

HOMEOWNERS WANTED

Bird Nest Predation Study in Hampton Roads

We all love birds on our backyards and parks. Yet, living in a city can be dangerous for birds. For example, some predators can eat birds' eggs and chicks, which totally diminishes breeding effort of loving bird parents.



Three photographs taken on a Bushnell nest-camera at dusk on 10 June 2015: A clutch of Golden Plover eggs becomes a meal for an Arctic Fox (images provided by Becky Laidlaw)

Nest predators can be a serious threat for some birds

Credits: Becky Laidlaw / Wadertales

My name is Oleksii, and I am a Ph.D. student at Old Dominion University. For my research, I want to look at what predators are the most dangerous for birds nests in different environments across Hampton Roads.

What the research is about?

In this project, I look at predators that affect birds by attacking their nests. I want to see what predators are more active in the cities compared to rural areas. To do that, I plan to install **artificial nests** with quail eggs monitored by a **motion-activated camera** for 10 days. It will provide video recordings of predators that are trying to eat the eggs.

Where?

Basically, anywhere near **Norfolk, VA**, mainly the following counties: **Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, Suffolk**, and **Portsmouth**. Yet, if you live outside of these cities but are still nearby, I would still be happy to conduct the research on your property.

When?

Please feel free to contact me **any time** if you are available in the area sometime between **late March and mid-June of 2023**.

What does it mean for you?

Once we get in touch, I will visit your household and install an **artificial nest** on your property, of course, under your guidance. The **motion-activated camera** will be facing a nest in such a way that it will not record your everyday activities. The camera and the nest will be there for 10 days, after which I will come back and collect them. Over this period, there is no reason to expect that the setup will attract any vermin: the camera will only show what already occurs at your property. Of course, I will be willing to share any recordings that have been recorded on your property.

What are the artificial nests?

Artificial nests will look like either

- a bluebird **nestbox**,
- a **cup nest** installed between branches on a tree or a shrub,
- or a small depression on the **ground**.

The exact type of nest will be decided upon randomly. Each nest will contain several **quail eggs** to imitate a real nest.

There are pictures with examples of artificial nests below.

Nestbox



Credits: Alice McGlashan / Nest Box Tales

Cup nest



Credits: Kaisin et al. 2018

An artificial cup nest is only a cup of nest material (coconut fibers/wool) installed in a fork of branches

Ground nest



Credits: Sabatier et al. 2015

An artificial ground nest is just a depression in soil with a bit of coconut fibers and wool

There will be **no real birds** in these nests. However, there is a chance that some animals will occupy the nestbox over the 10 days while the setup is in your property. On my second visit, when I collect the equipment, I will check the nestbox with an endoscope to ensure that it is empty. If not, we could leave the nest box until the end of breeding season (July–August), if it is fine by you.

What is a motion-activated camera?

Motion-activated camera is exactly what it sounds like. It has a motion detector that triggers the camera to take a photo or record a video. It looks like this:



Credits: Alice McGlashan / Nest Box Tales

- Camera
- Motion detectors

Motion activated cameras (or trail cameras) are commonly used to observe wildlife.



Credits: Sam Stark / NPS

For example, the National Park Services successfully uses the trail cameras to monitor nests of rare birds

You will be able to participate in the installation process of the camera so that it will not be recording your house or everyday activities. The camera will be pointed at the artificial nest only to record what predators are trying to eat the eggs inside. The setup will be installed for 10 days, and I will collect the nest and the camera after these 10 days.

Who can fill out this form?

Anyone.

It does not matter what kind of property you decide to let me in: it can be your **residence, local business, warehouse, forest, farm**, etc. Every kind of environment is interesting for the purpose of this research.

Moreover, you do not have to be always around Hampton Roads from March to June – I just need **10 days** within the study period.

Contact Information

Does it sound like something you would be interested in? Let's get in touch!

You can reach out to me over phone or text via:

757-355-3036

or via email:

odubo001@odu.edu

You can learn more about me and my work on the website:

oleksiidubovyk.github.io

You can also easily share your contact information using the form below. It will let me know that you are interested in this study:



<https://forms.gle/WsaaMDtJRtmEZY6D9>