

# *NestWatch* **Digest**

NESTING SEASON 2025



# Cheers to a Remarkable Year!

We're excited to share our annual report, which highlights an extraordinary year of participatory science powered by the NestWatch community. Your passion and commitment in 2025 led to outstanding achievements: 43,996 nest observations from 52 countries. With an additional 58,436 records from prior years uploaded, we continue to lead the way in preserving invaluable historic nesting data. Together, that's 102,432 nesting records newly available to scientists worldwide.

This year also brought major global growth. We launched the NestWatch app in Portuguese, with the website coming soon, expanding opportunities for data collection across South America. We proudly welcomed 14 new NestWatch chapters, including our first-ever chapters in Spain, Mexico, and Thailand, extending our community to new corners of the world. And in 2025, we began developing an online course dedicated to the biology of nests and eggs, a milestone project that has now been completed (see page 5).

This report celebrates what we've accomplished together in conservation, scientific research, and community engagement throughout 2025. You—our participants—are the heart of NestWatch, and your efforts continue to make a real difference. We're inspired by what we've achieved and can't wait to see what unfolds in the coming nesting season.

With gratitude,



Robyn Bailey

Cover: Black-capped Vireo by Mark & Teri McClelland / Macaulay Library  
Right: Tree Swallows by Ann Janette Vander Ende

This issue of the *NestWatch Digest* is brought to you by NestWatch, a research and education project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The NestWatch project is made possible by the efforts and support of thousands of participants across the world. This document contains accessibility features for those with visual impairments; for assistance contact [nestwatch@cornell.edu](mailto:nestwatch@cornell.edu).

Anyone, anywhere, who finds a nest is welcome to join NestWatch. Help scientists monitor nesting birds while you support bird conservation in your own community. To join, visit [NestWatch.org](https://NestWatch.org) and get certified as a nest monitor. Certification is free and ensures that nest monitoring activities follow our code of conduct designed to protect birds and their nests.

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NestWatch extends a heartfelt thank you to all of our participants! Your nest data joins 860,226 observations of over 1,100 species, stretching over 100 years. These data are critical for understanding the breeding biology of birds across the world.

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Pygmy Nuthatches by Christine Haines







**20% off**

*when you order by  
May 31 with code  
NWBANest26*

Take your NestWatching to another level with our new course,

## ***The Hidden World of Nests and Eggs!***

"I LOVE it! It is so amazingly unique and interesting. I have learned so much already that I never knew."

—Bird Academy learner

This online, self-paced course includes instructional videos, photo galleries, and interactive learning tools to help reveal how birds raise their young. You'll learn how and why eggs take on so many colors, shapes, and sizes; how chicks get their parents' attention at every developmental stage; how parents help baby birds survive and thrive; and so much more.

- ✓ Take a journey through the worldwide diversity of nests
- ✓ Explore the gem-like variation in egg patterns & colors
- ✓ Learn the strategies & behaviors of effective bird parents
- ✓ Get tips on supporting nesting birds in your neighborhood

Designed by the Cornell Lab's Bird Academy and NestWatch, this course delivers a fun and comprehensive look at some of the most fascinating biology on the planet.

**Get Started Today!**

Photo credits: Page 4, clockwise: Eastern Bluebird by Terry Marron, Anna's Hummingbird by Deborah De Seixas, Common Gallinule by Kateryna Kofanova, Toco Toucan by Roger MacKertich / Macaulay Library, and Yellow-crowned Night Herons by César Martínez. Page 5: Red-eyed Vireos by Cheryl Shank / Macaulay Library, Indian Paradise-Flycatcher by Manish Panchal.





47,251

**NEST STRUCTURE PLANS DOWNLOADED IN 2025**

Find free nest box plans via our [Right Bird, Right House](#) tool. Got a design to share? [Tell us!](#)

Northern Flicker by Christine Haines

# Conservation Highlights

Bobolink by Joshua Covill / Macaulay Library



Bobolinks are a grassland-nesting species that are experiencing steep declines across their range, but The Trustees of Reservations land trust is doing their part to help reverse that trend on their Appleton Farms property in Massachusetts. The hayfields, pastures, and meadows on the property are managed for grassland-nesting species, like Bobolinks and Savannah Sparrows, through practices like haying and rotational grazing. Staff work with volunteers to monitor the birds and their nests to ensure that the management plan is successful. Last year, they monitored 23 Bobolink nests, adding to their property-wide total of at least 46 nests—amazing results for a species of concern! These data are critical for documenting how best management practices can support threatened species like Bobolinks.

