

EGGS of EVERY STRIPE & SPOT!

by Lee Lamb

Everybody loves a good Easter egg hunt, and this time of year you can hunt for wild eggs every time you go walking in the woods. Spring is when most birds build nests, lay eggs and raise their young. So look for pieces of hatched eggs beneath trees and bushes or tucked in clumps of grass. Just like birds themselves, eggs come in many sizes, shapes, colors and patterns.

ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL

Not all bird eggs are elliptical, or oval-shaped, like chicken eggs. Some are more spherical, or round, like those of a great-horned owl. Killdeer eggs are more pyriform, or pear-shaped.

In general, the bigger the bird the bigger the egg. Ostriches stand up to 8 feet high—taller than any player in the NBA—and can weigh up to 250 pounds. Their eggs measure 7 inches long and weigh 2½ pounds.

Hummingbirds (the only birds that can fly backwards) fit in the palm of your hand.

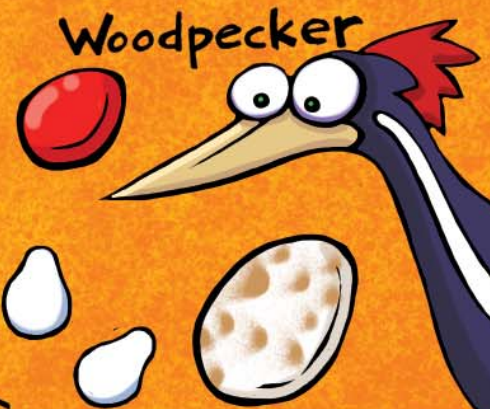
Their eggs measure about half-an-inch long and weigh one-hundredth of an ounce—about as much as a single Lucky Charm!



Scrub Jay



Robin



Woodpecker



Loon



ostrich



Cardinal



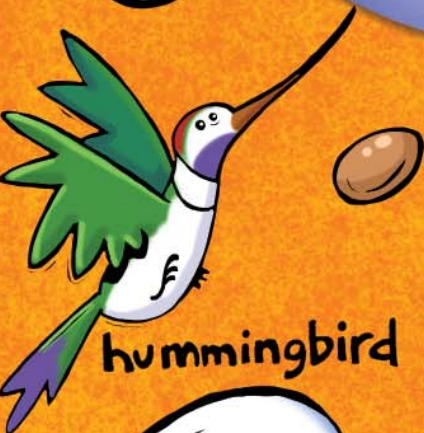
Killdeer



Quail



Eagle



hummingbird



owl

LOOK, BUT DON'T TOUCH!

Oology, pronounced *oh-ol-uh-jee*, is the study of eggs. It's okay to look at eggs in a nest, but please don't touch. If the parent birds are nearby and seem upset, it's time to back off. If you don't, they may abandon the nest.

CAN YOU HELP EACH MOTHER AND FATHER BIRD FIND ITS EGGS?

NATURE'S EASTER EGGS

Lots of eggs are white, like those of a woodpecker. But they come in as many colors as Easter eggs. Robin eggs are blue, mountain quail eggs are red, scrub jay eggs are green and loon eggs are brown.

Many birds, from cardinals to golden eagles, lay eggs covered with speckles, streaks or blotches. These markings help camouflage, or disguise, the eggs so they blend into the nest. This makes it harder for scavengers like skunks and raccoons to find them.