

A Kids' Guide

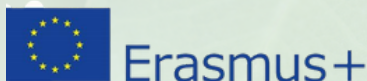
to exploring

Birds



Erasmus+





BirdLife Malta

Established in 1962, BirdLife Malta is the oldest environmental organisation in Malta, committed to the protection of wild birds and their habitats. A non-governmental organisation (NGO), BirdLife Malta is also part of the BirdLife International network working towards conserving global biodiversity and the sustainability of natural resources.

Teach, Inspire and Protect (TIP)

TIP is an Erasmus+ funded project led by BirdLife Malta focusing on early years education. Early childhood education plays a vital role in the development of values and skills, being the best age group to instil care and love for nature!

Young children also require a different approach to learning which is exploratory, sensory, and interactive. Nature around us provides the ideal setting for this!

Erasmus +

Erasmus+ is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe. As an integrated programme, Erasmus+ offers more opportunities for the mobility of learners and staff and cooperation across the education, training and youth sectors.

In this booklet...

You will find information and **lots of activities** to help you learn more about the birds around you and how you can help look after them. Learn how to create **bird feeders**, your own **binoculars** and many other **fun bird-linked activities!**

NATURE IS AMAZING

Nature is the wonderful creatures and beautiful flowers. Nature is the trees that give us shade, the sea that never rests, and the rain that brings new life. And it's waiting for you and your family to explore it!

WHY PROTECT NATURE?

Nature also needs protection. Inspiring your children to love and care for the world around them is one of the very ways you can help. In this booklet you will find activities and information to help you!

HOW TO PROTECT BIRDS

Just like us, birds need to drink, especially on warm days, and eat, especially in winter and summer, and somewhere to live, especially during the nesting season.



How to be a good birdwatcher



1 Get some binoculars and a bird guide. Birds are shy and often try to keep their distance from you. Having a good pair of binoculars will help you spot them!

2 Keep a low profile to prevent scaring birds. Use bird hides in nature reserves or keep low to the ground behind walls when in the countryside.



3 Turn your phone off and avoid making loud noises or sudden movements. By staying quiet and moving carefully, you are less likely to scare the birds away.



4 The morning and the late afternoon can be particularly good for birdwatching. Birds are just waking up or coming in to roost at those times.



The best time of year to look for birds is during migration. These are the months of March, April, September and October.

Bird ID tips and tricks

Not everyone is a bird expert so here are some tips and tricks on how to ID a bird!



Shape and Size

The shape and size of a bird tells us a lot about which species it could be!

TIP: Compare the size or shape to a bird you already know, for example a sparrow.



Colour

Some birds have bright colours and are easier to identify, other birds have simpler colours but have beautiful unique patterns.

TIP: Why not count how many colours the next bird you see has?



Beaks, legs, and feet

Birds have adapted their beak, legs, and feet to suit their dietary needs. Depending on these, you can work out what the bird feeds on!

TIP: Check out this foot, the sharp claws are used for catching prey!



Wings and tails

Wings and tail are very characteristic to a bird species and they determine the way a bird flies. By looking at the shape and size of the bird's wings and tail, they can help you recognise the species.

TIP: Ask yourself, are the wings slender? Broad? Is the tail forked? Wide?



Habitat

Different bird species are found in different habitats. For example, if you are in woodland it is very unlikely you are going to see a seabird. Knowing the habitat you are in can help you find out what bird species you have seen!

TIP: Ask yourself, what can you see around you. Trees? Ponds? Buildings? Sand? Bushes?



Make your own binoculars!



1 Using the stapler, staple the two toilet rolls together.

Materials needed:

- 2 empty toilet rolls
- Stapler
- Hole punch
- String
- Decorating material

2

Attach your string by punching a hole at each side of the rolls.



