

Birds are like people some are locally inclined

A strong tendency in nature is toward harmony and the adjustment of each outdoor creature to its environment. There is a ^{lean} tendency toward adaptive color. The lichen matches the rocks or trees. The song sparrow that lives more in the damp and wooded areas is darker brown, while the song sparrow that dwells in the sand and sage has a lighter and more grayish coat.

The ptarmigan or snow grouse is often cited as a good illustration of protective coloration. It is white in winter and grayish or brown in summer, the color blending with the environment. It is the same with the weasel and snowshoe rabbit living in the north.

The rufous hummingbird that nests in Oregon builds a tiny cup of greenish moss and the nest is generally saddled on a little limb. It is almost a universal habit for the bird to shingle the outside of her home with some lighter green lichens. One might compare this to the black-chinned hummingbird in southern California, which commonly nests in the sycamore trees. Her nest is nearly always light brownish or buff in color because it is made almost entirely from the down on the under side of the sycamore leaves.

These nests might be considered as most remarkable exhibits of protective coloration, yet the question might be raised as to whether the selection of nesting materials is made more for the purpose of disguising the nest so it will not be seen by enemies or whether the colors are selected to match and blend with the surroundings. Lichens certainly give the nest of our rufous hummingbird an

artistic touch. It so often looks like the branch upon which it is placed and might suggest something like an artistic taste in the builder.

The nest^s of the wood peewee and some of the gnat-catchers and flycatchers are made of moss and fibres and are saddled on limbs with cobwebs. The material is weather worn and inconspicuous. It is not a case of birds taking the material that may be close by and handy. They hunt for neutral colors. The outside of the cup is then finished off with lichens so it is a remarkably beautiful structure. It all leads ^{me} to think that birds are like people; some have little taste and others are very artistically inclined.

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