



MSVUSE

15. The Birdman of India

Look at the title of this lesson and the pictures on this page. What, do you think, you will read in this lesson?

You must have seen people worshipping birds, trees and animals in many places. After observing this, you must have wondered as to 'Why people worship nature'? An easy answer to this question is because our ancestors did it. A long long time ago, worshipping birds, trees and animals were ways devised by our ancestors to respect our ecology. This was also meant to prevent human greediness from destroying our natural wealth. Unfortunately, if we look at the present situation, birds and their habitations have faced much destruction.



What are the two reasons given for worshipping nature?

There are about 9000 species of birds and their size varies from 5 cms to over 2.5 metres. The Humming Bird is one of the smallest species of birds and the Ostrich, which reaches a height of over 8 feet, is the largest bird on the planet. There are birds, which are known for their swiftness such as the Eagle and the Hawk; there are other birds such as the Vulture, which are known for flying at high altitudes. There are also several birds, which have lost the power of flight such as the Ostrich, the Emu and the Kiwi.

Make a table showing specialites of the birds mentioned in the paragraph.



Birds are called winged bipeds. The body temperature of birds remains more or less constant. Another interesting feature about birds is their feathers. Observing the feathers of a bird gives us an idea about the life that they lead. Birds have beaks. They have no teeth. Their main food consists of insects, food grains, and flesh. Like reptiles, birds too lay eggs. They have a keen sense of sight and hearing, but their sense of smell and taste is poor. Birds have the wonderful capacity of adjusting their vision quickly. As a result, they can shift their focus from a distant object to a nearby object in a fraction of a second.

Find the specialites of birds given in the paragraph.

In India, the world of 'Birds' was exposed to us by the great Salim Ali's contribution. He is affectionately known as the 'Bird-man of India'. Salim Ali was born on 12th November 1896. His maternal uncle Amiruddin Tyabji brought him up. His uncle was a hunter and a nature lover. Under his guidance, Salim learnt to hunt and appreciate the nature around him. As a child, Salim Ali shot a bird, which had a

yellow streak running below its neck. His uncle could not identify the species and advised him to contact the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) in Mumbai. Dr. W.S. Millard, the honorary secretary of the BNHS identified the bird as a yellow-throated sparrow. He also showed Salim Ali the Society's splendid collection of stuffed birds.

This single incident changed Salim Ali's life and India got its best ornithologist as a result. Once Salim Ali said, "My chief interest in the study of birds has been the opportunity to observe the bird's life history under natural conditions and not in the laboratory under a microscope. By travelling to remote uninhabited places, I can study the birds as they live and behave in their natural habitat".

What do you like the most about Salim Ali?

Salim Ali received honours and medals from all over the world for his service including the J. Paul Getty International award, the Golden Ark of the International Union for conservation of nature, the gold medal of the British Ornithology Union (a rarity for non-British people) and Padmashree and Padma Vibhushan from the Indian Government.

His timely intervention saved the Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary and the Silent Valley National Park. His famous book "The Book of Indian Birds" is a bible for budding ornithologists. He passed away in 1987 at the age of 91. He is no more, but his legacy lives on. His dedication to ornithology has left behind committed groups of amateur bird watchers all over India.

-Writers group

Word Meanings

ancestors	forefathers (people related to us who lived long-long ago)
deities	images of Gods/Goddesses
ecology	the scientific study of the pattern of relations of plants and animals in their natural environment
exist	to live
species	family of animals or birds
wing	body part which help birds fly
bipeds	two legged animals
constant	not changeable
ostrich	a very large African bird with beautiful feathers, which runs very quickly but cannot fly
feather	soft covering on a bird's body
sight	power to see
sensibility	feelings (reactions)
orphan	a child who has lost his parents

ornithology	the science of studying birds
conservation	attempt to save natural resources
reptile	cold-blooded animal which lays eggs
sanctuary	a safe natural environment for wildlife
honorary	degree given to a person by a university for extraordinary work (not following the usual rules)
observation	action of noticing or watching
intervention	to come in the way usually to do something good
budding	beginning
legacy	history (life history)
amateur	those who are not experts
splendid	excellent
uninhabited	where people don't live

Reading Comprehension

A. Read the lesson again and complete the table:

No.	Names of Birds	Names of Persons	Names of Awards
1.	-----	-----	-----
2.	-----	-----	-----
3.	-----	-----	-----
4.	-----	-----	-----

B. Answer the following questions:

- (i) Why is Salim Ali called the Bird-man of India?
- (ii) What do ‘feathers’ of birds tell us ?
- (iii) “Looking at the beak of a bird, it is possible to understand its life cycle”. Explain.
- (iv) What influenced Salim Ali to become an ornithologist?

