

WHAT'S HATCHING?

Official Newsletter of the Maryland & DC Breeding Bird Atlas 3
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Rock Pigeon by Tibbett Speer/Macaulay Library

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BIRD OF THE MONTH

Despite their overt familiarity even to non-birders, Rock Pigeons often go overlooked.

TIPS AND TRICKS

Before peak breeding season arrives, try spending some time focused on a few specific target species.

OUT OF THE ARCHIVE

Continuing our look back at the nest records from a half-century ago, in this issue we explore 1950.

Rock Pigeons have always been labelled a year-round nesting species in Maryland. The earliest nest record was January 2, but until 2021 the latest pigeon nest recorded in the region was only October 27; there were no November or December nest records. Julie Maynard broke the species' late-date record on [December 17, 2021](#) at a Home Depot. [Exactly one year later](#), Jordan Rutter found a chick in a nest under a bridge overpass. Mikey Lutmerding has the only other December nest record; he reported nesting pigeons in Dunkirk on [December 10, 2022](#).



Rock Pigeon by [Matthew Addicks/Macaulay Library](#)

"I will show you my pigeons! Which is the greatest treat, in my opinion, which can be offered to [a] human being."

--Charles Darwin

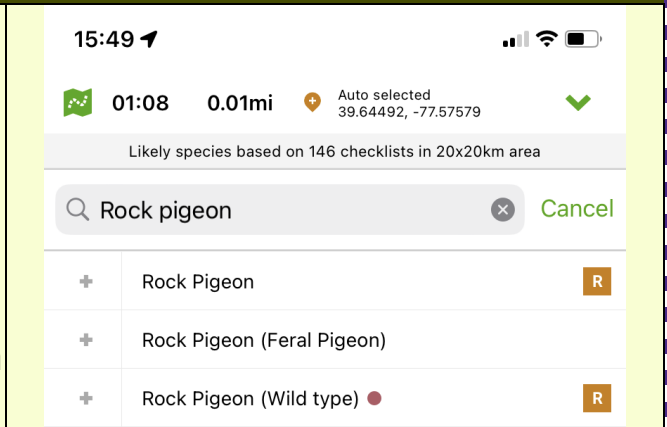


Rock Pigeon by [Nathan Goodman/Macaulay Library](#)

eBird Tip: Rock Pigeons

Ever had eBird flag your pigeon as rare? Chances are, you selected 'Rock Pigeon' rather than 'Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)'.

North America's pigeons are descended from domestic birds, not wild birds. It might seem like a minor distinction, but where the wild type occurs, there are real—if somewhat unknown—conservation implications. You can see the overlap [here](#).



From the Coordinator

Early in the new year, you should see the review output in eBird.



Data review for 2022 is now complete! This past year, over 223,000 breeding codes were submitted to the Atlas portal. Of these, approximately 8% were reinterpreted. Two-thirds of those reinterpretations were Possible codes. S7 codes represented 16% of the 17,000 reinterpretations. Overwhelmingly, the reason a breeding code was reinterpreted was related to timing; 62% were too early in the year and 20% were too late.

Colonial waterbirds such as gulls or herons also tended to have a higher rate of reinterpretation than other species since our review rules are tighter for them. Most notably, a Possible code for most colonial

waterbirds requires a colony to exist in the block; if no colony is known in that block, then the Possible code is reinterpreted to 'No Code'.

Of course, just because a breeding code was reinterpreted to something else does not mean that the breeding code should not have been used in the first place. For example, a Least Tern carrying food is likely taking that back to feed chicks; however, Least Terns can also travel a long way to forage. Retaining that breeding code in a block where the terns forage but don't nest wouldn't be an accurate reflection of their breeding distribution, so we would reinterpret it to 'No Code'. However, the behavior is absolutely correct—the only thing that affects the

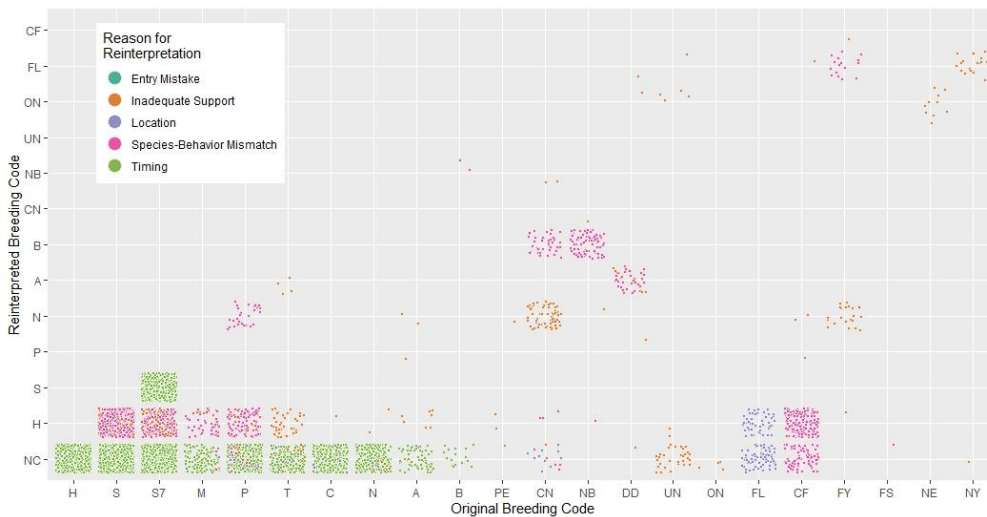
interpretation of that behavior is how far the bird is traveling. Imagine that we used larger blocks than we do now; in that case, the same breeding code that is reinterpreted to 'No Code' might be retained as a Confirmed code.

