

COLOR-CHANGING EGGS

For the first time, scientists have discovered bird eggs that are *iridescent*, meaning they change color when viewed from different angles.

Ornithologists made the discovery by accident while investigating the glossy eggs of the great tinamou, native to Central America and South America. They wondered what gives the eggs their shine. When they used a *spectrophotometer* to reflect light off the shells at different angles, the device detected a color change. “We were very surprised!” says Branislav Igic of the University of Akron in Ohio.

The eggs’ iridescence is difficult for humans to see, but no one knows how birds view it. “Birds see color very differently from humans,” says Igic.

—Jacqueline Adams

➔ **BLUE HUE:** Different species of tinamou have differently colored eggs. Only the great tinamou egg—the big blue one shown here—is iridescent.