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A new ornithology textbook published in 2025, *New Perspectives in Ornithology: 21st Century Dispatches across the World of Birds* by Scott Edwards, cited several NestWatch studies. Aimed at educating current and future thought leaders on cutting-edge practices in ornithology, this coverage raises awareness of how platforms like NestWatch contribute to a broader perspective in ornithology. Similarly, authors also mentioned NestWatch in a new book chapter entitled *Nest Boxes: An Effective Management Approach to Save Threatened Water Birds Species* by F. Jahan and H. Ali ([page 443](#)). We're thrilled to see this recognition of NestWatch as a practical tool for community conservation.

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Bobolink nest searching by Bobolink Nests Group Appleton Farms



# Regional Roundup

Highlights from the 2025 season

In 2025, participants reported 43,996 nest attempts by a total of 374 species. Here, we summarize data from the United States and Canada; however, we also received data on 641 nests of 183 species from an additional 50 countries in 2025. Another great year is in the books!

## 2025 NESTWATCH SEASON TOTALS

**43,996 NEST ATTEMPTS**

**3,268 PARTICIPANTS**

**374 SPECIES**

**137,058 EGGS**

**91,486 FLEDGLINGS**

## TOP 2025 INTERNATIONAL CONTRIBUTORS

**Spain**

246 nests



**India**

41 nests



**Colombia**

38 nests



## NORTHERNMOST NEST - YUKON TERRITORY

BARN SWALLOW



## SOUTHERNMOST NEST - ARGENTINA

CRESTED DUCK



## REGIONAL TOTALS 2025

**ALASKA AND NORTHERN CANADA**

**TOTAL NESTS: 67**

**TOTAL REPORTED SPECIES: 6**



**SOUTHWEST**

**TOTAL NESTS: 4,170**

**TOTAL REPORTED SPECIES: 85**



**SOUTHEAST AND GULF COAST**

**TOTAL NESTS: 9,459**

**TOTAL REPORTED SPECIES: 86**



**NORTHWEST**

**TOTAL NESTS: 3,313**

**TOTAL REPORTED SPECIES: 78**



**NORTHEAST**

**TOTAL NESTS: 23,726**

**TOTAL REPORTED SPECIES: 114**



**CENTRAL**

**TOTAL NESTS: 2,608**

**TOTAL REPORTED SPECIES: 53**



Photo credit: Barn Swallow by Ryan Sanderson / Macaulay Library; Crested Duck by Daniela Zaffignani / Macaulay Library

# Nesting Productivity for Top 16 Species Reported in 2025

Table 1. The average number of fledglings per successful nest (F) and the percentage of successful nests (%) for each region.

SPECIES	TOTAL NESTS	OVERALL		NORTHEAST		SOUTHEAST		CENTRAL		NORTHWEST		SOUTHWEST	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Eastern Bluebird	14,777	3.87	79.00	3.91	75.91	3.74	81.11	4.22	85.79	-	-	-	-
Tree Swallow	11,066	4.42	77.23	4.45	76.86	4.16	76.30	4.47	77.73	4.72	75.37	4.19	81.39
Northern House Wren <sup>†</sup>	3,008	5.23	79.41	5.21	79.42	4.83	60.71	5.06	79.00	5.80	82.05	5.72	83.78
Purple Martin	1,951	3.82	79.41	3.70	77.93	4.52	69.51	4.18	89.62	4.52	91.11	*	*
Mountain Bluebird	1,392	4.61	81.34	-	-	-	-	*	*	4.75	82.12	4.42	80.24
American Kestrel	1,175	3.74	66.97	3.64	67.05	*	62.07	*	84.62	*	*	4.32	84.62
Western Bluebird	1,008	4.11	78.35	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.62	72.15	4.06	78.96
Carolina Chickadee	826	4.69	72.46	4.83	60.38	4.61	78.72	*	*	-	-	-	-
Carolina Wren	553	4.34	76.22	4.25	73.83	4.38	76.67	*	90.91	-	-	-	-
American Robin	514	2.98	65.50	3.01	65.66	*	66.67	2.82	54.17	*	72.73	*	*
Black-capped Chickadee	471	5.22	74.83	5.42	73.27	4.10	83.33	5.00	73.53	4.40	82.61	*	81.82
Barn Swallow	432	3.85	83.91	3.96	87.50	3.95	89.66	*	*	*	60.00	3.64	90.70
House Finch	284	3.76	66.87	3.90	61.73	3.68	74.19	*	*	*	*	3.61	67.50
Bewick's Wren	271	4.79	79.60	-	-	4.88	81.44	-	-	*	*	4.35	<b>67.74</b>
Wood Duck	232	10.06	82.43	10.08	<b>84.06</b>	13.35	73.17	*	100.00	8.17	85.71	6.09	85.71
Dark-eyed Junco	210	2.17	61.36	*	*	*	*	*	*	3.00	70.83	<b>1.46</b>	59.02

