

Birds Nesting Inside Your Outdoor Shed and Garage

There are several species of birds who will make themselves right at home in your outdoor shed or garage, but in my opinion, the sneakiest are the wrens. They are small, agile, and stealthy, and can squeeze through a small slit – and will. Swallows are number two on my list of sneaky, quick, and agile birds. To keep these and other birds out, keep your windows and doors firmly closed. And patch any slits or holes. However, if keeping windows and doors closed makes these enclosed areas too hot, then put screens on all the windows and add screen doors. Garage doors will have to be kept closed.

Birds that use sheds and garages are creative nesters. They will use flower pots, buckets, open spaces on shelves between stuff, and boxes. Anything in your space is a potential nesting site. And swallows can ‘glue’ their nests right to the top of a light fixture or on the side of a wall.

Most songbirds will build their nest within a week of claiming a nest site. It will take a few days for the female to lay her eggs. Most eggs hatch within 23-27 days. The young are in the nest on average about two weeks and then the entire family will leave. So the time frame from the moment the bird claims a nest site in your enclosed space is about 7-8 weeks. When the birds leave, what remains is a flattened nest and bird droppings – all easily cleaned up. Always remember to use rubber gloves when cleaning up bird droppings or picking up a nest. For me, the cleanup is a small price to pay for knowing I have provided a bird with a safer nesting site.

Most of these birds who nest in these enclosed spaces are fairly tolerant of us – particularly wrens. The female will sit tight on her nest and not be easily flushed. But when I know a nest is there, I do try to keep away from it for at least 7-8 weeks to allow time for the baby birds to be ready to leave the nest. The one thing you do not want to do is cause the youngsters to explode out of the nest before they are ready because you have frightened them. They have no way of getting back into the nest and are extremely vulnerable to changes in the weather and predators – most especially cats and dogs. So keep your distance – especially after the eggs have hatched.

If a bird is nesting in your shed or garage, it has been my experience that I did not have to leave a door or window open at night for the female – and sometimes the male - to come and go. I have never had an outside shed so my experience is in garages. I have also not lived any farther south than southeastern West Virginia – and I was in the mountains – so have no experience with the overnight heat and humidity of states like Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Our garages have never gotten hot at night, so never needed venting. If you live in an area where nighttime temperatures do not go below 70, then leave a door or window open so she can get out if she becomes too hot. The Carolina Wrens who nest regularly in our garage seem just fine to be in there all night with the doors and windows closed – and who knows, she may have a secret way to get in and out of our garage that we know nothing about. The first thing we do when we get up in the morning is open the back garage door. Wrens seem to have no trouble at all getting out of an enclosed space – they seem to immediately understand open windows and doors. Hummingbirds could learn a lot from wrens!

My advice is for you to decide what you can and cannot live with. For Cleon and me, having a bird nest in our garage is great! And we clean up right after the family leaves. However, this is generally one nest. If you have several birds nesting in your garage or shed, and this is more than you can tolerate, then you must take a good look at the windows, doors and walls, and close up any slits.

Remember, almost all songbirds are experiencing decreases in their populations – some are in serious decline. Try to share your space if you can. But if that is not possible, close your garages and sheds up tight from early spring through late summer – both day and night. And remember, it is against the law – and there are stiff penalties – if you hurt or kill a bird. They are protected under the Migratory Bird Act. If you need more information on this treaty, look on this website’s menu under “Articles I Wrote”: [Organizations that Not Only Help Birds, They Help You Understand Birds.](#)