



Bird Nest Follow-Up Activity Ideas



Lots of bird and nest activities for students as well as lists of teacher resources can be found at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology BirdSleuth website including this 'Life in A Nest' activity: <http://www.birdsleuth.org/get-a-birds-eye-view-on-nesting-birds/>. Activities provide an introduction to Maryland Green School projects such as installing bird boxes.

1. Outdoor Connections:

- a. Have students explore the schoolyard to find a potential safe spot for a nest – would this location provide cover from predators and access to food and water?
- b. Take students outside to look for birds and nests. If you find a nest, try to determine the species of bird using it. Help on identifying nests can be found on nestwatch : <https://nestwatch.org/learn/focal-species/>. Students can also look for these signs that birds are nesting: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/top-three-signs-that-birds-are-nesting-near-you> Nests are easiest to spot in the fall when the leaves have dropped (and there is no risk of disturbing an active nest). In the spring, you might want to review Nestwatch's Code of Conduct on searching for nests before going outside with students: <https://nestwatch.org/learn/how-to-nestwatch/code-of-conduct>
- c. You can also do a **habitat hunt** to see if the schoolyard would provide suitable habitat for a chosen bird: <https://www.nwf.org/Educational-Resources/Educator-Tools/Lesson-Plans-and-Webinars> activity: Habit Hunt. Research the habitat needs of different bird species at: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/search/>. Students can suggest ways the schoolyard habitat could be improved for birds, especially before projects such as planting trees, shrubs or flowers at your school or installing bird boxes.

2. STEM Activities:

- a. Student teams can research different bird species including the type of nest they build. They can then try to build a similar style of nest.
- b. Challenge students to build nests from recycled man-made materials or to build a nest without the wire frame.

3. Science Connections

- a. Investigate camouflage: have students color an egg to be camouflaged in their nest (egg shapes attached).
 - Ground nesting birds have particularly well camouflaged eggs. Have students color an egg so it will be camouflaged outside (or somewhere in the classroom).

- Have students hide their egg in a spot where it is camouflaged and see if other students are able to spot their eggs.
- b. Students can learn more about American Robins, their lifecycle, migration and habitats as well as how to take part in citizen science by following along with real time mapping of the Robin's migration at Journey North:
http://www.learner.org/jnorth/tm/robin/kids_current.html
- c. Consider monitoring a nest with the Cornell Lab's NestWatch citizen-science project: <http://nestwatch.org> or watching their nest cams.
http://cams.allaboutbirds.org/channel/16/Red-tailed_Hawks/

4. Writing Connections:

- a. Have students write a creative description of their nest for a potential bird renter, describing all its benefits.
- b. Have students write a persuasive letter. Help robins stay safe during their nesting season by writing a letter to remind pet owners to keep cats indoors. Learn the facts about cats and birds from the American Bird Conservancy's Cats Indoors Program.



5. Math Connections:

- a. Have students investigate grams as a unit of measure using the following questions:
 - What common objects are measured in grams?
 - If a dry American Robin's nest weighs 205 grams, what common objects are similar in weight?
 - How many ounces would be the same as 205 grams?
 - Each chick weighs about 5.5 grams when they hatch and about 70 grams when they are ready to fledge, 10 days later. How much weight do they gain? How much per day?
 - How much weight does the nest have to support when there are 4 fledglings and a mom who weighs 77 grams? What common objects weigh as much as a hatchling/fledgling?
- b. A robin's nest is about 8-20 centimeters in diameter (3-8 inches). Have students make circles to show the range of diameters for a robin's nest.

