

BIRDS NESTS IN OUR AREA - DO YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE? ... Kaye Traynor

There is great diversity of size and structural complexity of bird nests, and the construction is so perfectly designed to provide a safe haven and nursery for the next generation. That birds can create nests, which we, with all our knowledge and skills, can never perfectly replicate, is one of nature's marvels.

Below is a selection of different styles of nest building by some of our local birds.

Olive-backed Oriole



Olive-backed Oriole
Oriolu sagittatus

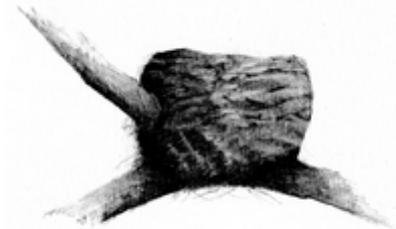
After spending their winter migration in the warmer northern areas, Olive-backed Orioles return for the breeding season. They build deep, cup-shaped nests, which are suspended from thin forks and branches, 7–20 metres above ground level. Nests are made from bark strips, grass, moss, bits of wool, leaves and other soft plant material. They are quite large, carefully woven, hanging nest.

Two to four cream coloured eggs, spotted with grey and brown, are laid in a nest.

Australian Magpie-lark

Magpie-larks breed at any time of the year. Their nests are bowl-

shaped, approximately 150 mm in diameter, and can often be seen perched on a horizontal tree branch 6–15 metres high, or even in some cases on man-made structures. Nests are made from plant fibre, mixed together with mud, and lined with feathers, grasses, wool, fur or any other soft material.



Australian Magpie-lark
Grallina cyanoleuca

A Magpie-lark will lay three to five pink eggs, heavily marked with brown, grey and violet spots and blotches.

Brown Thornbill



Brown Thornbill
Acanthisa pusilla

A Brown Thornbill's nest is a fairly untidy, domed construction, with a side entrance near the top. It is made from coarse grasses, bark, bracken fern and cobwebs, and is lined with fine grasses, fur and feathers and is usually situated low in the undergrowth

Usually three eggs are laid. They are white tinted, pale buff, and freckled with dull red or red-brown, mostly at the larger end.

Eastern Yellow Robin

Eastern Yellow Robins breed during the spring and summer. This beautiful nest is a cup made from bark strips, fine twigs and grass, decorated with bark, lichen and moss, and bound with spider-web, and lined with grass and fibres. These nests are usually found in the fork of a thin tree or sapling, well disguised, 1–7 metres off the ground.



Eastern Yellow Robin
Eopsaltria australis

Three eggs are laid, grey green to pale blue, with red-brown and violet-brown markings, usually at the larger end.

Grey Fantail



Grey Fantail
Rhipidura fuliginosa

The Grey Fantail breeding season is from August to January. Its nest is a delightful, wineglass shape, tiny grey cup made from plant fibres and bound with cobweb, with a tail hanging beneath. It is usually placed on a horizontal fork of a tree, about 1–2 metres above ground, but can be higher, up to 10 metres.

Two, three or four eggs can be laid. They are dull white or cream coloured, finely freckled or blotched with light brown.

Reference: Graham Pizzey and Frank Knight. 2006, *The Field Guide to the Birds of Australia*, 2006 8th edn, HarperCollinsPublishers.

North, Alfred J 1984, *North's Nests and Eggs of Australian Birds : A Life History of Our Birds : A Facsimile Edition of an Australian Classic Volume 1*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne/Oxford

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