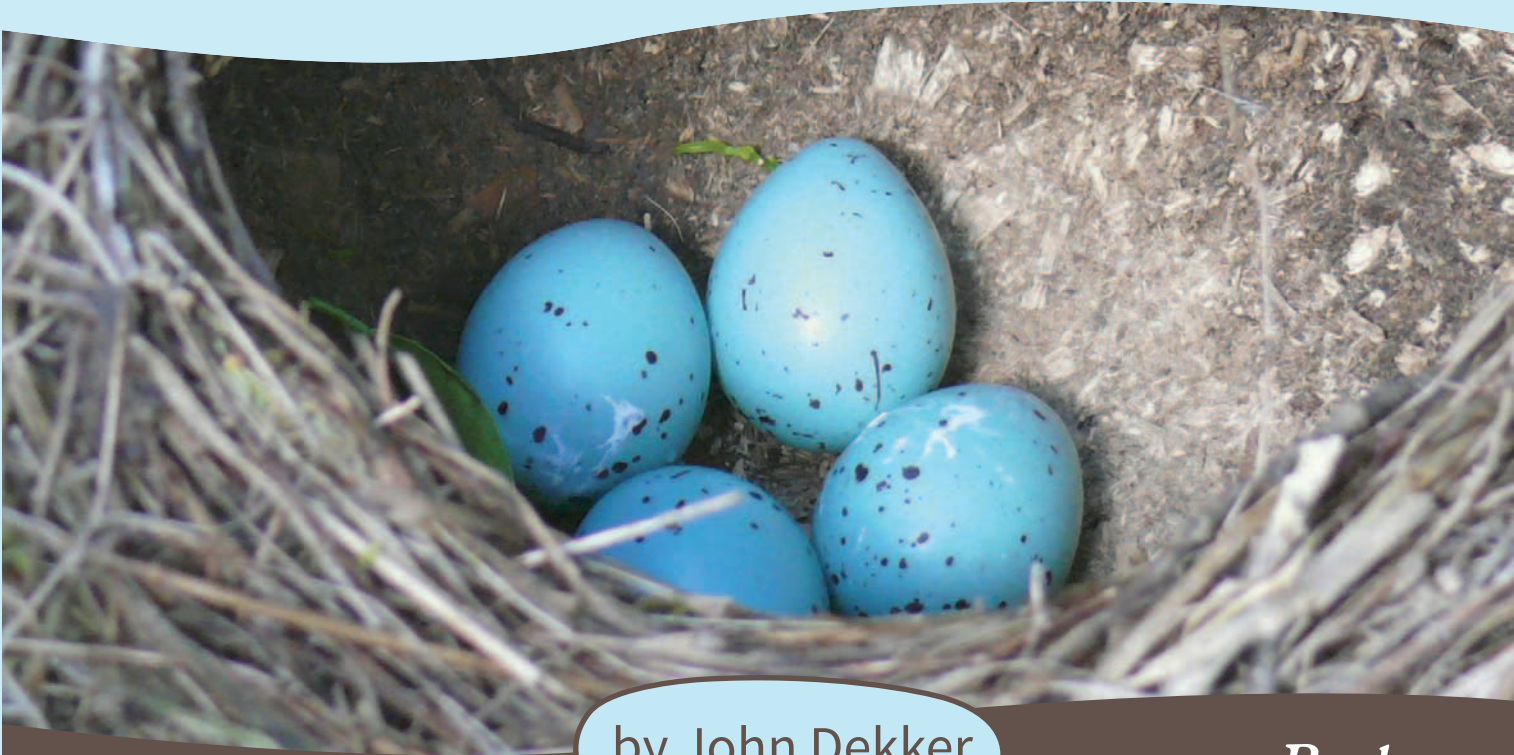


Blue Eggs



by John Dekker

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to Read*

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Ministry of Education



Have you ever seen blue eggs like these?
They belong to a song thrush.

Song thrushes lay three to five eggs at a time. A group of eggs in a nest is called a **clutch**.



Building the nest

The female song thrush builds the nest.
It takes her about a week.

Like many other birds' nests, the outside
is made up of grass and thin twigs.

But something special about the nest
is that it has a mud lining.



