

Eastern  
Bluebird



Cowbird egg in Eastern Bluebird Nest  
Photo by Lara Hampton



Brown-  
headed  
Cowbird

House  
Wren



## Quick Guide to Nest & Egg ID

House  
Sparrow



Tree  
Swallow



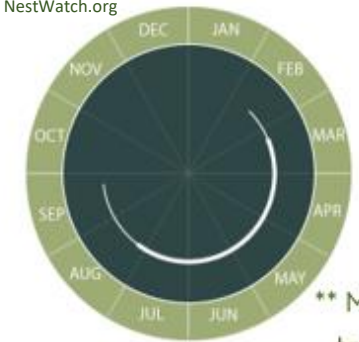
Carolina  
Chickadee



# Monitoring

## Eastern Bluebird Nesting Season

Image via NestWatch.org



INCUBATION PERIOD



11-19  
days

BROODING PERIOD



17-19  
days

\*\* May have up to 3 broods



- ✓ *Don't monitor when the eggs/young are more vulnerable.* Avoid: dawn, dusk, rain, & extreme hot/cold weather.
- ✓ Watch/listen for predators and don't approach directly from the front of the box.
- ✓ Listen for chirping nestlings and watch for young perching in the nest box entrance. Do not approach if you see/hear nestlings from a distance when they aren't being actively fed; they may be close to fledging and could fledge early if you approach the box at this time. Wait to visit again until you know they have fledged.
- ✓ Tap the side of the box, wait, & tap again before opening. Watch for signs of animals or insects inside the box. Keep your face away from entrance hole. ***Do not force an adult nesting bird off the nest.*** If they stay on the nest, try coming back later or mark on data sheet that the adult stayed on the nest during the visit.
- ✓ Keep visits less than 2 minutes. Take photos of contents, if needed. Count the number of eggs/young. It is okay to move feathers/moss out of the way to count the eggs as long as they are replaced properly. Do NOT move the eggs themselves. Walk away using a different path to prevent leaving a "dead end" scent trail to the box.
- ✓ Wait to input data until you have walked far enough away from the nest that the adults will feel it's safe to return.
- ✓ Once young have fledged or have disappeared from the box, promptly remove all nesting materials out of box in preparation for the next avian occupants. Dispose of all nest contents 100+ft from any nest box.
- **It is *illegal* to remove an active nest of a native bird species without a permit. It is illegal to "pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill," or "sell" a migratory bird or any of its parts, including nests, eggs, and feathers without proper permits.**  
- Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act

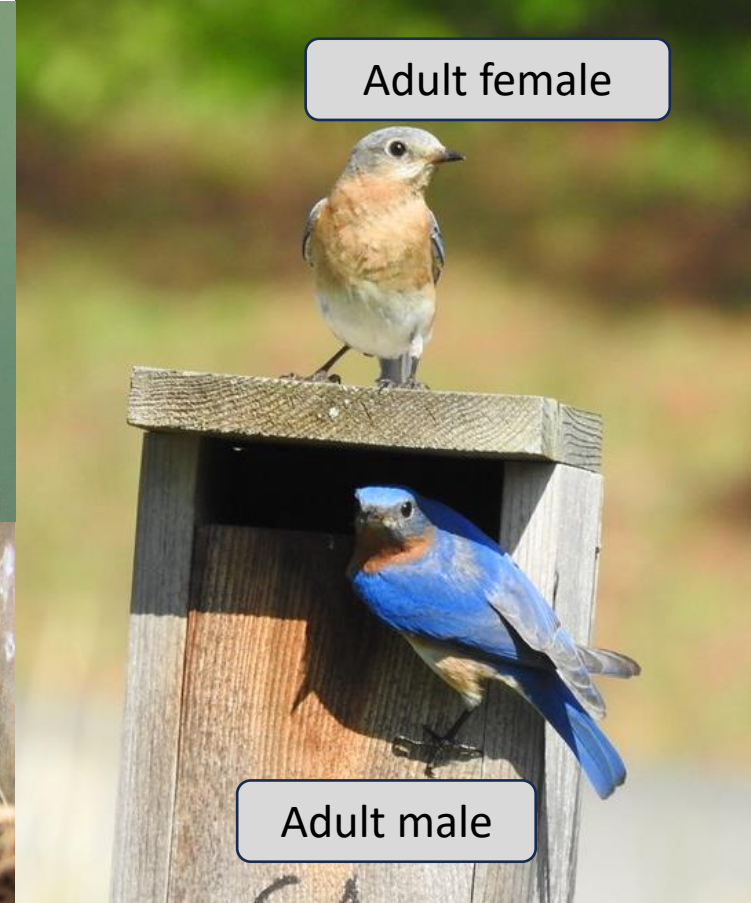
- ✓ Be aware that other living creatures may be present in boxes. This includes mice, snakes, wasps, bees, squirrels, ants, and others.
- ✓ **Mouse nests** - constructed of a variety of materials such as: grass, leaves, hair, feathers, milkweed silk, shredded bark, moss, cotton, or shredded cloth. ***No nest cup*** (see left). Rodent droppings are generally evident. Remove materials if present in box and wash hands thoroughly immediately after.
- ✓ Alert an employee if there is evidence of a wasp/bee nest within a box. Do not attempt to continue to monitor until box has been deemed safe. **Please alert via email or phone.** We don't often check the data sheet comments.



