

The importance of bird conservation

READING

LEVEL
Advanced

NUMBER
C1_3015R_EN

LANGUAGE
English





Goals

- Can read and understand a complex, technical text about the importance of bird conservation.

- Can share own thoughts on the methods and debate the relevance of bird conservation.







Birdwatching

Have you ever gone birdwatching before?

What did you enjoy about it?

Tell your teacher about your experience.





Conservation

**What do you know about conservation?
Discuss with your teacher.**





Vocabulary



Anthropocene is a word meaning the time since human activity has been influential on the environment.



The infant **mortality** rate has fallen as medical technology improves.



Many organic farms have started to abhor **pesticide** use.





Vocabulary



The most interesting part of my trip to the zoo was a visit to the **avian** enclosure.



The biggest risk for the species is **encroaching** human development.



Sally was in awe of the brilliant colours of the **kaleidoscope**.



Annie had to go begin a **rehabilitation** program after breaking her ankle.



The importance of bird conservation



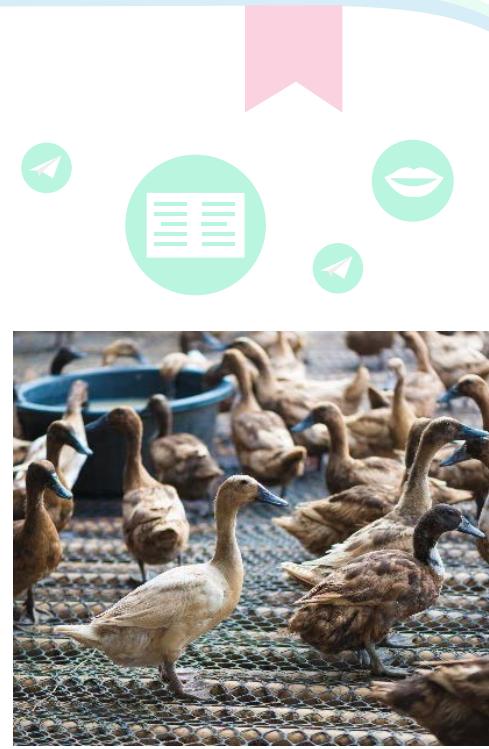
The rise of the **Anthropocene** has been tough for species who don't count themselves lucky enough to be human. Human activity has had significant and **detrimental** effects on bird species, with population numbers plummeting around the world. As the global population booms and human populations spread, bird habitats shrink. Other risks to **avian** populations include hunting, pollution and environmental **degradation**, and climate change. To combat this, organisations at global and local levels work with governments to **coordinate** conservation and protection programs, working to restore bird habitats.



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With human communities **encroaching** ever further upon bird habitats spaces for breeding and nesting become compromised.

Rich ecosystems such as swamps and rainforests, usually a dynamic **kaleidoscope** of exotic species, are drained or logged. Ecosystems are extremely fragile, and the loss of one species can have tremendous **ramifications** to the checks and balances of other animals in the network.





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Migratory species are especially vulnerable. Millions of acres of bird habitat are lost to development, agriculture and logging, and as migration routes cross political barriers it can be harder for conservation groups to coordinate safeguarding measures. Man-made structures such as power lines, wind farms and airports can also affect the wellbeing of migratory birds. In fact, the largest risk is posed by high rise buildings with glass windows, which birds collide into, being unable to **discern** the transparency of the glass. Solar plants also provide a risk, as unwitting birds flying into heated up areas are **incinerated** at temperatures of 1000 degrees Fahrenheit.





New words

detrimental

Staring at a computer screen for too long is very **detrimental** to your vision.

ramifications

The **ramifications** of John's mistake will become obvious next year.

coordinate

The managers decided to **coordinate** the project from different offices.

incinerated

The forest was **incinerated** in the raging bushfires.



What do these phrases from the text mean?

...has a detrimental effect on bird species

...human communities encroaching even further upon bird habitats.

...being unable to discern the transparency of the glass.

...migration routes cross political barriers.

...birds flying into heated up areas are incinerated...

The rise of the Anthropocene...

Anthropocene

The **Anthropocene** refers to the modern epoch beginning from when human activity has had a measurable impact on the planet.



One significant aspect of the **Anthropocene** is man-made climate change.



The Anthropocene

It is clear in the modern world that human activity is having an impact on the natural environment. Industrialisation has brought us countless benefits, not least of which is an improved lifespan. Brainstorm the benefits and drawbacks of human industrialisation.

