

SOME FACTS ABOUT EGGS

The natural colour of vertebrate eggs is the white of the calcium carbonate from which the shells are formed, but some birds, mainly passerines (commonly called perching birds), produce coloured eggs. The pigments biliverdin (a green bile pigment) and its zinc chelate give a green or blue ground colour, while other chemical combinations produce reds and browns as a ground colour, or as spotting.

Non-passerines usually have white eggs, except in some ground-nesting groups where camouflage is necessary, and some parasitic cuckoos which have to match the passerine host's egg colour.

It has been suggested that the markings on passerine eggs actually act to reduce brittleness by acting as a solid state lubricant. If there is insufficient calcium available in the local soil, the egg shell may be thin, especially in a circle around the broad end. The speckling compensates for this, and increases inversely to the amount of calcium in the soil. For the same reason, later eggs in a clutch are more spotted than early ones as the female's store of calcium is depleted. The colour of individual eggs is also genetically influenced, and appears to be inherited through the female only.

It used to be thought that colour was applied to the shell immediately before laying, but research now shows that colouration is an integral part of the development of the shell, with the same protein as that which deposits the calcium carbonate, or the spotting when there is a lack of that mineral, being responsible.

In communal ground-nesting species, each female's eggs have their own individual markings, making it easier for her to identify her own eggs on the crowded breeding-ground.

Most bird eggs are an oval shape, one end being rounded and the other more pointed. This shape forms while the egg is being forced through the oviduct. At this stage the egg's wall is still malleable, and as the egg is pushed forward, by the muscles contracting the oviduct behind it, the pointy end develops at the rear. Cliff-nesting birds often have extremely conical eggs. This makes them less likely to roll off, as they tend to roll around in a tight circle; this trait is likely to have arisen due to evolution via natural selection. In contrast, many hole-nesting birds have nearly spherical eggs.

R.V.C. with help from Wikipedia

SHEP'S LORIKEET FOOD...ANOTHER BARGAIN FROM OUR RANGE

The Services Officer, Dennis Lomman, has a full range of *SHEP'S* Lorikeet Food, in both Wet-mix and Dry-mix. This product, if fed in the right proportions, will not produce "squirty" droppings.

The *SHEP'S* diet is in two parts...Wet-mix and Dry-mix. Neither one on its own provides the correct nutrient balance, they **must** be fed in conjunction.

The correct feeding method is: enough Wet-mix each day to be eaten in approximately two hours, **plus** Dry-mix at all times. This with the addition of fresh fruit daily will provide the birds' complete dietary requirements for both maintenance and breeding.

Ask Dennis for details: (08) 8344 8363 or dennisem@chariot.net.au