

Brilliant Birds

Spring is the perfect time to start bird watching because the birds are very busy building nests and feeding their young, also the trees aren't in full leaf, so it is easier to spot them. The [Woodland Trust](#) provide great tick sheets to help you identify some [common birds](#) and [woodland birds](#).

Stop and Listen

Birds sing to talk to each other and to mark their territory. You don't need to get up at dawn to hear bird song, but getting out before 9am is helpful. With no rush hour traffic or aeroplanes flying over, you'll be able to hear more than usual! Find a quiet side street, ideally with trees, and stop to listen for bird song. Use the [RSPB website](#), enter the name of a bird and listen to its song. Common birds to search are blackbird, robin, wood pigeon, house sparrow, blue tit, great tit, crow, starling or chaffinch.

Birds and beaks

Birds use their beaks to feed themselves and their hungry chicks.

You will need: chopsticks (or two sticks), pasta shapes or pieces of wool, a bowl.

Pretend to be a bird, feeding caterpillars to your chicks. Sprinkle your 'caterpillar' pasta or wool over a grassy area and use your chopsticks to try and collect them. No fingers - birds only use their beaks to collect food. Collect your caterpillars in a bowl, or use your nest (below). How many can you collect in 5 minutes?

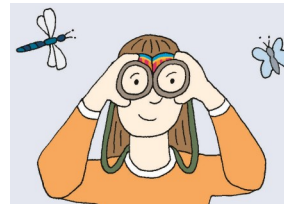
Build a nest

Birds build nests to keep their eggs safe and protect their chicks from bad weather and predators. Different birds use different materials to make their nests. Robins use dead leaves and line it with soft feathers or moss. Blackbirds use twigs and grass and line their nests with mud to make them stronger.

Choose some materials you can find in your garden or out on your walk to make a nest. Remember, no glue or scissors, birds only use their beaks ... it's trickier than you might think!

How many mini Easter eggs can your nest hold?

Bird spotting



If you have a pair of binoculars, take them with you, but if you don't, you can always make your own using the [Surrey Wildlife Trust](#) activity sheet.

The key to good bird watching is to stay still so that you don't scare them off, so get comfortable. Choose somewhere near some trees or bushes, a park or even your local street with trees. Use your eyes and ears to find birds and tick them off on one of the spotter sheets linked above.

Feed the birds

If you don't have a bird feeder there are lots of ways of making one at home. You can use a [pine cone](#), a [toilet roll](#) or an old [plastic bottle](#).

Get your bird seed delivered to your door from the [RSPB](#) and help 'give nature a home'.

Remember to keep feeding the birds once you start as the birds will rely on your food and might go hungry if you forget.