Benefits of human industry

Drawbacks of human industry





Persuade the teacher

Pick one of the statements below. Prepare some points to discuss with your teacher and try to persuade them that the statement is correct.

Industrialisation has left some significant scars on the planet, some of which cannot be healed.

Our species must find a better balance between our expansionist tendencies and harmonious living with our environment.

The heights of human achievement and culture are a direct result of our ingenuity. Industrialisation is a sign of progress and is more important than the natural environment.



The importance of bird conservation



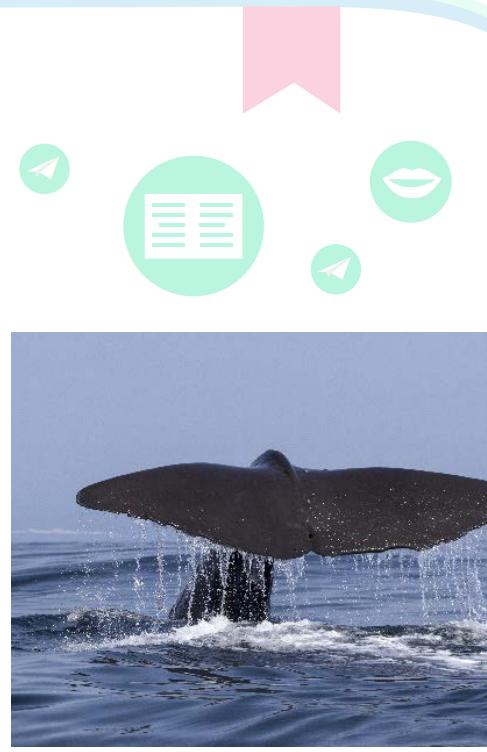
Human interference has had an impact on bird species in both direct and indirect ways. People have often introduced foreign species to an ecosystem with unintended effects. Introduced **fauna** can prey on local bird species, compete for food sources or spread external disease.

On the island of Mauritius, the Dodo was famously wiped out by newly introduced species. As an island bird it had evolved little in the way of defensive characteristics, and proved easy prey. A more direct cause of **extinction** in the past has been hunting and sport. Overhunting has caused the **extinction** of a range of species, from the Great Auk to the Moa of New Zealand.



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Another primary threat to bird life is pollution and environmental degradation. Seabirds in particular are among the most endangered birds in the world. Seaborne **pollutants**, plastics and toxins can build up in the bird's body throughout its lifetime. Marine disasters like oil spills can also catch out seabirds, **saturating** their feathers and stripping them of their waterproofing. Larger seabirds are also vulnerable to be taken by large-scale fisheries, becoming trapped and **crippled** in the vast nets of trawlers.





New words

fauna

Due to its geographical location and history, Australia has some very unique **fauna**.

extinction

Do you know what caused the **extinction** of the dinosaurs?

saturating

The spray from the whale's blowhole covered the deck, **saturating** the tourists on board.

crippled

The train accident left Gerald **crippled** from the waist down.



Values

Talk to your teacher about reasons why bird conservation is such an important topic.

ecosystem

setting examples
for younger
generations

sustainable
populations

responsibility



The extinction of the Dodo

Read the article about the extinction of the Dodo.
Fill in the gaps using the vocabulary below.

unfortunate

conservationists

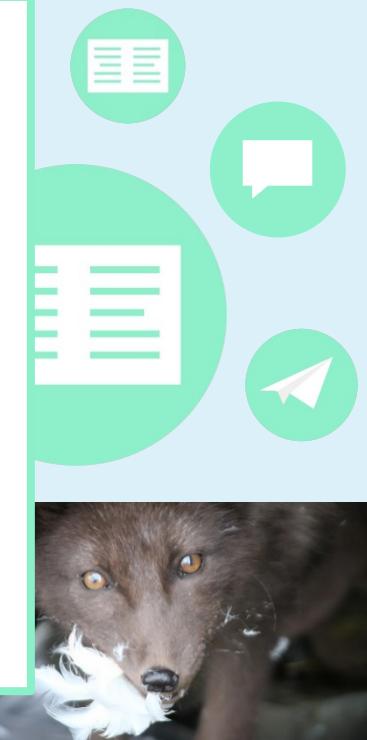
extinction

environment

interference

One of the most famous examples of human _____ spelling the _____ of a species is that of the Dodo. Endemic to the island of Mauritius, the Dodo was a plump and flightless bird with little in the way of natural defences. Along with the dinosaurs, it is symbolic of the concept of extinction.

