

## WATER BIRD

(Map Ref 27)

## PELICAN & EELS PRESENTATION

(Map Ref 14)



UP, LS, US



Waterbirds live in a variety of habitats including swamps, marshes, rivers/lakes, ponds, bays, lagoons and estuaries. Each type of waterbird lives in an area to suit its needs - some are divers and require deeper water, others feed on plants growing under the water whilst some rely on the huge variety of life surrounding the water; insects, frogs, crustaceans etc. Fish make up a large part of water birds' diets.

Waterbirds tend to be nomadic, moving from one place to another as water levels and food availability change with the seasons.

Q1

Many waterbirds have webbed feet why do you think this is?

THIS IS AN ADAPTATION TO HELP BIRDS MOVE THROUGH THE WATER - LIKEN IT TO PULLING YOUR HAND THROUGH THE WATER WHEN YOU'RE SWIMMING, FIRST WITH YOUR FINGERS SPREAD, THEN WITH YOUR FINGERS CLOSED. IT ENABLES YOU TO MOVE MUCH FASTER AS DO WEBBED FEET FOR WATERBIRDS,

Q2

Some waterbirds have feet with very long, spaced-out toes with no webbing. Why do you think this is? Do you think this type of bird depends on its swimming skills for food? Where do you think it would find most of its food?

AN EXAMPLE OF THIS TYPE OF FOOT CAN BE SEEN ON AN IBIS OR SWAMPHENS. THESE BIRDS SPEND MOST OF THEIR TIME ON THE SHORELINE, WADING THROUGH SHALLOW WATER OR MUD. THESE FEET HELP THEM TO STAY ON TOP OF THE MUD BY INCREASING THE SURFACE AREA (IMAGINE PLACING YOUR HAND ON MUD STRAIGHT DOWN, FINGERS FIRST, OR PLACING YOUR HAND FLAT ON THE MUD). THESE BIRDS SIFT THROUGH THE MUD OR AMONGST THE ROOTS OF MANGROVES AND REEDS FOR SMALL ITEMS SUCH AS FISH, CRABS AND INSECTS.

Q3

What are some of the adaptations each species of bird has to ensure its survival in a wetlands environment? Explain their use.

EACH SPECIES WILL HAVE ITS OWN UNIQUE ADAPTATIONS WHICH STUDENTS MAY IDENTIFY, HERE ARE SOME GENERAL ONES:

- OILY FEATHERS TO RESIST WATER (WATCH THE BIRDS AS THEY GO UNDER THE WATER)
  - LONG BEAKS FOR SIFTING THROUGH MUD - ROYAL SPOONBILL, IBIS SWIMMING BIRDS HAVE WEBBED FEET
  - WADING BIRDS HAVE LARGE FEET WITH SPREADOUT TOES
  - SWIMMING BIRDS HAVE LONG, SQUAT BODIES, MUCH LIKE THE SHAPE OF A BOAT
  - COLOURATION AND PATTERNING TO CAMOUFLAGE THE BIRDS IN THEIR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
  - FLEXIBLE THROAT SACS TO ENABLE BIRDS SUCH AS DARTERS AND PELICANS TO CATCH AND SWALLOW LARGE FOOD ITEMS
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A1

Using the signs around this area, identify the types of birds you can see. How many different species are there?