



Family Home Learning Pack

GARDEN BIRDS

Notes for parents and carers:

These home learning packs have been compiled by Better Planet Education to support you whilst your children are at home during the Covid-19 lockdown.

Each week, we will include suggestions for activities you can do alongside your children, as well as those that they can do independently, whilst you are working from home.

We will attempt to suggest activities which require no special materials other than those you may find around the house. It may be possible to pick up some resources during your occasional shop for essentials but please do not aim to shop specifically for listed supplies! We will also attempt to minimise the need to print out any materials.

In your pack each week:

- * Open ended project ideas and research topics
- * Activities to explore independently or together
- * Games to play
- * Ideas for science experiments
- * Art and craft ideas
- * Links to other learning resources
- * A use each week for toilet roll tubes...





ACTIVITY IDEAS

Whether you have a large garden, access to woodland or a park, or even just a window sill, you can still attract a range of birds by leaving out a choice of foods for them! Birds can be fascinating to watch, with very distinct personalities and a range of interesting behaviours. They are also our link to the age of the dinosaurs, as studies have shown that they likely descended from theropods (which included the T-Rex!). So, if you'd like to encourage some modern day dinosaur visitors, read on!

Make a bird feeder:

Birds appreciate snacks all year round. In the winter, the ground can be hard to peck and the number of seeds available is less. In the Spring and Summer, more energy is needed for nesting and breeding. If you are lucky, you will even see parent birds bringing their young for a meal and feeding them. You can research the types of foods most likely to attract certain birds, but a good starting point is a bag of mixed bird seed with suet pellets. These can usually be found in all supermarkets and pet shops, but are best value when purchased in large quantities from homeware stores.



Pine cone bird feeder:

One simple way to make a bird feeder is to use a pine cone. Birds will be able to peck the seeds from the spaces in between the scales.

Tie a piece of string securely to the top of the cone, so that you can hang it in a tree.

Roll the pine cone in any sticky food (lard, honey or peanut butter will all work well) then roll it again in a bowl of bird seed, so that all the spaces are filled up with seeds.

Orange half / coconut shell bird feeder:

Another easy feeder can be made from an orange or grapefruit half after you've squeezed juice from it to drink. Just pierce holes in the sides and thread through with string, before filling it up with seeds, or a seed and lard mix.





Lily and Callie from Rochdale made bird feeders using coconut shells! They asked for help to drill holes in the shell so that they could thread a hanging string through.

Next, they mixed up a bowl of different bird seed and some lard to make the mixture sticky.



Once the mixture was smeared inside the shells and left to settle, the shells were ready to hang up outside. What a tasty treat for some lucky birds!



Make a bird feeder from a recycled bottle or carton:

You can also make a bird feeder using all different kinds of recycled bottles or cartons. This one has been made using a washing liquid bottle (make sure you rinse it very thoroughly, first!). The handle can be used to tie on string to hang the bottle and the top of the bottle makes a good roof. Use sharp scissors, or a craft knife to cut windows from the bottle, getting help, if needed. You might also want to poke some holes in the bottom, so that any rain water can drain away.



Indiana Ivy



This version of a bird feeder uses a Tetra Pak milk carton. You can also use these as nesting boxes, by cutting a much smaller hole in only one of the sides and making sure the container is securely attached to a post or branch in the garden, instead of being left to swing around.

You could also try making a bird feeder from a plastic bottle (right). Get help to poke holes in the side using a hot skewer or screwdriver.

You can add a wooden kebab skewer, or a spoon as a perch, with feeding holes just above these.

For more information on how to do this, see <https://ypte.org.uk/downloads/home-learning-activity-make-a-bird-feeder>



Lorna in Lairg has converted this old bicycle (right) into a feeding station for birds! It has a dish hanging from the handlebars, a fat ball holder hanging from the crossbar and a bird feeder full of nuts attached to the saddle! The bicycle provides lots of places for the birds to perch on.





Make a bird box:

There are lots of kits available online to help you build your own bird box. This one (left) was built and decorated by Caroline in Lymington. You might also like to have a go at cutting out the wood yourself. there's a great pattern to follow here:

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-kids/games-and-activities/activities/make-a-nestbox/>

Make a bird bath:

Birds love to have a place where they can splash around! You can use any sturdy bowl that will withstand being tipped over. Try putting some rocks in it to weigh it down and give the birds something to stand on while they have a drink and a bath!

Make sure that you position the bath out of the reach of any cats or other predators.

An upturned bin lid is ideal to use as a bird bath - this one has even made use of the rest of the bin as a stand!