| Species                                                                                                                                                     | Nest                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Eggs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <div data-bbox="63 121 280 149" data-label="Section-Header"> <p>Eastern Bluebird</p> </div> <div data-bbox="20 154 338 275" data-label="Image"> </div>      | <p>Neat, cup shaped, woven nest typically 100% fine grass or pine needles. Cup may be in the back of the box. Occasionally bits of fur or a few feathers, or even some hair (e.g., from a horse). Fairly deep, often cylindrical cup – usually 3-4” deep, with the cup portion 2.5” in diameter &amp; about 2.25” deep.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p>Eggs - powder blue (no dark spots), sometimes white. Surface is smooth, shape is subelliptical to short subelliptical.</p>                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <div data-bbox="89 292 254 321" data-label="Section-Header"> <p>Tree Swallow</p> </div> <div data-bbox="20 349 338 518" data-label="Image"> </div>          | <p>Nest of grass or pine needles, usually lined with many feathers. Feathers often placed to curl up over eggs when adult is not on the nest; you may need to move the feathers slightly to get an accurate count on the eggs. Flatter cup (about 2" diameter, up to 1.5" deep) than bluebirds. Occasionally contain plant materials or small amount of trash. *** (<b>Note:</b> the start of a Tree Swallow or Eastern Bluebird nest can look like a House Sparrow nest - don't remove it until you're sure! It is okay to leave it for a few more days until you get a positive identification either on your own or with help.).</p> | <p>Eggs - pure white (may appear pinkish when first laid up to 4 days) with a pointy end.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <div data-bbox="50 539 293 568" data-label="Section-Header"> <p>Carolina Chickadee</p> </div> <div data-bbox="45 572 313 682" data-label="Image"> </div>    | <p>Nest base of moss, sometimes with strips of bark, thickly lined with grass, plant fibers, fur, hair (e.g., rabbit deer, squirrel, opossum, raccoon, cow, cat). Distinct, small, deep cup. Female may cover eggs when leaving the box; you may need to move the moss slightly to get an accurate count on the eggs.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p>Eggs - ovate to rounded ovate, white, finely marked with reddish-brown dots, spots or blotches, often concentrated on the larger end, little or no gloss.</p>                                                                                                                                     |
| <div data-bbox="89 701 254 729" data-label="Section-Header"> <p>House Wren</p> </div> <div data-bbox="10 733 341 882" data-label="Image"> </div>            | <p>Messy nest of coarse twigs (often with cottony spider cocoons), lined with fine fibers and downy feathers, usually filling box. Cups are often hidden closer to the bottom of the box while the sticks extend above. Males may build eggless “dummy nests” in nearby boxes to reduce competition.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p>Eggs - Tiny glossy white eggs, often tinted pink/buff, with numerous pinkish brown/reddish brown/brown specks that generally form a ring on the larger end of the egg.</p>                                                                                                                        |
| <div data-bbox="25 906 326 935" data-label="Section-Header"> <p>Brown-headed Cowbird</p> </div> <div data-bbox="63 939 280 1092" data-label="Image"> </div> | <p>Cowbirds do not build their own nest – they lay eggs in the nests of other birds, depending on the host to incubate and raise their young.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <p>Eggs - oval with variable shape, with a moderately glossy, granulated shell, white or grayish white, evenly dotted with brown/ reddish brown/gray, sometimes with heavier markings at the large end. Granulated, moderately glossy. Similar to a House Sparrow egg, but larger (size varies).</p> |
| <div data-bbox="76 1113 267 1142" data-label="Section-Header"> <p>House Sparrow</p> </div> <div data-bbox="10 1170 341 1420" data-label="Image"> </div>     | <p>Loose jumble but stuffed full of odds and ends, including coarse grass (with seed heads), cloth, feathers, twigs and sometimes litter (e.g., clear plastic, cigarette filters). Mid-summer nests sometimes contain bits of green vegetation (mustards/mints.) Tall nest; materials often built up to cover sides of box. Often difficult to find the cup or see the eggs. Often found with a tunnel-like entrance to the cup.</p> <p><b>NON-NATIVE to U.S.. Do not allow to nest in nest boxes. When identified as attempting to use a box, please remove nest box contents and deposit 100+ feet from all nest boxes.</b></p>       | <p>Eggs - cream, white, gray or greenish tint, with irregular fine brown speckles, shell is smooth with slight gloss. Variable background color, color and thickness of spots, and size.</p>                                                                                                         |



