

Family life



The mating season of stone martens is in July. Their young are born in March or April the following year. This means that the *pregnancy* is nine months, which is a very long time for such a small animal. There is a reason for this. When the egg is *fertilised*, the babies develop inside their mother's body for about a month. Then they stop growing for a few months and start again in February.

Females give birth to between two and four blind and hairless young. They weigh about 30 grams. After about five weeks their eyes open. They are fed on mother's milk for seven weeks. Afterwards, their mother brings them food to their nest. At the age of four months, she shows them how to find their own food.

Young stone martens play a lot. They play with their brothers and sisters or alone, they play with objects and they also playfight with each other. By the end of the summer the young are independent.

<i>pregnancy</i>	Tragezeit, Schwangerschaft
<i>fertilise</i>	befruchten