
Books

Comments on Review of Bluebird Book

We feel obliged to respond to Mrs. Roger Foy's review of our book, **Bluebirds, Their Daily Lives & How to Attract and Raise Bluebirds** by Tina Curtis Dew and R. B. (Reber) Layton, published in NABB 12:22, 1987.

In defense of our publication, we wish to treat each comment of the review by citing specific pages for answers to errors in the review, so that readers can judge for themselves the efficacy of each point of disagreement.

Foy states, "The first 108 pages are copies of letters from the Dews to the Laytons, depicting a year's cycle of the bluebirds in their backyard." In fact, the first 108 pages cover a year's cycle of the bluebirds on the Dew Trail of over 50 boxes over a run of two miles or more, with valuable information of events from week to week throughout the year. The book preface explains that I found these unsolicited letters from the Dews of such an informative nature that after a year I asked their permission to compile them into a book.

Whereas Foy says (in about 1/3 of her comments), "The book fails to give sufficient space to House Sparrow elimination," the book actually devotes pages 148-155 to the threat of the House Sparrow.

Although Foy states that "Insufficient attention was paid to the fact that all traps can be death traps unless in the hands of knowledgeable people who can properly identify our avian friends," this concern is covered on pages 150-151 and 155.

Foy's claim that "There is no information about repelling snakes," ignores pages 163-165 giving instructions on making and erecting predator guards and pages 189-190 covering snake experiences. Although Foy claims that flying squirrels are another problem not mentioned, pages 157-158 cover this topic along with other squirrels.

Foy's statement that "Information on proper habitat for bluebirds is non-existent. Another oversight," overlooks information on proper habitat for bluebirds given on page 11, and pages 132-133.

Foy says, "A summary of the banding results published annually in many local bluebird trail reports would have added substantially to the credibility and usefulness of the book." This is a matter of opinion. We felt that our space on migration patterns was sufficient for the purpose of our book and preferred to leave a long elaboration on what bird bandings show to bird banding journals.

We disagree with Foy's opinion that "there is very little that is new and very little that has not been printed before elsewhere." There are many new aspects about bluebirding throughout the book and, as far as we know, no one has previously given a week-by-week account of events along a true bluebird trail for an entire year. We challenge anyone to read these letters and form their own opinions.

Finally, we make no apology for giving credit to the North American Bluebird Society, for their voluntary efforts to help bring back bluebirds to North America, for they, like we, are promoting the cause of bluebirds across our continent.

In conclusion, since the readers of our book will find for themselves answers in detail to *all* of the errors reported by Mrs. Foy, we must conclude that she had not read the book in detail herself. Instead, her review seems motivated as an avenue of criticism of the North American Bluebird Society. We feel that our publication can stand on its own merits and we invite you, the readers to be the judge. We appreciate this opportunity to respond to Mrs. Foy.

R. B. Layton