KEY:  
 (-) species not present in the region  
 (\*) insufficient data (< 10 nests)  
 [blue text] indicates a ≥20% increase from 10-year average  
 [red text] indicates a ≥20% decrease from 10-year average

<sup>†</sup>Formerly "House Wren," the Northern House Wren was split from other similar species in Central and South America and the Caribbean in late 2024.  
 American Robin nest by Crystal L'Hote



# Celebrating Our Newest Chapters

NestWatch Chapters are hosted by nature centers, parks, wildlife refuges, zoos, and other nature-minded organizations all across the world. These groups help recruit and train NestWatchers in their local communities while using NestWatch to monitor nesting birds as part of their mission. Do you live near a chapter? Consider joining their ranks, attending events, or using them as a resource for all things NestWatch. We extend a warm welcome to Chapters established in 2025:

- Fort Worth Audubon Society, Benbrook, TX
- Osage Trails Master Naturalists, Kansas City, MO
- Societat Valenciana d'Ornitologia, La Nucia, Alicante, Spain
- PAU Ecuador, Loja, Ecuador
- Unidad de Manejo para la Conservación de la Vida Silvestre La Coruja, Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico
- Leduc Wildlife Conservation Society, Leduc, Alberta, Canada
- Lathrop State Park, Walsenburg, CO
- Mass Audubon, Lincoln, MA
- Bowie Nature Park, Fairview, TN
- The Suburban Biodiversity Conservation Center at Pace University, Pleasantville, NY
- IMPACT Farm, Bangkok, Thailand
- NYC Parks Wildlife Unit, New York City, NY
- Shelby County Bluebird Club, Memphis, TN
- Chattanooga Bluebird Society, Hixson, TN

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Congratulations also to those who started their tenure as a NestWatch Chapter ten years ago, in 2015.

- Brambleton Bluebird and Garden Club, Brambleton, VA
- QuébecOiseaux, Montreal, QC
- Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy NestWatchers, Leesburg, VA

Purple Martin gourds by Brenton Valentine



# Amphibian Abodes

Sometimes we open our nest boxes only to be surprised by a distinctly non-avian animal using the box! We received a surprising number of images this year of amphibians and reptiles using nest boxes as a temporary shelter. Check out these fascinating finds.

▼ Tree frog by Tannyr Lamica Bush



▼ Squirrel tree frog by Tannyr Lamica Bush



▲ Gray tree frog by Karen Meyer



▲ Moorish gecko by Grupo Ornitológico Universitario de Cádiz

# Community Highlights

In 2025, we updated our mobile app to include new groups and filtering features. This update also helped app users with large datasets see a faster sync process due to improvements to the way data are synced to the app from our servers. Additionally, we began working on a new interface that will help those who monitor nests as part of a group better organize and share data. Stay tuned for more about this in 2026. All of these updates help us position NestWatch as a cutting-edge tool for larger nest-monitoring groups like nature centers, environmental nonprofits, and research collaborators.

The Ontario Eastern Bluebird Society recently recognized Nature Barrie with their Conservation Award for its ongoing support of the conservation of cavity nesting birds. Nature Barrie is a long-time NestWatch group based out of Ontario, Canada, monitoring mainly Eastern Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, and Northern House Wrens. Congratulations!



Eastern Bluebird by Harriet Neill

Red-bellied Macaw by Katia Oliveira / Macaulay Library

NestWatch was represented at one of the world's largest birding festivals in 2025, AvistarBrasil (São Paulo, Brazil). With the launch of our mobile app in Brazilian Portuguese last year, we were excited to share NestWatch with a new audience of bird enthusiasts. We especially thank our Brazilian app testers for their help: Lorena Patricio Silva, Patrícia Paludo, Enrico Lopes Breviglieri, Raiane Vital da Paz, and Larissa Sayuri Moreira Sugai.



