

2014-2023 Cavity Nesting Bird Results

This volunteer monitoring program started in 1988, has continued annually since that time, and originally focused on providing boxes/habitat for the breeding eastern bluebird population in the Metroparks. At one time (1950's-1970's), this species was rapidly declining, so many nest box programs started up for bird conservation. However, currently, Metroparks monitors all native songbird species that inhabit nesting boxes in and adjacent to open, managed areas (Eastern Bluebird, House Wren, Tree Swallow, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Black-capped Chickadee).

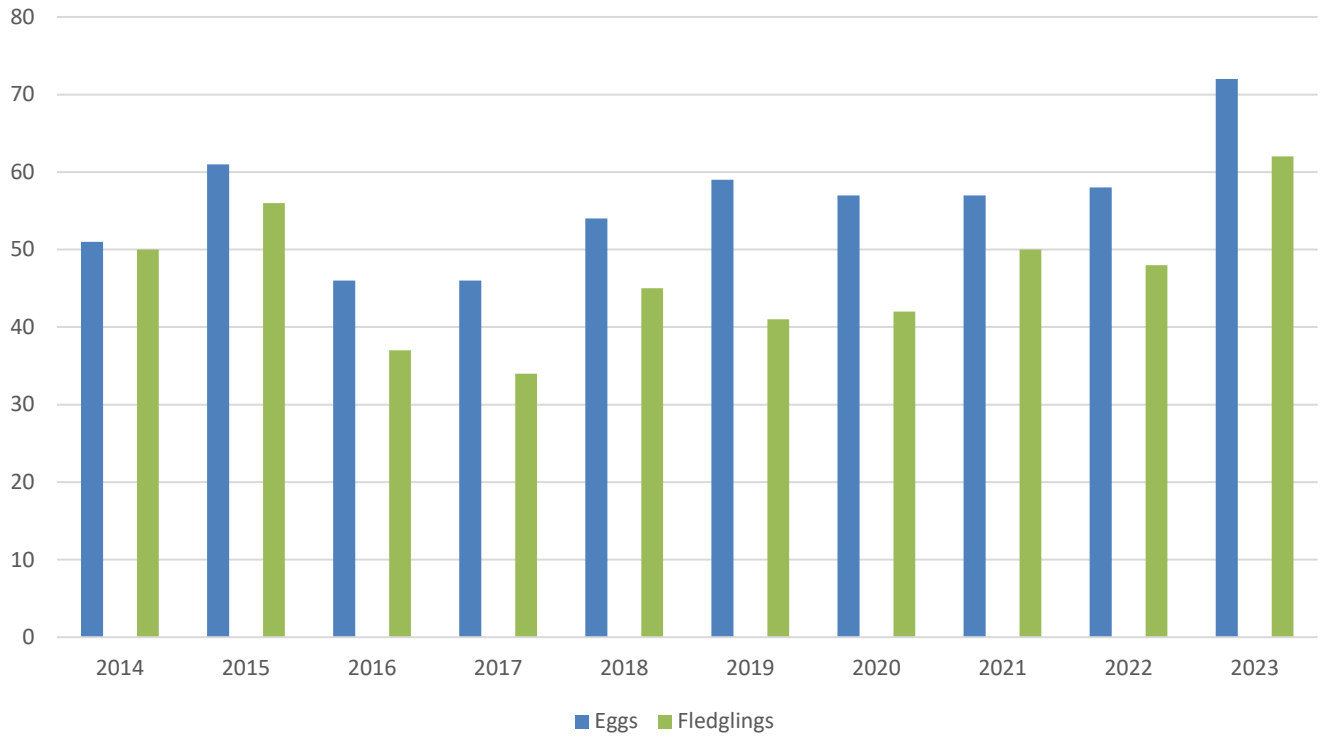
The main purpose of the Metroparks Cavity Nesting Monitoring program is to maintain the eastern bluebird population in the Metroparks through providing suitable nesting boxes, managing good habitat, and also monitoring the success of other native, cavity nesting bird species. Since the Oak Openings Region has always been a "stronghold" for the eastern bluebird, it is important to keep the largest percentage of boxes in managed and restored "openings" in this area. As a secondary nester, the eastern bluebird relies on abandoned cavities in open areas previously created by woodpeckers. Many of those cavities have the potential to become occupied by non-native species such as starlings and house sparrows---mostly, in urban and some suburban areas. Bluebirds can also be "out-competed" not only by non-native birds, but also by other native, cavity nesters, such as woodpeckers and great-crested flycatchers. In addition to maintaining the Eastern Bluebird population, Metroparks is currently adding more boxes for Wood Ducks, Screech Owls, and American Kestrels.