Vocabulary

A. Fill in the blanks with appropriate words given below.

winged bipeds, reptiles, ornithology, budding, intervention, laboratory, identified



- (i) Hissaved the Bharatpur bird sanctuary.
- (ii) Dr. Salim Ali studied the life of birds in natural conditions not in the
- (iii) The science of studying birds is known as
- (iv) The secretary the sparrow as the yellow throated sparrow.
- (v) Animals that are able to change blood temperature and usually lay eggs are
- (vi) "The book of Indian Birds" is a bible for ornithologists.
- (vii) Birds are called

B. Match the column ‘A’ and ‘B’:

‘A’	‘B’
(1) ecology	given as an honour and not according to the usual rules
(2) deities	those who are not experts
(3) conservation	flowers, animals, birds in the environment
(4) amateur	images that we worship
(5) honorary	attempt to save natural resources

C. Frame your own sentences using the word /phrases:

high altitudes, distant objects, nature lover, life history

Grammar



LOST and FOUND BOX

red pen, blue pencil, small purse,
white paper, black book, brown doll,
green lunch box, pink bottle, yellow bag,
purple sketch pen, orange ribbon

- A. From the given lost and found box , pick up phrases and use in your sentences as given in the example:
Example: I lost my pen which is red.
- B. Underline the part of the sentence which describes the object in exercise ‘A’:

Writing

- A. 1. A picture of a very strange-looking and beautiful bird is given. Look at the picture very carefully and write a paragraph describing the bird's features.



Some tips for writing the paragraph.

1. The bird's beak
 2. The bird's colour and its feathers
 3. Its neck and write what you have observed
 4. The length of its neck
 5. Height of the bird
2. An ornithologist (person who studies birds) requires certain tools to carry out his observation, Some of these tools are listed. You will have to explain why those tools are necessary for studying birds.
- a. Binoculars
 - b. Tape-recorder and mike
 - c. Sample of bird feathers
 - d. Bird-tag
- B. There is some interesting information about the feathers of birds. Read it and complete the notes given below it.

The feather is the one thing that makes a bird unique from all other animals-not flight, not eggs. All an animal needs is one feather and it is considered a bird. Feathers not only help birds fly, they also keep birds warm and dry. Feathers are excellent for birds to hide from enemies. Most birds use them to attract and

select a mate. Some other role that feathers serve are- balancing on the ground, in flight and as lining inside nests for incubation.

There are many kinds of feathers. They can be broadly divided into two types - body feathers and flight feathers.

1. **Identity of a bird:**

2. **Utility of feathers:**

2.1

2.2.

2.3.

2.4.

2.5.

2.6.

2.7.

3. **Kinds of feathers:**

3.1

3.2.

Activity

A. Task I.

Look at the pictures carefully, listen to the passage, recognise the nests and write the names of birds in the space given:

See Appendix-1 Lesson-15



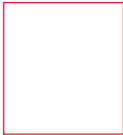
Task II.

Complete the table:

NESTS

Name of bird	Made of	Speciality
.....	Cup shaped
Swallow	
.....	Sticks bound by mud and wool	

B. Describe your favourite bird by completing the table given below:

Name of Bird	Picture	Colour	Sound	Tail	Special features
					

Now tell the class about your favourite bird.

Project

Collect information about Chhattisgarh Myna and write a paragraph about its unique features.

Use the following proverb in your sentence. Meaning is given.

Proverb

A rose is a rose is a rose
is a rose.

Meaning

Things and people are what they
are-you cannot change their
nature.

