

ELF NOTES

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NESTING

With the arrival of spring, bird populations boom because the birds that winter in warmer places fly back to nest and raise their young. In spring birds are in their brightest plumage, and they sing their hearts out trying to claim a nesting territory and attract a mate. Once a nesting site is located, the work to collect materials and construct the nest begins. Imagine being a human-sized bird. Take a walk outdoors and see if you can locate a good nesting place, not necessarily in a tree. It should be well hidden and protected from weather. Spend some time looking around to see what sorts of materials are available that could make a strong, cozy nest. You can, like some birds do, collect special materials to decorate with to make the nest a little more comfy and attractive. Use your "nesting" spot as a place for viewing wild bird activity.

DESIGNS OF NATURE BIRD NESTS

Created in a variety of designs and located in nearly every habitat, bird nests are remarkable examples of how form and function intersect in the natural world.

Birds build nests to hold and protect eggs during incubation. Once eggs hatch the nest may also provide a safe home for nestlings.

Nest design varies in complexity from simple ground nests to more complex cavity, platform, or cup nests. The design of a particular nest and the materials used in construction tell about the size, habitat and habits of the bird that builds it.

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