



# Spencer Sparrow's Search For Food

Key Stage 1

## Summary of Activity

Starting with a letter from a sparrow pupils are asked to consider birds which use their school grounds. Simple bird surveys and clue hunts are used to create a list of birds which use the grounds. Pupils then consider how they might be able to help their local bird life and create a variety of feeders, assessing the effectiveness of each.

## Learning Objectives

1. To identify birds which use the school grounds
2. To create effective bird feeders.

## Preparation

- Photocopy observation sheets (see below).
- Enlarge the letter from Spencer Sparrow (see below), print and put in envelope addressed to the class.
- Gather materials for making bird feeders (See below).
- Do any stages of making the feeders that pupils will be unable to do (drill holes, halve coconuts etc.).
- Buy foods to fill feeders.
- Request that pupils come in to school well prepared to spend time in the outdoors.
- Choose a location in the school from which pupils can sit to observe the school grounds. You may wish to create a classroom hide by shading sections of the windows out with sugar paper. Working in small groups pupils are given an observation sheet and asked to record the birds that they see during a

ten minute period. Pupils use bird posters and books to identify the birds they see. Each member of the class should have a go at doing this. A group could be allocated to each break time, so that data is collected over a week.

## Resources

- Letter from Spencer Sparrow.
- Bird observation sheet.
- Bird identification posters/books.
- Bird feeding observation sheet.
- Binoculars

## Health and Safety Consideration

1. Refer to your risk assessment for your school grounds.
2. Complete a risk assessment if you leave the school grounds. Refer to Norfolk guidance at [www.norfolkesinet.org.uk](http://www.norfolkesinet.org.uk)
3. Consider pupil specific risks, such as nut allergies.
4. Consider activity specific risks such as use of scissors to make bird feeders, handling dirty bird feeding equipment to refill with food, eating food meant for birds and piercing fruit/coconut shell to thread onto string.



**Saving Norfolk's Wildlife for the Future**

# Activity

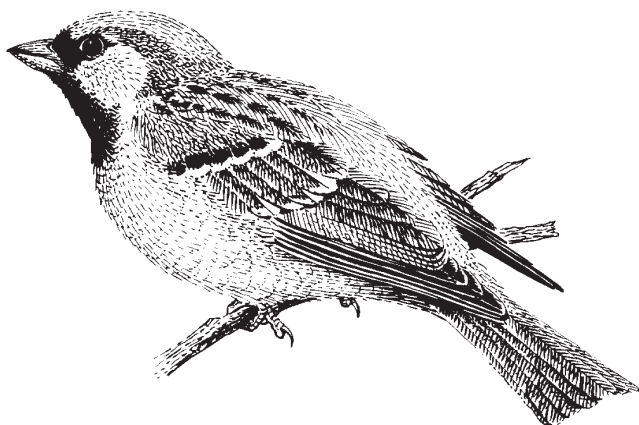


## Introduction – Meeting the Developer

1. Read the class the letter from Spencer Sparrow (see below).

## Main Activity – Collecting the Evidence

1. Discuss with pupils:
  - How should we help Spencer?
  - Do we just want to feed Spencer?
  - Do all birds eat the same things?
  - Which birds live in our school grounds?
2. Create a summary table of results from the bird observations on the board for pupils to refer to. Pupils can create a list of birds which occur in their school grounds.
3. Ask pupils how they can help the birds that live in their school grounds.
4. Using the guidance below support pupils in creating a range of different bird feeders (fat balls, half coconuts, fruit on string, ground feeding, bird tables, fat in cracks of a post).



## Plenary – Presenting the Evidence

1. Pupils then need to decide where to locate bird feeders and should explore school grounds to find suitable areas.
2. When bird feeders have been placed in school grounds, pupils should repeat 10 minute observations, this time adding upon which feeder they saw a particular bird. You may wish to use the Bird Feeding Observation Sheet below.



# Follow-up Ideas



Male Chaffinch



Create bird feeders, tables, baths and boxes. Establish plants that are good for birds and insects.



Pupils could use simple spreadsheets to record their data.



Create report style fact-files about sparrows.



You may wish to investigate which feeding methods are favoured by each of the birds on your list. This can be linked to adaptation. You could also investigate how feeding patterns change between season.



