



Myths about nesting birds

MYTH: Birds remain in the nest all year long.

Birds use nests as a place to incubate eggs and raise young. Once the birds fledge, they do not typically return to the nest.

MYTH: Birds that don't migrate are not protected from The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918.

It is illegal to possess or sell bird parts, feathers, eggs and nests of ANY bird native to or migrating within North America.

MYTH: If you build it they will come.

Providing a nest box is a great way to attract birds to nest, but it is not a guarantee. If you provide a box in the appropriate range and habitat for a cavity-nesting bird, have patience. The chances are good that eventually it will get occupied.

MYTH: One size fits all.

For cavity-nesting birds, one box size does not fit all! Purchase or build nest boxes with a target species in mind. For information on nest box dimensions, entrance hole sizes and more, visit our Resource Center at <www.nestinginfo.org>.

MYTH: My cat doesn't kill birds.

Cats kill more than a billion birds annually according to some estimates; chances are good that if you own an outdoor cat, it kills birds. Keeping your cat indoors will protect birds and also keep your cat safer and healthier. For more information visit <www.abcbirds.org/cats/>.

MYTH: Parent birds will abandon nestlings touched by humans.

In general, most birds have a poor sense of smell. If you find an uninjured baby bird that is not ready to be out of the nest, carefully put it back, if possible.

MYTH: Birds sing for our benefit or because they are happy.

Birds sing to attract a mate and to defend a territory against competitors. Next time you hear a bird singing listen and look for a female or male present.

MYTH: Some birds mate for life.

Some birds stay together for more than one breeding season, or perhaps until one of the pair dies. However, DNA analyses have revealed that many birds once thought to be strictly monogamous may actually have "cheated" on their partners by mating with others.