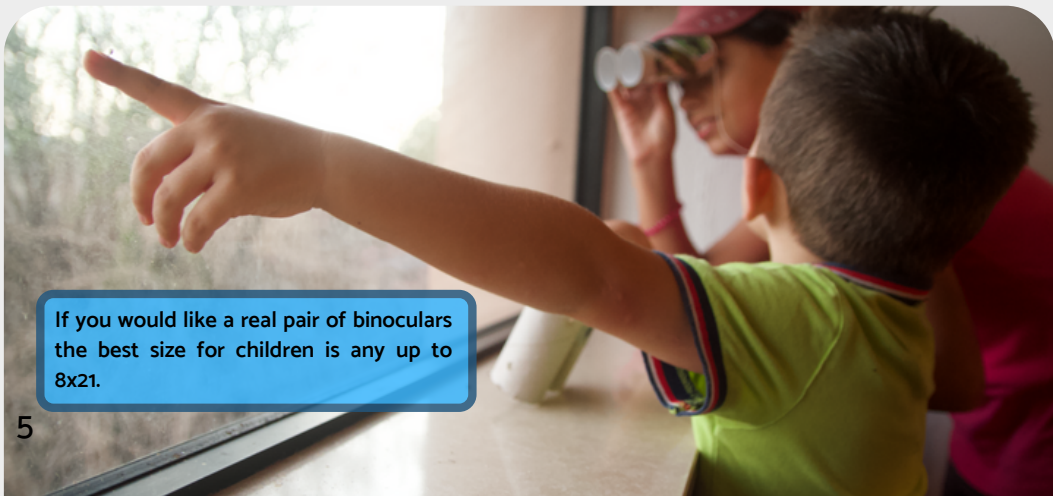
3

Colour in your rolls, decorate with pictures, personalise your binoculars.



4

Have fun and enjoy your new binoculars! Why not see if you can find some of the birds on pages 7 to 10?



If you would like a real pair of binoculars the best size for children is any up to 8x21.

Make a bird feeding table



Materials needed:

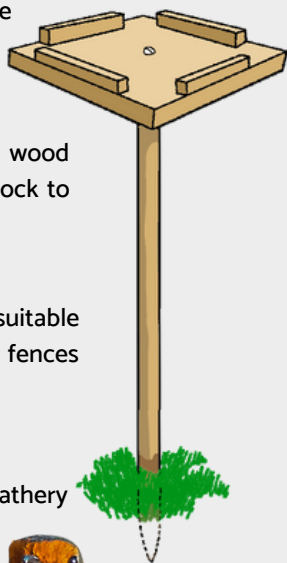
- 1 oblong piece of wood
- 4 wooden sticks
- 1 wooden block
- Broomstick
- Screw, nails, glue
- Bird seed, nuts and dried fruit, mealworms, sunflower seeds.

1 Using strong wood glue, attach 4 wooden sticks to each side of your oblong piece of wood.

2 Attach your wooden block to the bottom of your piece of wood using nails and glue. Then attach your broomstick to this block to make your bird table stand up.

3 Stick your bird table stand in soil or a big plant pot in a suitable location. Preferably in an open space, away from walls and fences and close to a small bush.

4 Sprinkle your bird seed on the bird table and wait for your feathery friends to arrive!



Remember to keep your bird table clean and only provide enough food for one day - this prevents unwanted visitors like rats.



Birds to see migrating



Turtle-dove

Gambusia



European Bee-eater

Qerd in-Naħal



Marsh-harrier

Bagħdan Aħmar



Hoopoe

Daqquqa tat-Toppu



Common Kestrel

Spanjulett



Wood Warbler

Vjolin Ħadrani



Honey-buzzard

Kuccarda



Spotted Flycatcher

Żanzarell tat-tikek



Chaffinch

Sponsun



Habitat



Woodland



Wetland



Countryside



Urban

Behaviour



Territorial



Ground feeders



Flocks

and where to find them!