Make a bird table:

If you have access to wood and tools, plus a space to stand or attach one, you could try building a bird table.

There are plans that you can follow here:

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/how-you-can-help-birds/feeding-birds/all-about-bird-tables/making-a-bird-table/>



Make a quill pen from a feather:

Did you know that the word 'pen' is also the name for a female swan, and the reason we call a writing pen a 'pen' is that people used to use swan feathers to write with? These types of pens are called quills and you can make them yourself!

1. First, you will need to find a large feather. Ones from bigger birds such as swans and geese are ideal. You need one where ink can flow up inside.

2. Next, you need to cut the tip off the feather diagonally, to give you a suitable writing angle. You can keep re-trimming your quill as required.



Make a second, short cut, directly up the shaft of the feather, to help the ink flow.

3. Finally, dip your pen in ink (or runny paint) and start writing! Beth in Berkshire made this quill pen and it works really well!



Go birdwatching :

Whether you look out of your window, or go for a walk in nature, the best way to find out more about the birds in your local area is to watch them! Why not see if there is a children's bird watching group near you at <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/community-and-advice/local-groups/find-a-local-group-near-you/> or register for the RSPB's Annual Big Bird Watch here: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/birdwatch/>

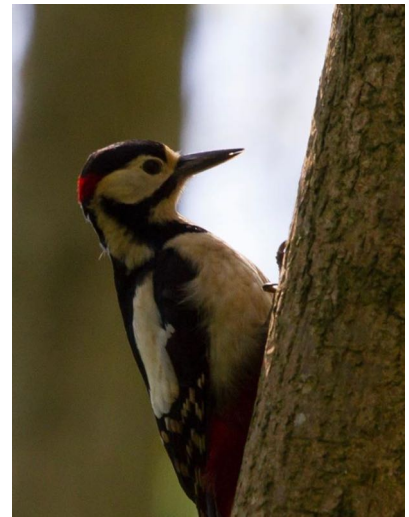
Mark from Essex (@mjd_wild) has taken these great photos of birds that you can use to start you off. How many of these can you spot in your local area?



Coal tit



Magpie



Greater spotted woodpecker



Jackdaw



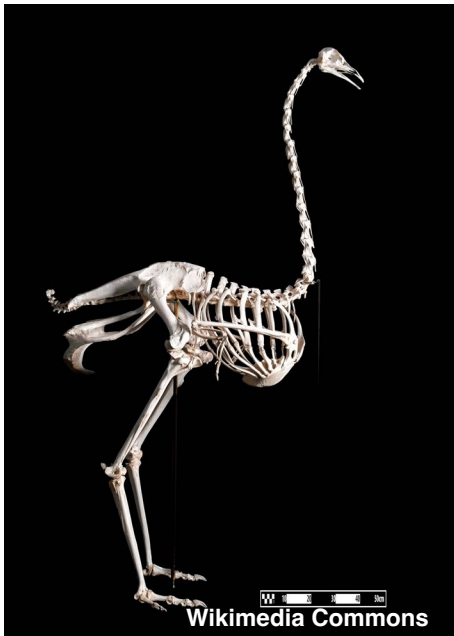
Robin



Song thrush

RESEARCH IDEAS

How do scientists know that birds evolved from dinosaurs?



Did you know:

Scientists have been able to trace modern day birds ancestors back to theropods (a type of dinosaur which included velociraptors and the T-Rex!)

Find out:

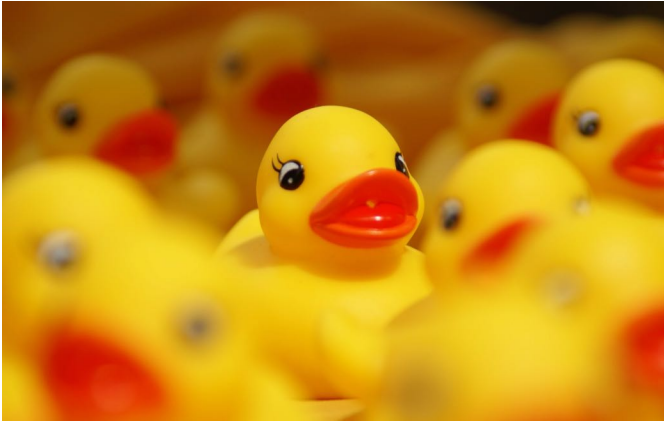
- How did birds and other creatures survive when an asteroid hit Earth?
- If dinosaurs had teeth, why don't birds have teeth?
- Why are there no giant birds the size of a Tyrannosaurus Rex?
- What was an archaeopteryx and how was it different from modern birds?



