

Safe dates and habitats - alphabetical

The table below provides “safe dates” and the most frequently used breeding habitats for each species. Safe dates give the period when most migrants will have left, and those birds that remain are likely nesters. Breeding codes, especially those in the Possible and Probable categories, generally should not be used outside the safe dates for a given species. Confirmed breeding codes, are less likely to cause errors, but even confirmed breeding should be well documented (e.g., a detailed description of the bird species and the behaviors that confirm breeding) if it happens outside the safe dates for a species because these records are likely to be of particular interest.

If you find a species and you feel that there is strong evidence of nesting, even though you are outside the safe dates or in an inappropriate habitat, please provide additional documentation. Species marked with an asterisk (*), below, or any species not on this list, always require additional written documentation because they are rare breeders in the state that we want to fully document for the historical record. Information on reporting rare sightings is provided on the web site (www.ctbirdatlas.org).

Species	Safe Dates	Habitat
Acadian Flycatcher	6/5-8/1	Red Maple swamp and hemlock
Alder Flycatcher	6/5-8/1	Shrubby areas near water, thickets
American Bittern*	5/15-8/1	Fresh/brackish reedy pond or marsh
American Black Duck	5/1-8/5	Most wetlands, from beaver ponds to saltmarsh
American Crow	3/25-7/15	Conifers in forested areas, woodlots, suburban yards, parks
American Goldfinch	6/1-8/1	Forest edge, copses, brushy areas, marsh edges, residential
American Kestrel	5/10-7/20	Open country, scattered trees, edge
American Oystercatcher	5/15-8/15	Upper portions of coastal beach, dunes
American Redstart	6/1-8/1	Secondary forest, copses
American Robin	5/1-9/1	Almost anywhere except the most open habitats such as marsh, grasslands
American Woodcock	4/15-7/15	Forest edges
Bald Eagle	4/15-8/15	Margins of large lakes, rivers
Baltimore Oriole	5/25-8/1	Open deciduous forest, shade trees in urban or rural areas
Bank Swallow	5/25-7/1	Earthen embankments
Barn Owl*	4/1-8/1	Open habitats
Barn Swallow	5/25-7/1	Structures offering access to interior; barns, garages, porches,
Barred Owl	4/1-7/15	Moist woods, wooded swamps, bottomlands
Belted Kingfisher	5/1-8/10	Stream, river, lake, or bay shore with banks
Black Rail*	5/15-8/1	Fresh/brackish marshes, especially along coast
Black Skimmer*	6/1-8/1	Coastal, sandy beach
Black Vulture	5/10-8/15	Woods, cliffs, caves, buildings
Black-and-white Warbler	5/25-8/1	Mainly deciduous forest
Black-billed Cuckoo	6/5/8/15	Forested habitats, edge
Blackburnian Warbler	5/25-8/5	Coniferous forest
Black-capped Chickadee	4/1-8/15	Woodlands, orchards, shade trees, yards, and city parks
Black-crowned Night-Heron	5/5-7/15	Coastal islands
Black-throated Blue Warbler	5/25-8/10	Mixed woods with dense understory, esp. Mountain Laurel
Black-throated Green Warbler	5/25-8/5	Coniferous and mature mixed forest
Blue Jay	5/1-8/15	Varied; most forest types, thickets, suburban yards, parks
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	5/15-8/1	Wooded edges along ponds, rivers, streams, swamps, beaver ponds
Blue-headed Vireo	5/15-8/10	Mature coniferous or mixed woods
Blue-winged Teal*	5/10-8/5	Fresh/brackish pond or marsh
Blue-winged Warbler	5/20-8/1	Old, brushy fields, copses, edge with low undergrowth, powerline cuts
Boat-tailed Grackle*	5/1-7/10	Various habitats close to coastal marshes
Bobolink	6/1-8/1	Grasslands, including airports, hayfields
Broad-winged Hawk	5/15-7/25	Mature, mixed woodlands
Brown Creeper	5/20-8/1	Mature, mixed, and swampy forest

