

Signs of nesting

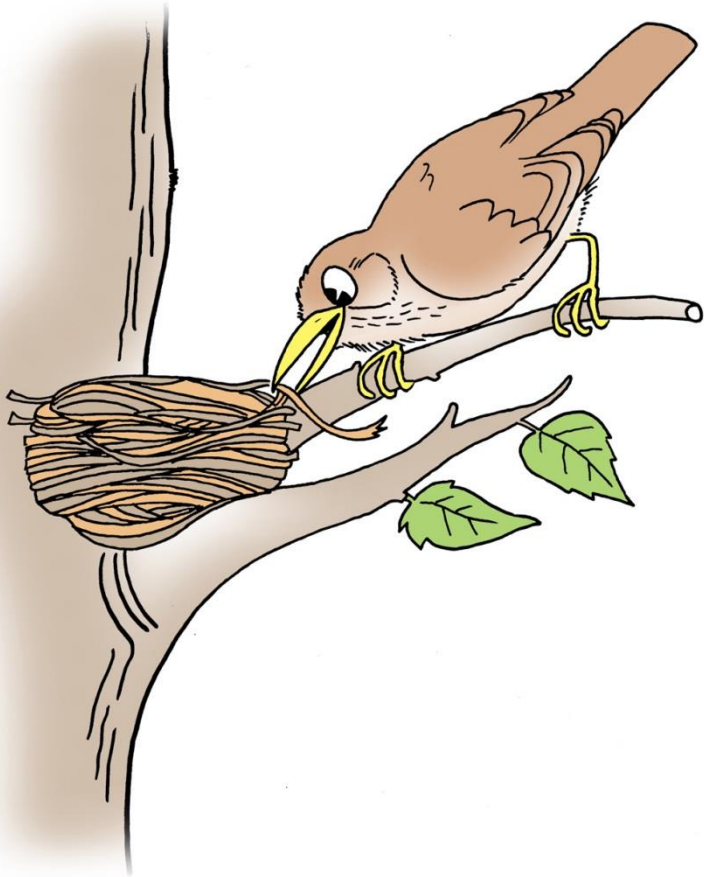


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Spring is the time for nesting!



- Spring and summer are the best times for nesting.
Why is that?
 - there is a lot of food (e.g. bugs) available for the parents and the chicks
 - it is warm (food is plenty and the chicks will not be cold)

Can you spot a nest?

- Birds usually try to hide their nests.
- Nests can be hard to find.

BUT:

- You can still tell if a bird is nesting by looking at various clues!
- All you need is a detective's mind...

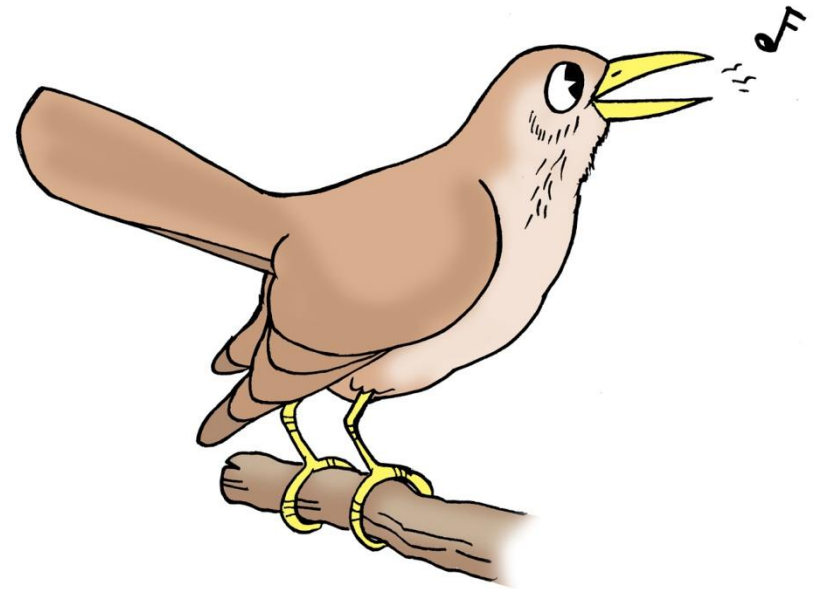


Look for the signs of nesting!

