

# BIRD NESTING BOXES

A wide range of birds choose to make their nests in cavities or, in some cases such as the woodpeckers, will actually dig their own hole in trees. This nesting behaviour not only keeps the eggs and young safe, but the micro-climate inside the hollow is much more stable than an exposed nest, which helps the successful raising of the young.

Because natural cavities and suitable trees are quite rare, these species are usually fairly uncommon where suitable nesting sites are unavailable. However they will, if given the opportunity, use artificial nesting boxes, allowing the birds to breed where they couldn't otherwise.



A male woodpecker drilling a nesting hole in a dead branch.

Bird species that will utilise artificial nesting boxes include Egyptian Geese, Speckled Pigeons, Spotted and Cape Eagle Owls, Common Barn Owls, House and Cape Sparrows, Cape Wagtails, Cape Robin Chats, Common Hoopoes, Knysna and Cardinal Woodpeckers, Cape, Common and Red-winged Starlings and Acacia Pied Barbets.

The African Malachite Kingfisher and Giant Kingfisher utilise specialised burrow boxes in riparian areas, while Swifts, swallows and martins will utilise specially designed boxes that are mounted on buildings.

On Pearl Valley Golf Course, a project is underway to provide a range of nesting boxes to not only help ensure nesting success, but to attract a wider range of birds that would otherwise remain 'missing in action'.

Some species will, in the absence of nesting cavities, utilise holes in buildings, often leading to conflict between them and the human inhabitants of the building. By giving the birds an alternative, this problem is often solved in a mutually agreeable way.

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