Information on what to do if you find baby birds: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/i-found-a-baby-bird-what-do-i-do/>

More information about the legal protections for birds and nests can be found here: <https://www.fws.gov/birds/policies-and-regulations/laws-legislations.php>



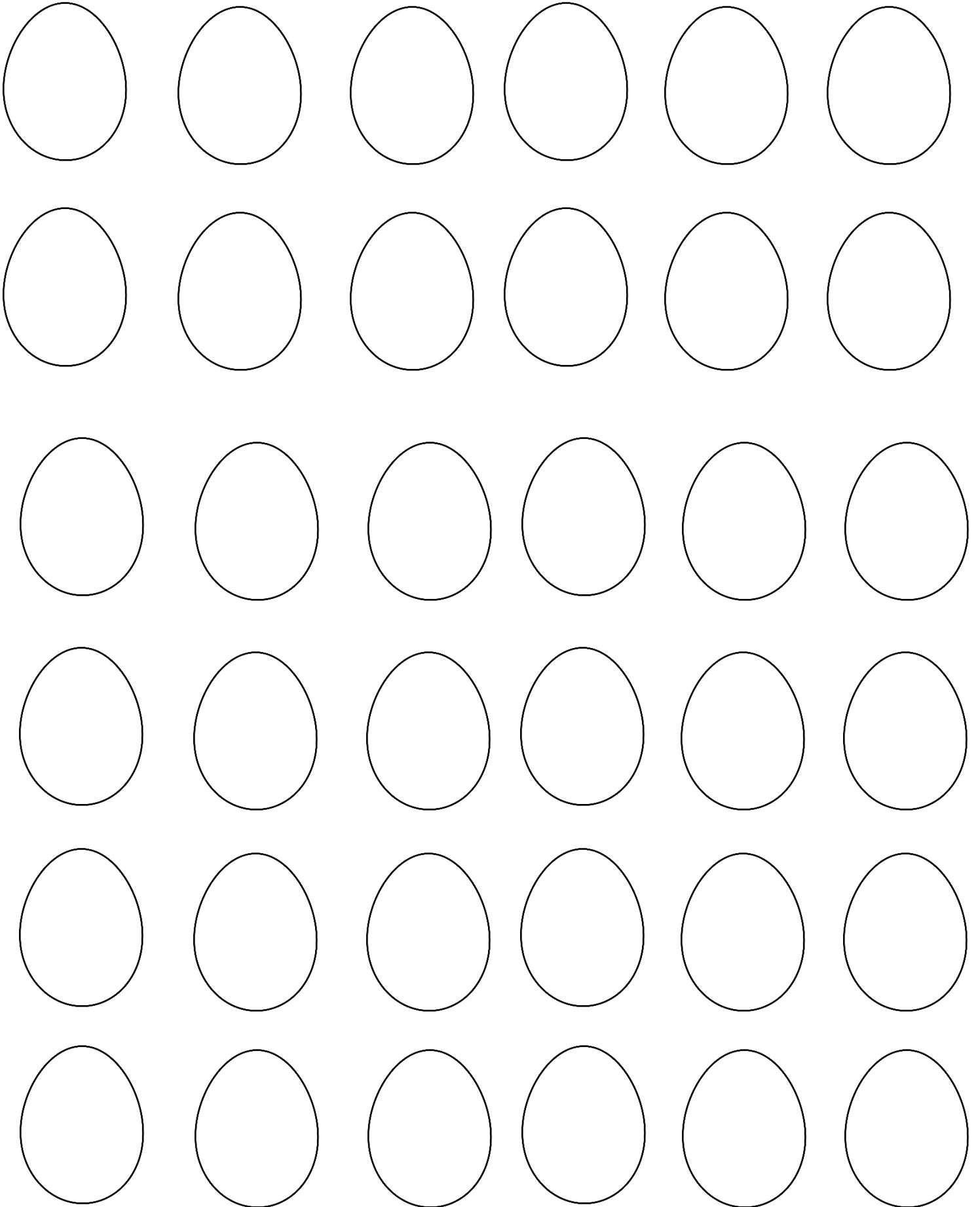
Larry Hogan, Governor

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Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary

Small Eggs to Color to Add to Nests



Eggs to Color for Camouflage Activity

