

For Creative Minds

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Bird Fun Facts



Scientists sort animals into different classes. All the animals in this book are birds. While all birds have **feathers**, not all birds can fly (penguins do not fly). Birds **lay eggs**, **breathe air**, and are **warm blooded**.

Most birds build a nest that is hidden (**camouflaged**) or is hard for predators to reach. A nest may be made out of different things; you might even find dog hair or ribbons woven into nests.



male oriole



Quite often **male** birds have bright feathers or coloring to attract a mate. It is usually the **female** who builds a nest, but sometimes the male or both male and female will build the nest together. Birds don't really need to learn how to build their nests; they are born knowing how (**instinct**).

female oriole



Bird Math



Robins lay two broods of three to six eggs.

Screech Owls have only one brood a year but they lay between two and seven eggs, depending on the type of screech owl.



Killdeers have one or two broods a year with three to five eggs in each brood.

Which bird might lay the most eggs in a year? How many eggs?

Which bird might lay the fewest eggs in a year? How many eggs?

Why do you think birds have so many babies at a time?

Is it Injured?

If you see a fledgling on the ground, that does not mean it is injured or abandoned. It might just be learning how to fly or to find its own food. If it has no visible injury, you should keep pets away and leave it alone. Observe the bird from inside or far away so that the parent birds can reach it.

You should get help for the bird only if you can see a visible injury, you know for sure that the parents are dead, or the bird has been alone for over eight hours and it is now dark. It is illegal to care for migratory birds and most songbirds and you need to get the bird to an avian (bird) vet or a bird rehabilitator. Check the phone book or internet to find one in your area. Don't try to feed the bird.



Match the Nest Activity

Read the descriptions and match the nests to the correct birds.



a. Magpie

1. The magpie builds a large bulky bowl of mud and grass surrounded by a latticework of sticks that point in all directions. The nest, which has a side entrance, is located high in trees.



b. Baltimore Oriole

2. The oriole carefully weaves a deep hanging pouch of plant fibers, hair, yarn, or string, and attaches it to a tree branch. This pouch, or sack, has a top opening. The nest is lined with hair, wool, or fine grasses. The female usually builds the nest while her mate stays nearby and sings. It can take from five to eight or more days to build this intricate nest.



c. Starling

3. This bird makes a sloppy nest. The male starts to build the nest in a hole in a tree or other opening, but the female often removes what he has done and adds her own materials. She fills the hole with grass, twigs, or dry leaves.



d. Common Grackle

4. The female builds a loose nest of weeds and grasses, with some help from her mate in the early stages. Sometimes she reinforces the nest with mud on the inside and lines it with grass or feathers.



e. Mourning Dove

5. This bird often finds a deserted nest, and the male brings sticks to the female to place in the nest. The female builds a careless platform of sticks with little, if any, lining of grass or weeds. The nest is so loosely made that it often falls apart in a storm.





6.

f. Whip-poor-will

This bird makes no nest; it lays its eggs on the ground on dead leaves.



7.

g. Meadowlark

The female does all the work on the nest. First, she finds a depression in the ground that pleases her. She forms the base of the nest, lining it with coarse dry grasses and an inner lining of fine grasses. Then she builds a dome-shaped roof of grasses which she weaves into nearby plants.



8.

h. Brewer's Blackbird

Her nest is on the ground, in shrubs, or in trees. She uses twigs or grasses made stronger with mud or cow dung.



9.

i. Robin

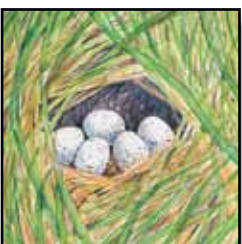
The robin builds her nest early in the spring and may place it in an evergreen shrub or tree fork. Her nest is a deep cup, which she shapes by sitting in it and pressing her breast against the edges. The nest is made of grass, weed stalks, and strips of cloth or string worked into soft mud. It is lined with fine grass.



10.

j. Screech-owl

The female lays her eggs in a natural opening or a hole in a tree.



11.

k. Killdeer

The male scrapes several hollows in an open stretch of ground, and the female chooses one of them. She adds a few pebbles and bits of grass or woodchips to line the depression.

