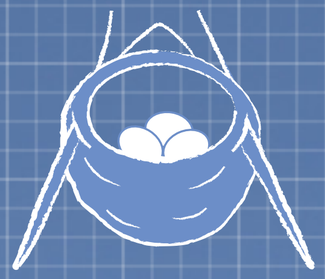
BASIC NEST BLUEPRINTS

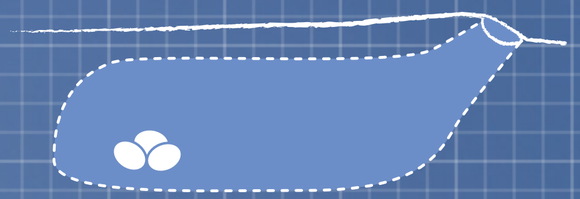
Birds build nests of all different shapes and sizes, but their nests tend to fall into these 10 basic categories.

1. CUP

2. PENSILE

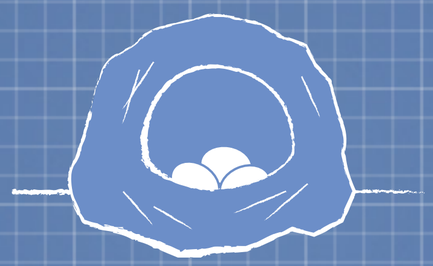


3. BURROW

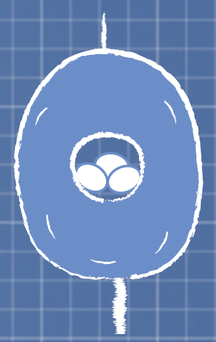


4. MOUND

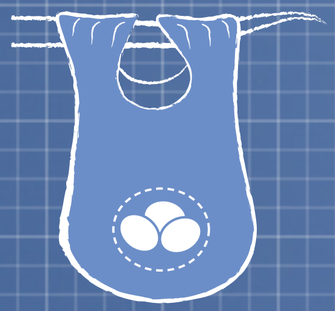
5. DOMED



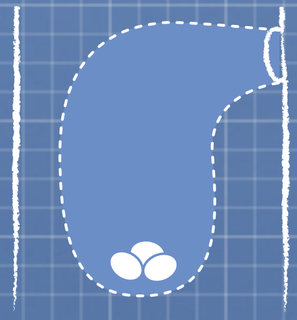
6. GLOBULAR



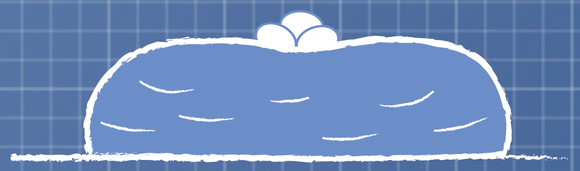
7. PENDULOUS



8. CAVITY



9. PLATFORM



10. SCRAPE

Illustrations by Marla Coppolino
Designed by Nia Mitchell

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Learn more in the self-paced, online course
The Hidden World of Nests and Eggs

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BASIC NEST BLUEPRINTS

Note that the location, height, materials, and size will vary by species (and even individuals!), creating a wonderful diversity of real-life constructions.

1. CUP

A classic nest type, accessed from above.

Example Species: Northern Yellow Warbler

2. PENSILE

A cup nest suspended from the top rim.

Example Species: Blue-headed Vireo

3. BURROW

A nest underground or excavated into an embankment.

Example Species: Burrowing Owl

4. MOUND

A pile of nesting material with a central egg chamber.

Example Species: Australian Brushturkey

5. DOMED

A cup nest with an overhead covering.

Example Species: Ovenbird

6. GLOBULAR

An enclosed spherical nest with an entrance hole.

Example Species: Firewood-gatherer

7. PENDULOUS

A deeper nest suspended by the top rim.

Example Species: Yellow Oriole

8. CAVITY

A hollow in a tree, cactus, or other structure.

Example Species: Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

9. PLATFORM

A shallow depression on a mound of nest material.

Example Species: White Stork

10. SCRAPE

A shallow depression in the ground.

Example Species: Wrybill

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