

Rules for participants

1. You must be aged 25 or below and based in the UK to take part in this competition. Sign up using our [entry form](#).
2. Individuals or groups can sign up to the competition. If a nest record is found by a group, it can only be submitted once (either by the group or one individual in the group).
3. In order to participate in BTO Nest Quest, individuals or groups must be signed up to the BTO Nest Record Scheme as a volunteer. Signing up is easy! Find the link to sign up to the NRS here: [Taking part | BTO](#)
4. Participants **must** follow the BTO Code of Conduct for nest recording found here: [NRS Code of Conduct | BTO](#)
5. All nest records must be entered onto DemOn (Demography Online). A short tutorial of how to use this system can be found [here](#).
6. Participants must have pre-agreed access to the land they are nest recording on, unless it is an area generally accessible to the public when permissions are highly recommended. More information [here](#).
7. The competition will take place between the 6th of March and the 30th of September. All entries must be submitted by the 31st of October.
8. Once all records are entered on DemOn, scores should be worked out by entering a summary on a downloadable Excel Sheet, which can then be shared with us.
9. Nests will **only score points** if:
 - They are 'active' which for the purpose of this competition is a nest containing either **live eggs and/or live chicks**; AND
 - There are **multiple visits to the nest**. In other words, a record of a nest in the process of being built won't score any points, neither will any record of a single visit to a nest.
10. Each nest will score according to several criteria:
 - The ease of finding a nest, so box-nesting and colony-nesting species will score less than other species, with open-nesting passerines the highest scoring
 - The conservation value of the monitoring, based around the Red and Amber lists of Birds of Conservation Concern
 - The [Nest Record Scheme priority list](#), which considers the number of records we receive for different species and how important it is to receive more
11. Nests of any [protected species](#) (Schedule 1 in England, Wales and Scotland, and equivalent in Northern Ireland) will **not** score any points, as special licences are required for monitoring.
12. Winners for the following categories will be announced in November 2026:
 - Highest overall score
 - Greatest number of species recorded
 - Most unusual nest (i.e. a species nesting somewhere unexpected).
 - The best urban nest record
13. Winners in each category will be decided by a scoring system based on several factors:
 - The ease of finding a nest, so box-nesting and colony-nesting species will score less than other species, with open-nesting passerines the highest scoring
 - The conservation value of the monitoring, based around the Red and Amber lists of Birds of Conservation Concern
 - The Nest Record Scheme priority list, which considers the number of records we receive for different species and how important it is to receive more
14. The competition relies on trusting participants to honestly input their records. BTO reserves the right to query any rare or unusual records.