



## May Hiker Activity – Nest Quest

### Instructions:

1. Pass out binoculars and remind the students to handle them with care.
2. Show the robin nest to the students and ask them to make observations about its construction. Students may carefully hold it. (The nest collected for this activity was built in 2010 and no longer in use. When the robins returned to the same area in 2011 a new one was built right beside it. Please remind students not to disturb any nests they find on their own.)
3. Search the Habitat for nests. Note: the Habitat includes the area up to the pavilion.
  - LOOK for birds carrying nesting materials and quietly follow them.
  - LOOK for nests and LISTEN for birds in likely places (evergreen trees, sheltered areas around buildings).
4. Observe birdhouses from a distance. Are birds entering/exiting? Are they carrying anything?
  - It is permissible to open any birdhouse (from the side or front) in which you suspect there to be a nest. Screwdrivers and a ladder are available in the shed. Look but don't touch!
  - The Habitat committee encourages the removal of house sparrow nests (see nest identification sheet. Please be sure to tell the students why these birds are not welcome and remind them again to never disturb a nest on their own.
5. Please let the Habitat committee know what you find and/or observe.
6. Refill bird feeders and remove weeds/litter as time allows. Plant material may be discarded in the woods.
7. Comments and photos for use on the Habitat website may be sent to [m.hauer@sbcglobal.net](mailto:m.hauer@sbcglobal.net).

### Supplies:

- Binoculars and field guides (retrieve from library)
- Robin nest (in shoebox in Habitat shed)
- Nest information page
- Ladder and screwdriver (in shed if needed to observe nests in birdhouses)

**Please feel free to offer suggestions for improving this activity.**

## BIRDHOUSE NEST IDENTIFICATION



### Bluebird

A neat nest made of fine grasses and sometimes a feather or two, leaves and thin bark. It has a fairly shallow cup. Eggs are blue.



### Tree Swallow

Similar to a bluebird nest but typically contains a lining of large white feathers. Eggs are white.



### House Sparrow

A loose jumble of odds and ends, including coarse grass, cloth, feathers, twigs and sometimes litter. Usually domed and sometimes fills the entire birdhouse. Eggs are cream, grayish or greenish with brown speckles.

***Remove house sparrow nests, including eggs. They are a very aggressive non-native species. Besides competing for food and nesting sites, they actually evict and kill native birds and build their nest on top of the previous nest.***



### House Wren

A nest made from small sticks and usually lined with a variety of different materials. These include: feather, hair, wool, spider cocoons, strips of bark, rootlets, moss and trash. Eggs are cream with red blotches.