxes
- 1,542 12 binoculars, 1 spotting scope and 1 tripod
- 320 Canon power shot digital camera