

Who Laid That Egg?

By Steven D. Bailey and Sheryl De Vore

Here's a different kind of bird identification quiz. Name the species that laid the eggs depicted on this and the following page.

Here's a hint: These are larger-sized birds; three are affiliated with some type of water and another often nests in a barn. And for a bonus point, name the bird that built the nest on the next page. Steven D. Bailey took all these photos in Illinois during the breeding season of 2003.



#1: This species commonly nests along rural roadsides, along railroad tracks and even in the middle of parking lots and lawns, usually where there is an abundance of gravel. This nest in mulch placed under a newly planted pine tree is rather atypical for the species. You will always know what species it is because it even goes to the trouble of telling you its name.



#2: Although this species will sometimes only build a scrape in the sand with little vegetation used, the birds in this colony built their nests near or under some supporting cover of weeds along the beach. Eggs of this species and other similar species are highly vulnerable to a large variety of predators, including other birds. Need another hint? Brad Semel of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and many others are working to keep the last breeding population of this species in the state from becoming extirpated. See Meadowlark 12:1 for an article about this species.

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