Hatching

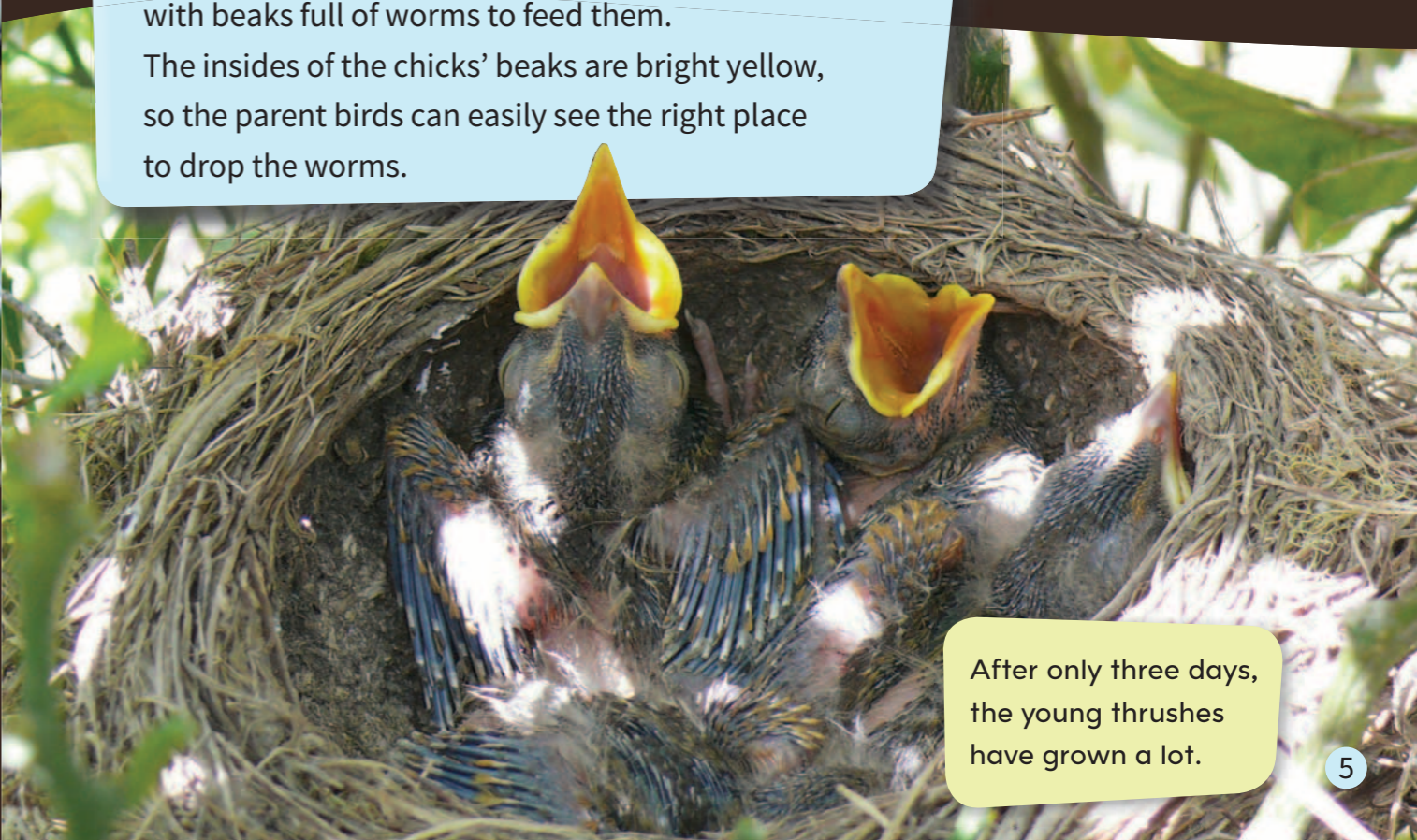
After the female song thrush lays her clutch of eggs, she has to **incubate** them (keep them warm). They hatch after about two weeks.

When the four little chicks hatch out, they are covered in **down** (soft new feathers). Their eyes look huge!

Feeding the chicks

The hungry young thrushes grow quickly. They hold their beaks wide open. Both parents keep flying back to the nest with beaks full of worms to feed them.

The insides of the chicks' beaks are bright yellow, so the parent birds can easily see the right place to drop the worms.



After only three days, the young thrushes have grown a lot.



Growing up

After ten days, the chicks' feathers have grown. The young thrushes chirp loudly when they hear their parents near the nest.

Leaving the nest

The chicks leave the nest when they are eleven to fifteen days old. They now have the feathers they need for flying, but they can't fly very well.



This is the first young bird to leave the nest.

Finding food

Even though the young thrushes have left the nest, their parents will continue to feed them for several more weeks.