Many _____ have speculated on the rapid disappearance of the Dodo. Reports from sailor's logs at the time paint a picture of a bird unconcerned and even curious of humans. Its lack of a fear instinct make it clear that it enjoyed an _____ free of natural predators. Ships from abroad, with their cargo of hungry sailors, dogs and foreign disease, were to prove a swift end for the _____ creature.





Pollution

Talk to your teacher about different forms of pollution and how they can affect bird populations in the wild.



oil spills

seaborne
plastics

pesticides

emissions

landfill

mining/fracking

other?



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There are many ways you can do more to support bird conservation efforts. Developing an awareness of breeding seasons is beneficial, as these periods are crucial for the reproduction of fragile species. For pet owners, keeping your cat indoors during this season can dramatically reduce the **mortality** of chicks in urban and rural environments. Limiting your use of **pesticides** and planting native plants also support healthy **avian** habitats.

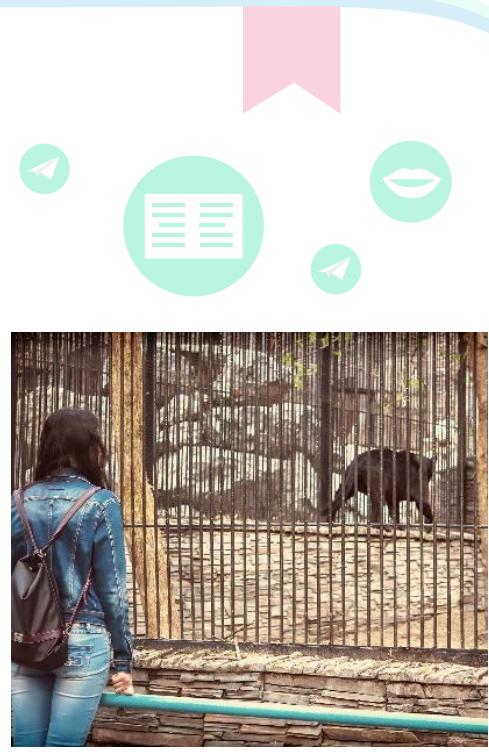
Conservation groups have become organised and efficient with their **rehabilitation** programs.



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For species close to extinction, captive breeding can be an effective way to bring populations back from the brink. Populations of captive bred birds can be reintroduced to the wild after numbers have recovered to stable levels. These processes can be risky, as captive bred birds don't have the learned **instincts** and behavior that a bird raised in the wild learn to survive.

Still the most significant threat is habitat loss, and many groups focus on environmental protection and setting aside tracts of land under protected legislation. In national parks birds and other threatened species have scope to **flourish** and exist with minimal interruption from humans.





New words

flourish

The species began to **flourish** after poaching was eliminated from the area.

pesticides

The widespread use of **pesticides** has had a significant effect on human health.

avian

Avian influenza is a disease carried by birds.

rehabilitation

The habitat is going through a process of **rehabilitation**, and so visitors are not allowed.

instinct

An **instinct** is a behavior that is natural or inherent, rather than learned.



The cat has an **instinct** for hunting for birds in the garden.

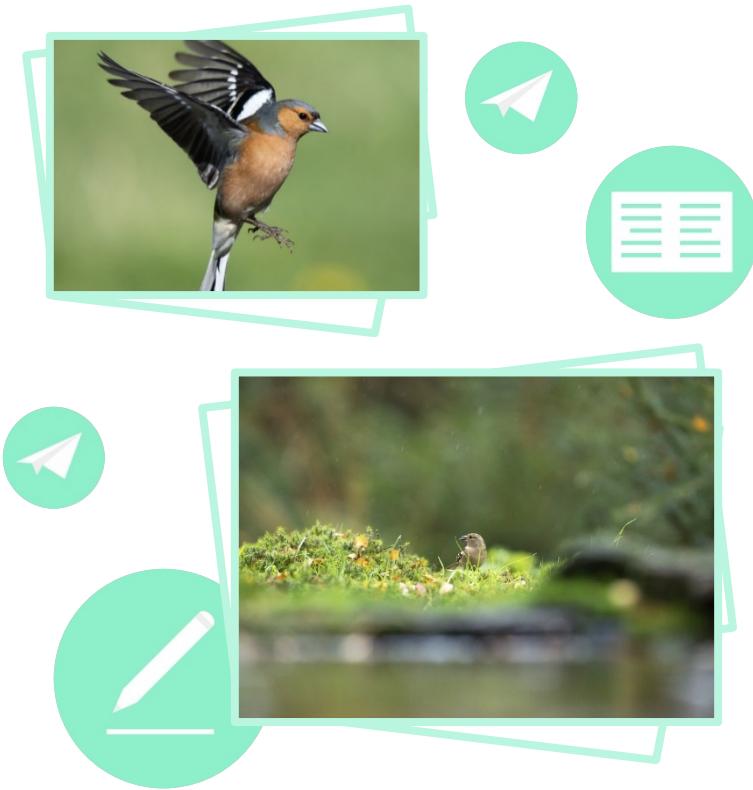


Instincts

"These processes can be risky, as captive bred birds don't have the learned instincts and behavior that a bird raised in the wild learn to survive."

