

Cornell Lab Offers Ways to Get More Involved

BECOME A CAMCLICKR

By Tina Phillips

We need your keen eye and quick fingers! As you may know, we have live cameras positioned at active bird nests all around the country. Since 1999, we've archived more than eight million images from these NestCams. To help sort through the images, we developed CamClickr—an online tool you can use to view the images and sort them into albums, then tag each image by the type of behavior you see: preening, eating, feeding chicks, etc.

What's in it for you? NestCams allow you to peek into the nests of Barn Owls, bluebirds, Wood Ducks, and other birds for an up-close look at fascinating bird behavior. CamClickr will appeal not only to bird lovers, but to people who enjoy testing their skills with online games. When you help sort and tag the camera images, you collect points and compete for prizes such as binoculars, DVDs, books and posters. It's easy and fun!

Why do we need your help? By using CamClickr to help tag and sort the NestCam images, you help scientists studying breeding bird behavior. The more we understand about bird behavior, the better equipped we are to understand how birds are responding to threats in their environment.

Just visit www.camclickr.org to create an account. This allows you to chat in the NestCam forums, tag photos, and track your stats in CamClickr anytime. You can check your rankings in "my sessions" to see how you stack up against other taggers. The redesigned CamClickr home page also provides the latest Twitter feeds. Educators will appreciate the newly developed lesson plan, appropriate for all ages, and easily modified for individualized instruction. You can watch videos of fascinating nesting behaviors from the Lab's Macaulay Library.

Make it your summer project to help science and the birds—be a CamClickr. Thank you for helping us help the birds.

HELP MONITOR NESTING BIRDS

By Laura Burkholder

I'm the new leader of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's NestWatch project. As you may know, collecting information about nesting birds is what NestWatch is all about. The new season has gotten under way—and we need friends like you to help gather information from across the continent.

NestWatch welcomes data for all North American birds. Participants submit data about which kinds of birds are nesting, the number of eggs laid, dates eggs were laid, and the numbers of chicks hatched and fledged. Collecting this information across the continent over long periods of time is one of the best ways we have to detect widespread changes in breeding bird biology.

I believe it's become even more important in light of the new State of the Birds 2010 Climate Change Report just released by the Department of the Interior. Nesting birds are vulnerable to climate change. Data show some species, like the Tree Swallow, are laying their eggs more than a week earlier than they did just a few decades ago. That could spell big trouble if hatch dates get out of sync with the availability of food. More long-term data are needed to clarify the impacts of environmental change and human land use on breeding birds.

In addition to its scientific value, NestWatch is fun, free, and open to all. Participation is a great way for you to connect with nature. Kindergarten students in one New York classroom collected information about bluebirds nesting on school grounds. "This was so exciting for the children and for me too," their teacher Ruth Taylor wrote to us. "They named the male Skyboy and the female Bluebell. First we had two eggs and then four eggs in the nest. What a marvelous experience for all of us to enjoy and learn!"

The always-popular NestCams are also back in action. You can get a live peek into nests and nest boxes across the country. Live cameras for Barn Owls, Barred Owls, and Wood Ducks are online right now with Eastern Bluebirds and other species soon to follow at www.nestcams.org.

Everything you need to take part in NestWatch is available online at www.nestwatch.org, including directions on how you find nests, how to build and put up nest boxes and how you monitor nests without disturbing the birds. I do hope you'll be a part of NestWatch this year and help us monitor the birds we love.

GUIDING YOU TO THE BIRDS

Cornell Lab of Ornithology

"BirdsEye is the best invention for birding since binoculars," said Kenn Kaufman, author of the Kaufman Field Guide to Birds of North America and team member of a partnership that has created BirdsEye, a new birding app for the iPhone and iPod touch.

"It's like having thousands of local birding experts in your pocket," he said in a news release.

The application was developed by Birds in the Hand, of Virginia, and brings together content from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the Academy of Natural Sciences, and Kaufman. BirdsEye is now available on the App Store.