Most of the nest boxes are located and monitored in Oak Openings Preserve (59---2013), (67---2014), (68---2015), (68---2016), (66---2017), (66---2018), (65---2019), and (64---2020, 2021, 2022, 2023) with the remainder of the boxes in Secor (10), Wildwood Preserve (8), Swan Creek Preserve (9), Side Cut (2018-2023--7), Blue Creek (2018-2023--5---(4), and Howard Marsh (2018-2023--6).

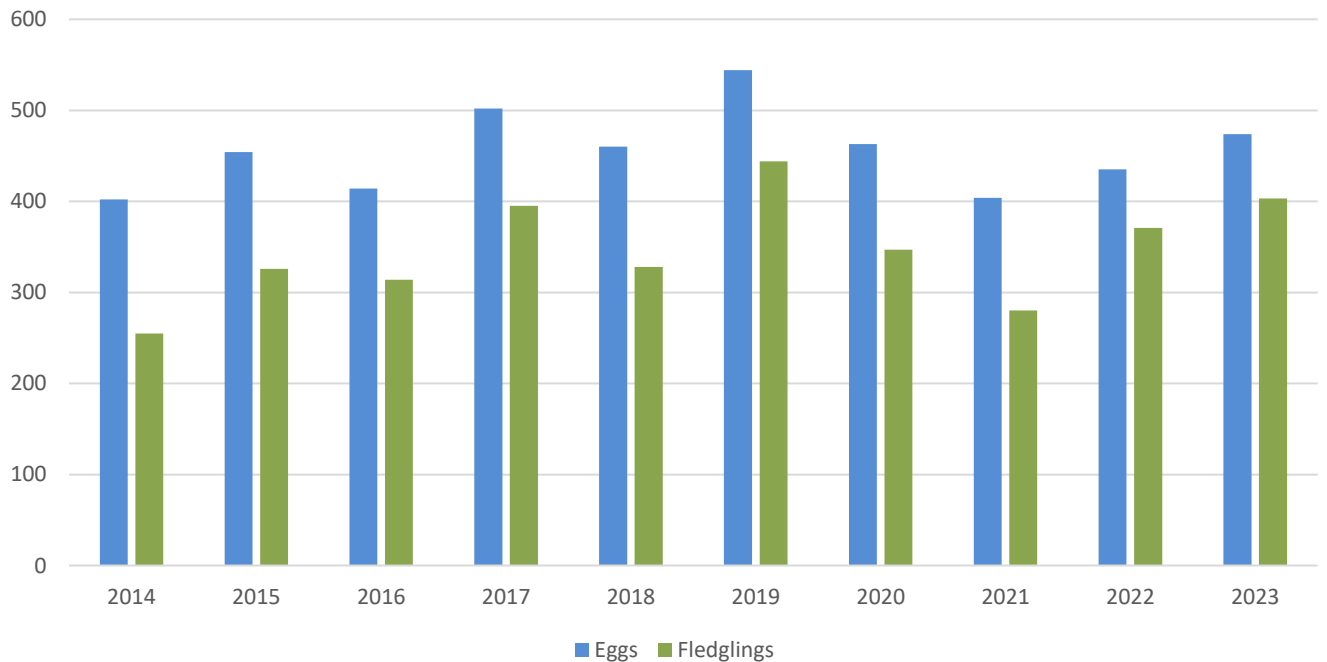
Boxes are monitored/checked from mid-April (depending on the weather) until mid- August or until nesting is completed. Each monitor is required to check the boxes on a weekly to bi-weekly basis, keeping data on the progress of the current brood (eggs, young, and fledgling status). Data such as: species building nest; number of eggs; number of young; known or presumed fledged, and evidence of predation is noted on a card and then submitted. Boxes are checked by removing the nail or screw and opening up the front door. Volunteers are trained according to a standard set of monitoring guidelines/instructions that are updated annually.