This difference between the observed behavior and the interpretation of that behavior is precisely the reason why we retain that behavioral information as a 'behavior code' in eBird.

The Steering Committee has made one change to the review process that departs from how we have been handling S7 codes to date. During review, S7 codes are treated the same as Possible codes. This means that an S7 code has to be within safe dates to be retained. However, the steering committee has decided that S7 codes that are within the first week of safe dates and are also the highest code in that block for that species should be reinterpreted to an S code. The reasoning is that this will alert observers to the existence of a 'weak' Probable code, and it can be upgraded to something stronger.

You should expect to see the changes implemented in eBird early in the new year. As always, if you have any questions or concerns I'm happy to talk about the review process. You can reach me at mddcbba3@mdbirds.org.

--Gabriel



The bottom of this figure shows the breeding code reported by the atlaser, while the left side shows the breeding code it was reinterpreted to (and 'NC' refers to 'No Code'). Each dot on the graph represents a single breeding code. The color of the dot refers to the reason why it was changed. The reasons can be seen in the legend in the top left of the graph. For example, wrens or woodpeckers with codes CN or NB (at the bottom of the graph) are reinterpreted to code B (on the left). You can see the number of reinterpretations and that the reason was a species-behavior mismatch.

bird of the month: ROCK PIGEON



Rock Pigeon by Jesse Adkins/Macaulay Library

Rock Pigeons were introduced to North America over 400 years ago and have become a well-established part of our avifauna. Despite that, they were ignored by birders and ornithologists until just a few decades ago. In 1958, Stewart and Robbins stated that “no truly wild population is recognized in this area” and that “the great majority of observations refer to privately owned or escaped birds”. Rock Pigeons were recorded on the Annapolis-Gibson Island Christmas Bird Count in 1941 and 1943, but otherwise the species was not counted on CBCs until 1973. As a result, little is known about the historical distribution and population status of the Rock Pigeon.

This unfortunate fact is referenced in Rock Pigeon species accounts in many atlas books. In our first atlas

publication, Rick Blom said that, “considering this bird’s close association with people, it is remarkable that almost nothing is known about its breeding biology in Maryland. As far as ornithologists and birdwatchers are concerned, the Rock Dove barely exists, despite its large numbers.”

Of course, whether it is naturalized or not, ignoring a substantial part of the ecosystem is problematic when trying to understand changes and impacts.

Top Tips

- Check bridges and barns for nests
- Use code N (visiting probable nest site) where appropriate
- Remember that pigeons can fly a long distance from their nest site to food sources

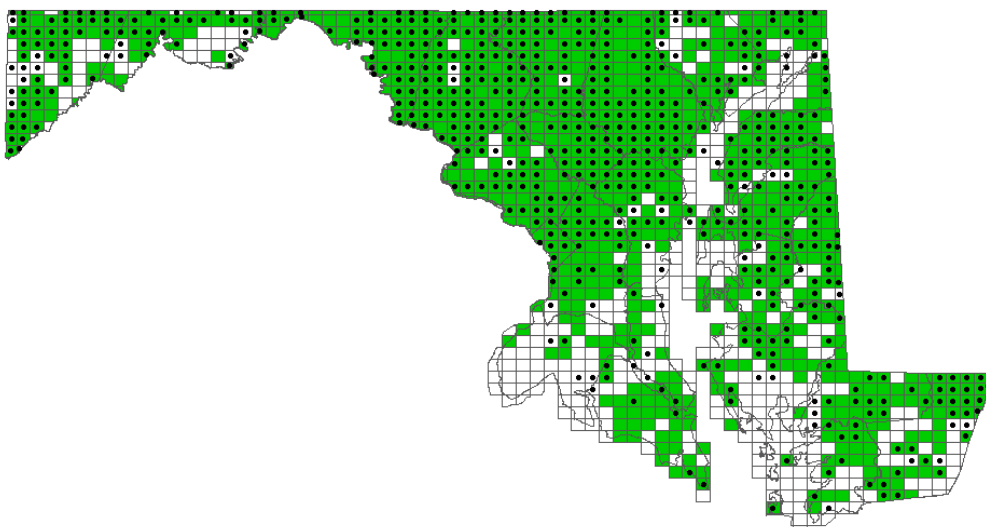
- Don’t overlook pigeons just because they are naturalized.

Habitat

In North America, Rock Pigeons are closely associated with human infrastructure. Although they infrequently nest on cliff faces like their wild Eurasian counterparts, they are nearly always found nesting in or on buildings or under bridges. They can be found in high density in urban areas, while in rural areas they are associated with farms—especially farms with livestock—and small towns. Highway overpasses and bridges also provide nest sites. These highways can extend their range through areas they wouldn’t otherwise be in, like I-68 through Allegany County. Pigeons require a flat surface for their nest site, usually with some cover.

Identification

Rock Pigeons are distinctive and familiar birds, despite their plumage variability. Although they are often found in large flocks, they do not require large groups. They primarily eat seeds and grains, and can travel substantial distances to reach foraging areas.



Rock Pigeon breeding distribution map from the Maryland & DC Breeding Bird Atlas 2 (2002–2006) and Atlas 3 (2020–2024). Green fill indicates a BBA2 Rock Pigeon breeding observation in that block (72% of blocks), while black dots represent BBA3 breeding observations (48% of blocks).

Behavior and Phenology

Nearly all our breeding birds feed their chicks animal protein, which generally limits their reproduction to the warmer months. Rock Pigeons produce a 'crop milk' that is high in fat and protein. A diet of seeds is sufficient to create this secretion, which frees pigeons from the typical seasonal constraints imposed on other breeding birds. They will nest all year long, although they appear to nest less frequently in late fall (perhaps due to the timing of their molt). Rock Pigeons only lay two eggs at a time, but regularly lay over six clutches each year.

