



HIGHLANDS BIOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

# Week 1

## Nearby Nature – Birds

Tuesday 3/17

It's a rainy day here in Highlands so here is an indoor activity - diy bird nests! It's the time of year that birds are making their nests, and we've seen Northern Cardinals, Carolina Chickadees, American Crows, Blue Jays, and Brown Thrashers around the Nature Center today. When the rain stops, take a walk outside and see how many birds you can find near your home!

[https://www.kaplanco.com/blog/post/2017/04/21/crafts-for-kids-diy-bird-nests?fbclid=IwAR2fmwQwmpGEFE2pBDj8IPPHZyAWrf5vWlpscvcKel1834bv\\_Ek4c7FUN6g](https://www.kaplanco.com/blog/post/2017/04/21/crafts-for-kids-diy-bird-nests?fbclid=IwAR2fmwQwmpGEFE2pBDj8IPPHZyAWrf5vWlpscvcKel1834bv_Ek4c7FUN6g)



## Wednesday 3/18

Need some eggs to put in your DIY bird nests from yesterday? Here is a simple recipe from Kleinworth & Co for Salt- Dough "Robin Eggs" that you can use to make some while at home! If you go exploring outside and see a large (6-8" across) nest reinforced with mud, it is likely a robin's nest! They are often lined with dry grass, so keep your eyes peeled (pun intended 😊).



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### Salt- Dough "Robin Eggs"

**WHAT TO DO:**

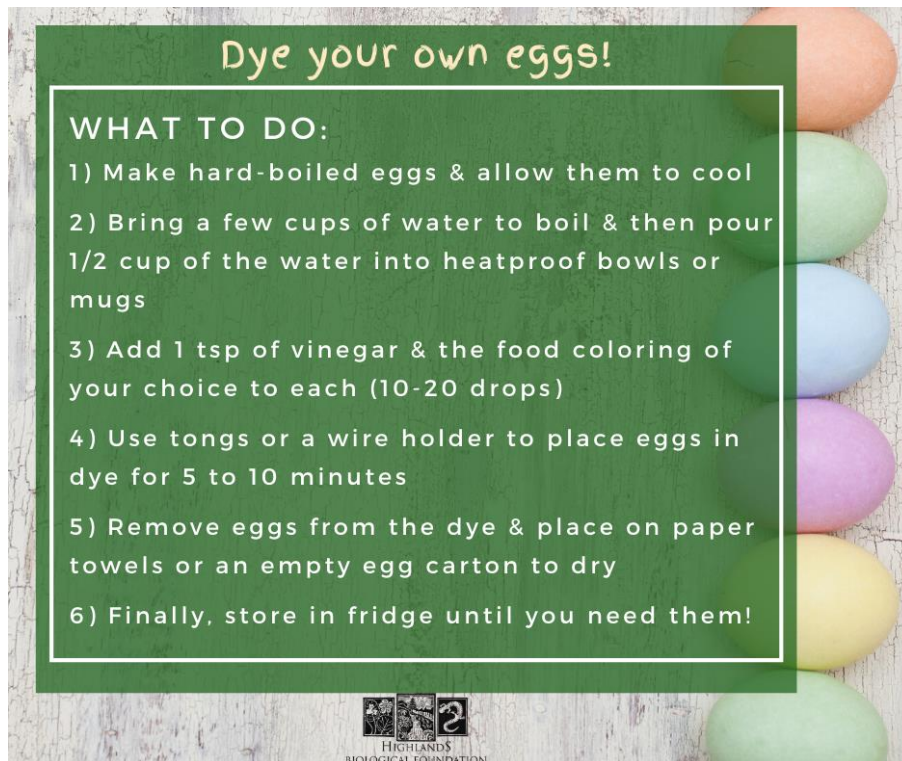
- 1) Mix 1 cup of flour & 1 of cup salt
- 2) Add 1 cup water & combine: kneading with hands
- 3) Add 2 drops of blue gel food color & knead until color is evenly spread throughout dough
- 4) Grab small portions & shape into egg form
- 5) Leave on tray for several days or bake @ 200 degrees for 6 hours
- 6) Finally, place in DIY nest from yesterday's activity!

## Thursday 3/19

Did you know that just two pigments account for the remarkable spectrum of bird eggshell hue and patterns?! That's incredible considering the wide variation of eggshell colors and patterns used for camouflage, easy recognition, solar radiation defense, and more! Click the link below to learn more:

<https://www.audubon.org/news/cracking-code-egg-coloration>

If you're looking for a fun at home activity for today, and perhaps a nice snack 😊, here is an easy guide for dyeing your own eggs! Experiment by mixing different food colors to see what colors result. This way you can practice your egg dyeing technique before Easter arrives in a few weeks.



## Friday 3/20

This week we've shared a lot of activities focused on birds that we hope you found helpful while you've been at home. To wrap up this week and lead into the weekend, we wanted to share this free "All About Birds" resource from the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/) :

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/>

**Check out the live camera feeds of various birds, learn bird ID tips, and hear bird songs and calls!** Bird diversity is very high in the southern Appalachian Mountains. Connect with nature during this isolating period and go outside to put your new bird ID skills to the test!

Some great birding areas nearby include [Mainspring Conservation Trust](https://www.mainspringconserves.org/projects/) properties such as the **Tessentee Bottomland Preserve** and **Gibson Bottoms**. Visit <https://www.mainspringconserves.org/projects/> for more info. on these areas.