The following graphs reflect comparative data for parks from 2014-2023 and 2018-2023.

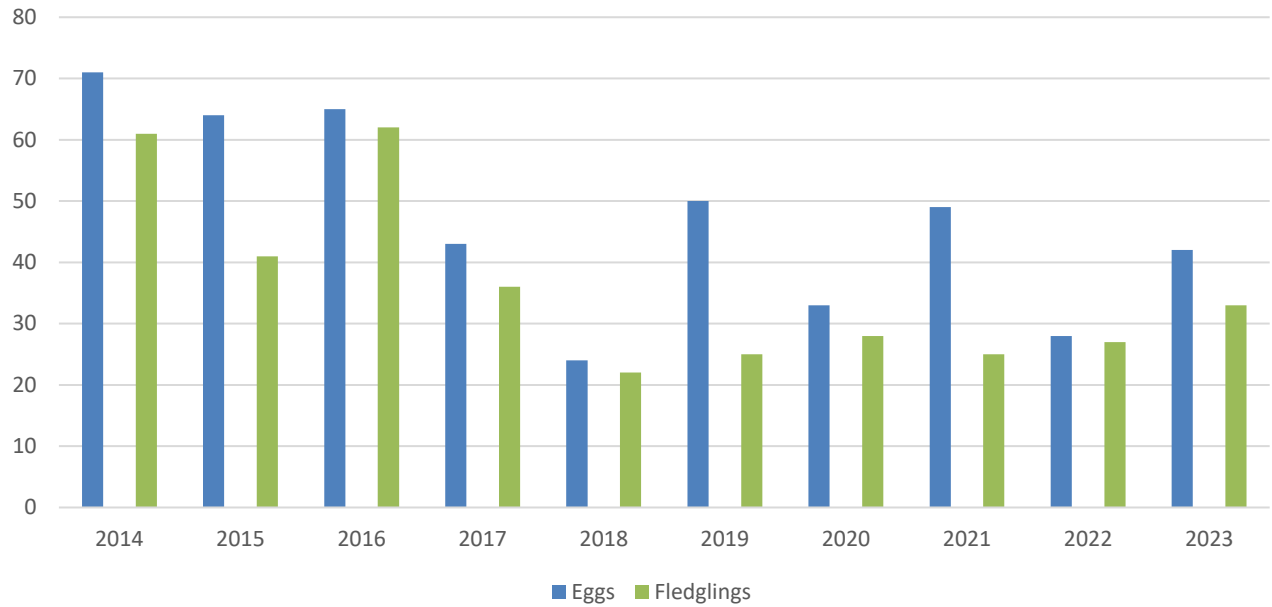
Cavity Nesting Bird Totals for Secor Metropark



