

The stages of a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker nest.

- During excavation birds will be seen excavating a cavity but only when they are deep inside emerging head first to throw out woodchips is the cavity anywhere near complete. Lesser Spots always make a new cavity each year but often return to the same small area of woodland or the same dead tree if it is still standing. Birds often try an excavation but move on elsewhere before completing a cavity. This may be an important aspect of breeding so please record such failed cavities.
- During laying and incubation the birds become very secretive and only change over every two hours or so - at this stage it is easy to assume the nest is no longer active. It is worth being patient and waiting to confirm that the nest is still active if you have the time available, or return regularly to increase the chance of detecting activity.
- During chick rearing the young are fed every 5-10 minutes and their age can be worked out from the adult behaviour. For the first week after hatching the young are always brooded by one of the adults so there is a changeover every time the young are fed. The young are usually fed inside the cavity until their last week when they can be fed at the nest hole with the adults only going in occasionally. For their last 2-3 days in the nest the young can be quite noisy making insistent begging calls (but not always) and can often be seen looking out of the nest hole waiting to be fed.

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