1. A bird sings.
2. A bird gathers or carries nest material.
3. A bird builds a nest.
4. A bird often goes to a possible nest site.
5. A bird incubates (sits still) on its nest.
6. A bird carries food.
7. A bird warns or attacks towards a predator or a person.
8. Sounds of chicks from a nest or a nest box.
9. Young birds that have already left their nest.

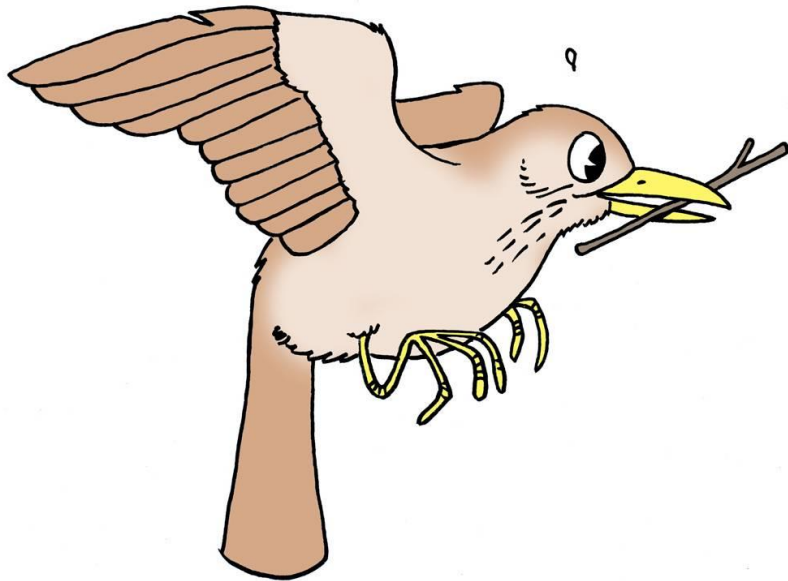
1. A bird sings

- A male bird singing gives an important message to others:
 - it is looking for a partner
 - it tells others that the nest site is taken
- The singing is constant and repetitive. Sounds made for other purposes are often short.



LISTEN: Can you hear a repeated phrase or a long warble?

2. A bird carries nest material



- Different birds use different materials for their nest:
 - grasses (flycatchers)
 - moss (tits)
 - mud (swallows)
 - hair (tits)
 - twigs (crows)
 - aquatic plants (waterbirds)

LOOK: Does the bird have something in its beak?