Write a short text on some instincts that birds might develop in the wild which help with their survival.

A sheet of white paper with a vertical blue margin line on the left side. There are ten horizontal grey lines for writing, each preceded by a small grey circular bullet point.



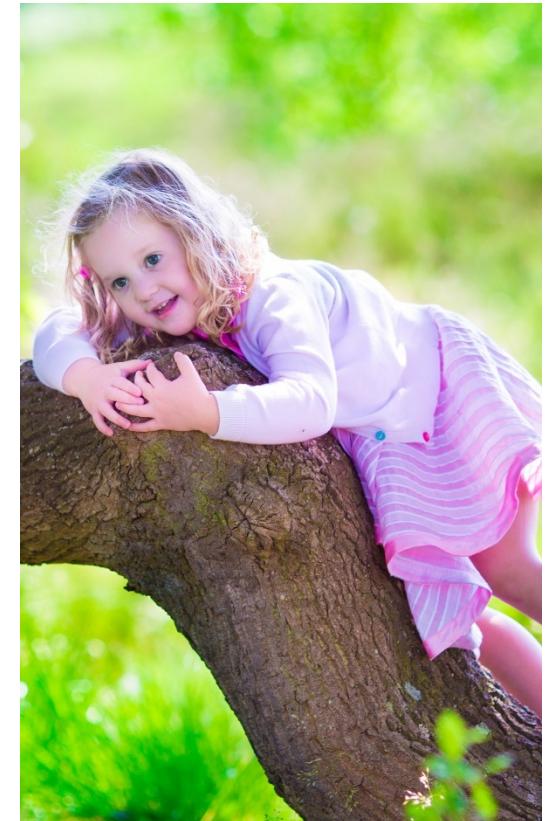


Grandmother's garden

Read the extract below.

Jane walked along the garden path listening to a melody of chittering birdsong. The sky was obscured by twisting branches and a canopy of foliage. She could hear the chirping of newly hatched chicks in the nests above her head. This was the sanctuary of her grandmother, a garden characterised by decades of care and attention. She saw the old oak tree where she used to climb as a child and watch her mother reading old paperbacks by the birdbath. After all of those years this was the place where she felt most at peace.

Her grandmother was an avid lover of birds, and spread birdseed and food along the path each morning. Decades of this learned behaviour had tamed generations of birds, who would perch themselves on your arm if you let them. She remembered helping her father make bird feeders in his workshop as a child and the gratitude in her grandmother's eyes when she was gifted them. The pumpkin seeds placed inside the feeders each morning, along with the fruit growing from the trees provided ample food for the collection of birds who called the garden their home.



**Describe all of the aspects of the garden that make it such a haven for bird life.
Write the answers in sentences – they will be useful for the next activity.**



Strategies for bird conservation

Write a list of strategies which you could incorporate in your backyard or town which would increase local bird populations. Conversely, what activities might harm local bird life?

Positive

Negative





Local conservation

What can you do on a community level to minimise human impacts on avian populations? Write a letter to your local newsletter asking them to publish some pointers.

A large rectangular box with a thin black border. Inside the box, there are eight horizontal grey lines spaced evenly apart, intended for handwritten text.



Reflect on the lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!

