

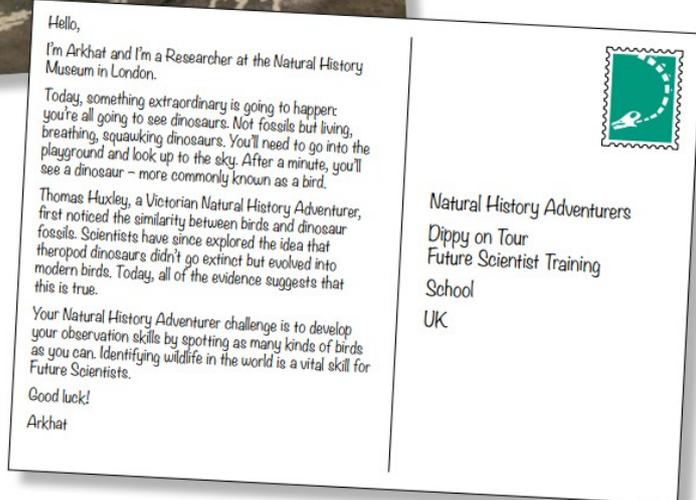
Nature Activities—January

Bird Watch

When Dippy visited Birmingham, he found out lots about birds as part of his adventure. You can find a set of resources that were made to support this at:



Great auk



<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/content/dam/nhmwww/take-part/dippy-on-tour/resources/adventures-with-dippy-birmingham-episode.pdf>

The resources include lesson plans and curriculum links and have a set of cross curricular activities spinning off from a birdwatching trip to the school grounds. The materials include working on the evolutionary evidence for the links between birds and dinosaurs.

Great Auks, like the bird you can see on this postcard, are extinct, but you will be able to see the ones from the Great North Museum: Hancock collection as part of the Dippy exhibition.....



Nature Activities—January

Big Schools Bird Watch

Every year, the RSPB ask schools to make their students into conservation scientists and record birds around the country so that we can understand better which species are doing well and badly. Registration for the event is already open (it started on 22 October 2018) and you can submit results up to 22 February 2019. You will get back the results so that your class can see how they have contributed to conservation science.

You can register at: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-teachers/schools-birdwatch/resource-request/> and the RSPB will send you a free bird identification poster to help you with your identifications.

The RSPB have produced a bird counting sheet aimed at a KS2 level which you can download and use: http://ww2.rspb.org.uk/Images/counting_chart_COL_tcm9-382562.pdf and there are lots of other brilliant resources on their website, including their 'Identify a Bird' page <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/identify-a-bird/> which can help you to find out what it is that you have seen.

They also offer, for example:

- Outreach visits (in partnership with Aldi): <https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-teachers/free-school-outreach-visits/>
- The Wild Challenge and supporting 'What's Wild Now' sheets: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-teachers/schools-wild-challenge/>

....and there's an RSPB section on TES: <https://www.tes.com/member/RSPB>



Nature Activities—January

Feed the Birds!

Having a bird feeder in your school grounds is a great way to support birds during the lean months of winter. Attracting them into places where you can see them will help you to learn more about them too. Remember to keep feeders stocked as birds come to rely on them. You can make lots of different kinds of feeder, but here are some ideas:

Bird cake

You will need:

An old yoghurt pot or similar type of pot OR a pine cone

Some string

Lard or suet (vegetable suet or white vegetable fat like Trex is fine)

Some or any of: bird seed; peanuts (nb do not use salted or dry roast nuts—get plain ones from a garden centre or pet shop); raisins; grated cheese; porridge oats

- Make a hole in the bottom of the yoghurt pot. Thread the string through and tie a knot inside the pot to keep it in place. If you want to use a pine cone instead, tie the string onto its stalk
- Cut the fat into little pieces in a bowl (or put the suet in a bowl) and let it get warm and squishy, eg by a radiator
- Squidge in the seeds/nuts/raisins cheese with your fingers
- Press the mix into your pot. If using a pinecone, press it into the spaces until the cone looks like a ball of bird cake
- Put the pot or pine cone in the fridge to go hard
- Hang the pot or pine cone up outside—try to keep it high up so that it's out of the reach of predators like cats



Feed the Birds..... contined

Use an old **plastic bottle** and a stick to make a feeder which you can hang up. There are intructions at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7yV6V6rtpyc>

Cheerio feeders or popcorn necklaces—thread Cheerios onto a pipecleaner or piece of string and hang them up. Use plain unsalted, unsweetened popcorn and thread it onto a fine string using a darning needle. You could also include berries or bits of fruit on the string.

Apples—you can just leave apples on a bird table, or you could core the apple and tie on a piece of string, then push two sticks through it for birds to perch on while they eat. You can also push seeds into the apple for an extra treat: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/globalassets/downloads/documents/kids-and-schools/make-an-apple-bird-feeder.pdf>

Use a **Tetrapack** to make an owl shaped feeder:

<https://www.redtedart.com/juice-carton-crafts-owl-bird-feeder/>

The most sustainable way to feed the birds is by thinking about growing plants they like to eat and making a good habitat for invertebrates and other food species. You can find some suggestions of good plants to attract birds at <https://www.gardenersworld.com/plants/top-10-plants-for-birds/>. Having a pond will help to attract lots of different kinds of wildlife. You could also think about making a bug hotel <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/give-nature-a-home-in-your-garden/garden-activities/build-a-bug-hotel/>



Literacy Activities—January

Write with a Quill Pen

Set the students a task to find a feather and bring it in. Use the feathers to make a real quill pen (snip the end of the quill with a scissor at an 45 degree angle) and provide calligraphy ink and thick paper to write their names with.

