

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Families—Your child has been learning about nesting birds. This sheet offers information and activities so the whole family can enjoy birds too.

NESTS AND CHICKS

Baby Bird Dos and Don'ts

At home, watch one of our online Bird Cams (cams.allaboutbirds.org). While watching, look at how the parent birds interact with the young in the nest. Are they resting or is it meal time? Have fun watching the cameras and talk about what you see.



If there are any nests near your home, you can monitor how many eggs are laid, how many chicks hatch, and how many fledge. Report your findings to the Lab's NestWatch project (NestWatch.org). This is a great way to continue being active in citizen science.

Here are some FAQs to share with friends and family.

- Q** If you find a baby bird on the ground, what do you feed it?
- A** Don't feed it anything. Humans cannot provide the things baby birds need. But don't worry! The vast majority of "abandoned" baby birds are perfectly healthy and learning to fly with parents nearby.
- Q** If I handle a baby bird, will its parents pick up my scent and abandon it?
- A** Fortunately, that's just a myth. Parent birds don't recognize their young by smell.
- Q** Why do birds leave the nest before they can fly?
- A** Usually, it's to their advantage to leave as soon as they can. Predators can easily find a nest full of squawking baby birds and nests can host parasites. Parent birds work very hard to get their young out of the nest as quickly as possible.
- Q** I accidentally spooked a nesting mother. She flew away and hasn't returned. Should I try to hatch the eggs myself?
- A** Hatching eggs is a very delicate process. The right equipment and conditions are essential. In these cases, the best solution is to contact your local nature center or wildlife rehabilitator. They will know how to deal with the situation.

Visit NestWatch.org to learn more about nests, incubation, hatching, and first flights.

COOL FACT

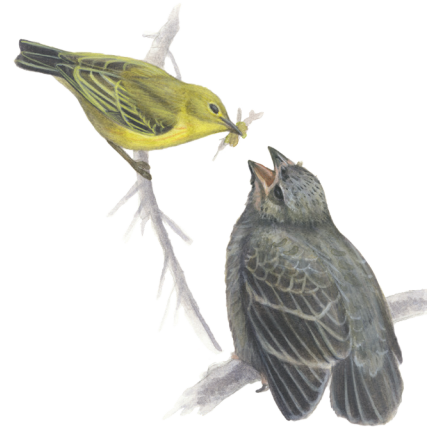
Extreme Nests

Most birds do not live in their nests year round. Nests are only used for incubating eggs and raising chicks. Nests come in many sizes and shapes. Several hummingbird species have nests that are about an inch in diameter. Bald Eagles build incredibly large nests, some more than 12 feet tall! Bald Eagles keep building on top of their old nests every year.

Bird of the Month

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD

This bird is North America's most common "brood parasite." A female cowbird makes no nest of her own, but instead lays her eggs in the nests of other bird species, who then raise the young cowbirds. Young cowbirds can grow larger and mature faster than their host species and sometimes receive more of the host adults' attention. This gets them more food than the other chicks.



Brown-headed Cowbird (chick)
by Evaristo H-F

Hands-On Activity

EGG-SPLORATION

- Everyone should have their own bowl and at least one raw egg. (Wash hands thoroughly before and after the activity.) Gently pick up the egg and take a close look at the outer shell.
 - What color is the shell?
 - What does the shell feel like? Is it rough or smooth?
 - How would you describe the shape of the egg?
 - When we crack the egg, how will the inside of the shell look?
- Gently crack open the egg over your bowl, being careful not to break the yolk. After eggs are broken, look at the inside of the shell.
 - Compare the inside of the shell to the outside. What is similar/different?
 - What color is it?
- Then look at the egg white and yolk of your egg.
 - What color is the egg white? Do you know why it's called "white?" (*Because it turns white when cooked.*)
 - What color is the yolk? What shape is it?
 - What other details do you notice?
- Break the yolk and carefully observe what happens.