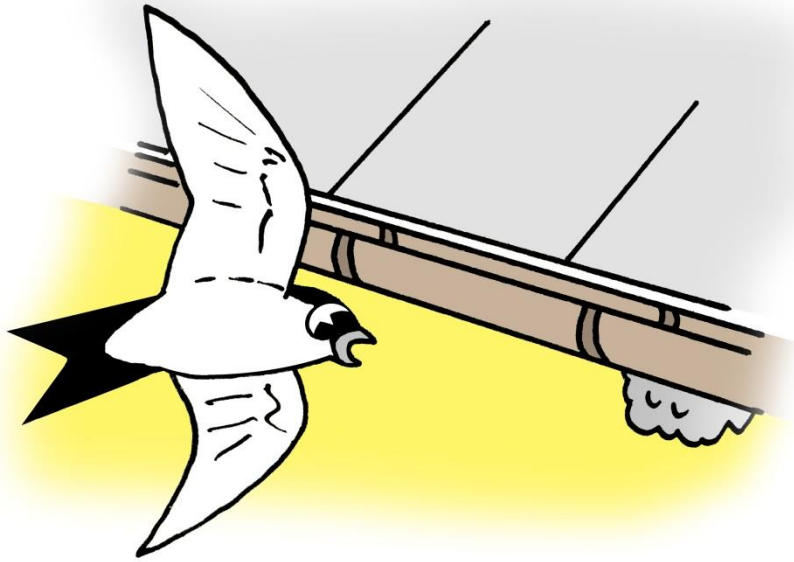
3. A bird builds a nest

- Different birds have different places for their nest:
 - a branch (thrushes)
 - a hole in a tree (woodpeckers)
 - a nest box (tits)
 - a hole in building (House Sparrow)
 - the shore (water birds)



LOOK: What is the bird doing?

4. A bird often goes to a nest site

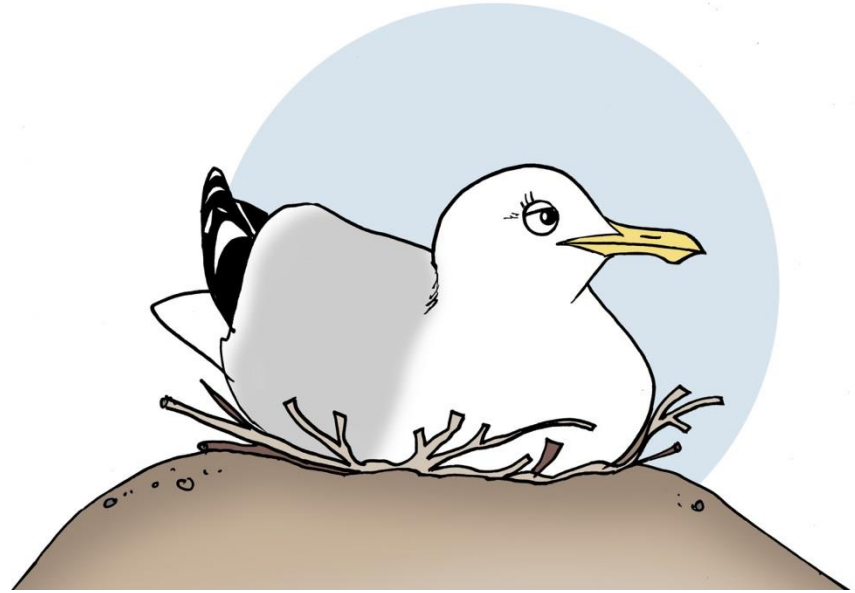


- Even if you cannot see a nest, the bird can give away its place by going there often:
 - under the eaves of a house (swallows)
 - in holes of buildings, between rocks, in woodpiles (House Sparrow, White Wagtail)

LOOK: Is the bird going back and forth to a good nest site?

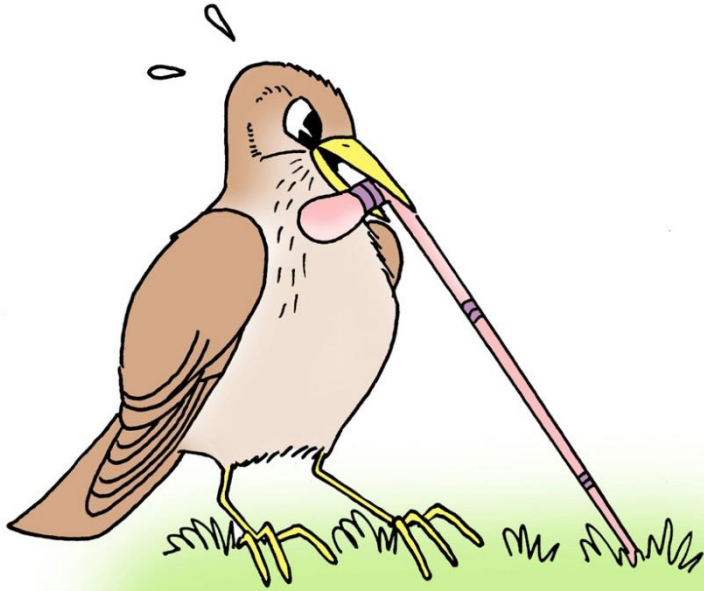
5. A bird incubates on its nest

- An incubating parent bird tries to hide itself well.
- The easiest ones to spot are:
 - gulls on rocks
 - other waterbirds on shores and in the reeds



LOOK: Can you see a bird sitting still? Is it sitting on a nest?