Pigeons use a courtship display of coos and bows to form and maintain their pair bonds, as well as preening each other and courtship feeding via regurgitation. Both males and females coo, but males coo louder and more frequently. Unmated males select a nest site and advertise their availability by cooing from the nest site. Once an interested female pairs with him, the pair will use his nest site until he dies and aggressively defend

the site from other pigeons. If he dies, she will seek a new male elsewhere.

The nest building process can seem more ritualistic than practical. While the female is cooing on the nest site, the male leaves to find a single stick, piece of grass, or other suitable material. According to the literature, he may fly more than 130 ft to find this stick. Considering pigeons may fly several miles to a good foraging site, a bystander could interpret 130 ft as a bit half-hearted. This nest construction procedure is repeated 1–5 times per minute for 5–20 minutes each morning for 3–4 days—an effort that, again, could be interpreted as less than lusty.

Once the construction phase is complete, the female lays two white eggs. The monogamous pair share incubation duties; the male incubates from late morning to late afternoon, and the female the remainder. The eggs hatch about 18 days later, and the parents remove the shells—although they will ignore the feces produced by their chicks. In fact, these feces eventually form a sort of broad nest cup, and some older nests can



Rock Pigeon by [Christopher Gilbert/Macaulay Library](#)

weigh in excess of five pounds. Once hatched, the chicks are brooded continuously. They'll eat crop milk from their parents for the first week; after that the parents begin to include seeds. Initially covered in stringy yellowish down, the chicks are well-feathered by two weeks of age and feather growth is 90% complete by day 27. Chicks, or 'squab', that hatched in the summer will leave the nest after 25–32 days. Those that hatched in the winter may stay in the nest for as long as 45 days. After fledging, the young will return to roost at the nest site for 2–4 days before striking out on their own. They reach sexual maturity within 5–9 months—females a little earlier than males—but pigeon populations are limited by nest site availability, so many young pigeons don't breed immediately.

The average interval between clutches is about 46 days, but it can be as short as 29 days. Females may even lay their next clutch before their current young have departed.

Breeding Codes

Rock Pigeons can be coded with code H (habitat) anytime they are in an area that may have a suitable nesting location, but note that pigeons may travel well outside a block to forage. In this way,



Rock Pigeon by [Jonathan Irons/Macaulay Library](#)

pigeons have some similarities to vultures. Codes S (singing) and S7 (singing for 7+ days) can be used for their cooing, although codes P (pair), C (courtship display), and N (visiting probable nest site) may all be better choices depending on the context. Code T (territorial) can be used when witnessing agonistic interactions, but since these take place around the nest site code N may still be the better choice. Pigeons have no distraction display (code DD) and they do not carry food (code CF) or fecal sacs (code FS). Finding likely nest sites for pigeons is not difficult but actually

seeing the nest can be, so code N can get a lot of use for pigeons.

We still have two years of data collection, but Rock Pigeons have only been recorded breeding in 48% of blocks so far. This is a substantial difference from BBA2's 72% and BBA1's 79% of blocks. The Confirmation rate is also much lower; In BBA1 44% of blocks had Confirmations. In BBA2, that dropped to 31%, and now we have only Confirmed Rock Pigeons in 20% of blocks.

Author: Gabriel Foley

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Rock Pigeon by Eaton Ekarintaragun/Macaulay Library

ATLASER SPOTLIGHT

Toby Pessoa Gingerich teaches high school math in Baltimore City.



What made you interested in birds?

Birds really piqued my interest while tagging along birding with my youngest brother during a camping trip that included some spectacular dramas. A pair of Merlins were harassing Flickers nearly their own size (and later, a decidedly bigger Red-Shouldered Hawk!). A Purple Finch was singing from the very top of a pine that suddenly dove just ahead of a stooping Cooper's Hawk. When I finally got a good pair of binoculars and an eBird account, I was hooked!

Have you been involved with other atlases?

This one is my first atlas, but it did inspire me to contribute to the North Carolina atlas during a trip last summer.

What bird do you particularly like?

I'm still in love with Merlins. They're amazing fliers, and their feisty personality often leads to a great show, especially if some crows are foolish enough to bother one!

You can take binoculars, a field guide, and what other item?

I'm going to count my phone as my field guide, and pick a snack for a nice long day out!

What bird best reflects your personality?

I'll say a Hairy Woodpecker—they're usually quiet and unobtrusive, but can be persistent and loud, too.



Who would you go atlasing with?

Lynne Parks. She has a fantastic ear, is wonderfully generous about sharing her knowledge, and is so attentive to birds' behavior and habits. Baltimore misses you, Lynne!



Merlin by Toby Pessoa Gingerich

What's our biggest conservation issue?

Conservation's biggest problem is public policy that prioritizes corporate profits over the public good. Between habitat destruction, pollution, and the climate crisis, human activity is killing birds and other wildlife at terrifying rates. We all contribute to this each time we buy food, get in our car, or even put new tires on a bike, because this destruction is built into our social order.

We've built energy and transportation systems dependent on fossil fuels, an agricultural system dependent on big agribusinesses and their poisons (pesticides and herbicides), a whole geography of suburban sprawl and highways instead of walkable towns and public transit. It infuriates me every time I visit North Point State Park that there's a historic trolley station but absolutely no way to get there now without a car! I applaud everyone who bikes to work, plants native shrubs, or becomes vegan, but personal action will not save our beloved birds or their natural world without major policy change. We collectively built the systems killing our planet, and we can build new, better ones, but only through equally collective action to promote sustainable policies, elect responsible leaders, and hold them accountable to deliver. Concretely, we can all support MOS (and other groups) in conservation and advocacy, prioritize conservation when we vote, and encourage our friends and family to as well. As engaged citizens, we can make a much bigger difference than we could individually.

