

Birds and Their Nests

Different species of birds use different materials to build their nests and they build their nests in different places. Below are some examples of nests you might find around the Strathcona County. Remember to give birds and their nests lots of space.

American Robin



- Nests are built in trees, but sometimes on the ground. Made with twigs, grasses, string, scraps of cloth, bits of paper, and is held together with mud and lined with fine grass.
- The female chooses the nest site and builds the nest. It takes 2-6 days to build. Female lays 3-4 blue eggs. The female continues incubating the eggs for an average of 12 days.

Mallard



- The nest is built on the ground and made of grass and lined with down.
- Female lays 8-12 dull green eggs. Chicks hatch with fluffy downy yellow feathers after 26 days.
- Chicks stay in the nest for one day before heading to the water. Mother leads them to water and the chicks find their own food (water bugs, insects, and tiny plants). They will stay with their mother for up to 2 months and after two months have their adult feathers

Red-Winged Blackbird



- Nest is made of leaves woven together and lined with fine grass. Nest sites rest over water to minimize predation of young.
- Female lays 3-5 bluish-green eggs with brown spots. The eggs hatch after approximately 2 weeks of incubation. Once they have hatched, the young stay in the nest for 9 - 12 days.
- When the nests are placed over water, there is a chance the chicks will fall in, however, the chicks can swim for short distances should they fall from the nest. This ability is lost as they reach adulthood.

Great Horned Owl



- Great Horned Owls use previous year's nest of some other raptor, such as a Red-tailed Hawk, or that of a crow or magpie as their own.
- Great Horned Owls are very early nesters with egg laying and incubation underway well before the snow disappears in Winter. Laying begins approximately 1 month before hatching. The number of eggs per nest ranges from 1-5, the average clutch size can differ from place to place and year to year.
- The young owls are almost fully feathered and capable of short flights around 8 weeks. However, they remain largely dependent upon their parents for food during most of the summer and leave the area they hatched in the until fall.

Black Capped Chickadee



- The female lays 1 egg a day until there are 5-10 eggs which are white with fine dark spots. After 13 or 14 days, the young hatch. The female takes care of the young until they are well feathered. Both parents clean the nest by carrying away the droppings and feed the nestlings 6-14 times an hour.
- After 16 - 17 days, the young are ready to leave the nest. The parents continue to feed them for an additional 2-3 weeks, while they learn to feed themselves.

Build your own bird nest!

Respect nature: do not pull living materials off plants and do not leave artificial material behind.

- What materials can you use?
- What shape is your nest?
- How big should your nest be?
- Will your nest be on the ground or in the tree?
- Does your bird need a pillow?

When your nest is finished find a place to put it in the forest. Remember materials found in the forest should stay in the forest and do not leave any man-made materials behind. Perhaps a bird will use your nest.