



# Bird Notes

From Northeast Kingdom Audubon  
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## For Immediate Release

### All Nests Left Behind

One does not have to look far and wide to discover the beauty of the current “stick season”. Bird’s nests, everywhere. And what better time of year to talk about them than now when so many people go into the woods. Coincidentally, I just received the winter Northern Woodlands publication that includes an article about nests with wonderful illustrations. The author and illustrator, Bernd Heinrich, suggests that every nest is distinct to the bird species, and can be identified by matching it to the bird’s habitat. Take a walk with me to see how many nests we can find.

Walk out the door to find the first nest. The protected spaces of houses, barns, and other out-building provide the perfect nest habitat for many birds. The robins have left their bulky, grass covered mud cup nests in between the log ends of the cabin. The phoebe’s nest is similar, stuck by mud above the screen door, showing bits of moss glued to the outside. Other clever birds use mud to cement their nests in place. Look up on the rafters in your barn for barn swallow nests.

Fields at this time of year have for the most part been mowed. A well-built, cup-shaped nest of grasses, weeds, bark and leaves, lined with finer materials, left behind by the Song Sparrow, could still be buried down in the hay, but probably not. Along the edge of the fields where the mowers can’t go, are the small shrubs and bushes. Last summer the chestnut-sided warblers sang from this area and made a light and flimsy-looking nest out of grasses in a spirea bush. Is it still there?

As we enter the young deciduous woods, the red-eyed vireo nests appear attached to upland trees and bushes. At 5 to 10 feet about the ground, they are fully suspended, deeply cupped and well made of plant fibers, bark, or even hair, thread and bits of paper. Before the winter winds rip them apart, these 2 inch (inside) diameter cups will be on display from a thin, horizontal, forked branch.

On into the dense coniferous thickets I go and discover why so many bluejays frequent my feeders. Nests everywhere. There is one in a tree crotch, close to the trunk. And there is another on the extremity of a horizontal limb, among the outer branches. They can be found anywhere between 6 and 50 feet above the ground; these are less than 20 feet. They are rather bulky with a ragged rim of sticks, twigs, grasses and leaves, but could contain just about anything that may capture the bird’s fancy, like paper, rags or string.

On the return trip, the cattails on the pond edge still hold a red-winged blackbird nest about a foot about the water.

And do remember to leave all nests behind and never collect them. All migratory bird nests are protected by law. They are very nice to photograph and sketch, however.

Happy Nest Watching!

**Carolyn E. Boardman is a board member of NEK Audubon living in Brownington, Vermont. NEK Audubon is one of 8 chapters of Audubon Vermont and part of the National Audubon Society. NEK Audubon is a non -profit organization that encourages people to enjoy birds, wildlife and natural habitats through field trips, programs and publications. For more information about meetings, field trips and special events visit [www.nekaudubon.org](http://www.nekaudubon.org). Find us on Facebook at Nek Audubon. Art work by Robin Rothman.**



Photo: vireo nest from Seabrooke Leckie, Internet blog