What is the best thing about atlasing?

Atlasing puts the focus on the whole bird and its place in the web of life. It helps me remember to slow down and really enjoy watching and listening to birds, and (re)discover what quirky, shy, feisty, fascinating neighbors they are.

Where is your favorite place to atlas?

Druid Hill Park—there's a wonderful variety of habitats, and I've been amazed by what all I've seen there! Being able to walk up to the park has been a lifesaver during the pandemic.



Eastern Kingbird by Toby Pessoa Gingerich



Red-tailed Hawk by Toby Pessoa Gingerich

TIPS AND TRICKS

Species-specific atlasing

If you're looking for some atlasing to do before the peak breeding season hits, you might consider heading out and targeting just one or two species that nest a little earlier. For example, the peak for Canada Goose goslings is mid-April to mid-May, before many other species are nesting. If you compiled a list of blocks in an area that don't have Canada Goose Confirmed yet, half-a-day of driving to likely locations in each block should yield a few FL codes (recently fledged young) and help fill in the Canada Goose map.

You could use this same tactic for finding raptor nests, like [Glenn Therres recommended earlier this year for Bald Eagles](#). Mallards, Wood Ducks, pigeons,

Horned Larks, and goldfinches are other candidates for this approach—essentially, any species that is common and conspicuous can be targeted. Like Canada Geese, Mallard and Wood Duck chicks have also been reported most in the first week of May. Pigeons can be found nesting year-round, larks can be seen flitting across open fields, while goldfinches fledge later than many other birds and have a loud, [distinctive begging call](#).

Focus on a single species in multiple blocks before or after 'prime atlasing time' to increase your efficiency. It's a good way to become familiar with the habitat and access in a set of blocks. You can also mark down things to

check out later in the season, like Purple Martin houses.

Late winter or early spring is also a good time for finding territorial owls. If you want a refresher on nocturnal atlasing tips, [check out last year's article](#). In a previous newsletter, Simon Best also put [together a list of how he finds success while owling](#). His efforts have filled in much of Baltimore County's screech-owl map.

If you have a technique for a species that works particularly well for you, why not share it? Send your atlasing tips to mddcbba3@mdbirds.org.

Author: Gabriel Foley

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Species:

You can explore species maps of all breeding observations that have been reported to eBird for the Atlas. This will show you blocks that are currently missing that species. Head to [the Atlas's Explore page](#) and type in the name of the bird you're interested in; zooming in will reveal the location of each breeding observation and links to the checklist.

FROM THE FIELD



Red-eyed Vireo by [Bill Blauvelt/Macaulay Library](#)



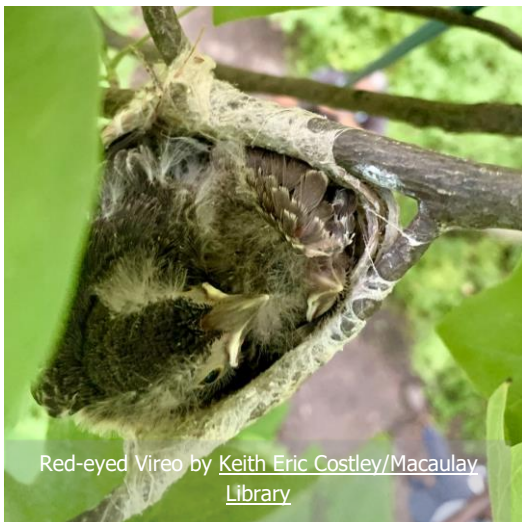
Red-eyed Vireo by [Keith Eric Costley/Macaulay Library](#)



Red-eyed Vireo by [Bill Townsend/Macaulay Library](#)



Red-eyed Vireo by [Kristin Trouton/Macaulay Library](#)



Red-eyed Vireo by [Keith Eric Costley/Macaulay Library](#)



Red-eyed Vireo by [Tim Carney/Macaulay Library](#)

OUT OF THE ARCHIVE

Summary of Maryland Nest Records, 1950

Webster, H.L. 1951. Summary of Maryland Nest Records, 1950. *Maryland Birdlife*. 7(1):8-16.

Did you observe any birds nesting during this past season? What kind? When was the observation made? Where was the nest? In what type of habitat was it located? How was it constructed? How many eggs were in the clutch? How long did they take to hatch? How long did the young remain in the nest? These and many other interesting questions about the nesting habits of birds you can answer for yourself; and the compilation of your answers and the answers of fellow club members will not only be of interest to readers of *Maryland Birdlife*, but will provide scientific data valuable to others. The keen nature student loses much of the fascination associated with wildlife if he passes up the opportunity to peep into the family life of birds during the nesting season. Ask your friends to tell you of any nesting activities that they may see. Many will be glad to cooperate in this way and in time they themselves may succumb to the fascination of bird study.

In making these observations one should bear in mind that in approaching a nest he probably leaves a trail behind that may attract some predator to the nest. Nests on or near the ground are especially vulnerable to predation and your visits should be limited to the number necessary to obtain useful data.

Make your reports as nearly complete as possible, but clear and concise. Information presented in this manner has greater value and is more easily extracted. You may wish to consult the nest record file in connection with some research project or article for *Maryland Birdlife*,

and you will appreciate the availability of well-presented data.

There is still much to be learned about the birds of Maryland, and through the combined efforts of observers all over the State we can compile valuable data on the distribution, ecology and nesting seasons of the various species. Those who have not read the summary of Maryland nest records for 1949 by C.S. Robbins (*Maryland Birdlife* 5:41-48) should not fail to do so. This article gives some idea of the many things yet to be learned about the birds nesting in Maryland.