This animation from The Natural History Museum might act as a useful starting point for your research on avian dinosaurs (birds!)

<https://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/why-are-birds-the-only-surviving-dinosaurs.html>



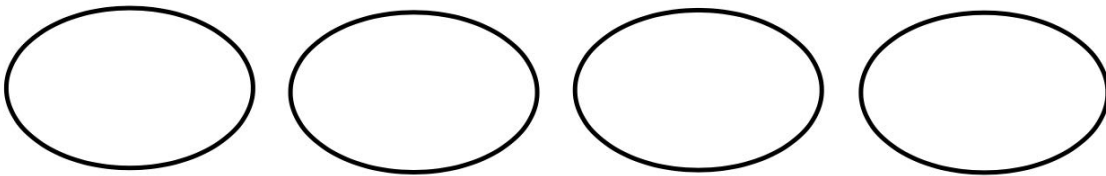


MATHS CHALLENGE

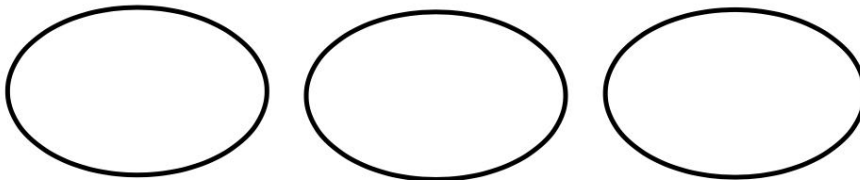
Duck Ponds:

You have 14 ducks each time. You may like to use counters to represent the ducks (unless you have 14 rubber ducks!)

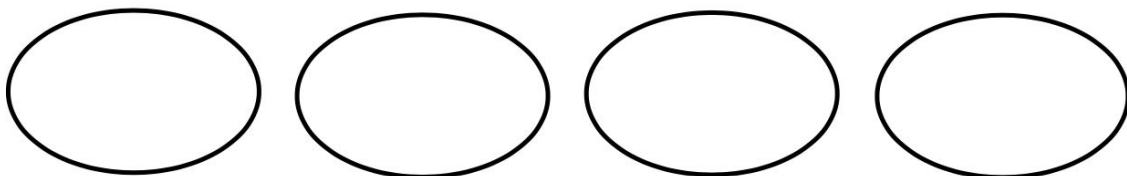
1. Make each pond hold **2 ducks OR 5 ducks**:



2. Make each pond hold **twice as many** ducks as the one before:



3. Make each pond hold **one less duck** than the one before:



*Questions adapted from Mathematical Challenges for Able Pupils, DFE, 2000.
Solutions at end of the pack!*

WORD CHALLENGES



wikimedia commons

Keep a birdwatching journal:

Why not keep a record of the birds that you see by making a journal? You could draw pictures of the birds, or cut out pictures from magazines. When you spot a new bird, make notes in your journal about its colour, size, and where you spotted it, to help you look it up again later and find out what it was!

Make a bird fact sheet:

When you visit a wildlife centre, you will often find fact sheets to help visitors learn about the birds and other wildlife that they will find. Why not research and design some fact sheets to help visitors to your garden learn more about the birds that they can spot?

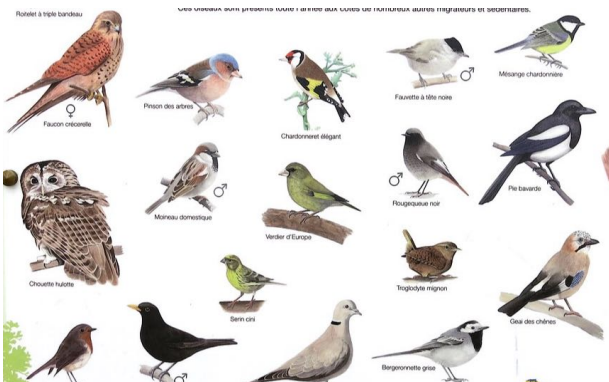


Elliot Brown

Bird watching Guess Who?

