

Spot it! Birds and mammals

Ray Kennedy (rspb-images.com)



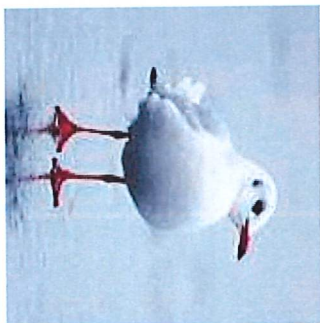
House sparrow

Nick Upton (rspb-images.com)



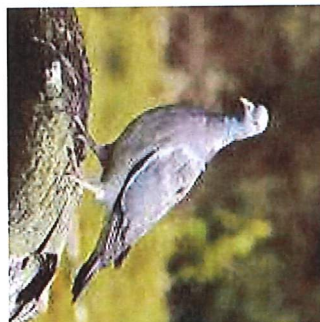
Carrion crow

David Norton (rspb-images.com)



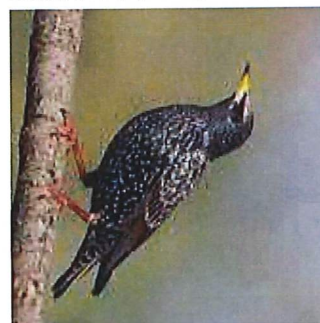
Black-headed gull

Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)



Woodpigeon

Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)



Starling

Ray Kennedy (rspb-images.com)



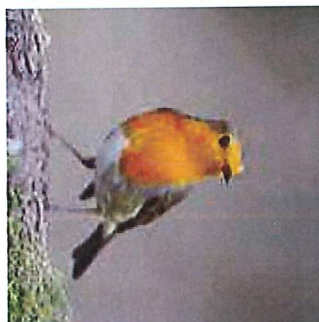
Blue tit

Ray Kennedy (rspb-images.com)



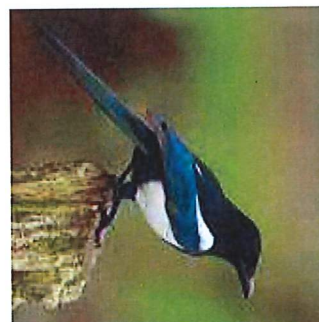
Blackbird

Ray Kennedy (rspb-images.com)



Robin

Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)



Magpie

Ray Kennedy (rspb-images.com)



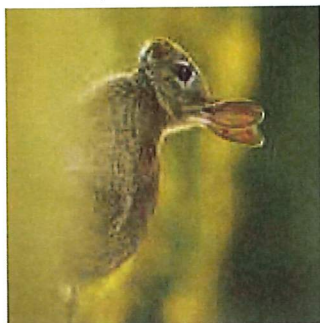
Song thrush

Ben Hall (rspb-images.com)



Grey squirrel

Ben Hall (rspb-images.com)



Rabbit

Seen something else? Draw it!



SUPERSTAR

Brilliant Birds

Organiser's Card



About the activity

This activity is designed to get children thinking about birds, habitats, designing and making.

The children have been given a story about Mrs Twitcher, a local bird expert. She thinks it is only birds who can build nests.

Through this activity you will support your group to:

- Design and build their own nest.
- Test the strength and stability of their nest under windy and wet conditions.
- Present their findings to the rest of the group.

Kit list

- An outside environment – playground, school field, shrubby area etc.
- Nest building materials e.g. wool, twigs, grass, leaves, feathers, shredded paper, pipe cleaners etc
- Pot of clay or modelling material per team to act as 'glue'
- 'Beaks' (chopsticks, pegs or folded card)
- A watering can
- Strong fan

What to do

1. Introduce the activity using story. Ask the children if they think Mrs Twitcher is right, or do they think they can build a good nest?
2. Give out activity cards and equipment to the children.
3. Explain that they will be using the equipment provided to build a nest and then test it in the 'rain' and 'wind'. You could show pictures or videos of birds building nests.
4. Encourage children to discuss their ideas and how to carry out their investigations. Prompt questions:
 - What materials will they use?
 - How will they fix their nest together?
 - How will they record their results?
5. Give each child a pretend beak to use. Remind them not to put the beaks in their mouths. Let them practice using their beaks.
6. In an outdoor area, ask the children to gather materials for their nest. If necessary set up extra materials in the outdoor environment beforehand.
7. Once all the nests are built, the children can test them. What happens if you pour water over them? Do they fall apart or get waterlogged? Support children to conduct their tests and make their own records of their results. They could also take photographs or make drawings.
8. Ask the children to present their findings to the rest of the group, they can be as creative in their presentation as they want - the activity card suggests they could re-write the words to the song, using their findings.