Species	Safe Dates	Habitat
Brown Thrasher	5/15-8/10	Dry second-growth; powerlines, overgrown pastures, coastal thickets
Brown-headed Cowbird	5/1-7/15	Virtually all habitats; anywhere host species are found
Canada Goose	4/15-8/1	Shore or islands in any wetland
Canada Warbler	6/5-8/1	Thick undergrowth in moist deciduous/mixed forest; cedar swamp, Red Maple
Carolina Wren	4/1-8/15	Wet woods, stream edges with dense thickets, tangles, brush piles, etc.
Cattle Egret*	5/10-7/15	Coastal islands
Cedar Waxwing	6/10-8/15	Second-growth forest, parks, orchards, gardens, and margins of waterways
Cerulean Warbler	6/1-8/1	Mature, moist deciduous forest
Chestnut-sided Warbler	5/25-8/1	Brushy, open second-growth, edges
Chimney Swift	5/25-8/15	Urban chimneys
Chipping Sparrow	5/1-8/15	Open mixed forest, suburbs, parks, and cemeteries with conifers
Clapper Rail	5/15-8/1	Salt and brackish marsh
Cliff Swallow	5/25-7/1	Eaves and sides of old barns and other buildings, bridges
Common Eider*	5/15-8/1	Coastal islands
Common Gallinule*	5/25-8/15	Fresh/brackish reedy pond or marsh
Common Grackle	5/15-7/10	Variety of urban and rural habitats from open forest to marshes, parks, etc.
Common Merganser	6/1-8/5	Forested lakes and rivers
Common Nighthawk*	6/5-8/1	Barren habitats including river bars and flat rooftops
Common Raven	3/20-7/20	Remote forested areas
Common Tern	6/1-8/5	Coastal islands, saltmarsh
Common Yellowthroat	6/1-8/10	Brushy areas, thickets, powerline cuts, preferably wet
Cooper's Hawk	5/5-8/1	Mixed woodlands, groves, copses
Dark-eyed Junco	5/1-9/5	Edges in coniferous/mixed woodlands; brushy thickets at higher elevations
Double-crested Cormorant	5/10-8/5	Islands on coast or lake
Downy Woodpecker	5/1-7/25	Forests, copses, suburbs
Eastern Bluebird	5/1-8/15	Fields with scattered trees; farmland, orchards, pastures, etc.
Eastern Kingbird	5/25-7/25	Open habitats, including edge, copses, often near water
Eastern Meadowlark*	5/5-7/25	Extensive grasslands, including airports, margins of saltmarsh
Eastern Phoebe	5/1-8/15	Ledges, bridges, porch sills, etc., usually near water
Eastern Screech-Owl	4/1-8/1	Open deciduous forests, woodlots, orchards, residential areas
Eastern Towhee	5/1-8/10	Dry, open forest, edge, brushy habitats, coastal thickets, powerline cuts
Eastern Whip-poor-will	5/25-7/15	Secondary forest, copses, pine barrens, Scrub Oak, edge
Eastern Wood-Pewee	6/5-8/1	Mature forest
European Starling	4/10-6/15	Everywhere except remote rural areas
Evening Grosbeak*	5/25-8/15	Mixed forest
Field Sparrow	5/1-8/5	Brushy areas, weedy fields, powerline cuts
Fish Crow	5/1-7/15	Mixed woods, woodlots, suburban yards, parks
Gadwall	5/15-8/5	Fresh/brackish water or saltmarsh
Glossy Ibis	5/1-7/15	Coastal islands
Golden-crowned Kinglet	5/10-8/1	Coniferous woods
Golden-winged Warbler*	5/20-8/1	Damp brushy fields, powerline cuts
Grasshopper Sparrow*	5/25-8/10	Grasslands, including airports, hayfields
Gray Catbird	5/20-8/15	Dense tangles and thickets
Great Black-backed Gull	5/1-8/1	Coastal islands
Great Blue Heron	5/1-7/15	Wooded swamps, beaver ponds, islands
Great Crested Flycatcher	5/25-8/1	Mature forest, edge
Great Egret	5/15-7/15	Islands on coast or lake
Great Horned Owl	12/1-6/15	Wide variety of habitats from forest to farmland
Green Heron	5/10-8/1	Woody growth near marshes or open water