Juvenile



Adult male

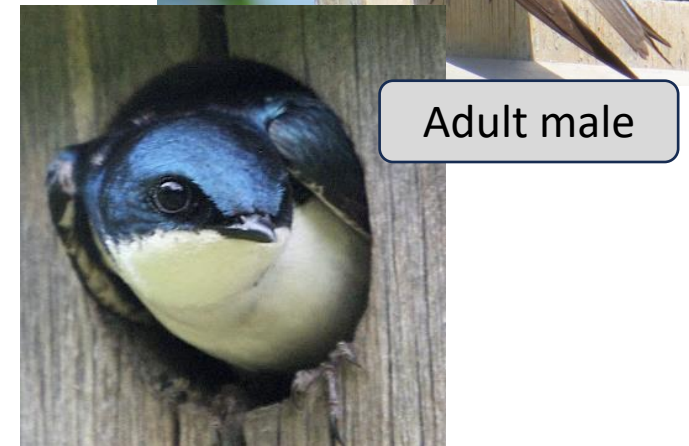
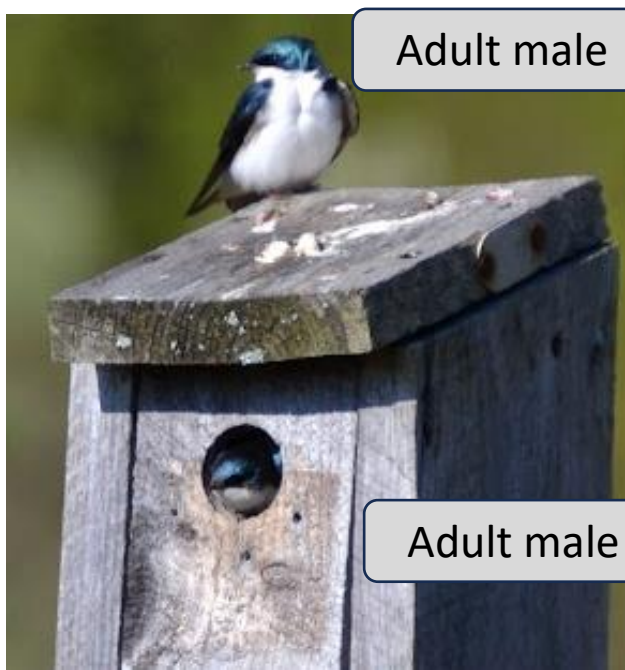