You could play this by simply writing a list of questions, or go all out and re-purpose a Guess Who board with photographs of different birds, in order to try to work out which one is being described by a process of elimination. Write

down a series of facts about the appearance different birds, for example "It is very small" or "it has a white stripe over one eye". When you have a collection of these, see if another player can guess the bird you are describing from your clues. Play in reverse, by using a 'deck' of bird pictures and asking questions such as "is this bird brown?" then discarding any cards that don't match the answer, until you are left with only one card.



torbakhopper

ART AND CRAFT

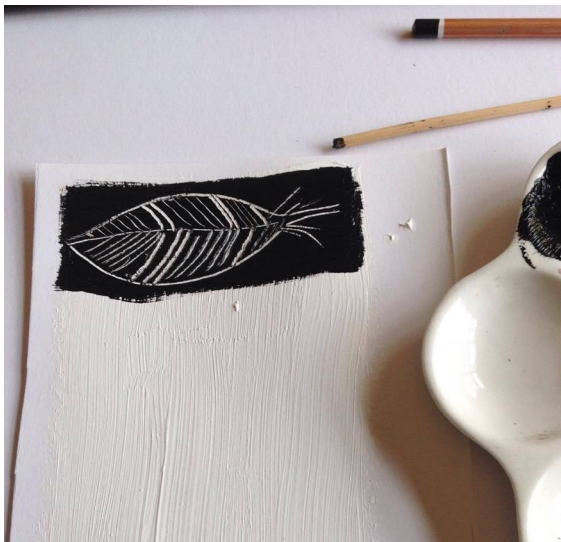


Scratch off feather designs:

This method of pattern making works well using paint - or try it with wax crayons over painted with black ink, for a rainbow effect!

Paint a layer of white acrylic on piece of card (paper will be too thin and will tear). Leave it until it is completely dry.

Paint a strip of black acrylic paint at the top.



While the paint is still wet scratch a feather shape with pencil, or stick, then scratch shapes and designs inside it.

Work quickly before the paint dries.

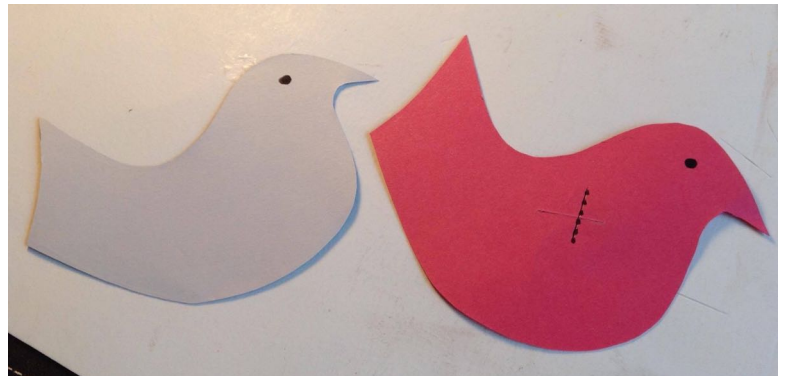
Continue painting and scratching until you have a row of different patterned feathers.



Make a bird mobile:

This simple design looks really effective when hung up as a mobile.

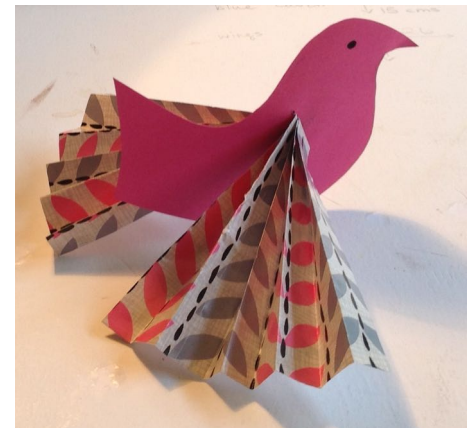
Simply cut out a body and head shape for your bird from thin card. The



shape can be as stylised as you like. Cut a slit for the wings.

Take a piece of paper which is roughly twice the length of the bird's body and fold it in zig-zags, to make a fan.

Poke the folded paper through the bird's body and unfold the fans on either side to



make the wings. You can pierce a hole in the top of the bird to thread a hanging loop.

You might like to add another fan of paper for the tail!

Weave a bird's nest:

Trying to weave your own bird's nest from grasses and small twigs can be an interesting way to see just how dextrous the birds need to be!

Gather a range of grasses and flexible twigs, then start with a few crossed together in a star shape at the base. Weave in and out of these and see if you can construct a shape that stays together.

Then remember that birds manage to do all this with their beaks!



mothernautured



Paint pictures of birds:

You can use your own observations of birds to make drawings or paintings, but if you'd like to follow some tutorials, there are lots online.



