

BREEDING BIRD BEHAVIOR (e.g., EVIDENCE) CODES

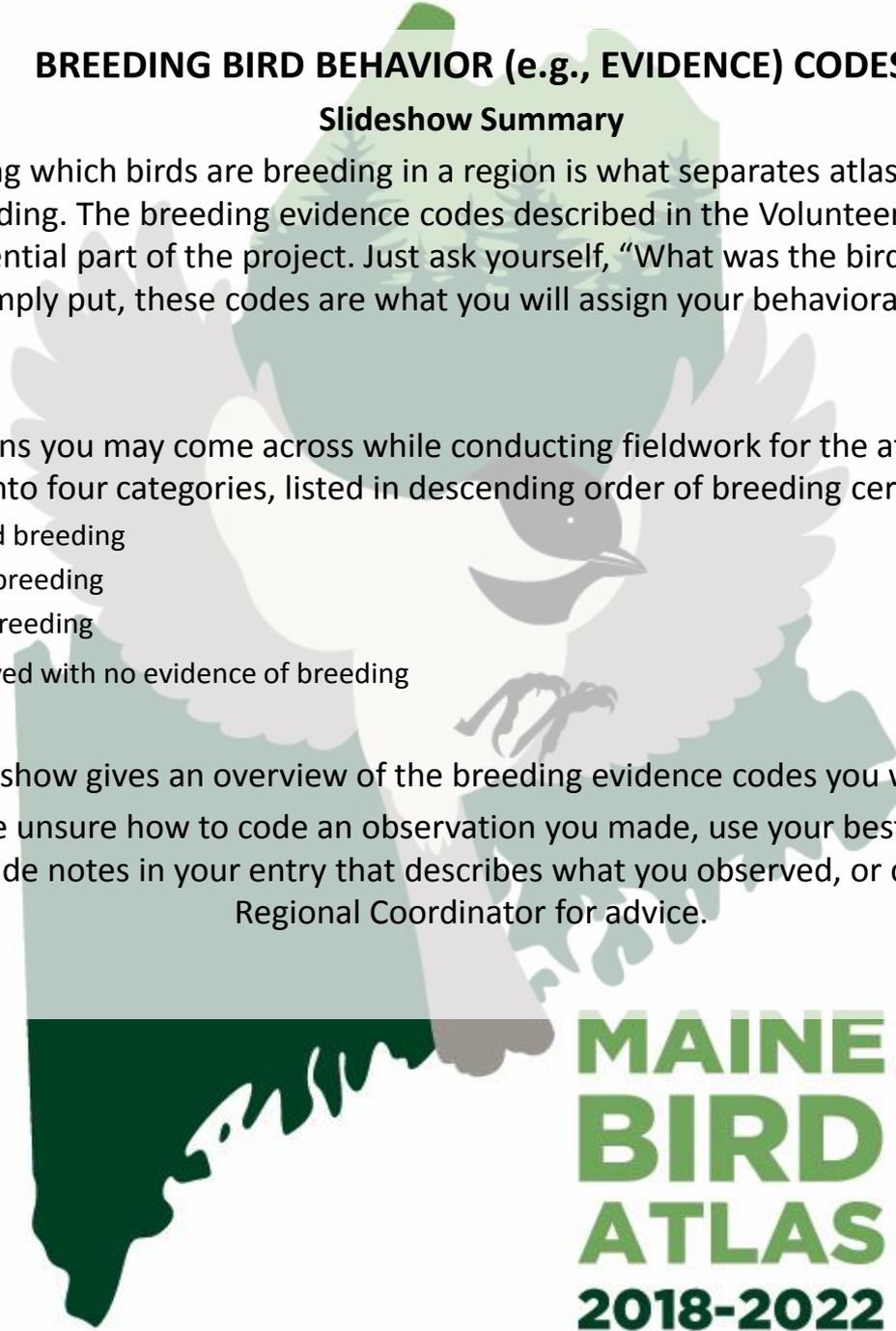
Slideshow Summary

Determining which birds are breeding in a region is what separates atlasing from general birding. The breeding evidence codes described in the Volunteer Handbook are an essential part of the project. Just ask yourself, “What was the bird I saw doing?” Simply put, these codes are what you will assign your behavioral observations to.

Observations you may come across while conducting fieldwork for the atlas can be classified into four categories, listed in descending order of breeding certainty:

- Confirmed breeding
- Probably breeding
- Possibly breeding
- Or, observed with no evidence of breeding

This slideshow gives an overview of the breeding evidence codes you will be using. If you are unsure how to code an observation you made, use your best judgement and include notes in your entry that describes what you observed, or contact your Regional Coordinator for advice.



**MAINE
BIRD
ATLAS
2018-2022**

Breeding Codes Explained Confirmed



NY – Nest with Young

Young can be seen or heard

?

?

**KEEP YOUR DISTANCE – DO NOT
DISTURB BIRDS!**

?

?



Bald Eagle adult and nestling

Breeding Codes Explained Confirmed

NE – Nest with Eggs
(or eggshells) and
adult bird nearby

?

?

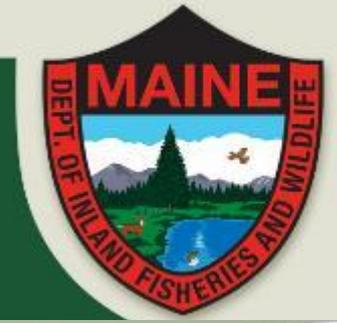
**NO NEED TO FIND
NESTS!**

?