Things to think about

Birds often work with each other to build their nests. Children will find it is helpful to collaborate in this activity using their varied skills to construct the nest.

Some children will find this activity challenging. Give them time to try using a beak, but let them use their hands if they are not making progress.

Make sure children do not disturb natural birds' nests.



Keywords

- Habitat
- Nests
- Shelter
- Structure

Take it further

Birds use a range of materials to build their nests. The availability of materials and the need to protect their offspring influences the type of nest the birds build. As an extension activity, you can help children to think about this by providing a limited range of different materials to different groups and asking them to also think about what they would do to give the baby birds the best chance of survival.

Watch out!

Follow the organisation's policy for outdoor work. Check that the area is free of unsuitable materials e.g. animal faeces, broken glass or tin cans and hazardous plants such as stinging nettles.

Wash hands after working outdoors and handling nest building materials.

Find out more

Not all birds construct nests. The star no-nest builders are probably Emperor Penguins and Fairy Terns.





CREST
AWARDS

SUPERSTAR

Brilliant Birds

Activity Card

The Best Of The Nests

Local birdwatcher Mrs Twitcher is an expert on birds' nests. "I think birds are brilliant," she told our reporter. "I don't think people can build nests like birds do."

Do you think Mrs Twitcher is right?



Your challenge



Can you build a birds' nest?

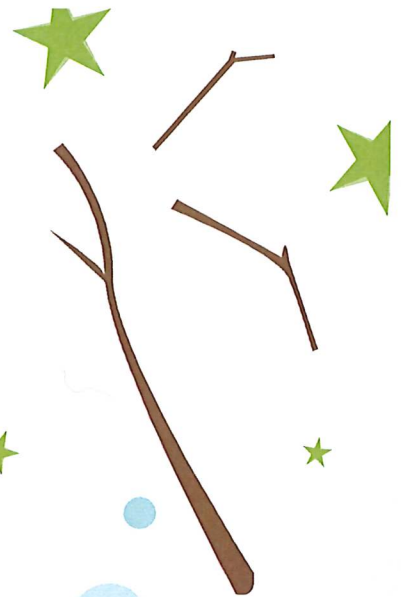
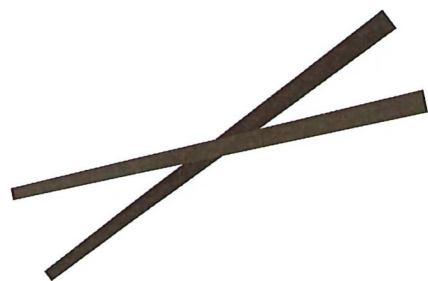
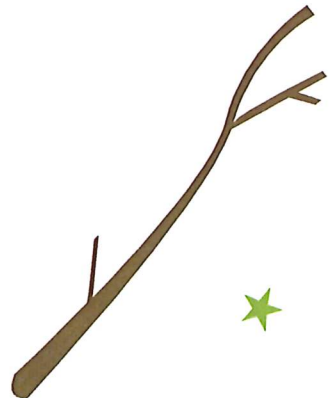
Make sure you only use your pretend beak!

How will your nest survive in the wind and the rain?

Discuss



- What do birds use to build nests?
- How do you think they decide which materials to collect?
- How difficult do you think building a nest will be?



Getting started

What materials can you find that you might be able to use to build your nest?

Which ones do you think will be best?

Do you need different materials inside and outside the nest?

How will you keep everything together?

You could start with a small bowl made out of modelling material.

What other ways can you think of to build a nest?

Test your ideas

What will happen to your nest on a windy day?

What will happen to your nest in rainy weather?

What works well and what could be improved?

Share your ideas

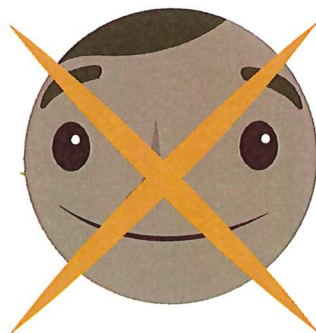
Take pictures of the best nests and make a display for Mrs Twitcher. Give a presentation on building birds' nests.

Extra things to do

Do birds with different shaped beaks make different nests?

Are there any unusual materials that birds use to make nests?

Find out if all birds build nests.



Remember to hold
you pretend beak
in your hands, not
your mouth