6. A bird carries food

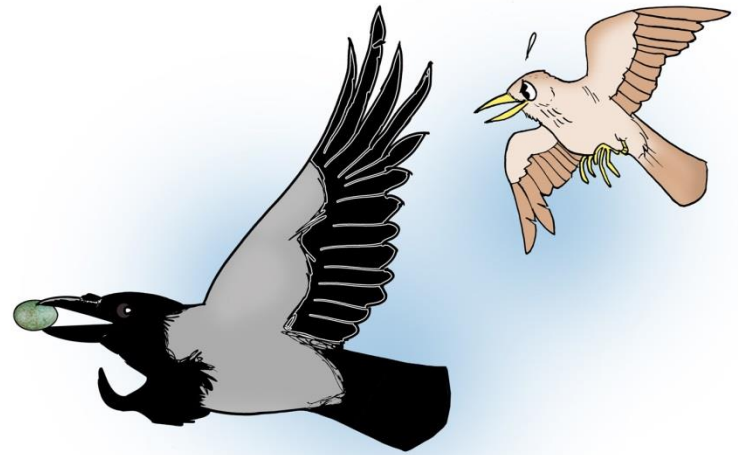


- Young birds are hungry all the time.
- Food must be sought often!
 - worms, caterpillars, insects (landbirds)
 - mice, voles (birds of prey)
 - fish (loons, grebes)

LOOK: Does the bird have something in its beak?

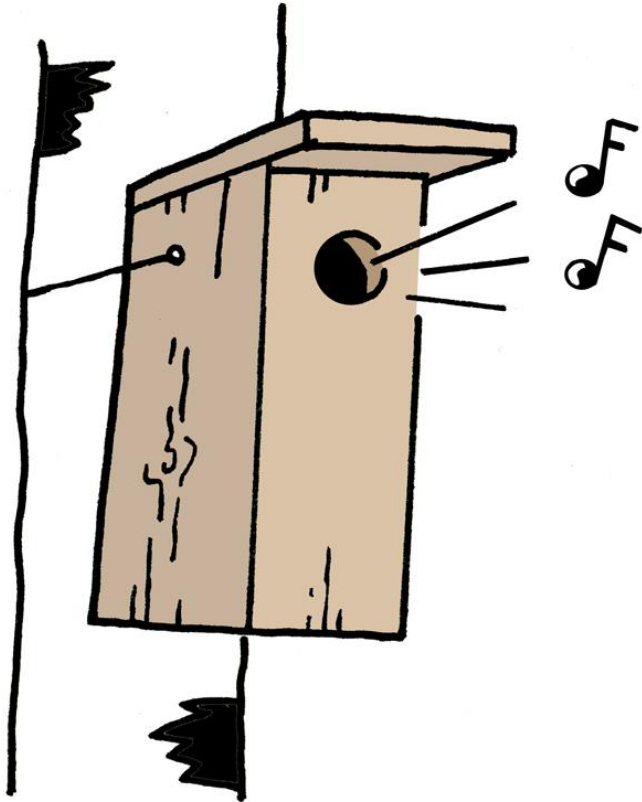
7. A bird warns or attacks

- Nests are threatened by cats, crows, squirrels, people...
- First the parent emits alarms calls.
- The parent tries to shift the predator's attention to itself.
- Finally the parent may start attacking towards the predator.



LOOK and LISTEN: Can you hear loud, nervous bird sounds? Can you see a parent bird chasing a predator?