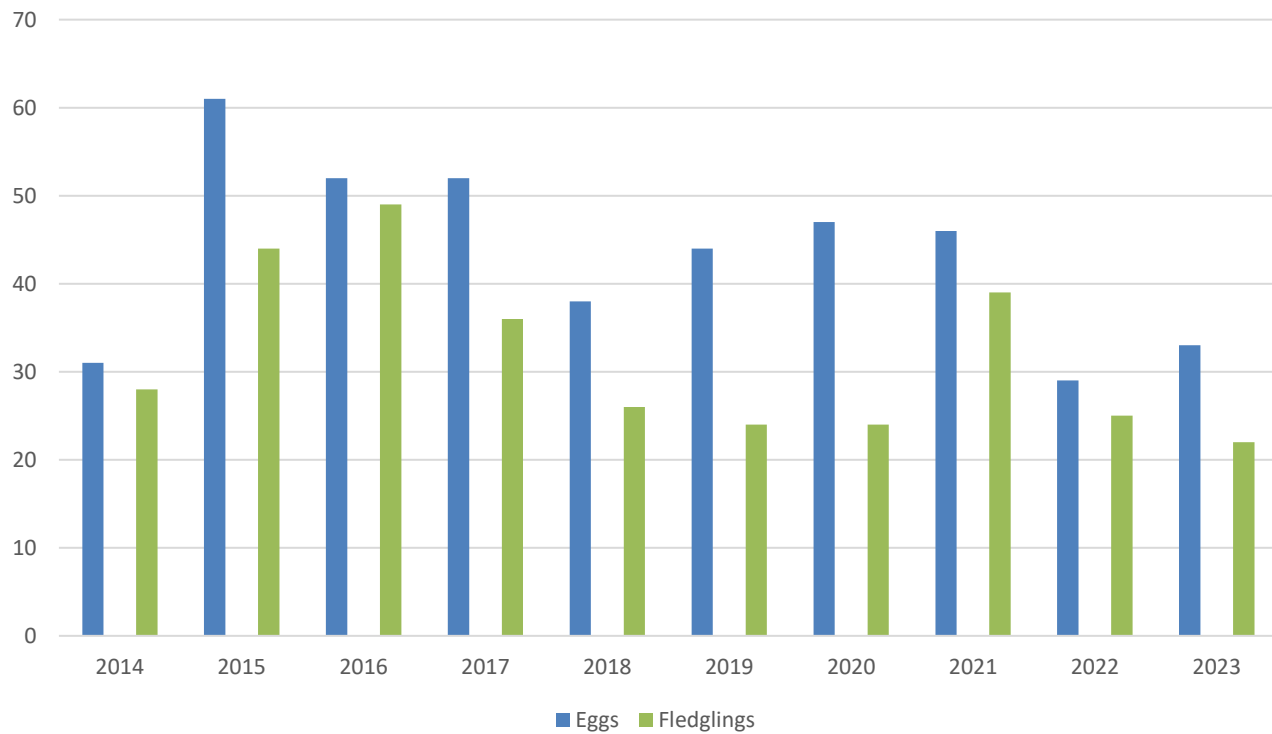
Cavity Nesting Bird Totals for Oak Openings Preserve