Species	Safe Dates	Habitat
Green-winged Teal*	5/15-8/5	Fresh/brackish pond or marsh
Hairy Woodpecker	4/25-7/20	Forests
Hermit Thrush	5/10-9/10	Damp mixed forest with dense undergrowth including pine barrens
Herring Gull	5/1-8/1	Coastal shores/islands, flat rooftops
Hooded Merganser	5/15-8/5	Wooded swamps, freshwater marshes, streams
Hooded Warbler	6/1-8/1	Moist thickets in woodlands
Horned Lark*	4/25-8/1	Coastal dunes and beaches, abandoned agricultural fields, airports
House Finch	4/15-8/1	Scattered trees- especially conifers- mainly in residential areas
House Sparrow	3/10-8/15	Residential, farms
House Wren	5/20-8/15	Open forests, wood edges, farms, orchards, suburbs, parks, gardens
Indigo Bunting	5/25-8/10	Brushy habitats including forest edge, overgrown fields, powerline
Killdeer	4/20-7/1	Open, sparsely vegetated areas; flat rooftops
King Rail*	5/15-8/1	Fresh/brackish reedy pond or marsh
Least Bittern*	5/25-8/1	Fresh/brackish reedy pond or marsh
Least Flycatcher	5/25-8/5	Open deciduous forests, forest edge
Least Tern	5/25-8/15	Coastal sandy beach, especially dredge spoils
Little Blue Heron	5/15-7/15	Coastal islands
Long-eared Owl*	4/1-8/1	Conifers
Louisiana Waterthrush	5/10-7/20	Rocky streams in deciduous or mixed forest
Magnolia Warbler	6/5-8/10	Coniferous forest
Mallard	5/1-8/5	All wetlands, occasionally suburban yards with swimming pools
Marsh Wren	5/15-8/15	Cattail and other tall marshes, including saltmarsh edges
Mississippi Kite*	5/1-8/15	Various wooded habitats ranging from wooded suburbs to hardwood forest
Monk Parakeet	6/1-8/1	Urban streets, large trees, telephone poles
Mourning Dove	4/1-8/15	Suburbs, woodlots, farmlands
Mute Swan	4/15-8/1	Large ponds and marshes
Nashville Warbler	5/25-8/15	Open Scrub Oak woodlands, overgrown pastures, bogs
Northern Bobwhite*	4/30-8/15	Open scrub, pastures, fields
Northern Cardinal	4/15-8/20	Suburban or semi-rural areas; forest edge, woodlots, thickets, parks, gardens
Northern Flicker	5/25-7/25	Forests, parks
Northern Goshawk*	4/10-8/15	Mature, mixed woodlands
Northern Harrier*	5/10-8/20	Coastal dunes, beaches, marshes, heathlands
Northern Mockingbird	5/5-8/15	Suburban or semi-rural habitats with thickets, forest edges, hedgerows
Northern Parula*	6/1-8/10	Woodlands with <i>Usnea</i> lichen
Northern R-winged Swallow	5/20-7/1	Often near water, in cavity, pipe, or excavated burrow
Northern Saw-whet Owl*	4/15-8/15	Mixed moist woods with conifers
Northern Waterthrush	5/20-7/25	Wooded swamps, bogs, backwaters
Orchard Oriole	5/25-7/15	Open, patchy forest, copses, often near river, stream, or pond
Osprey	5/10-8/15	Coastal marshes; rarely large wetlands inland
Ovenbird	5/20-8/5	Open forests with little or no understory vegetation and ample leaf litter
Peregrine Falcon	5/15-8/1	Cliffs, tall buildings, towers
Pied-billed Grebe*	5/10-8/1	Fresh/brackish reedy pond or marsh
Pileated Woodpecker	4/1-6/30	Matured forest, especially bottomland
Pine Warbler	5/1-8/5	Variety of pine forest types
Piping Plover	5/15-8/15	Coastal, sandy beach
Prairie Warbler	5/25-8/1	Brushy fields, powerline cuts, edges
Prothonotary Warbler*	6/1-8/1	Deciduous/mixed forest, saplings at forest edge, wooded swamps
Purple Finch	5/25-8/10	Conifers in mixed woods, suburbs, parklands
Purple Martin	5/25-7/1	Open areas; edge of saltmarsh, coastal farmland, and golf courses
Red-bellied Woodpecker	4/15-8/1	Older-growth forest and woodlots
Red-breasted Merganser*	6/1-8/5	Coastal marsh
Red-breasted Nuthatch	5/15-8/10	Coniferous forest