Virginia Rail by Alex Mann/Macaulay Library

The summary of nest records reported by members of the Maryland Ornithological Society is to be an annual affair, so be sure to request nest record cards from local officers of the Society, and be ready to report any nests you may observe this spring and summer.

Special acknowledgment is due Edwin Willis, who submitted detailed records on 369 nests

and also prepared an excellent summary of his data. Other members who reported 20 or more nests were Miss A.A. Brandenburg, Robert Dickerman, Douglas Hackman, Robert T. Mitchell, Chandler S. Robbins, Rosemary B. Thomas and W.B. Tyrrell.

The following summary contains selected notes on the 89 species reported in 1950.

GREAT BLUE HERON - About 30 nests on Mar. 24, and young about half grown on May 16 at Fairhaven, A.A. County (W. B. Tyrrell).

LEAST BITTERN - Three nests recorded, with 3, 4, and 2 eggs, on June 11, 22, and 28 at Middle River, Baltimore Co. (Edwin Willis).

MALLARD - Nest with 9 eggs on May 13 at Strawberry Point in Baltimore Co. was empty on May 27 (Willis).

BLACK DUCK - Late nest with 5 eggs on June 14 at Swan Point, Kent Co. (Judge & Mrs. W.L. Henderson).



WOOD DUCK - Hen with 4 young on Apr. 28 at Marshall Dierssen Refuge, Montgomery County. (Robert J. Beaton). Five nests at Patuxent Refuge with 10, 10, 13, 11 and 10 eggs, which hatched on June 2, 12, 26, July 6 and July 25; the latter is a very late date. (Clark G. Webster).

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK - Four downy young, 10 days old, in fork of sycamore tree near Halethorpe, May 7 (Ruth Lenderking).

OSPREY - Building, Mar. 3, Caroline County



(Roberta Fletcher). Nest with 3 eggs, Assateague Is., May 4 (J.H. Buckalew). Five nests containing 3 eggs, 3 young & 1 egg, 1 egg, 2 young, and 3 young, June 6, Eastern Shore (W. Bryant Tyrrell).

BALD EAGLE - Indications on April 27 that young had been removed from nest; locality withheld (Tyrrell).

MARSH HAWK [NORTHERN HARRIER] - One young and 3 eggs (2 pipped), June 23 at Bittinger, Garrett Co. (Tyrrell); second nest record for western Maryland.

SPARROW HAWK [AMERICAN KESTREL] - One young in nest, May 26, Dundalk (Kolb).



RUFFED GROUSE - Nest with 15 eggs, May 13, Catoctin Mt., Frederick Co. (Catoctin Conference, M.O.S.).

BOB-WHITE - Eggs reported as early as June



25 and as late as Aug. 13, both in Harford Co. (Rosemary B. Thomas)

KING RAIL - Nest with 8 eggs, Caroline Co., June 23 (Roberta Fletcher).

CLAPPER RAIL - May 20, nest with 11 eggs, West Ocean City (Low, Buckalew and many others, M.O.S. trip).

VIRGINIA RAIL - June 3, 2 eggs in nest at Strawberry Point, Baltimore Co. (Willis). June 26, adult with downy young at Kent Narrows (R. Dickerman, R. Gibbs). July 8, adult with young, Unity, Montgomery Co. (Seth H. Low).

KILLDEER - Twelve nests or broods recorded. Nest with 4 eggs as early as Mar. 25, and another with 4 eggs as late as June 11 at Middle River (Willis). July 27, one extremely late downy young at Fort Meade,



Anne Arundel Co. (Dickerman).

SPOTTED SANDPIPER - Juvenile, July 2, Kent Is. (Diekerman).

GULL-BILLED TERN - Twelve juveniles banded on island off South Point, Worcester Co., July 2 (Buckalew); increasing there.

COMMON TERN - Poor season; 163 young banded, July 2, off South Point (Buckalew). On Aug. 5 at Ocean City, one very late nest with eggs, 18 downy young, and 18 feathered young not yet able to fly (Robert Dickerman, Robert Gibbs, Martha Trever).



LEAST TERN - June 24, 32 young banded off South Point (Buckalew). June 17, 8 nests with 2 eggs each, Cove Pt., Calvert Co. (M.O.S. trip, reported by Pearl Heaps). July 9, 2 eggs in nest, also 4 juvenile birds well-feathered on wings, back and breast, Cove Point (Dickerman and Gibbs). July 13, 12 or more young in colony at Oxford, Talbot Co. (Judge and Mrs. Henderson).

BLACK SKIMMER - July 2, 92 young banded off South Point, Worcester Co. (Buckalew). Aug. 5, one late downy young, Ocean City (Dickerman, Gibbs, Trever).

MOURNING DOVE - Seven nests recorded. The earliest contained 2 eggs on Apr. 15 in Frederick Co., and was successful (Rodgers Smith and Mrs. M.J. Hoyler). The latest nest reported contained 2 eggs which

hatched on Aug. 3 but were destroyed on Aug. 4, Middle River (Willis).

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO - July 31, 3 eggs, unsuccessful; Aug. 6, nest with 1 young and 1 egg; both at Middle River (Willis).

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO - Two eggs found on July 16 hatched about July 19, Middle River (Willis); very late record.

BARN OWL - June 25, 1 young nearly grown and 2 addled eggs in observation tower, Blackwater Refuge (Kolb). June 18, young in nest in barn, Charles County (M.O.S. trip).



Eastern Screech-Owl by [Suzanne Labbé/Macaulay Library](#)

SCREECH OWL - Three young left nest, June 20, Leakin Park, Baltimore City (T.C. Buck); late record.