"I've planted many native plants and shrubs... I use no pesticides and spend an hour or so each morning tending to the birds. I've seen and experienced so much happiness because of nature!"

**Tracy Fleming**

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Western Bluebird by Joan Jernegan



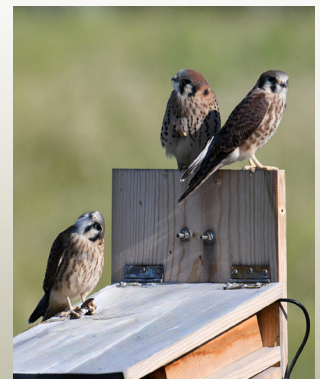
# Research Highlights

Gray Catbird nest by Daniel Hinnebusch



Increasingly, we're noticing more birds weaving bits of plastic into their nests. We are working with Cornell student Will Cawley to investigate how frequently birds are incorporating plastics into their nests, and what the consequences for nest success might be. After looking through existing photos of common species in the NestWatch database, Will selected American Robins, Gray Catbirds, and Northern Mockingbirds as the focal species for a new pilot project, [described in our blog](#). This nesting season, we're asking NestWatch participants to photograph these species nests from two angles—the side and the top—and report on the nest outcomes so we can compare nests containing plastics to those without it.

From 2022–2024, NestWatch staff participated in a study that combined numerous data sources on American Kestrels from around the United States. When combined with other data types, such as bird banding data and abundance surveys, researchers were able to look at vital rates and population trends at the continental scale. The results of this multi-institutional collaboration were recently published in the journal [Ecosphere](#), documenting that the overall population has declined by 29% from 1986–2019. There was no decline in brood size over that time period, but concerning declines in adult and juvenile survival were noted. The findings suggest several potential problems that can't be solved by nest box provisioning alone, including declines in arthropod prey, rodenticide use, neonicotinoid insecticide use, and predation.



American Kestrels by Bobbie Moller

NestWatch participants often want to know if their nest-monitoring observations are impacting nests. We are working with Cornell student Christian Zeser to evaluate whether the nest-checking frequency impacts the outcome of a nest, while controlling for related variables like nest height, and whether the nest is on a natural or anthropogenic substrate (e.g., in a tree versus on a building). This study is ongoing, and we hope the results will be useful for ensuring NestWatch protocols are the best they can be. This study may also help professional researchers decide how often to check nests, balancing the need for quality data with minimal disturbance.

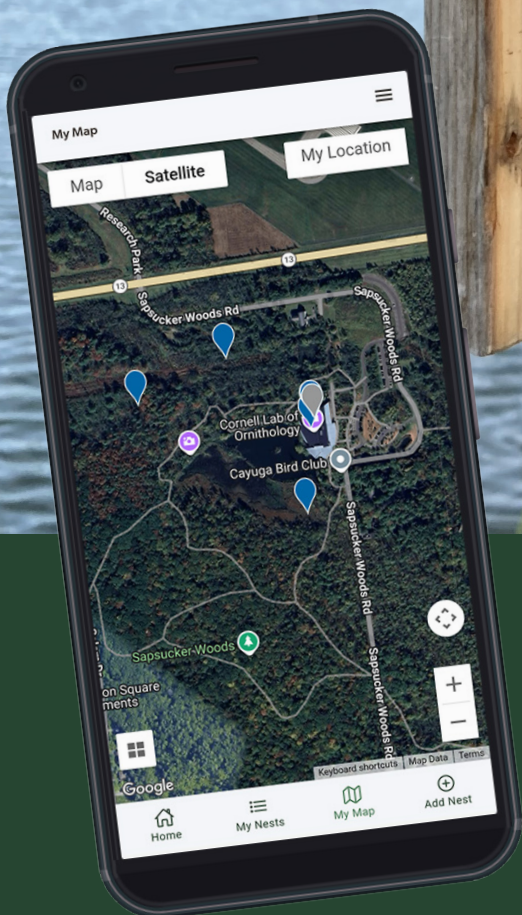
Tree Swallows by Ann Janette Vander Ende



# Collect data in the field

Download the NestWatch mobile app today, and input your data directly into NestWatch while you're out checking nests.

AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH,  
PORTUGUESE, AND  
SPANISH



Tree Swallow nest by Karen Smith



DOWNLOAD

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Yellow-bellied Seedeater nest by Alejandro Williams Viveros

Thanks for another great year!

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