Adult female



Adult male

# Eastern Bluebird



# Tree Swallow

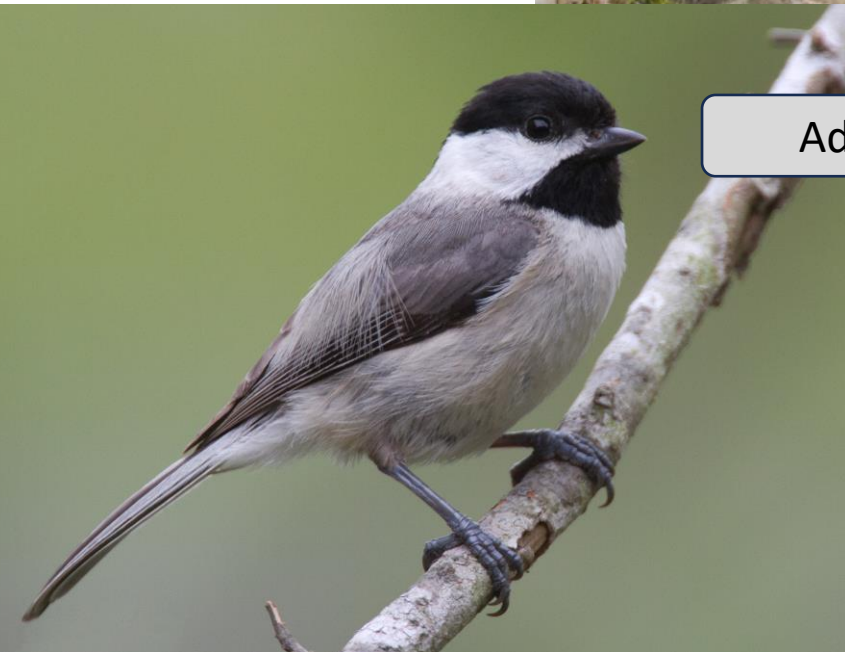
---



Juvenile

Adult

# Carolina Chickadee





Adult



Adult



Juvenile

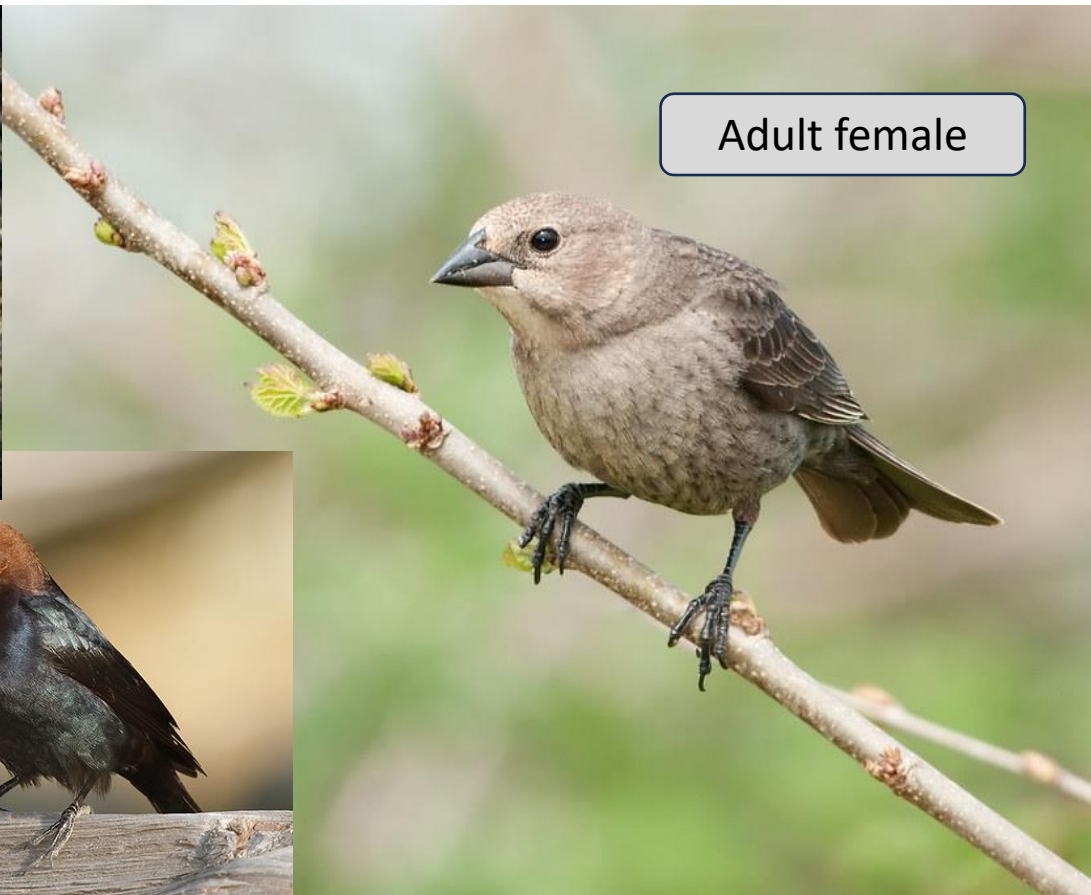


# House Wren



Juvenile

Host parent



Adult female



Host parent

Juvenile



Adult male



# Brown-headed Cowbird



Adult male

Adult male



Adult female



Juvenile



Adult female

# House Sparrow

**NON-NATIVE to U.S.**

Do not allow to nest in nest boxes.