Activity 9: Build a bird

Design a bird from a selection of wings, feet and beaks that make it well suited to a particular habitat.

Learning outcomes

Children will:

- understand that birds’ bodies are adapted to live in different habitats that provide their food source
- understand that birds that look similar often live in the same habitat
- learn to explain why a bird is adapted to a particular habitat and answer questions about it
- understand that living things in a habitat depend on each other for food

Resources required

Provided in the Natural History Museum package:

- bird features and worksheet

Provided by school:

- coloured pencils or pens
- glue
Activity 9: Build a bird

This is my bird. It is called a

It feeds on

It lives
Activity 9: Build a bird
Activity 9: Teacher notes

Birds live in lots of different habitats. They have different shaped bodies, feet and beaks that are adapted to where they live and the food they eat.

- shore and wetland birds – waders, longer legs, beaks adapted to probing for shellfish and long wings (eg spoonbill, curlew, avocet and oystercatcher)
- water birds – webbed feet, maybe long necks for catching fish, long legs and flat beaks for dabbling (eg great-crested grebe, grey heron, mallard and black-headed gull)
- woodland birds – feet for clinging, beaks for breaking seeds, nuts, fruits and insects and short wings to fly through foliage (eg blackbird, jay, robin, blue tit and crossbill)
- birds of prey – hooked beaks, tearing claws and very good eyesight (eg kestrel, golden eagle, sparrow hawk and tawny owl)

Tell the children that birds live in lots of different habitats. They have different shaped bodies, feet and beaks that are adapted to where they live and the food they eat. Ask if they can name birds they have seen and where they have seen them. Discuss whether they have seen how birds are specially adapted for their habitat, for example webbed feet or long necks for water birds.

Tell the children they are going to design a bird to live in one of the habitats named on the information sheet using the bodies, wings, beaks, legs and feet. They can choose and cut out the different elements for their design and stick them together. Encourage them to draw in any features that they think are missing or not quite right, and to colour the bird in.

Give the children a writing frame and ask them to invent a name for the bird and write down what it feeds on.

Organise the children into small groups. Each child takes it in turns to tell the group the name of their bird and what it eats, then ask the other children to guess what habitat their bird lives in and how they know this. This could be a questioning game. Each group sorts the birds according to their habitat and looks for any similarities and differences they can see.

- You could find out about and add in pictures of some food sources for each habitat and use this to construct simple food chains. For example, plant – caterpillar – bird – bird of prey.
- You could link this to Activity 8.
- You could use different kitchen tools to try picking up and breaking open different shapes of food, to help the children understand how some beak shapes are adapted to their food source. This could be linked to learning about how different human cultures use different tools for eating.
- You could read Aesop’s story The Stork and The Fox to learn about how different animals need to eat differently.

Please share your birds with us by emailing pictures to DippyOnTour@nhm.ac.uk with the subject line Pictures.

English curriculum links (Key Stage 1)

Science

Living things and their habitats

Pupils should be taught to:

- identify that most living things live in habitats to which they are suited and describe how different habitats provide for the basic needs of different kinds of animals and plants, and how they depend on each other
- describe how animals obtain their food from plants and other animals, using the idea of a simple food chain, and identify and name different sources of food

Northern Irish curriculum links

(Foundation Phase and Key Stage 1)

The world around us

Place

Pupils should be enabled to explore:

- how place influences plant and animal life
- ways in which living things depend on and adapt to their environment
Scottish curriculum links (Early and First)

Sciences: Experiences and outcomes

Planet Earth: Biodiversity and interdependence
I can distinguish between living and non living things. I can sort living things into groups and explain my decisions. **SCN 1–01a**

I can explore examples of food chains and show an appreciation of how animals and plants depend on each other for food. **SCN 1–02a**

Welsh curriculum links (Foundation Phase)

Knowledge and understanding of the world: Range
Myself and other living things
Children should be given opportunities to:

• observe differences between animals and plants, different animals, and different plants in order to group them

• learn about the senses that humans and other animals have and use to enable them to be aware of the world around them

• identify some animals and plants that live in the outdoor environment

• identify the effects the different seasons have on some animals and plants

Creative development: Skills
Art, craft and design
Children's art, craft and design skills should be fostered and promoted through using their senses, imagination and experience. Creative art, craft and design activities in the Foundation Phase should enable children to express themselves freely and make progress in their ability to:

• explore and experiment with a variety of techniques and materials

• make choices when choosing materials and resources

• mix, shape, arrange and combine materials to create their own images and objects that communicate and express their ideas, feelings and memories creatively