If you are in search of a particular bird, BirdsEye will show you where it has been observed, and even give you directions. If you are new to birding or an experienced birder who is on the road, BirdsEye will give you a list of birds seen nearby and a map of birding hotspots for any location in North America (the contiguous 48 states, Canada and Alaska).

The application includes images and audio for the 470 species most frequently observed in North America. Additional content is available for more elusive birds—for a total of 847 species.

Bird sounds come from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Macaulay Library archive, the largest collection of bird and animal sounds in the world. Images are from the VIREO collection at the Academy of Natural Sciences. Kaufman wrote text for each species account—with a specific goal in mind.

"Even when you're in the right location, it helps to know something about the bird's behavior and habitat in order to find it," he said in the news release. "Will you find this bird in flocks up in the treetops, or solitary individuals lurking in the thickets? Are you likely to hear it before you see it? I wrote each of these short accounts as if I were giving advice to a friend who was hoping to see this bird for the first time."

BirdsEye provides access to bird observations submitted to the eBird database at the Cornell Lab. eBird, a joint project of the Cornell Lab and Audubon, receives 1.5 million to 2 million bird observation reports each month from birders all over North America. Ability to submit observations to eBird directly from BirdsEye is already in the planning stage.

"It's amazing to have instant access to all the birds reported to eBird within a 30-mile radius of your location," said eBird co-leader Brian Sullivan at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

"Our goal is to give people more great birding opportunities," said Todd Koym, leader of the programming team. "BirdsEye is a

means to an end—with the end being seeing more birds."

Portions of BirdsEye sales go to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to help support its research, education and citizen science projects focused on birds, and to the Academy of Natural Sciences to support VIREO, the world's largest collection of bird photographs.

More information

- BirdsEye: www.getbirdseye.com
- iTunes App Store: <http://itunes.com/app/birdseye>
- Cornell Lab of Ornithology: www.birds.cornell.edu
- eBird: www.ebird.org

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- Todd Koym, Birds in the Hand, LLC, (434) 327-8533, tkoym@birdsinthehand.com
- Kenn Kaufman, (419) 957-7790, kenn.kaufman@worldnet.att.net
- Brian Sullivan, eBird, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, (609) 694-3280, bls42@cornell.edu
- Pat Leonard, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, (607) 254-2137, pel27@cornell.edu

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 lab's website at www.birds.cornell.edu.

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The American Federation of Aviculture, Inc. (AFA) is a non-profit, 501(c)3 educational organization, established in 1974, whose purpose is to represent all aspects of aviculture and to educate the public about keeping and breeding birds in captivity.

AFA's primary goals are the education and dissemination of information related to aviculture among pet owners, hobbyists, avicultural societies, zoos, veterinarians, research institutions, the pet industry and government officials. In addition, AFA is concerned about the welfare and humane care of all birds and promotes the establishment of high standards of avian care both in the United States and abroad.

The AFA supports your rights to acquire, keep, breed and sell birds in a responsible manner. The organization monitors proposed laws and regulations at the state, federal and international level that affect your future as an aviculturist and the well being of birds.

The AFA is primarily a volunteer organization. Our efforts to ensure the future growth and development of aviculture are totally dependent upon people like YOU joining and supporting AFA. The AFA believes that aviculture is a valuable conservation tool and that the care and breeding of birds in captivity is an exciting and fulfilling endeavor. AFA offers many different services to its members because AFA has so many different types of members.

Membership Services and Benefits include:

- **AFA Watchbird** – the official publication of the American Federation of Aviculture, filled with articles covering topics such as: avian health, nutrition, housing and care, breeding, species profile, conservation, legislative updates and more!
- **Classified Ads** – nationwide ads for exotic birds, bird related supplies and bird events in each issue of the AFA Watchbird
- **AFA Educational Course** – Fundamentals of Aviculture, available online
- **Traceable AFA Logo Bands** – both open and closed bands available from Canary to Macaw
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And much more!

Cuban Macaw by Wayne E. Smyth

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