



Best Nest

Lyndsay Wasko

Mice Type

(32pp)

978-1-77823-910-6

Instilling appreciation for wildlife in its audience, Best Nest is a fun and educational picture book that focuses on avian habitats.

Lyndsay Wasko's vibrant picture book *Best Nest* combines ornithology and splendid illustrations to introduce types of birds' nests.

The bird motif takes flight in the book's appealing end pages: speckled and plain eggs of varying sizes, feathers, ribbons, and twigs adorn a light blue background, hinting at the tidy arrangement found in field guides. From here, remarks about how "all birds are different" set the stage. The simple, repeating pattern is reassuring too: each two-page layout features a bird on the left and its nest on the right, with a proud explanation about why its is the best nest.

With examples including a bald eagle, a tern, hummingbirds, and penguins, the featured birds span the globe. Each description is succinct; a heron, for instance, is "tall, proud, and sleek." Educational facts are stitched in too: flamingos are pink from the shrimp they eat. There are some similarities between the nests, even though the book is brief. More intriguing are its unusual details, as with a note that a tailorbird's nest is woven together with spider silk. And the book's conclusion is warm, showing that a nest isn't only for show—it's a shelter for chicks to "hatch and grow."

The illustrations are their own draw, with just enough background details to suggest the birds' habitats and contextualize the information. In them, a burrowing owl perches on a saguaro, a toucan pecks at tropical fruit, and quail linger in an autumn woodland. The inclusion of features like marsh grasses and seaweed imbue the environments with realism, as does the precision given to depicting feather markings and beaks.

In the avian-themed picture book *Best Nest*, birds display their finest handiwork.

KAREN RIGBY (September 19, 2024)

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