



What lives in the Boxes?

(All Seasons | Grades 2-8) • **Map Stop 2** • Find bird boxes along the long trail that is on the side of Twelve Hills away from the school and soccer field

Which bird do you think uses the box you see here? What is the box for?
Why do we pick certain shapes and sizes for bird boxes?



Background Information:

Cavity-nesting birds nest in tree cavities, and sometimes in bird houses or bird boxes. They choose places to nest that are the correct **size** for them and are in the correct **habitat**.

Activity:

Measure the box height, width, and depth, and the width of the entrance hole. Then, check it against the chart below, and try to figure out which of the listed cavity-nesting birds can live there before viewing the answer on the next page.



Whose bird box is this?

height 10.38 in.
width 6 in.
depth 5 in.
hole diameter 1.5 in.

Carolina Chickadee
length 4.75 in.
wingspan 7.5 in.
weight 0.37 oz.



Eastern Bluebird
length 7 in.
wingspan 13 in.
weight 1.1 oz.



Red-bellied Woodpecker
length 9.25 in.
wingspan 16 in.
weight 2.2 oz.



Wood Duck

length 18.5 in.
wingspan 29.9 in.
weight 1.3 lbs.



Barred Owl

length 20.9 in.
wingspan 42 in.
weight 1.6 lbs





Do you have your **ANSWERS**? The boxes are used by **bluebirds** for nesting. Bluebird boxes must have holes **1.5 inches** in diameter so predators and pest birds (which are larger) cannot enter.

Wild birds use nests to raise their young. Each specific bird species nests in a specific structure; the size and location of nesting boxes are different for different birds. Bluebirds like to nest **alone** facing wide, open spaces (like the prairie these boxes are facing), while birds like purple martins like to nest in large **group** houses that are very high up. Others, like cardinals, build more “traditional” round twig nests.



Where do birds live in the wild? Many people might answer the question with “their nests”, but **birds only use nests while they raise their chicks**. Most of the time birds will **roost** (rest) just about anywhere - trees, bushes, reeds, electric lines, cacti, and even on the ground.

Fun Fact: At Twelve Hills Nature Center, **Carolina chickadees** nest in the nest boxes, even though they're meant for bluebirds! Bluebirds have not been sighted at Twelve Hills at least since 2008. Bluebirds prefer to nest in large open meadows. Perhaps they need more space than Twelve Hills provides.

Design:

Allow yourself to be inspired by these birds that build unique nests using their own designs and materials. Then, use your knowledge about bird houses and bird nests to sketch a bird house for another type of bird that nests alone.

Note to Educators: Encourage students in grades 6 through 8 to think out of the box and create a complex design.



Bald Eagles

Bald eagles build large nests of interwoven sticks, high in tall trees. Nests are 4 to 5 feet in diameter and at least 2-4 feet deep. They live in the United States, including Dallas, Texas.

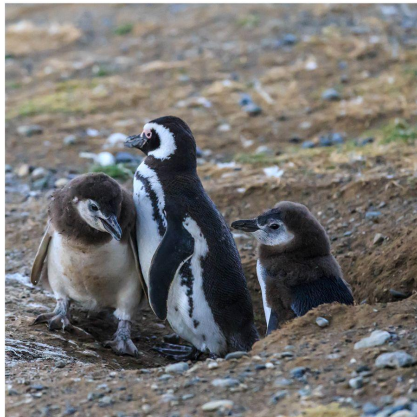
<https://www.nationaleaglecenter.org/eagle-nesting-young/>



Cliff Swallows

Cliff swallows build nests made of mud, and cements them to the walls of cliff ledges, under bridges, eaves, and culverts. They are 8 inches X 6 inches by 4.5 inches. They live in the United States, including Dallas, TX.

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Cliff_Swallow/id



Humboldt Penguins

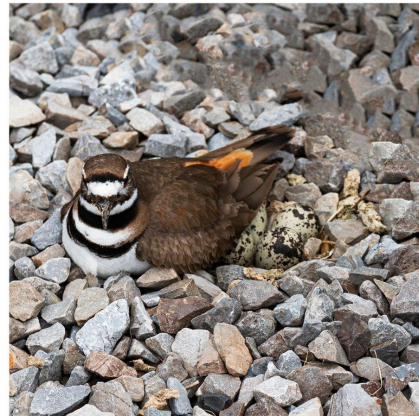
Humboldt penguins dig burrow-like nests in caves and along cliffs amid piles of guano from sea birds. They live on the coasts in Chile and Peru.

https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/species/birds/penguins/Humboldt_penguin.html

Killdeer

Killdeer scratch a shallow depression 3.5 inches across into bare ground. This is called a scrape. Rocks, bits of shell, sticks, etc. are added. Killdeer live in the United States, including Dallas, TX.

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Killdeer/lifehistory>



Black-headed Weaver

Weaver birds like to create hanging nests stitched together from plants. To view another type of weaver, the African taveta golden weaver, at work building his nest, scan the QR code below!

<https://youtu.be/bUd3sfXpz7s> | sharpphotography.com

