BALTIMORE ORIOLE

BY SHARON BEALS

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

Contemporary
United States
Bullock's Oriole
Icterus bullockii

Collected from Ithaca, Tompkins County, New York, 2003
The Cornell University Museum of Vertebrates

These colorful songbirds breed in woodlands in western North America—especially insect-rich land bordering water, filled with cottonwood, sycamore, and willow trees. Most migrate to Mexico for the winter. Usually the female weaves the hanging nest, but her mate may help, the pair working in tandem, one on the inside, the other out. Horse hair, twine, fibers, grasses, and wool form the outer shell, which is lined with cottonwood or willow cotton, wool, or feathers. The blue fibers wrapping this nest are the plastic threads of a construction tarp.

Subject Details:
This was made by a Bullock's Oriole in 2003. There is one theory that blue, in the form of plastic or paint chips (Anna's

Hummingbirds use the paint chips) are a kind of camouflage, since they are the color of sky. The ribbon is actually the "thread" from a plastic tarp.
Ithaca, New York, 2003

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