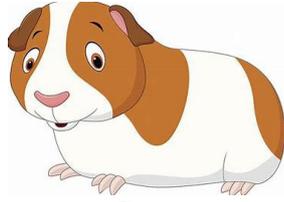


Welcome back to the Animal Nursery. I hope you enjoy the tale today.



Ruaridh



Gwen



Daisy



Scott



Rebecca



Mabel



Bertie



Simon



Tomasz



Felicity



Martin



Dana



Henry



Sofija

The Tale of Bird Week

This week at nursery the animals have been learning all about birds. This interest was sparked by Dana who, at together time on Monday, shared her really exciting news with everyone. "There is a big garden bird count on soon, and my uncle Tim is an orno-thol-ogist and said that the nursery could take part in counting the birds that visit the garden!" "Oh, that sounds like a wonderful idea" said Mrs Hippo, who loved nature and when the animals were gardening would often point out different birds that were in the trees at the top of the garden. Everyone liked listening to the birds chirping.

Scott, who had been listening very carefully, was a bit puzzled. "What's an orno- thingy?" Mrs Hippo explained, telling the animals that ornithology was the scientific study of birds, and that it involved finding out all sorts of things about them, from their different sounds, to their different nesting places. Someone who does this as their job is called an ornithologist.

"I'd like to find out more about birds, could I be an orno-whatsit one day?", asked Sofija. "Absolutely!", replied Mrs Hippo. Sofija smiled happily. "I want to be one too as I like to watch the birds flying. I wish I had wings, flying looks so cool", said Henry. "I wish I was one so I could be best friends with the robin that visits my garden" said Gwen. "I would like to be a banana-ologist", laughed Martin and everyone giggled as they knew how much Martin loved bananas.

Mrs Bear had been listening to all the chatter and went to collect the animals floor book, where they kept a record of thoughts and questions that were mentioned while discussing interesting topics. "Would anyone like to tell us anything about birds?" asked Mrs Bear. "I know that a robin has red on its tummy" said Gwen. "I know how to make pine cone fat balls for the birds 'cause my gran makes them", said Felicity, "The birds love them, and eat them all up!" "Birds can be all different colours" said Bertie. "I know that birds eat squiggly worms and some fly away somewhere warmer in the winter", said Ruaridh. "Thank you so much" said Mrs Bear, after she had finished writing down what the animals had said. Mabel, Henry and Daisy loved drawing and drew lots of birds and spirally nests in the floor book.

"What would you like to learn about birds?" asked Mrs Bear. "I want to learn lots!" said Tomasz "what is the biggest bird? And the smallest bird?, Do all birds sing? Which one is the loudest?, How do birds make nests?" "These are great questions", said Mrs Bear.

"Can we make a bird nest?" asked Rebecca who loved making things. "That's a great idea, we can definitely do that!" replied Mrs Bear. "Can birds fly backwards?" asked Daisy, followed by Martin wondering whether or not he could share his favourite fruit, banana, with a bird, something he thought they might enjoy. Mrs Bear laughed. "These are super questions, this week we will find out the answers together!"

On Tuesday, when the animals arrived the nursery looked a bit different. There was a big bird display with lots of different pictures of birds and books to look at. There was also black paper covering part of the window in the house area. In the black paper there were rectangular and circular shapes that had been cut out for the animals to look out of when they were bird watching. There was also two pairs of binoculars for the animals to try looking through and a table with lots of cardboard tubes for the animals to make their own binoculars and a variety of materials to decorate them with.

On Wednesday the animals made some pine cone fat balls for the birds. Mrs Hippo had

went to Tesco and bought a big bag of birdseed and some lard to make them with. Mrs Bear found a big bag of pine cones in the garden shed. Firstly the animals gave the pine cones a wash and then they put a layer of lard around the pine cone and then pressed in the seeds. "It's so squishy!" said Dana who made lots of them. In the afternoon the animals sang "Came a little blue bird to my window" as Bertie had spotted a bird with a little bit of blue on its tail from out of the window. Bertie hoped that if the bird heard their singing, it might return to the garden.

On Thursday the animals made their own nests out of twigs and moss. This proved very tricky and everyone admired the bird's skill. Simon particularly enjoyed this activity as he kept making his nest bigger and bigger so that when it was big enough he crawled inside and went to sleep!

On Friday there was a pile of clip boards with everyone's name on each one with a piece of paper attached and a pencil. Mrs Bear showed everyone how to do a tally mark of a line whenever they saw a bird in the garden. "That just looks like a number one", said Daisy who loved writing numbers. The animals had worked together earlier in the week to make the wooden climbing frame look like a hide. Scott had found special camouflage material when he was helping Mrs Hippo empty out a material box. Everyone had their binoculars that they had made.

The first birds that were spotted were two blackbirds with their distinctive orange beaks and everyone made two line marks on their paper.

While they were outside, as well as the two blackbirds, they managed to spot two starlings on the edge of the slide, a tiny robin that was hiding in one of the top garden trees, four house sparrows landing on the grass one by one next to the rope swing, and a chaffinch walking around the wooden pallet at the music area/

When they all went back into the nursery they all tallied up how many birds they had seen in an hour by counting up all the marks. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. "Ten!" said Rebecca. "Maybe I should try this at home and find out how many birds visit my garden!"

Because it was cold outside, Mrs Bear surprised everyone by announcing that there was warm milk and banana bread for everyone. Everyone cheered, especially Martin who said "I want to do a bird count everyday!"