



Just the Right Home

Most birds lay eggs in the spring and early summer. Birds create nests to lay their eggs. The type of nest they build varies as much as the birds themselves. For example, bald eagles have very different needs than hummingbirds. Bald eagles have a **wingspan** of 8 feet and can weigh 14 pounds (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). In contrast, the wingspan of a hummingbird is only a few inches. As you would expect, these birds build very different nests. Bald eagles build a nest large enough to hold a person. These nests are 4-5 feet wide and 2-3 feet deep. (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). Hummingbirds build tiny nests, roughly the size of a walnut. These nests may be only an inch wide or less.

Bird nests are built from a wide variety of materials. The type of nest depends on the needs of the bird

and the **habitat** that the bird lives in. Birds will build flat **platform nests** or cup shaped nests in trees or on the ground. Twigs, leaves, dirt, and other natural materials are used to build these. Hummingbirds use moss and other small materials to construct their cup nests. Eagles use large sticks to construct their nests in the tops of trees.

Other birds do not build up a nest; instead, they use a depression in the ground to lay eggs. This is known as a **scrape nest** (Golden Gate Audubon Society). Killdeer are an example of a bird that uses a scrape nest. They scrape a hole about 3 inches across to lay their eggs and will add rocks and other bits to the inside of their nest. Killdeer will often lay eggs in gravel driveways.

Finally, other birds, such as owls, do not build a nest at all. Owls lay eggs

inside of a tree cavity or reuse a nest that was built by a different bird (Warren). Different birds lay their eggs in all kinds of different nests. Each one has a home that is right for it.

Think about it...
What are the benefits of scrape nests? What might be challenging about a scrape nest?

Definitions:

Wingspan: the distance from the tip of one wing to the other wing

Habitat: a place that contains everything a plant or animal needs to live

Platform Nest: flat nest built on the ground or in trees

Scrape Nest: a small dip in the ground used as a nest

► Nest Matching

Match the bird to its nest.



Photo by [Christina Lorenzen](#)



Photo by [U.S. Fish and Wildlife](#)



Photo by [FishBio](#)

► Featured Plant: Moss

At first you might not even think of moss as a plant. It does not have flowers and seeds like some other plants. Instead, moss reproduces using **spores**. But moss serves a very important role in our forests. Moss carpets the forest floor and helps to prevent soil erosion. Moss is also able to break down nutrients, which can then be used by more complex plants (Encyclopedia Britannica).

People also use moss in creative ways. Gardeners will add moss to the soil to help keep plant roots moist. Historically, moss was even used as a bandage to cover wounds.

Spores: A single cell able to produce a new plant.



Photo by [Scott Heidorn](#)



Photo by [Michael Becker](#)

► Featured Animal: Bald Eagle

The bald eagle serves as the national symbol of America. The symbolic bald eagle shows the characteristic white head and tail. However, only adult bald eagles have these features. Juvenile birds are mostly dark brown in color.

These large birds consume fish as a large part of their diet. Because of this, they typically nest in high perches near water. The perch

must be sturdy. Bald eagle nests can weigh 1,000 pounds!

Bald eagles were once in danger of extinction due to hunting, contaminated food, and habitat loss. However, with laws put in place to protect the birds and careful monitoring, eagles are now recovering (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service).

► Try at Home: Nest Building Challenge



Can you build a bird nest? It may not be as easy as you think.

Using only natural materials such as: twigs, mud, and leaves see if you can construct a sturdy nest.