Common Swift
Rundun



Barn Swallow
Huttafa



Black-winged Stilt
Fras-servjent



Little Ringed Plover
Monakella



Golden Oriole
Tajra Safra



Greater Flamingo
Fjamingu



Little Egret
Agrett Abjad



Starling
Sturnell



Grey Heron
Russett Griz



Birds to see in winter



European Robin
Pitirross



Collared-dove
Gamiema tal-Kullar



Black Redstart
Fjamma Sewda



White Wagtail
Zakak Abjad



Stonechat
Buqaq tax-Xitwa



Yellow-legged Gull
Gawwija Prima



Cetti's Warbler
Bufula tal-Għolliq



Black-headed Gull
Gawwija Rasha Kannella



Grey Wagtail
Zakak tad-Dell



and where to find them!



Mediterranean Gull
Gawwija Rasha Sewda



Cormorant
Margun



Water Rail
Gallozz tax-Xitwa



Spanish Sparrow
Ghasfur tal-Bejt



Blackcap
Kapinera



Blue Rock-thrush
Merill



Kingfisher
Ghasfur ta' San Martin



Zitting Cisticola
Bufula tal-Imrewħa



Sardinian Warbler
Bufula Sewda



Flocks Breeds in Malta Shy Hear me first Seen in flight

Season All year Spring Autumn Winter 10

Make a re-filling water tray



1

Cut a hole in the pot about 1 cm from the rim.

Materials needed:

- Plant pot saucer
- Large yoghurt pot
- Scissors
- Stone



2

Fill the pot with water.

TIP: Why not use a water tub and collect rainwater to save the environment and your water bill!

3

Put the saucer on the top and carefully turn them upside down.



4

Place the stone on top of the saucer to keep your brand new water tray from falling over.



Make a bird feeder from recycled material

Materials needed:

- Milk carton
- Scissors, string, pencil
- Paint supplies
- Lollipop stick
- Bird seed, nuts and dried fruit, mealworms, sunflower seeds.



1 Decorate your milk carton.

2 Cut a rectangle near the top for your birds to access their food.

3 Cut a length of string and poke two holes at the top of your carton to hang your bird feeder up.

4 Poke a hole just below your rectangular hole and insert a lollipop stick. This is for your bird to perch on when feeding.

5 Fill up your bird feeder with some delicious bird seed.
TIP: Do not use bread, salty and sweet foods.

6 Hang your bird feeder up close to a bush or tree for birds to have shelter. Observe what birds visit your feeder from a safe distance.



Why not try this with a plastic bottle too? Recycling is a great way to help the environment.



Woolly Worm Game!

1 Cut 2 - 4 pieces of string from each colour. No longer than a few inches.

2 Find an open outdoor space and hide your pieces of string from the other people playing your game.

3 You are a hungry baby bird and the other players are your parents searching for delicious worms for you to eat!

4 Have the group look around the open space looking for all the worms for the baby bird to eat.

5 The easiest ones to find should be the brightly coloured string and eventually it will become harder to find the other pieces.

6 Once all the pieces of string have been found, pick a new person to be the baby bird and get them to hide the string so you can play again!

Materials needed:

- Open outdoor space
- Brightly coloured string of different colours
- Dull coloured string of different colours



This is a great way to teach your children more about camouflage in nature.



Sound Maps



Materials

- Circles of card or paper (your disk)
- Pencils, crayons, pens
- An outdoor space



Top Tip



Try and do this at different times of the day to see if there is a difference!

Step 1

Find a spot you can sit comfortably in and not be disturbed.



Step 2

Take a "disk" on which you are going to record the sounds around you.



Step 3

At the centre of the disk, draw yourself. Now you can close your eyes and listen.



Step 4

Every time you hear a new sound, try and work out where it is coming from and mark it on your disk.



Step 5

Each mark can be a drawing of the thing making the sound or symbol.



Step 6

Once finished, count how many sounds you heard and compare with others.

Step 7

Count how many of the sounds are made from nature. How many are birds?



Step 8

Count how many of your sounds are man-made.





We hope you enjoyed our "Kids' Guide to Exploring Birds".

We would love to hear from you!

Contact us on education@birdlifemalta.org or follow us on
Facebook [@BirdLife Malta](https://www.facebook.com/BirdLifeMalta)

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