



# Save The River® / Upper St. Lawrence RIVERKEEPER®

*Protecting the St. Lawrence River now, and for generations to come*

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## Haas the Great Blue Heron – Nests Activity

After the Read

**Materials:** coffee filters, materials scraps, toothpicks, ribbon scraps, tissue paper, pipe cleaners, spaghetti, artificial grasses and mosses, small wood sticks, play dough, clay, twine, string, yarn.

**Natural Materials:** twigs, sticks, pine straw, pinecones, grasses, leaves, pebbles, small rocks, a bucket of mud. (You may have the children collect these a few days before this activity.)



### Start the Conversation

Asking a few key questions can get the children thinking, speaking, and planning.

Why do birds build nests? Where do birds build nests? What does a bird nest look like? Why might a bird build a nest in a special place? (ground, in a bush, high in a tree, on a ledge)

**Resource Ideas** -It may help children with this by adding prompts before the activity time: Looking at various bird nests, read additional bird books, look at the birds that use various nests.

### A few statements:

A Great Blue Heron nest is 3' wide built high in a treetop.

The Common Tern nest is built on rocky islands, bare ground lined with debris.

Loons build their nests on a shoreline in the back of bays or on small islands. Looks like a ball of dead grasses and measures about 22"

The Mergansers often nest in large tree cavities, hollow logs, or in holes in the ground. They may even use an old woodpecker hole.

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## Activity Time

**Just Dabble** – Activity for ages 3-7. Giving each child a coffee filter allows them a framework to work from and an easy way to transport their creations home. It works out well to have the materials in small bowls or repurposed fruit/veggie trays allows the children to see all materials and know where to put them back. Invite children to design their own nest; once completed they may add the egg details using playdough or clay. An important step to the project is the “share time” allowing each child to use their words to describe their nest, eggs, and the bird that may use this.



**Task Challenges** – Activity for ages 7 and up. Using the same materials and/or adding larger materials to the challenge opportunities works well. This activity can be individual or a small team approach. Listed below are a few potential challenges:

- Build a nest that can hold the weight of 2 penny rolls.
- Build a nest that is stable on a tree branch.
- Build an authentic nest to represent the bird of your choice – tell about that bird.

It is important that children have the time to speak about and test their challenges in small groups or if comfortable for the class. Speaking about their project is important for this age. Children may also want to write a piece reflecting on their project, the challenges and the rewards.

## RESOURCES

The Cornell Lab All About Birds: <https://allaboutbirds.org>

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