

## Status Codes and Criteria (B, b, t, W, and w)

Bird observations are given one of the following Status Letters: B, b, t, W and w. The lettered symbols are defined as follows:

---

### **BREEDING SEASON (16 February-14 December)**

For observations of birds during the breeding season, the letters "B," "b," or "t" are used to indicate the bird's breeding status.

#### **"B" DIRECT EVIDENCE OF BREEDING**

"B" is used to indicate direct evidence of breeding: evidence that eggs or young have been produced.

Breeding is not assumed simply by the presence of adults, singing and territorial behavior, copulation, or nest-building. "B" is used only if one or more of the following criteria are met:

1. Occupied nest - adult attending a nest with eggs or nestlings (incubating or brooding), or adults entering or leaving nest site in circumstances indicating an occupied nest (includes high nests or cavities, the contents of which cannot be seen).
2. Recently fledged young (of altricial species) incapable of sustained flight or downy young (of precocial species) restricted to the area by dependence on adults or limited mobility.
3. Adults attending young - adult feeding recently fledged young or carrying food for young, or adult carrying fecal sac.
4. Nest with egg(s) that can be clearly identified. The presence of cowbird eggs or young is confirmation of breeding for both cowbird and host species.
5. Used nest with eggshell, or just eggshell found (identification must be convincing for such records to be accepted, and cannot be based on the nest alone).

NOTE: Records of direct evidence of breeding ("B") are only accepted when at least one of the five criteria listed above is observed and information for a "B" designation is included in the Comments section of the Report Form. If no supporting information is given, the record will be designated a "b" (see following).

#### **"b" INDIRECT or CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE OF BREEDING**

"b" is used to indicate indirect evidence of breeding. This status applies if one or more of the following criteria are met:

1. Singing males or territorial birds observed in suitable nesting habitat during the breeding season.
2. Courtship behavior or copulation.
3. Adults visiting a probable nest site.
4. Agitation behavior, distraction display, feigning injury, or anxiety call from an adult.
5. Nest building.
6. Physiological evidence of breeding (incubation patch or egg in oviduct) based on bird in hand.
7. Independent young of the year unaccompanied by adult (for non-migratory species or prior to normal migration).

**"t" NO EVIDENCE OF BREEDING, NO BREEDING BEHAVIOR**

"t" is used to indicate presence of any species (resident, migrant, or transient) that exhibits no breeding behavior at the time observed.

Behavioral activities that do not fit "B" or "b" should be considered "t." See "B" and "b" above to determine if a behavior constitutes direct or indirect evidence of breeding.

---

## **WINTERING SEASON (15 December- 15 February)**

For observations of birds during the wintering season, the letters "W" or "w" are used to indicate wintering status.

**"W" OVERWINTERING**

"W" is used to indicate regular observations of the species during the winter period.

Regular is defined as at least 3 days between 15 December and 14 January and 3 days between 15 January and 15 February. "W" can be documented two ways: (1) an individual observer submits data with dates for when the bird was observed during the winter months, following the above criteria, or (2) multiple "w" records in the MBD database for the same LL and from the same winter season are used to generate a "W", following the above date criteria. (Individuals submitting data need to include the dates for which the bird was observed during the winter months, 15 December – 15 February, in the Comments section of the Report Form.

**"w" OBSERVED DURING WINTER SEASON, but NOT confirmed OVERWINTERING**

"w" is used to indicate that the species was observed at least once between 15 December and 15 February, but not regularly during the winter season.