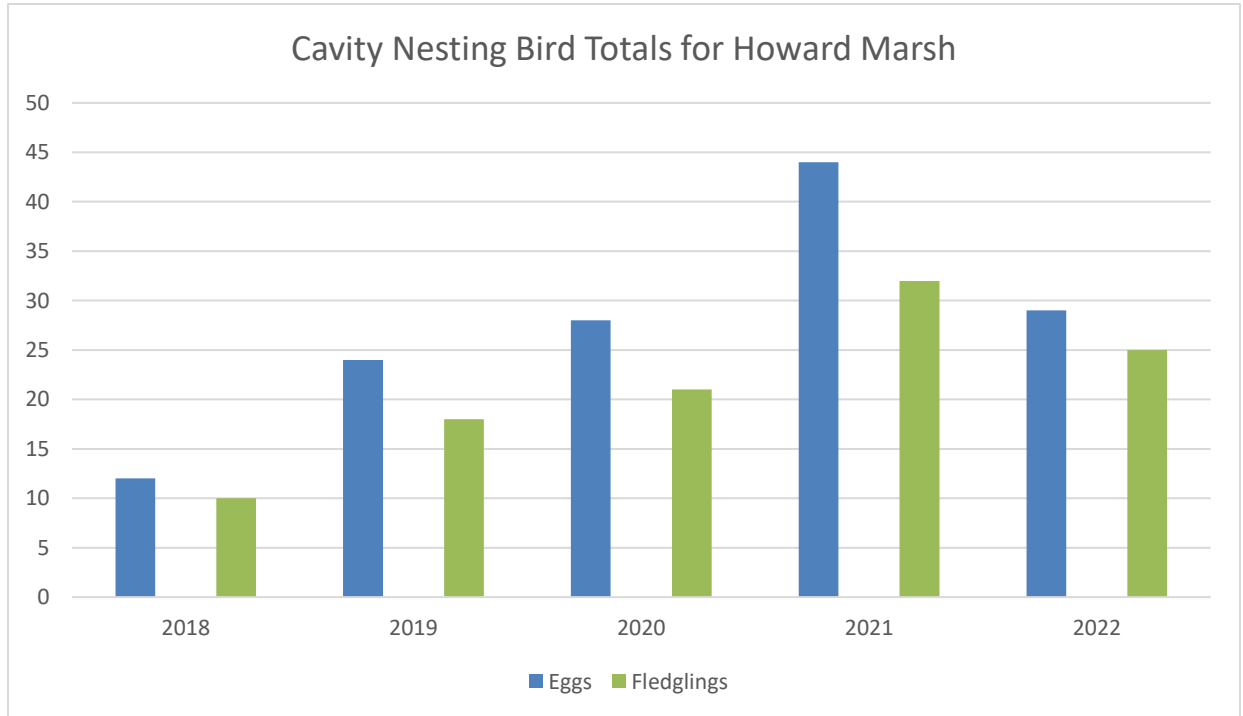
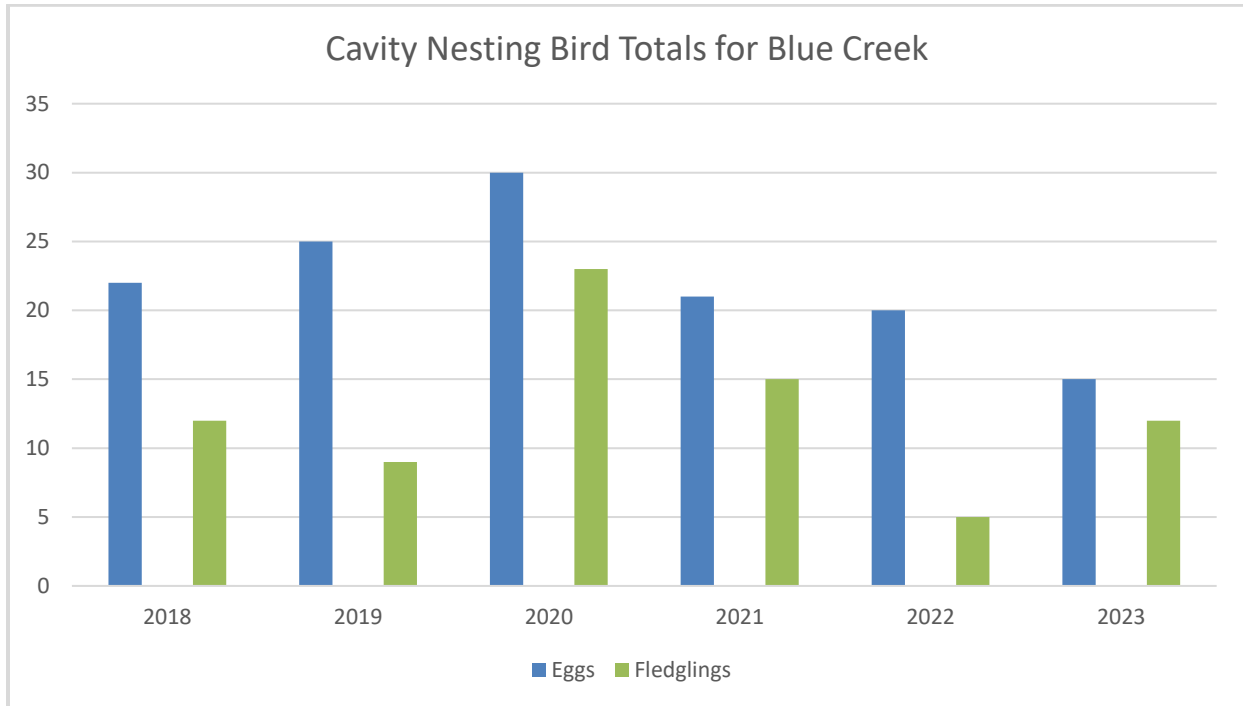