Top: Common Eider nest;
Bottom: Tern nest (case example of
the importance of confirming species
by identification of nearby adult)

Breeding Codes Explained Confirmed



FS-1 Carrying Fecal Sac

?

Most songbird and woodpecker adults carry fecal sacs away from nest

?

Eastern Bluebird



Breeding Codes Explained Confirmed



FY - Feeding Young

Any feeding of young by parents

?

?

?



Tree Swallow adult with young

Breeding Codes Explained Confirmed



CF – Carrying Food

Use with caution. Some species carry food for purposes other than to feed young (e.g., raptors). See volunteer handbook for more details.



Nelson's Sparrow



American Robin

Breeding Codes Explained Confirmed



FL-Recently Fledged Young

- Young that are specifically still “dependent”



Sharon Fiedler

Killdeer adult and “still dependent” young

Breeding Codes Explained Confirmed



ON – Occupied Nest

Incubating adult

Or

Territorial raptor acting aggressive

Multiple observations of adults entering or leaving site in *circumstances strongly indicating an occupied nest*

e.g., Chimney Swift entering chimney several times per hour

DO NOT approach or disturb nesting birds



American Robin incubating

Breeding Codes Explained Confirmed



UN – Previously Used Nest

Look for egg shell fragments
indicating recent use

Only use this code if sure of
species identification



Used duck nest box

Breeding Codes Explained Confirmed



DD – Distraction Display (you are too close)

Extreme agitation is not a distraction display

The distinction is that during a distraction display, the adult puts its life in danger and fakes injury to lead danger away



Sharon Fiedler

Adult Killdeer feigning wing injury

Breeding Codes Explained Confirmed



NB - Nest Building

?



Osprey landing on nest platform

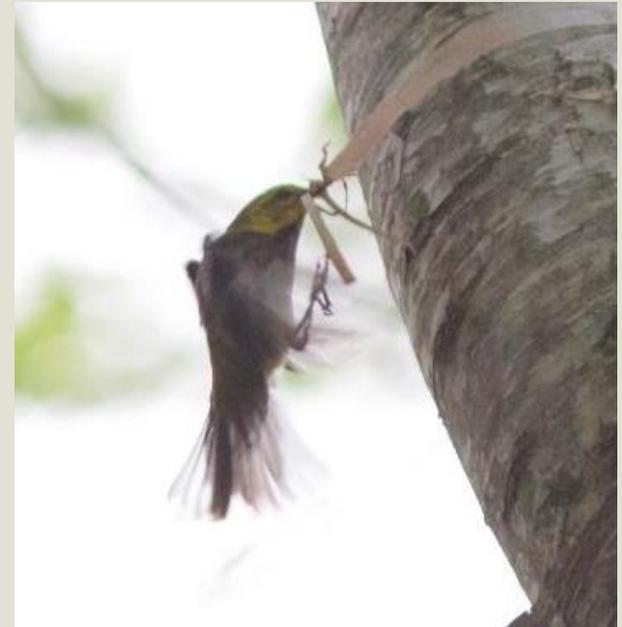
Breeding Codes Explained Confirmed



CN – Carrying Nesting Material



Mourning Dove carrying a stick



Black-throated Green Warbler
collecting Birch Bark

Breeding Codes Explained Probable



B – Woodpecker/Wren Nest Building



Black-capped Chickadee
excavating a cavity



House Wren
exiting a cavity

Breeding Codes Explained Probable



A – Agitated Behavior (you are too close)



Common Tern, agitated hovering

Breeding Codes Explained Probable



N-Visiting Probable Nest Site

?



Eastern Bluebird pair
prospecting nest box

Breeding Codes Explained Probable



C – Courtship, Display, or Copulation

Courtship includes transfer of food, visual displays, and grooming



Common Murre pair preening



American Woodcock "Timberdoodle" flight display

Breeding Codes Explained Probable



Territorial Defense



Northern Cardinal attacking an “intruder”

Breeding Codes Explained Probable



P – Pair in Suitable

Habitat -- Pair Observed in suitable habitat during its breeding season

Reference the “safe dates” table to identify breeding season cutoff dates



Male and female Bobolinks; despite the “appropriate habitat”, this may be a migratory flock. Check safe dates

Breeding Codes Explained

Probable



M- Multiple (7+) Singing birds - 7 or more singing birds present within a block (or at same location) on the same day during its breeding season

?

Reference the “safe dates” table to identify breeding season cutoff dates

Male Red-winged Blackbird



Breeding Codes Explained

Probable



S7 Singing bird - 11

Singing bird present at same general location for more days apart in same breeding season

?

First observation should be coded S?

Second observation should be coded S7?



Black-and-white Warbler



Breeding Codes Explained Possible



S - Singing bird -- Singing bird present in suitable nesting habitat during its breeding season (*within safe dates*).

Woodpeckers: Drumming is analogous to singing



Red-winged Blackbird

Breeding Codes Explained Possible



H - In appropriate habitat -- Adult in suitable nesting habitat during its breeding season (*within safe dates*)



Adult Common Loon

Breeding Codes Explained Observed



- Observed during breeding season but outside of suitable habitat
- Flyover



Left to Right: American Crow, Ring-billed Gull, Great Blue Heron



Kirk Rogers



Kirk Rogers

Kirk Rogers