Magpie Walls

Magpie Walls are of the key strategies that are part of the ethos of a writing classroom. We need to borrow and store words, phrases and ideas that other writers have used that we really like. We can then use them in our own writing. It is the concept that counts; students will need to see collecting and usage of new words and phrases being modelled explicitly by teachers regularly across the curriculum. Collect new words and phrases on the working wall. Have a picture of a magpie in the collecting area. Students should be encouraged to add to the class collection. This can be extended using swag books. These are little books in which students record words, phrases and ideas that they like and then use at a later date. Taken from <http://tbsstaffdevelopment.blogspot.com/2016/03/talk-for-writing-magpie-ing.html>.

- Words the class like can be made into a 'word bird' such as <https://www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/Kirsty-Jane-Lamb/artwork/51749>

Reading comprehension

There are nice reading comprehension exercises about garden birds available at: <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t2-t-985-ks2-garden-birds-differentiated-reading-comprehension-activity>

Tweeting birds

A nice classroom display can be made from writing about the birds that were spotted in your birdwatch recording as part of the RSPB birdwatch.

Get students to be journalists and summarise their projects, in a catchy tweet, then each day choose a tweet to go live!

If you would like to hear the best bird song a good place for sounds of birds is <https://www.xeno-canto.org/>. You could use the sounds to help create poetry with a similar rhythm and get the class to perform it.



Maths Activities—January

Bird watching maths

There is a whole host of ways you can count and record and present bird watching activities, such as using citizen science counting software <https://www.zooniverse.org/projects/penguintom79/penguin-watch/about/research> (counting penguin populations) or linked in to the RSPB British Bird count or if you have a school wildlife area, for example:

Who eats what?

Count the birds at a feeding station, when different food types are offered, turn into a table and graph for a classroom display.

There are a few premade resources readily available for statistics using garden birds for example: <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/au-t2-m-127-bar-graphs-with-birds-differentiated-activity-sheet>

Bird adaptations: measurements and weights

Bird adaptations of wings and beaks can be developed into a full STEM activity to design a set of wings for humans i.e. your students:

1. learn about the different types of wings (<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/335940453446747692/>)
2. measure and weigh calculations to work out wingspan required for human flight (<https://www.wesleyan.edu/earthoutloud/resources/pdf/radicalraptors/wingspanactivity.pdf>)
3. design and make mini versions (using preselected materials or let students choose their own)
4. test and record results (optional: choose 1 to make as real version for class display)

Birds out of an egg

For teaching about geometric shapes, this resource is great: <https://nrich.maths.org/5356>



Art, Arts Award — November

A nice arts award project would be looking into migration and birds in art and performance and creating a performance about migration.

Birds make a beautiful subject for arts projects, some ideas include:

- stained glass windows of the 7 Little Dickey birds (<http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/2d-art/seven-little-birds-display>)
- classroom displays (https://www.google.co.uk/search?safe=strict&biw=1920&bih=969&tbm=isch&sa=1&ei=30YSXJbeJICD1fAPsKyE6AI&q=bird+classroom+display&oq=bird+classroom+display&gs_l=img.3...23843.23843..24048...0.0..0.58.58.1.....0....1..gws-wiz-img.txdJNRdAeEg#imgrc=4kSbpQ87Chx9xM:)
- Drawing feathers (KS2) <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/tp2-a-013-planit-art-uks2-wildlife-lesson-1-drawing-feathers-lesson-pack>
- Making model birds (<http://www.sowerby.n-yorks.sch.uk/about-us/our-display-gallery/>, images 6, 7 and 8)
- Feather painting features in a history of the world in 100 objects: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/0jkb5jhCTJml7GvqOvxzRA> and you can see a good modern example at <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/howaboutthat/5043409/Artist-paints-on-swan-feathers.html>
- Bird silhouettes, splatter paint or collage a background (either abstractly or choose a habitat colour) and then cut out bird shapes and branches in black paper to stick on top (eg <http://www.pictureicon.com/image/watercolor-bird-painting-original-watercolor-branch-and>)



Crest Awards — November

Crest Awards (<https://www.crestawards.org/>) are run by the British Science Association and support science work and working scientifically. Star level is aimed at KS1; Superstar at KS2 and Discovery at KS3 and all have pre-made downloadable challenges which you can put together to achieve the awards. Beyond that, Bronze, Silver and Gold levels give more scope for individual projects. We are working to produce a Crest accredited challenge for when you visit Dippy at the Great North Museum: Hancock to make up one of these activities on your journey. The awards are cheap to do (£1 per child for Star and Superstar and £3 each for Discovery) and you can record the activities online to get the children's certificates and badges.

Bird challenges

Star (<https://www.crestawards.org/crest-star>)

Superstar (<https://www.crestawards.org/crest-superstar>)

- Brilliant Birds



Things to look out for in January

Whilst you are looking up at the sky and the nights are long, it is a great time to see the stars! For a good overview of what you are watching you can use websites such as <https://www.moonwise.co.uk/sky.php>.

Also there are great free apps available to watch the sky at night and find out about the stars such as Kid friendly version of Star Walk 2.

You may even be lucky enough to see the Northern Lights... check the chance of seeing them using a free app or online such as <https://www.auroramap.co.uk/>.

Wildlife wise, there are lots of birds to see...

Wildfowl– ducks such as mallards, pochard, tufted ducks and widgeons



Mistle Thrushes

Deer (easier to spot as the trees are bare)

Snow drops

Catkins (a downy, hanging flowering spike of trees such as willow and hazel, pollinated by the wind.)