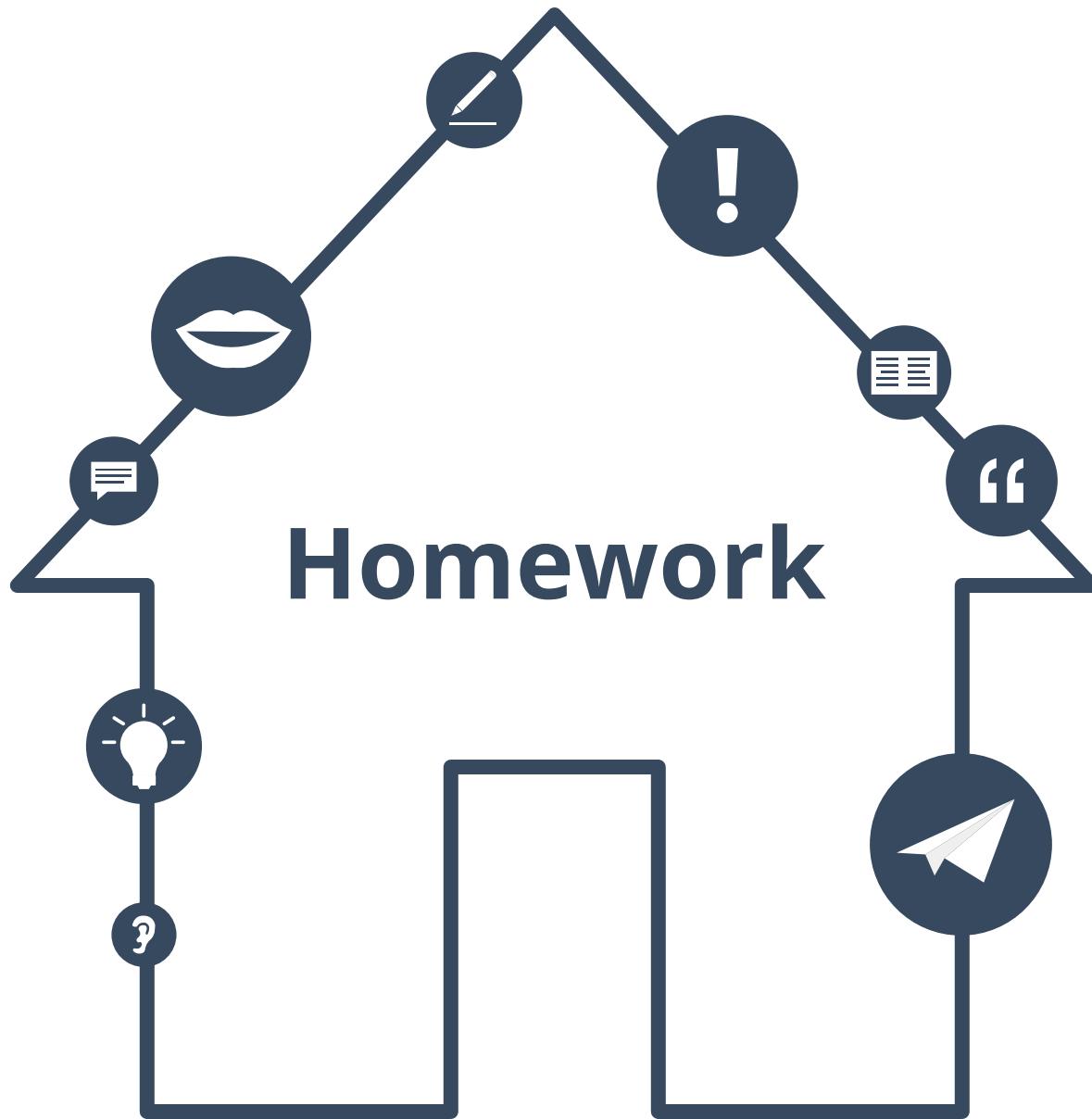




Answer key

interference, extinction, conservationists, environment, unfortunate

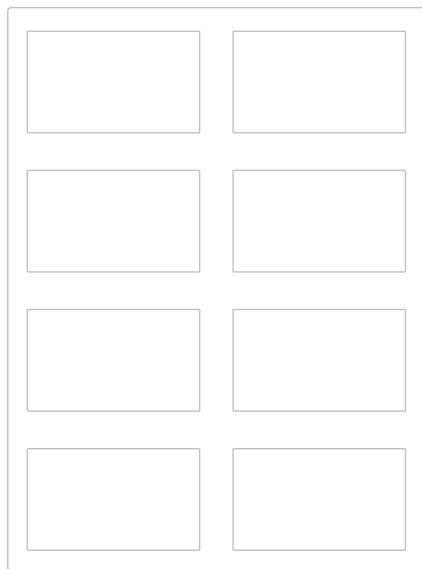
Activity P. 20





Vocabulary flashcards

**Create flashcards of the new vocabulary in this lesson.
Be sure to include the definition on the reverse side.**





Respond to the paragraph

Studies have shown that seabirds are particularly vulnerable to disruption and population loss as a result of human activity.

Why might this be the case? Come up with 2-3 reasons and write a short response explaining why this might be so.





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