

Amazing Adaptations

Activities for children aged 5–7 years

WWT has a well-established and well-loved education programme that we run across the UK at our ten wetland sites. We've designed these short activities based on one of our school activities. We've made it to connect you and your family to the natural world and help you to work with your children to feel great about nature and understand some of the things that WWT love and care about.

Why wetlands?

WWT works across the UK to save, conserve and build wetlands for wildlife and people. Wetlands are one of the most important habitats on earth – storing huge amounts of CO₂, providing a natural way of stopping flooding and serving as a home for huge numbers of different creatures.

This activity will help you and your children to get to know a range of wetland birds and what it is about them that allows them to live in a wetland.

These activities link to the National Curricula for science in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Stuff you need:

- **Set of amazing adaptations cards (see final pages of this document)**

Note: Where you see a **Q** this indicates a question to ask your child

Indoor activities

(30 minutes)

Over time, all animals have changed in special ways so that they can live in their habitat (home). Find out how wetland birds have become adapted to their habitats and how this helps them to thrive.

- Spread out the amazing adaptations cards so that you can see them all easily.

Q What do you think we mean by an adaptation?

Key word: ADAPTATION

Something about an animal's body which changes to help it to survive.

Feet

- We're first going to think about the birds' feet.
- Look carefully at the cards. For any birds where you can't see their feet clearly in the main image remember there is a close-up of their feet on the reverse.
- Ask your child to group the different birds according to the shape of their feet (there's no right answer at this stage).

The birds' feet on the cards can be sorted into four main groups:

Webbed feet

Long toes

Short toes

Talons

- See if your child can sort the birds into these four main groups. Once they have sorted them into their groups, look at each in turn.

Webbed feet	Long toes	Short toes	Talons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Mute swan- Canada goose- Mallard	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Grey heron- Little egret- Avocet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Reed warbler- Kingfisher	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Osprey- Marsh harrier

Q How do you think each type of foot helps these birds to live in a wetland?

You can talk through each group using the information below:

Webbed feet:

- These help the bird swim through the water.
- They are also useful when walking as they stop the bird from sinking in mud.
- These birds spend a lot of their time on the water.

Long toes:

- These help to spread the load so that the bird doesn't sink in mud.
- They also help the bird to balance.
- These birds spend a lot of their time standing.

Short toes:

- These can easily be curled around things to enable the bird to perch.
- They are also light and flexible, enabling the bird to fly well.
- These birds spend a lot of their time perching and flying.

Talons:

- These enable birds of prey to catch and kill their prey.

Legs

- We're now going to think about the birds' legs.
- A few of these birds have particularly long legs.
- Ask your child to make a separate group of birds with particularly long legs.

Q Why do you think having long legs helps these birds to live in a wetland?

A Their long legs keep their bodies up out of the water.

Neck

- We're now going to think about the birds' necks.
- Ask your child to make a group of birds with particularly long necks.

Q Why do you think these birds have long necks?

A A long neck enables these birds to reach down and get food from below the surface.

Take it outside:

(30 minutes)

- Go to a place outdoors. Find a quiet place where you can sit still.

Q Which birds can you see?

Q What is it about them that helps them to live here?

Q Can you think of any other amazing adaptations animals have developed (not just birds)?

Which are your favourites?



@WWTWorldwide



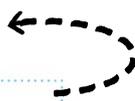
**Have fun and do share your work to our social media accounts –
we'd absolutely love to see it!**

Wetland bird adaptation cards

- To make the cards, cut the line across the width of your paper then fold each half in half again so you end up with the main picture on one side and the close-ups of the bill and legs / feet on the other. Stick the two sides together with glue.



Cut 



Fold



Fold



Mute swan



© ANDRZ. @ flickr

Legs/Feet



Bill

Cut

Cut

Fold



Reed warbler



© Imran Shah @ flickr

Legs/Feet



Bill

Fold



© Tony Sutton @ flickr

Cut



© Don Sutherland @ flickr

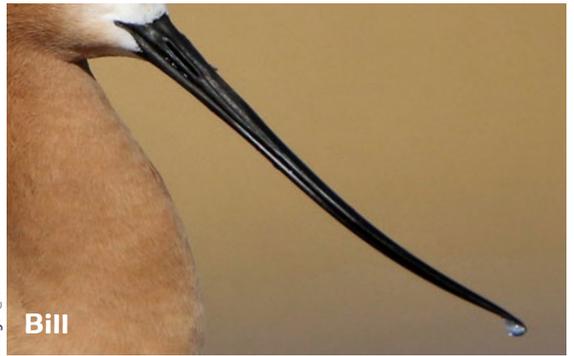
Fold

Avocet



© Nigel @ flickr

Legs/Feet



© Nigel @ flickr

Bill

Cut

Marsh harrier



© Silver Leapers @ flickr

Legs/Feet



© Arvind Agrawal @ flickr

Bill

Fold



Cut

Canada goose



© Blomdahl/Fredberg @ flickr

Legs/Feet



Bill

Cut



Fold

Grey heron



© Jenie Easterman @ flickr

Legs/Feet



© Melvin Yap @ flickr

Bill

Fold



Cut

Kingfisher



Legs/Feet



Bill

Cut



Fold

Little egret



Legs/Feet



Bill

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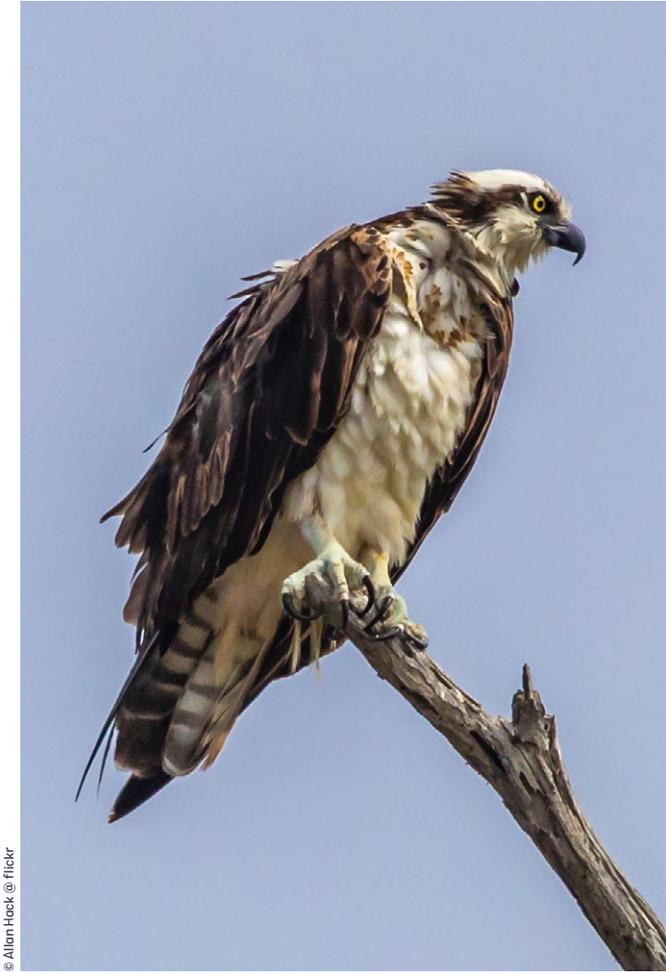
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Fold

Osprey



Fold



Cut

Cut

Mallard



Fold



Feet

Webbed feet

Cut

Feet

Long toes

Cut

Cut

Feet

Short toes

Cut

Feet

Talons

Cut

Legs

Long legs

Cut

Neck

Long neck

Cut

Cut