The topic of birds can be developed to consider migration. The WWF has a wide range of resources to support work on migration that considers the countries birds pass as they migrate and the issues those countries face. These books can also be used as a basis for literacy activities. Go to [www.wwflearning.co.uk](http://www.wwflearning.co.uk) and click on the bookshop link to find:

- Focus on Swallows (1995) games, resource sheets and photo cards for pupils aged 7 – 11.
- Swallow Tale (1999) is a big book for pupils aged 7 – 11.
- Long, Long Journey (2001) – a guided reading text for pupils aged 5 – 7.



Write a letter back to Spencer Sparrow about how they have chosen to help him.

# Follow-up Ideas



Use the 'Garden Birds' fold out key from the Field Studies Council to identify birds ([www.field-studies-council.org](http://www.field-studies-council.org)).



Map the presence of birds in their school grounds.














Consider providing and making bird boxes. 'Spud finds a home' is a book for children of between 2 and 6. The book tells the story of Spud the Sparrow's hunt for somewhere to nest (copies of the book can be obtained from: Spud, FREEPOST 1155, Canterbury, CT3 4BR. Each book costs £5 (including p&p) and cheques should be made payable to Jacobi Jayne & Co).



Log on to [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk) and click on 'Teachers' to link through to resources or click on 'Birds' and then on 'What You Can Do' to find information about feeding birds.



Continue bird monitoring all year round. Pupils can then analyse data collected and consider reasons why observations vary from month to month.

	Book		Continuation
	Website		Global
	Literacy		Grounds
	Older		Maths
	Geography		Science
	ICT		



Coal and Blue Tit on Feeder





# Bird Observation Sheet



Name	
Date	
Time Started	
Time Ended	

	NUMBER OF BIRDS SEEN
Blackbird	
Blackheaded Gull	
Blue Tit	
Chaffinch	
Date	
Collared Dove	
Dunnock	
Great Tit	
House Sparrow	
Magpie	
Pied Wagtail	
Robin	
Rook	
Starling	
Swallow	
Swift	
Wood Pigeon	

# A Letter From Spencer Sparrow



Dear Class,

My name is Spencer Sparrow. **Do you know me?**

I am a small brown bird. Sometimes I build my nest in the roof of your school. I often visit your school grounds. **Have you seen me?**

If you have not seen me you might have seen one of my family, or even one of my friends. There are lots of us around. **Have you seen a Sparrow near your own house?**

Sparrows just like me live throughout England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales and much of Europe. We get everywhere! In 1980 there were 10 million more sparrows in the UK than there are today. Here in the East of England, the problem has been really severe. The number of sparrows in this region has decreased by 90% since 1970, and every day there are less and less of us about. **Why do you think that is?**

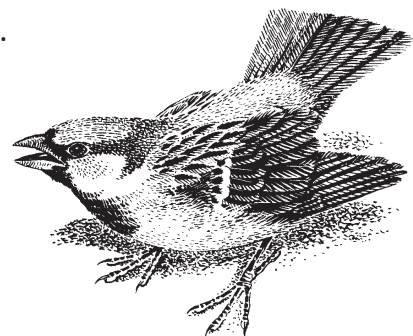
We really like school grounds and gardens. They are good places to build nests and find food. Our problem is that it is becoming harder and harder to find suitable places to build nests and there is less and less food around for us to eat. **Can you help us?**

Without food and places to raise our families we will have to move away from your school grounds to somewhere else. We might even have to move right out of the county, perhaps to Cambridgeshire or Lincolnshire.

Thank you for reading this letter. I hope you can help us.

Yours faithfully,

Spencer Sparrow





# Bird Feeding Observation Sheet



Name	
Date	
Time Started	
Time Ended	

	SUNFLOWER SEEDS	PEANUTS	BIRD TABLE	GROUND FEEDING
Blackbird				
Blackheaded Gull				
Blue Tit				
Chaffinch				
Date				
Collared Dove				
Dunnoek				
Great Tit				
House Sparrow				
Magpie				
Pied Wagtail				
Robin				
Rook				
Starling				
Swallow				
Swift				
Wood Pigeon				