Species	Safe Dates	Habitat
Red-eyed Vireo	6/1-8/10	Mixed and deciduous woods
Red-headed Woodpecker*	5/20-8/25	Open country with scattered trees
Red-shouldered Hawk	4/10-8/15	Wet mixed forests, swamps
Red-tailed Hawk	4/15-8/1	Mature woodlands, often near edges
Red-winged Blackbird	5/1-7/15	Wide variety of densely vegetated marsh habitats
Ring-necked Pheasant	5/1-8/15	Open scrub, pastures, fields
Rock Pigeon	1/1-12/31	Buildings, bridges, towers in urban areas, farms
Roseate Tern*	6/1-8/5	Coastal islands
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	5/25-8/5	Deciduous and mixed forest, woodlots, shade trees of parks and suburbs
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	6/1-8/1	Open woodland, rural and suburban gardens, edge
Ruffed Grouse	4/1-6/30	Mixed upland woods
Saltmarsh Sparrow	5/25-8/10	Saltmarsh
Savannah Sparrow	5/10-8/1	Grasslands, including airports, hayfields
Scarlet Tanager	5/25-8/10	Mature deciduous forest
Seaside Sparrow	5/25-8/10	Saltmarsh
Sedge Wren*	5/15-8/15	Overgrown wet fields, edges of freshwater marshes, bogs and wet meadows
Sharp-shinned Hawk*	5/10-8/1	Conifers in mature woodlands
Snowy Egret	5/15-7/15	Coastal islands
Song Sparrow	5/1-8/10	Forest edge, brushy areas, marsh edges, suburbs
Sora*	5/15-7/25	Fresh/brackish reedy pond or marsh
Spotted Sandpiper	5/25-7/5	Coastal shores, shores of freshwater lakes, ponds, rivers, streams
Swamp Sparrow	5/1-8/5	Freshwater wetlands including swamps, river meadows, and pond edges
Tree Swallow	5/15-7/1	Open areas or woodland edge near wetlands; including saltmarsh
Tricolored Heron*	5/15-7/15	Coastal islands
Tufted Titmouse	4/5-8/1	Deciduous forest, riparian woodlands, and residential areas
Turkey Vulture	5/10-8/15	Woods, cliffs, caves, buildings
Upland Sandpiper*	5/20-7/15	Extensive grasslands, especially airports
Veery	5/25-8/10	Moist mixed forest
Vesper Sparrow*	5/10-8/5	Short grass areas, agricultural fields, clearings in pine barrens, coastal moors
Virginia Rail	5/15-8/1	Salt, fresh, or brackish pond or marsh
Warbling Vireo	5/15-8/10	Semi-open borders of river meadows, ponds, and streams
White-breasted Nuthatch	4/25-8/10	Deciduous forest
White-eyed Vireo	5/15-8/1	Moist areas, thickets, tangle of vines or briars
White-throated Sparrow	5/20-8/20	Scrubby habitats esp with conifers; Red Maple, Atlantic White Cedar
Wild Turkey	4/1-7/15	Mature deciduous woods, edge
Willet	5/15-7/15	Coastal beach, dunes, saltmarsh
Willow Flycatcher	6/5-8/1	Shrubby areas near water, thickets
Winter Wren	5/1-8/5	Cool, moist, coniferous or mixed woods, swamps, bogs, streams, brooks
Wood Duck	5/1-8/5	Wooded swamps, freshwater marshes, streams, rivers
Wood Thrush	5/25-8/10	Mature forest
Worm-eating Warbler	5/20-8/1	Brushy undergrowth of rocky, wooded hillsides and ravines, usually near water
Yellow Warbler	5/25-8/1	Margins of freshwater marsh, other wet brushy areas, farmland
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	5/20-8/1	Higher-elevation hardwoods
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	6/5-8/15	Forested habitats, edge
Yellow-breasted Chat*	6/1-8/5	Thickets, esp. regenerating fields and pastures
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron*	5/5-7/15	Coastal islands
Yellow-rumped Warbler	5/25-8/10	Mature White Pines, coniferous forest
Yellow-throated Vireo	5/20-8/10	Open deciduous and mixed forest and riparian woodlands