

Tom Kuehl's Breeding Guidelines Chart Cheat SheetFor April

- Waterfowl in E – Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Wood Duck, Mallard and Hooded Merganser
- Upland Game Birds – Wild Turkey and Ring-necked Pheasant are in B beginning on 4/16 and Ruffed Grouse are in B all month
- Rock Pigeon and Mourning Dove are both in B all month
- Killdeer are in E as of 4/1 and B on 4/15
- American Woodcock is in B as of 4/1 so high time to get out at dusk for them!
- Great Blue Heron are in E all month, so now issue with seeking out birds on the nest at rookeries
- Osprey and Bald Eagles, and Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks are in E as of 4/1, so as with Great Blue Heron time to find these raptors ON, and the same for American Kestrel, Merlin and Peregrine Falcon
- Eastern Screech-Owl, Great Horned and Barred Owls are all in B as of 4/1, so continue on with nocturnal effort after seeking out Woodcock beginning at dusk. Northern Saw-whet Owl is in E as of 4/1 and in B as of 4/15
- Belted Kingfisher is in B as of 4/15
- Start coding these Woodpeckers now as Red-bellied, Downy, Hairy and Pileated Woodpecker are in B all month
- American Crow comes into B on 4/15 and Common Raven are in B all month
- Carolina Chickadee and Tufted Titmouse are in B all month and Blacked-capped Chickadee comes into B on 4/15
- Carolina Wren is in B as of 4/1
- European Starling is in B as of 4/1
- House Sparrow is in B all month
- House Finch is in B beginning on 4/15
- Red Crossbills are always in B
- Common Grackle is in B as of 4/22
- Louisiana Waterthrush is in B as of 4/15
- Northern Cardinal is in B as of 4/15

Some information on the Safe Date (B) of those species that you are likely seeing and are singing in your area – note that you will just have to wait for another four or five weeks before their Breeding Season begins:

- Northern Flicker - 5/8
- Eastern Phoebe – 5/1
- White-breasted Nuthatch – 5/1
- Northern Mockingbird – 5/1
- Eastern Bluebird – 5/1
- Song Sparrow - 5/8
- Pine Warbler – 5/1

Reference Materials from the Handbook -----

INTERPRETING THE BREEDING GUIDELINES CHART

- **Nonbreeding (N).** This indicates birds present in what is likely not their breeding season.
- **Migrant (M).** This is the expected prime migration window for this species. You cannot safely assume a bird in suitable habitat is a breeder. In practice, for some species, this code also denotes a post-breeding period where birds may not actually be migrating, but observations of breeding activity are no longer likely.
- **Either (E).** This is a window of overlap between breeding and migration or between breeding and nonbreeding – it is possible that birds are on a breeding territory; however, migrants are still moving through or birds may otherwise not be on their breeding territory. **Probable and Confirmed breeding codes can be recorded during these weeks. Take note of singing birds in suitable habitat but do not consider them as Possible breeders until later visits.**
- **Breeding Only (B)*.** It is generally reasonable to assume birds present during this time window are breeders, and all codes can generally be used during this time. This period is also known as ‘Safe Dates’ (i.e., when it is safe to use all codes for a species).

***There are exceptions when observed birds should NOT be assumed to be breeding even during ‘Breeding’ weeks):**

- Extremely rare birds (additional efforts should be taken to confirm breeding for these species, when possible)
- Rare singing songbirds not always likely to pair
- Colonial waterbirds prone to roaming (ex: Double-crested Cormorant)
- Oversummering terns and gulls
- Shorebirds (many Arctic-breeding shorebirds pass through in June and July)
- Species that wander in summer, early migrants (ex: Tennessee Warbler, Philadelphia Vireo)

Breeding Codes:

– **No Code** and **F-Flyover** provides for an **Observed Bird**, **H- In Appropriate Habitat** and **S – Singing Bird** are for Possible, and there are multiple codes to select from for **PROBABLE** and **CONFIRMED** observations.

These guidelines are designed to provide a general impression of the typical phenology for each species. However, your field observations take precedence over this chart – if you see a **Confirmed** breeding behavior, record it regardless of whether it is in a ‘Breeding’ week or not! The weaker evidence breeding codes – birds in suitable habitat and singing males – are trickier to deal with, and where we hope this chart will provide the most guidance. **These codes (H, S) should only be used during the weeks marked as ‘Breeding Only’. Outside of these weeks, singing males should be reported without a breeding code.**