Photos by [PinkStripeSocks](#)



Nest Building Supplies Scavenger Hunt

Twigs



Mud

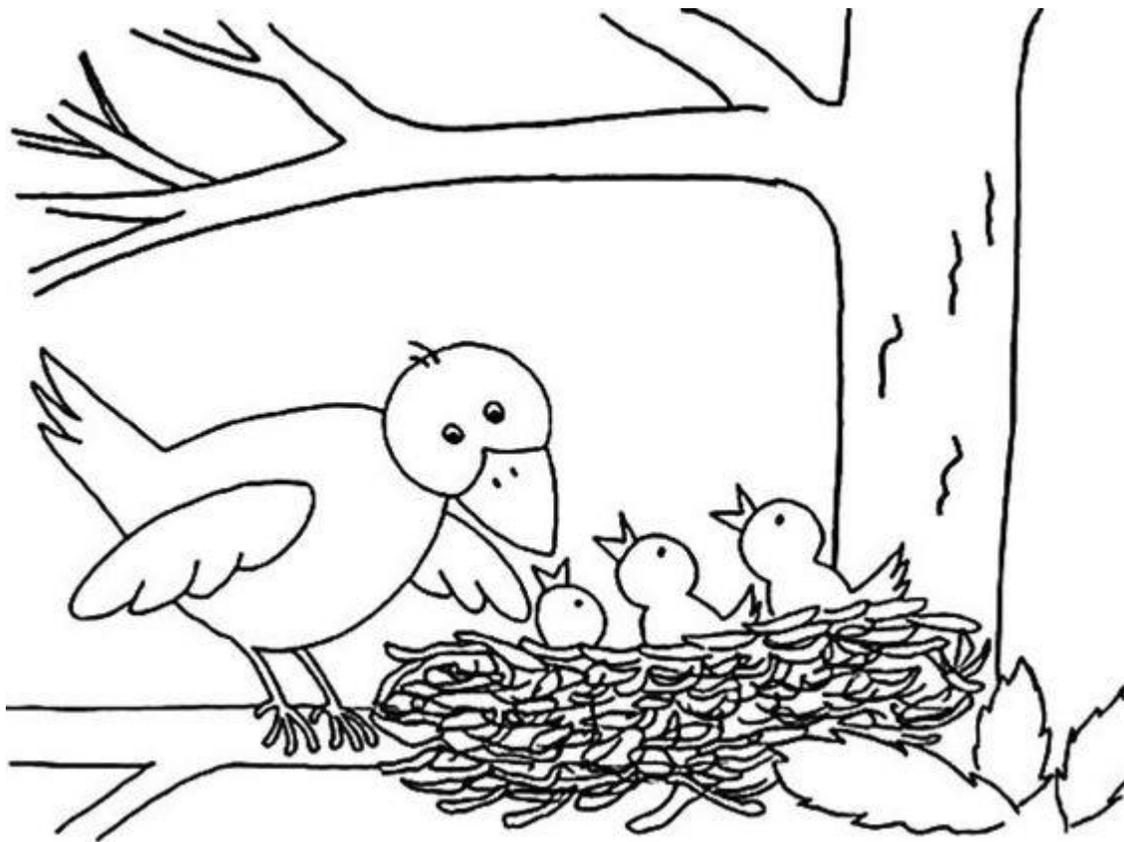


Moss



Leaves





► Contact Us

Hidden Lake Gardens
6214 Monroe Road (Hwy M-50)
Tipton, MI 49287

Phone: (517) 431-2060

Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)

Submit your coloring page for a chance to be featured in our next newsletter!

Please email a clear photo or color scan of your finished coloring sheet (including child's name and age) to Samantha Howard at howar279@msu.edu by June 20th.

► References

Encyclopedia Britannica. Moss. <https://www.britannica.com/plant/moss-plant>

Golden Gate Audubon Society. *Types of Bird Nests*. <https://goldengateaudubon.org/conservation/make-the-city-safe-for-wildlife/tree-care-and-bird-safety/types-of-bird-nests/>

The Cornell Lab. Killdeer. All About Birds. <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Killdeer/lifehistory>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. *Midwest Region – Bald and Golden Eagles*. <https://www.fws.gov/midwest/eagle/Nhistory/biologue.html>

Warren, Tom. (2020, December). *Nesting Season For Owls*. Farmers Almanac. <https://www.almanac.com/nesting-season-owls>.