Cavity Nesting Bird Totals for Wildwood Preserve

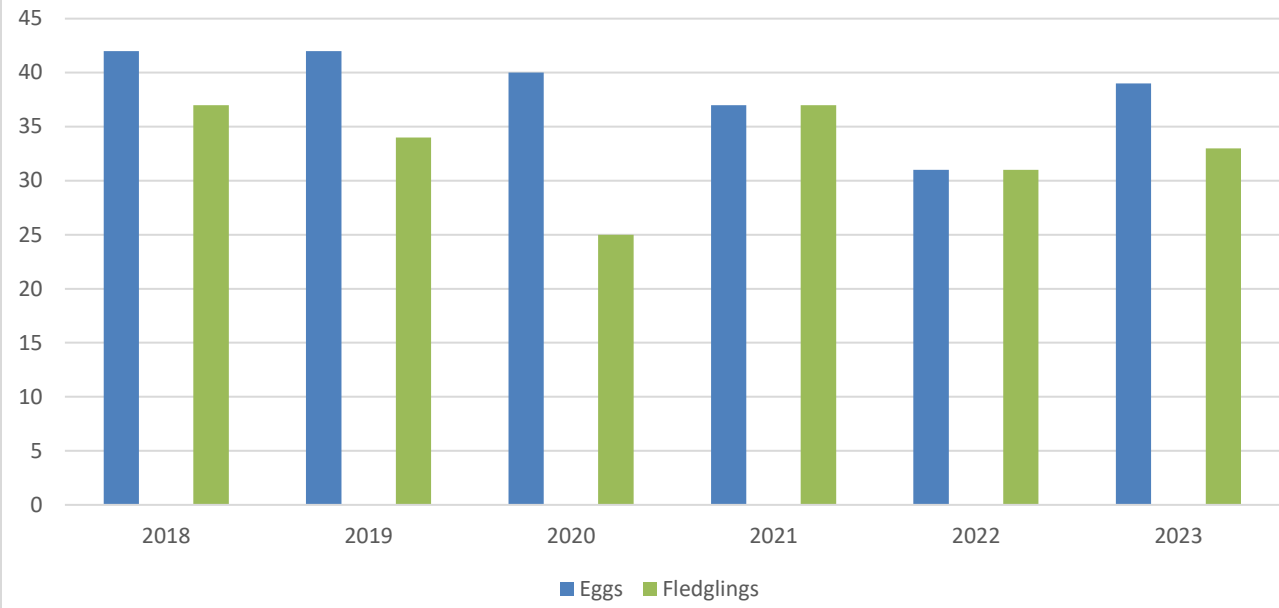


Cavity Nesting Bird Totals for Swan Creek Preserve

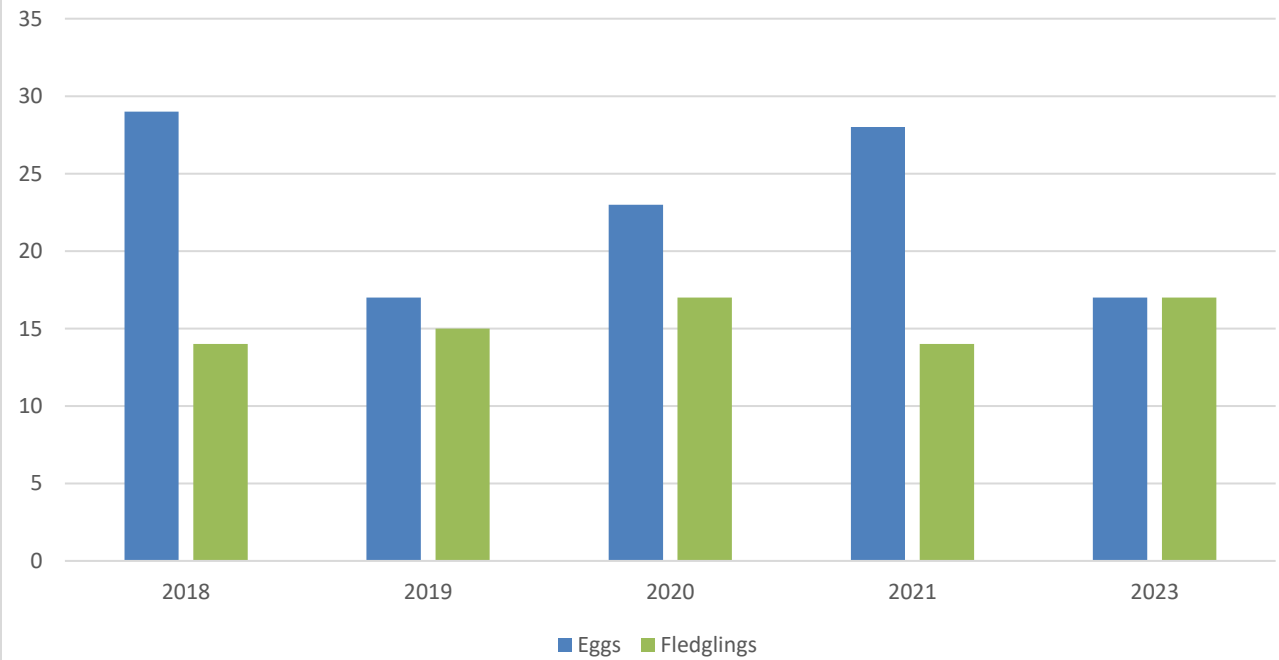




Cavity Nesting Bird Totals for Side Cut



Cavity Nesting Bird Totals for Middlegrounds



2023 Metroparks Cavity Nesting Bird Data	Oak Openings Eggs	Oak Openings Fledged	Wildwood Eggs	Wildwood Fledged	Swan Creek Eggs	Swan Creek Fledged	Secor Eggs	Secor Fledged
Eastern Bluebird	230	201	42	33	33	22	33	23
House Wren	244	202	0	0	0	0	39	39
Tree Swallow	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Carolina Wren	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Titmouse/Chickadee	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals:	474	403	42	33	33	22	72	62

2023 Metroparks Cavity Nesting Bird Data	Blue Creek Eggs	Blue Creek Fledged	Middle-grounds Eggs	Middle-grounds Fledged	Side Cut Eggs	Side Cut Fledged	Howard Marsh Eggs	Howard Marsh Fledged
Eastern Bluebird	15	12	0	0	0	0	0	0
House Wren	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tree Swallow	0	0	17	17	39	33	38	37
Titmouse/Chickadee	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals:	15	12	17	17	39	33	38	37

2023 Quick Summary

As in past years, some boxes remain empty for unknown reasons, particularly at Oak Openings Preserve. These boxes all have been noted, and each site is being evaluated this spring. Any boxes reported and/or noted on monitoring forms in need of repair or replacement have been placed on a work order list for this winter and early spring. Tree swallow numbers continue to be consistent at Side Cut and Howard Marsh, with highly successful fledging rates. There were also high success rates for eastern bluebirds and house wrens at Secor and Oak Openings and increasing numbers of bluebirds at Wildwood Preserve.

Thank you for monitoring this season! Volunteer monitoring contributes to annual natural resource management planning and measurement efforts for each park site regarding habitat quality. It also provides important, long-term information about species successes, as well as declines and aids in tracking changes in ecological conditions. We appreciate all of your tremendous efforts as monitors.