

# Get a New View of Bird Life with NestWatch

By Cornell Lab of Ornithology

**A**cross the continent, birds are in a flutter of wooing and nest-building. Perhaps there's an American Robin building her mud and grass bowl on your porch light or a Northern Mockingbird weaving a twiggy nest in your shrubs. If you find a nest nearby, you have a front-row seat to the daily drama of bird life.

It's also a perfect opportunity to become part of the NestWatch project at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. NestWatch has been tracking trends in the nesting success of hundreds of species of birds across the country for more than 40 years.

"It's only when many thousands of volunteers are collecting data over a vast area that scientists can fully measure the impacts of environmental change and land-use on breeding birds," said Jason Martin, NestWatch project leader, in a news release. "Take climate change, for example. We need a massive amount of data to investigate the potential impacts that altered climatic patterns may have on breeding birds. If birds start nesting sooner, as some

species are doing, they may eventually become out of sync with their food supplies."

As a NestWatch participant, you'll visit one or more nests or nest boxes every three to four days and report what you see at [www.nestwatch.org](http://www.nestwatch.org)—when the first eggs are laid, total number of eggs and young, and when the hatchlings take their first faltering flights.

After signing up, you'll first do a bit of online training to understand how best to observe nesting birds without disturbing them. You'll learn the best time to check nests and how to avoid accidentally leading predators to them. Participants will also get some tips on how to find nests.

Participation in NestWatch is open to anyone who is interested in birds and nature and is free, although a small donation is suggested to help support the program. Participants may sign up is easy via the NestWatch website, [www.nestwatch.org](http://www.nestwatch.org).

There are online tutorials to help along the way and a chance to share experiences with others on Facebook. It's a great way to connect with other bird watchers and with nature in your own backyard.



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