

## Camouflage

The colour and patterns of birds often help them to blend into their background. This is called camouflage. Birds also use mimicry and disguise to help them blend into their backgrounds.

**Question 1:** Why do you think a bird would want to blend into its background?

Think about a Snowy Owl. It lives in the high Arctic and is a top predator. It has to blend into its background to enable it to hunt without being seen. Snowy Owls also use their bright white feathers to reflect the sunlight off their bodies to warn rivals not to go near their territory. Patterns like strips and spots can also help a bird to camouflage.



Now think about a Wren. This tiny bird could be a tasty snack for something like a Sparrowhawk!



Wren



Sparrowhawk

**Question 2:** List 3 birds whose colour matches the trees they sit in  
List 3 birds whose colour matches the ground they nest on

Some birds are very brightly coloured and they use this to attract a mate. Some birds even have feathers that are only there to help them attract a mate.

**Question 3:** List 3 birds that use their colour to attract a mate

**Question 4:** What determines the type of camouflage a bird develops?

## Task

Draw, sketch or paint a picture that matches the colours in your bedroom. Try to make your picture blend in as possible.

**Snowy Owl Image:** Credit Matt Bruce (RSPB)

Education Programme  
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Can you spot the birds?



A nightjar hidden amid the leaves CREDIT: UNIVERSITY OF EXETER  
Bittern: Credit Pinterest  
Mallard: Credit seenature.org.uk  
Ptarmigan: Credit <https://www.audubon.org/>  
Ringed Plover chick: <http://gallery.nen.gov.uk/>  
Wilson's snipe: Credit <https://roadsendnaturalist.com/>

**Thank you for helping to conserve the Isle of Man's wild birds and their habitats**

# Investigating Colour

Draw a line to join the birds name to the birds' body then to the birds head



Chaffinch



Great tit



Brent Goose



Mallard



Mute Swan



# Education Programme

## Investigating Colour



### Answers

**Question 1:** To help hide or escape from predators  
To help hunt more efficiently by being harder to see

**Question 2:** 3 birds that camouflage into the trees they sit in:  
Owls, Treecreeper, Wren, Greenfinch, House Sparrow. Birds which have colours such as greens, browns, blacks can camouflage really well in the trees.  
3 birds that camouflage into the ground when they nest  
Hen Harrier, Mallard, Curlew, Skylark Ringed Plover

Look up images of these birds on [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

Select 'Birds & Wildlife'

Select Birds A-Z

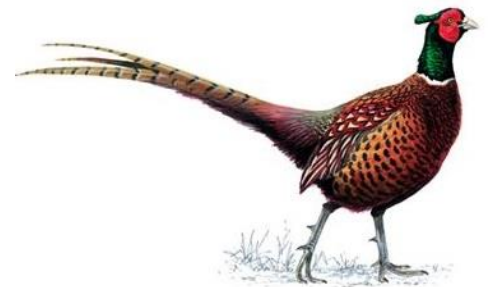
### Question 3:

Birds which use colour include:

A male Eider duck will throw its head back to show its pink chest to female birds



A male Pheasant had developed special feathers just for showing off!



Birds such as Chaffinches and Robins are at their most colourful just before spring



**Question 4:** Birds develop different colours/camouflage depending on the habitat where they live and also the different seasons.

Illustration: Credit Mike Langman (RSPB-images.com)

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Answers



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Answers



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