



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- **How do I get house sparrow egg replicas?** Once you have joined the project on SciStarter and received a message from a member of the Sparrow Swap Team, you can send us a message in SciStarter with your address and the number of house sparrow clutches you intend on swapping.
- **How do I determine 1st Egg Date?** House sparrows lay one egg per day, usually in the morning, if you visit the nest during egg laying, you can count back the number of days to determine the 1st egg date. Example 1: You visit the box in the late afternoon of April 7 and the nest has 4 eggs, when you come back on April 11 the nestbox now has 5 eggs. Because another egg was laid since your last visit you know that the 1st egg date for this nestbox is April 4. Example 2: You visit the nestbox in the morning of April 7 and there are 4 eggs, when you come back on April 11 there are still 4 eggs. While it is tempting to say that the 1st was also April 4, because you didn't visit the box during egg laying, the 1st egg date could be earlier.
- **What is a Clutch?** A clutch is a group of eggs laid by a bird in a single nest, usually one per day until the clutch is complete. House sparrows generally lay from 1 to 8 eggs (usually 5 or 6). It is important to label each clutch and keep clutches separate from one another.
- **How do I know a Clutch is complete?** House sparrows lay one egg per day, shortly after sunrise. If the number of eggs hasn't changed from a previous visit then you can assume the clutch is finished and do the swap on that visit. Note: On rare occurrences a female could skip a day of egg laying. If you are visiting your nestbox daily then please wait one extra day to be sure the clutch is finished before performing a swap or removal.
- **I am unsure if the eggs are from a house sparrow. What do I do?** If you are unsure if the eggs or nest belong to a house sparrow, do not remove the eggs or disturb the nest. Feel free to send us a photo of the nest and eggs at (sparrowswap@ncsu.edu). Please note that all native birds are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, since house sparrows are a non-native species they are exempt from this act.
- **What if my egg breaks during removal or packaging?** If an egg breaks during a removal, include the broken egg in the clutch size, make a note that the egg broke on the datasheet, and discard the egg. If the egg breaks during packaging, make a note on the datasheet and discard the egg. In both cases, please still send the rest of the eggs in the clutch to the Museum.
- **What if there is a cowbird egg in the nest?** Cowbirds are bird protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, which prevents the removal of eggs and nests of native birds. Because of this Federal law, there are two options you can do if you have a cowbird in your house sparrow nest 1) do nothing or 2) remove the house sparrow eggs as a Collector but leave the cowbird egg.
- **What if another egg(s) is laid after the swap?** There are two possible reasons that a house sparrow has laid an egg after the swap 1) the clutch was not finished when the swap was performed 2) the female has decided to lay another clutch. In either case, remove the replicas and end the datasheet for the original clutch. On the same visit, decide if you want to be a Swapper or Remover and start a new datasheet for that clutch.

Still have questions? Visit the FAQ page of our website for more answers at www.sparrowswap.org