BARRED OWL - May 20, 1 egg, White Marsh, Baltimore Co. (Douglas Hackman). Apr. 7, a nest 25 ft. above ground, Forest Glen, Montgomery Co. (Frank C. Cross).

CHIMNEY SWIFT - Adults breaking twigs off trees at Middle River from May 27 to June 10 (Willis).

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD - Aug. 17, adult feeding young on wire, Gibson Island (Hendersons).

BELTED KINGFISHER - May 13, building in bank along river, Loch Raven, Baltimore Co. (C. Haven Kolb, Jr.).

FLICKER - Building as early as Apr. 7,



Pileated Woodpecker by [Sandy Podulka/Macaulay Library](#)

Middle River (Willis). Seven eggs in nest box at Patuxent, June 4 (Mitchell).

PILEATED WOODPECKER - Adult feeding 2 young, June 19 at Bittering, Garrett Co. (Tyrrell & Allegany unit's Junior Camp).

RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER - Young heard in nest, June 6, Chase; one caught and banded on June 20 (Orville W. Crowder and Wm. S. McHoul).

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER - Nest in May, 60 ft. high in Baltimore City (Ruth Lenderking).

HAIRY WOODPECKER - Noisy young heard in Towson nest, May 30 to June 9 (Kolb). Young out of nest, July 2, Towson (Coles).

DOWNY WOODPECKER - Young out of nest, June 22 at Towson (Mr. & Mrs. R.D. Cole).

EASTERN KINGBIRD - Nine nests recorded. First eggs, June 16, White Marsh (Hackman).



Eastern Kingbird by [Peter Hawrylyshyn/Macaulay Library](#)



Great Crested Flycatcher by [Steve Kelling/Macaulay Library](#)

Last young in nest, July 28, at Patuxent Research Refuge, near Laurel (Robert Mitchell).

[GREAT] CRESTED FLYCATCHER - Young out of nest, June 3, Forest Glen (Cross). Adult feeding nearly-grown young, Sept. 4, Gwynns Falls Park, Baltimore City (Miss A.A. Brandenburg).

EASTERN PHOEBE - Nesting started late. No full clutch reported before May 6, when Kolb found 5 eggs at Loch Raven.

ACADIAN FLYCATCHER - Two very late records. July 14, 3 eggs, Whiteford, Harford Co. (Duncan McIntosh). Four young left nest in mid-August, Camp Roosevelt, Calvert Co. (Rod. Smith).

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE - Three well-feathered young as early as June 13, Darlington,



Eastern Wood-Pewee by [Matt Mason/Macaulay Library](#)

Harford Co. (Rosemary B. Thomas). Young in nest, July 22, Middle River (Willis).

HORNED LARK - Three eggs, McDonogh, Mar. 24 (Jack Weaver).

BANK AND ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOWS - Young in nests (at least 300 nests), May 30, Ches. & Del. Canal (Miss Brandenburg).

BARN SWALLOW - First eggs, May 20, Frederick Co. (Rod Smith). Latest hatching date, Aug. 4, Patuxent Refuge (Robbins).

PURPLE MARTIN - Four eggs, June 14, Baltimore Co. (Duvall Jones). Last young still in nest, Aug. 7, Laurel (Thomas B. Israel). Colony of 166 pairs in 5 boxes at Federalsburg, Caroline Co. (Virgil B. Turner). The largest box, with 96 rooms, is



Purple Martin by [Gary Leavens/Macaulay Library](#)

believed to be the largest Martin house in the State. Approximately 637 young left the houses successfully. The mortality rate because of heat was extremely low this year due to aluminum paint over the dark green roofs; in 1949, before the aluminum paint was applied, almost all birds near the 8th floor smothered, even though the house was well ventilated.

BLUE JAY - Building, Apr. 13, Middle River (Willis). Four young flew from nest at White Marsh, June 28 (Hackman); and 2 left nest at Middle River on July 28 (Willis).

CAROLINA CHICKADEE - Building at Takoma Park, Mar. 18 (Tyrrell). Six young hatched successfully, parents and young eating suet at Federalsburg, June 11 (Virgil Turner). Young out of nest at Towson, June 18

(Coles).

TUFTED TITMOUSE - Building, May 6; 2 or 3 eggs, May 17, and nearly-feathered young, June 3 at Rosedale, Baltimore Co. (Duvall Jones). Five eggs, May 19; 6 young hatched, June 2; left nest, June 20, Darlington, Harford Co. (Rosemary B. Thomas).

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH - Three young out of nest being fed by parent as late as July 15, Baltimore Co. (Miss Brandenburg).



HOUSE WREN - Nest with 7 eggs at Patuxent Refuge on May 24 (Mitchell and Robey). Five young in nest as early as May 25 at Fallston, Harford Co. (Betty Scarff). Last young left Middle River nest, Aug. 13 or 14 (Willis). Mean clutch size, 6.2 for 19 first-brood nests; 5.5 for 17 second-brood nests. One nest at Patuxent Research Refuge contained 8 young on June 7 (Harry Blagbrough).

CAROLINA WREN - Building, Apr. 6, Middle River (Willis). First young in nest, May 23, Towson (Kolb). Five young still in nest at Middle River, Aug. 20 (Willis).

LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN - Forty-two nests of 23 pairs studied in Middle River area by Willis. First set complete, May 27; last completed, July 29. First young hatched on June 9, and last on Aug. 11. First young out on June 22, last still in nest on Aug.



19. Nesting success, 31%. Three nests contained 3 eggs, twenty contained 4 eggs, and nine contained 5 eggs. The lowest nest was 1 ft. 8 in.; the highest, 3 ft. 10 in.; the median, 2 ft. 7 in.