Dylan, Lily and Callie from Rochdale have been trying out the follow-along classes from Elle Smith Art (Youtube clips, supervision recommended) where you paint at the same time as the artist:

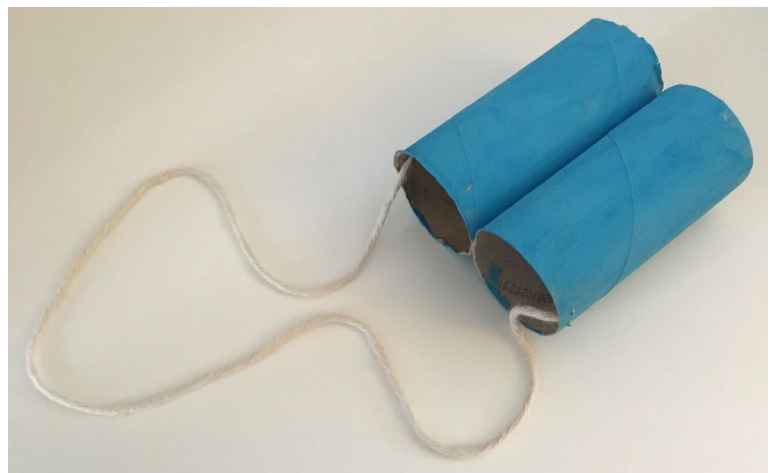
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjkrFGNcp5fQywUdtQI7fng>

This week's use for a toilet roll tube:

Make some pretend binoculars:

These binoculars won't help you see as well as the real thing, but look great for dressing up!

Luke in Plymouth made these by gluing two toilet rolls together, painting them, then attaching a string with sticky tape.



GAMES

Birds nests:

You can use hula hoops to represent the nests, or simply use pieces of paper on the floor. Beans bags work well as eggs, but you can use any small objects that will sit on the 'nests'. Vary the number of nests and eggs to suit the number of players.



Arrange hula hoops (birds' nests) as far apart as space allows with one hoop in the centre and a further nest for each player or team. Place the beanbags (the eggs) in the centre hoop. Players / teams line up behind their assigned a hoop/birds' nest.

When told to start, the first person on each team runs to the centre to grab a bean bag (one per turn) and return it to their nest. Once the central hoop is empty, they can start to take eggs from each other's nests. The aim of the game is to be the first team / player to have 6 eggs in your nest.

Hidden Eggs:

In this game of hide and seek, the hiders each carry something to represent an egg. When they are found, they hand over their egg, then join the seeker to help find all the rest of the eggs, until everyone has been found.

Catch the egg:

In this game, players pass a ball, water balloon or other object between themselves to music. It can be played while everyone sits down, perhaps in a circle, or on the move for added challenge! When the music stops, the person holding the egg is out of the game for this round. Continue until there is only one person left.

Eggs, birds and worms:

The children find a space to stand in and then start walking round the room or garden. If you (or another child) calls out 'EGG!' everyone has to curl up small on the floor. If the word called out is "WORM!" everyone stretches out on the floor, then wiggles. For "BIRDS!" they all run around as fast as they can, flapping their wings. Keep seeding up the changes between actions, till everyone is worn out!

LEARNING LINKS

There are a large number of resources available for online learning at this time. We'd always recommend that you support your child with this and only follow links from reputable names. **Any links provided here have been checked for suitability.**

This is the time of year when many birds are starting to build their nests ready to lay eggs. You can watch this process happening, right through to the hatching of chicks, by following nesting cameras online! There are many available, all over the world. As ever, please do approach any live stream content with caution. Reputable sites include:

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/webcams>

<http://www.seenature.org.uk/school-zone/school-streams/>

What makes an animal a bird? Learn about distinguishing features of birds with this **BBC Bitesize** clip: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/z6882hv/articles/zyd6hyc>

Learn many facts about a wide range of birds via this **TheSchoolRun** homework help page: <https://www.theschoolrun.com/homework-help/birds>

This simple guide produced by the **RSPB** is a good starting point for very young children interested in identifying some of the UK's most common birds:

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-kids/facts-about-nature/facts-about-birds/>

This lovely video has been made by a UK birdwatcher called Maurice Baker and features close ups of many kinds of UK birds as they feed in his garden. Ideal for getting a closer look at some common birds and for practising your bird recognition skills if you don't have access to a garden yourself (Youtube clip, supervision recommended): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amYUDQDtm9E>

This more in-depth article on how birds evolved from dinosaurs, by **Quanta magazine**, will help adults or older children delve more deeply into an exploration:

<https://www.quantamagazine.org/how-birds-evolved-from-dinosaurs-20150602/>

Or check out these links from **YPTE**:

<http://yppte.org.uk/factsheets/feeding-garden-birds/when-to-feed-birds>

<http://yppte.org.uk/factsheets/birds-in-the-city/birds-in-the-city>

<http://yppte.org.uk/factsheets/nestboxes-for-birds/introduction>

Answers to Maths Challenge:

1. (2) (2) (5) (5)

2. (2) (4) (8)

3. (5) (4) (3) (2)