

## Build a Bond with Birds

By Jason Martin, NestWatch

Whether in a shrub, a tree, or a nest box, bird nests are all around us. By monitoring a nearby nest you can help scientists study the biology of North America's birds and how it might be changing over time. Every spring and summer, volunteers from across the country visit nests and report their findings to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's NestWatch program. As a NestWatcher, you keep tabs on bird family life, following the progression from incubated eggs, to fuzzy chicks, to gawky youngsters ready to take their first fluttering flight. All the information you gather is submitted online to the NestWatch database.



*Eastern Bluebird nest. Photo by J. Brindo*

“NestWatch helps people of all ages and backgrounds connect with nature,” says project leader Jason Martin.

“The information that our dedicated citizen scientists collect allows us to understand the impact that various threats, such as environmental change and habitat destruction, have on breeding birds. Armed with this knowledge, we can take the necessary steps to help birds survive in this changing world.”



*Eastern Bluebird chick hatching.  
Photo by Mary Thomson*

Instructions and all the materials you need to participate are available on the NestWatch website at [www.nestwatch.org](http://www.nestwatch.org). You'll also get directions on how to find and monitor nests without disturbing the birds. It's fun, it's easy, and it's free.

The Cornell Lab's immensely popular NestCams are back too. Cameras broadcast live video over the web from the nests of Barn Owls, bluebirds, wrens, Wood Ducks, and many other species. Our newest camera is focused on a Great Horned Owl family in Houston, Minnesota. Check it out at [www.nestcams.org](http://www.nestcams.org).

And please join us for NestWatch this season—you'll build a bond with birds and with nature in your own backyard.

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*The Cornell Lab of Ornithology is a membership institution dedicated to interpreting and conserving the earth's biological diversity through research, education, and citizen science focused on birds. Visit the Cornell Lab's website at <http://www.birds.cornell.edu>.*