MOCKINGBIRD - Building, Apr. 23, Middle River (Willis). Three eggs, May 5, Frederick Co. (Rod Smith and Mrs. M.J. Hoyler). Young left nest, May 17, Havre de Grace (Rosamond Beech). Building, May 16; 3 eggs in nest, May 28; 3 young several days old, June 12; 3 young left nest, June 23; adult building new nest, June 25, Darlington, Harford Co. (Rosemary B. Thomas).

CATBIRD - First full sets, May 14 at Berwyn (C.S. and E.C. Robbins) and Middle River (Willis). Last eggs hatched, Aug. 17 (very late), and young left, Aug. 27, Middle River (Willis). Success of 31 nests, 60%





Brown Thrasher by Davette Saeler/Macaulay Library

(Willis). The lowest nest was 2 ft. 8 in., the highest was 20 ft., and the median was 6 ft. Seventeen first-brood clutches were distributed as follows: one set of 5 eggs, eleven sets of 4, three sets of 3, and two sets of 2 (mean, 3.6); in the second brood there were three sets of 4, fourteen of 3, and three of 2 (mean, 3.0).

BROWN THRASHER - Building, Apr. 26; 2 eggs, May 13; eggs gone, May 14, Harford Co. (Rosemary B. Thomas). Aug. 26, adult feeding young out of nest, Caroline Co. (Mrs. Roberta Fletcher). Fourteen Middle River nests were 35% successful (Willis). The lowest nest was 8 in. off the ground, the highest was 10 ft., and the median was 5 ft. Five clutches of 4 eggs and five of 3 were recorded in the first brood, and one of 4, six of 3, and one of 2 in the second brood.

ROBIN - First building, Apr. 12, and last,



American Robin by Kyle Tansley/Macaulay Library

July 12. Four eggs, Apr. 30, Rosedale (Duvall Jones). Four eggs, May 22; 3 hatched; one of second brood seen out of nest on June 25 at Middle River; last brood left nest on Aug. 10 (Willis). Forty-nine nests studied by Willis were between 50% and 60% successful. The lowest nest was 28 in. off the ground, the highest was 47 ft., and the median was 22 ft. Sets laid up to May 15 had the following clutch sizes: seven records of 4 eggs, three of 3, and one of 2; after May 15, four records of 3.



Wood Thrush by Bob MacDonnell/Macaulay Library

WOOD THRUSH - Building, May 13; one egg, May 17; nest destroyed by thunder storm, White Marsh, Baltimore Co. (Hackman). June 3, 4 eggs plus one Cowbird egg (removed); June 14, young left nest, Frederick County (Martha Kemp Slemmer). June 23, young ready to leave nest, Towson (Coles). Thirty-two nests ranged from 3 ft. to 42 ft. above the ground, with a median of 9 ft. 3 in. The incubation period was apparently 12 days, and young remained in the nest about 13 days after hatching. The latest egg date was July 20, Middle River (Willis). In first-brood nests there were three sets of 4 eggs and four sets of 3; in second brood, five sets of 3, and five sets of 2. Eighty-two percent of the young left 22 nests studied by Willis.

EASTERN BLUEBIRD - First completed nest, Apr. 27; 4 young in nest, May 24; Patuxent Refuge (Mitchell & Robey). Adults feeding noisy young, May 21, Clear Spring (Robbins & Duvall).

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER - Building 8 ft. over water, Apr. 22, Seneca (Tyrrell). Adults feeding young in nest, May 6, Charles Co. (M.C. Crone, M.W. Goldman, A.R. Stickley). First breeding records for central Maryland were obtained by the Frederick Branch, who found a pair building on May 6 in Frederick Co., and by Robbins and Duvall, who watched a pair building in an apple orchard near Spickler, northeast of Clear Spring, Washington Co., on May 21.

CEDAR WAXWING - Building 30 ft. up in scrub pine, June 14, Middle River (Willis). Young in nest in beech tree, 20 ft. above ground, June 18, Chase (Hackman). Female on nest, June 17, Charlotte Hall, St. Marys Co. (Miss Brandenburg and M.O.S. trip).



Cedar Waxwing by [Drew Weber/Macaulay Library](#)

[EUROPEAN] STARLING - Five young about 4 days old, Patuxent Refuge, Apr. 27 (Mitchell & Robey). Latest young, June 30, 8 ft. up in apple tree near Clear Spring, Washington Co. (Robbins).

WHITE-EYED VIREO - Building, May 6, Caroline Co. (Marvin Hewitt). Young out, June 17, Middle River (Willis).

RED-EYED VIREO - Nest nearly completed, June 6; 1 egg, June 15; and full clutch of 4 on June 18; incubation was 13 days and the young remained in the nest 10 to 11 days, Middle River (Willis). Three eggs, June 20, Bittinger, Garrett Co. (Tyrrell). Two young just out of the nest were caught on Aug 20 by Willis, who saw full-grown young being fed as late as Sept. 27 at Middle River. Nineteen nests ranged from 3



Worm-eating Warbler by [Graham Gerdeman/Macaulay Library](#)

to 48 ft. in height, with a median of 9 ft. 8 in.

WORM-EATING WARBLER - Adult feeding young out of nest, July 23, Worthington Valley, Baltimore Co., (Coles).

YELLOW WARBLER - Nest found on June 24 in a sea-myrtle at Strawberry Point, Baltimore Co., was already empty (Willis).

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER - Young out of nest, July 23, Worthington Valley, Baltimore Co., (Coles).

PRAIRIE WARBLER - Three eggs, June 8, Patuxent Refuge (Robert T. Mitchell).