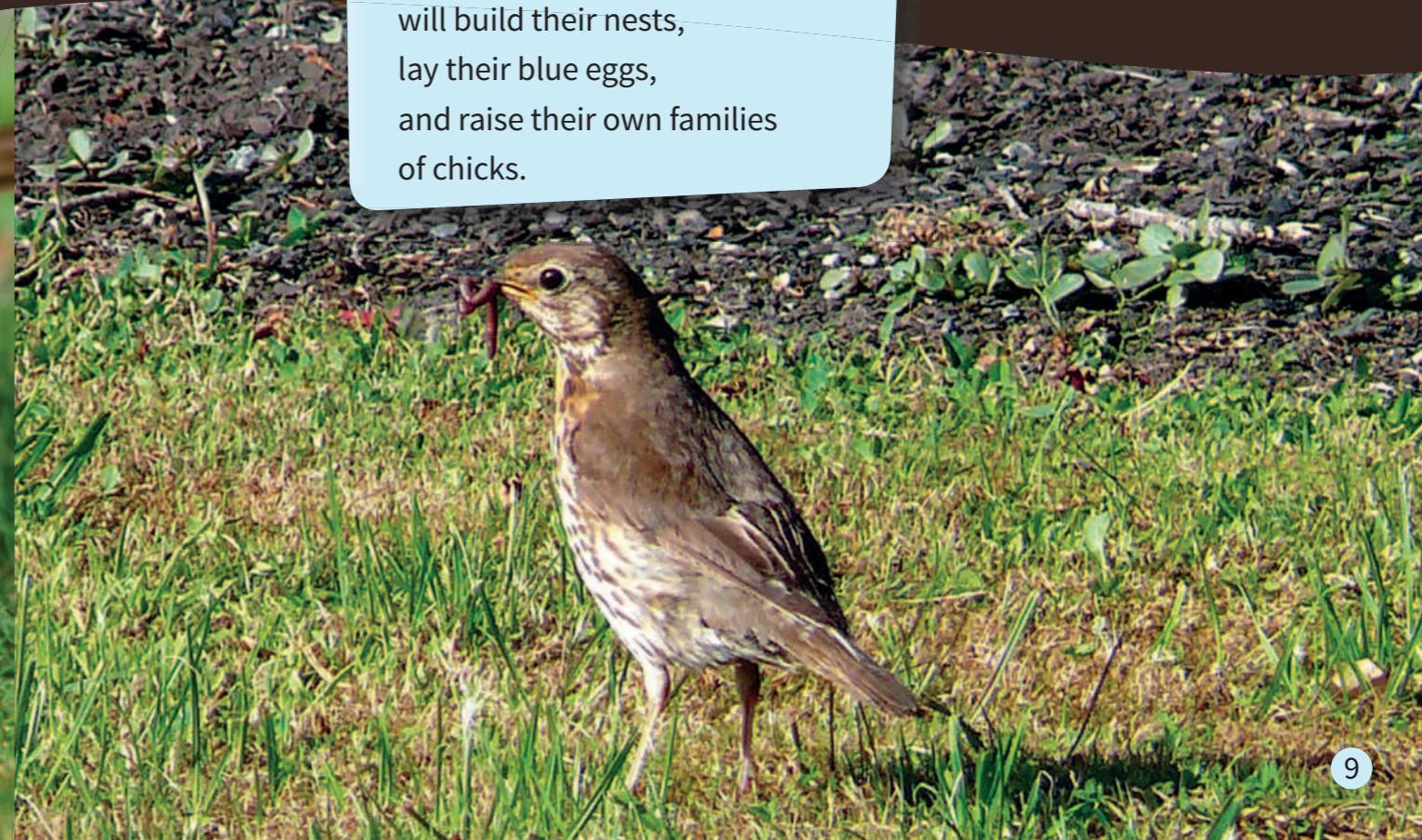
During this time, the young thrushes learn to find food. They pull up worms from the ground and use a rock to smash snail shells open.



Song thrushes are **omnivores**. They eat worms, snails, insects, spiders, berries, and fruit.

This young thrush has learnt to find its own food and to fly.

When spring comes again, the female song thrushes will build their nests, lay their blue eggs, and raise their own families of chicks.



The song thrush

The song thrush belongs to the thrush family of birds.

There are many different kinds of thrushes all around the world.

The blackbird is a type of thrush.

The settlers who came from England brought song thrushes and blackbirds to New Zealand. The birds' songs reminded them of the home they had left behind. The song thrushes and blackbirds were also useful for eating insects.



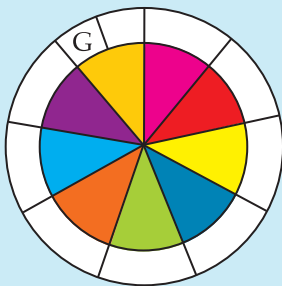
The problem with song thrushes

Song thrushes have a beautiful song. However, some people think these birds are a problem because they eat crops such as berries, grapes, and apples.

These grapevines are covered in nets to protect the fruit from birds.



Next time you hear beautiful birdsong,
look out for the song thrush.
There might be a nest in your garden.



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To go directly to audio and TSM for this book, scan the QR code or use the short URL.



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