8. Sound of chicks



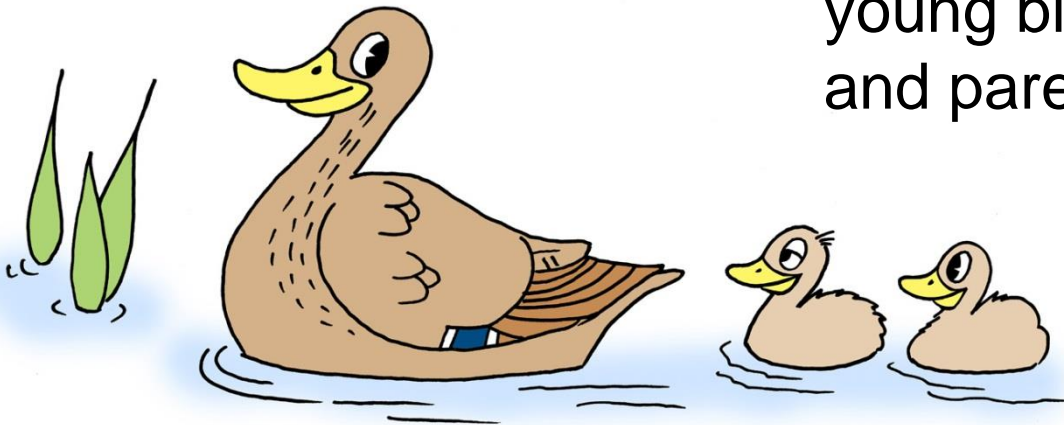
- Young birds peep when parents bring them food.
- Woodpecker nestlings make constant sound:
– *”ki-ki-ki-ki-ki...”*

LISTEN: Can you hear sounds from the nest box when the parent goes in? Can you hear young woodpeckers in the forest?

9. Young birds that have left the nest

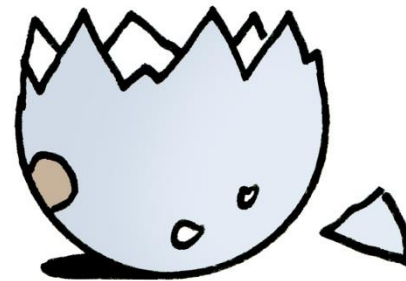
- Waterbird chicks leave their nest soon.
- Older landbird chicks wait for food on tree branches and in bushes. When the parent comes, they beg for food.

LOOK: Can you see waterbirds with their chicks? Can you find young birds sitting on branches, and parents bringing them food?



Other clues on nesting

- A broken egg shell
- Old, last year's nest
- A lot of bird poop in the same place (under a nest, perhaps?)



LOOK and LISTEN: Can you use these clues to find actual signs of nesting?

If you find a nest or young birds



- Move further away so that the birds are not disturbed.
- Be calm and avoid making noise.
- If parent bird starts giving warning signals and paying attention to you, move away immediately.
- When parent birds only focus on the nest/their chicks and not you, you are at the right distance.
- If a nest has nestlings, the parent birds will carry them food even every couple of minutes. If a nest has eggs, there may not be any birds flying near it, but you might see a parent bird incubating in an open nest.
- Do not touch the nest, the eggs or the chicks.
- Bird nests are protected by law, so you must not disturb or destroy them.
- You can use binoculars or spotting scopes to look at the birds from a distance, without disturbing them.

Share your observations!



Kids' Birdwatching Week

- Kids' Birdwatching Week takes place every year in May.
- We collect observations on the signs of nesting.
- Take a trip outdoors with your class or family.
- Report your observations with the online form.
- More information and materials:
www.birdlife.fi/birdweek

Learn more about birds and nature

BirdLife Finland

www.birdlife.fi



The Finnish Nature League

www.luontoliitto.fi



The Finnish Society for Nature and Environment

www.naturochmiljo.fi