KENTUCKY WARBLER - Young, recently out of nest, June 21 at Patuxent Refuge (Mitchell & Blagbrough). Young out of nest, June 25,



Kentucky Warbler nest by [Eric Soehren/Macaulay Library](#)



Common Yellowthroat by [Mason Maron/Macaulay Library](#)

Harford County (Rosemary B. Thomas).

[COMMON] YELLOW-THROAT - Building, May 24, Patuxent (Blagbrough). Building, June 10; 4 eggs, June 17, Loch Raven (Haven Kolb).

HOODED WARBLER - Four young left nest in Leakin Park, Baltimore City, on June 22 (T.C. Buck).

AMERICAN REDSTART - June 25, young in nest 40 ft. up in white oak tree at Middle River (Willis).

ENGLISH [HOUSE] SPARROW - In Frederick Co., Rod Smith found a tall pine with about 15 nests in it on May 30; the nests contained eggs and young in all stages of development. Young left nest under eaves of



House Sparrow by [Adam Jackson/Macaulay Library](#)

small shed at Middle River on Aug. 4 (Willis).

RED-WING - Building, May 6, at Middle River. An early clutch of 4 eggs at Strawberry Point on May 14, hatched on May 29. A very late nest with young, Aug. 4, Strawberry Point. Mean clutch of 41 nests was 3.25, and 57%, of young left successfully (Willis).

ORCHARD ORIOLE - Five eggs on June 2, 4 young on June 5, Patuxent (Mitchell). Female on nest, June 17, Calvert Co. (Brandenburg).



Orchard Oriole by [Stephen Davies/Macaulay Library](#)

BALTIMORE ORIOLE - Three young out of nest at Lutherville, Baltimore Co., June 21 (Brandenburg). Apparently only one of a brood of 4 that hatched about June 9 at Middle River survived (Willis).

[COMMON] PURPLE GRACKLE - See article by Willis in this issue.

COWBIRD - Willis reported eleven cases of parasitism in Red-eyed Vireo nests, ten cases in Song Sparrow nests, two in Carolina Wrens, and one each in nests of the following species: Yellow-throat, Redstart, Red-wing, Orchard Oriole, and Towhee; the earliest egg date was between Apr. 24 and 26 (Carolina Wren nest), and the last young begged from a Towhee on Aug. 28. Mr. and Mrs. R.D. Cole reported young being fed on July 1 by a Red-eyed Vireo, Scarlet Tanager, Red-eyed Towhee, and Song Sparrow. One young was fed by a Yellow-breasted Chat, July 18, Patuxent

(Mitchell). Young were fed by a Red-eyed Vireo as late as Aug. 20 at Riverdale (James B. Cope). Other hosts reported this year were Wood Thrush (2 records), Ovenbird, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow.

SCARLET TANAGER - Adults were seen feeding 3 young at Magothy River Park, Anne Arundel Co., June 23 (Brandenburg). Four young in nest, June 24, White Marsh, Baltimore Co. (Hackman). Three eggs hatched on June 16, Middle River (Willis).

CARDINAL - Female on 4 eggs, May 12, Patuxent (Robbins). Adult feeding very late young out of nest at Loch Raven, Sept. 16 (Kolb).



Indigo Bunting by Scott Stafford/Macaulay Library

INDIGO BUNTING - First full clutch, 3 eggs, Patuxent, June 1 (Mitchell). July 23, 2 young and 2 eggs in blackberry bush at Darlington; 4 young on July 26 (Rosemary Thomas). Latest nesting reported was 3 young out of nest, Sept. 10, Baltimore Co. (Brandenburg).

EASTERN [AMERICAN] GOLDFINCH - Nest half completed, July 20; bird on nest, July 30 and Aug. 13, Darlington (Rosemary Thomas). Aug. 9, building; Sept. 4, all 4 eggs hatched; incubation period 12½ to 15 days; young remained in nest 13 to 15½ days, Strawberry Point (Willis). First young left nest, Aug. 29, and last young died in nest after Sept. 24, Middle River area (Willis).

RED-EYED TOWHEE - Four eggs, May 25, White Marsh (Hackman). Four eggs, May 31,



Eastern Towhee nest by Daniel Hinnebusch/Macaulay Library

Patuxent (Oscar Warbach). Nests with 4 eggs, 3 young & 1 egg, and 2 eggs were found on June 2, June 3, and July 27 at Middle River (Willis). Extreme dates of leaving Middle River nests were June 4 and Aug. 12 (Willis).

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW - Nest with 4 young, Strawberry Point, Baltimore Co. (Willis).

CHIPPING SPARROW - Two eggs plus one Cowbird egg in nest in rosebush, May 21. Building, May 30; 2 young hatched, June 15; left nest, June 23; both at Darlington (Rosemary Thomas). Three eggs at Middle River, July 12 (Willis). Full-grown young still begging for food, Sept. 2 at Middle River (Willis).

FIELD SPARROW - Four eggs, May 20, White Marsh; 3 hatched, May 24 (Hackman). Nest under construction at Loch Raven, June 10; 3 eggs, June 17 (Kolb). Extreme dates for leaving Middle River nests, June 18 and Aug. 23 (Willis). Eight May nests ranged from 0 to 8½ in. off the ground (median, 4½ in.); nine later nests ranged from 0 to 2 ft. (median, 1 ft. 1 in.)

SONG SPARROW - Four eggs, May 14; 2 hatched on May 24, other 2 infertile, Baltimore City (G.M. Ortiz). Late young left a Middle River nest on Sept. 3 (Willis). Seven sets laid in May averaged 4.6 eggs, five sets laid in June averaged 3.8, and ten laid in July and August averaged 3.1. Median nest heights for these same three periods were 2 3/4 in.; 1 ft. 3 in.; and 2 ft. 10 in.

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