Bird Nests and Construction Behaviour provides a broad view of our current understanding of the biology of the nests, bowers and tools made by birds. It illustrates how, among vertebrates, the building abilities of birds are more impressive and consistent than those of any other builders, apart from ourselves, yet birds seem to require no special equipment, and use quite uncomplicated behaviour. In doing so, the book raises general issues in the field of behavioural ecology, including the costs of reproduction, sexual selection and the organisation and complexity of behaviour. Written for students and researchers of animal behaviour, behavioural ecology and ornithology, it will nevertheless make fascinating reading for architects and engineers interested in understanding how structures are created by animals.

MIKE HANSELL is Senior Lecturer in the Institute of Biomedical and Life Sciences, at the University of Glasgow. In his research career he has been interested in structures made by many different species, including caddis larval cases, wasp nests and mammal burrows, but his current interests concentrate on bird nests, bowers and tools. He is the author of *Animal Architecture and Building Behaviour* (1984).

Bird Nests
and Construction Behaviour

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Pen and ink illustrations by
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To *Norma*, *Christopher* and *Lindsay*

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Acknowledgements

My research interests embrace all animal architecture and building behaviour but, until recent years, I had confined my personal research to insect builders. Inevitably, as it now seems, I was drawn to the study of bird nests, because so much about them remains to be understood, the structures themselves have a tangible appeal, and the research environment at Glasgow University is particularly strong in various aspects of ornithology. Without this climate of support from colleagues I would not have had the confidence to undertake this book, or certainly not one with this breadth of coverage.

To give this book added authority I felt it was necessary to see and handle a large number of nests. The answer was to study museum collections. I am therefore most grateful to the following museums for their co-operation: Kelvingrove Gallery, Glasgow; Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh; Musée d'Histoire Naturelle, Rouen. Longer visits were necessary to the major collections at Musée National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris; the Natural History Museum, London; the National Museum of Natural History, Washington; and the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, California. I am particularly indebted to Lloyd Kiff at the Western Foundation for the personal attention he gave to my study of that fine collection. To enable me to visit these places, I am most grateful for the financial support given to me by the Association for the Study of Animal Behaviour and by the Carnegie Trust for Scottish Universities.

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