

EVEN AN OSTRICH NEEDS A NEST: WHERE BIRDS BEGIN

IRENE KELLY

GRADES
PREK-3

About the Book

Bird lovers of all ages will feel right at home with Irene Kelly's latest nature title.

Many birds build intricate nests out of twigs, leaves, feathers, mud—even dollar bills and clothespins. Some nests are gigantic, housing hundreds of birds or weighing as much as a car, while others are just large enough to keep one egg safe and warm. Whether simple or fancy, every species finds a unique way and a clever place to raise its young.

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Research

The book describes the nest-building activities of forty different birds from all over the world.

Students can do research using nonfiction books from their school or public library, encyclopedias, or online resources to find out additional information about each of these birds. They can search for facts about the bird's appearance, habitat, food, and special behaviors. They can choose birds individually or they can work in small groups—perhaps on birds from the same continent or geographical area.

Another option is to do research on those birds that live in or near the area where the students live (see Geography/Art section below).

Language Arts

Poetry—Many wonderful poems for children have been written about birds. Students can read many of them online (see Online Resources on the reverse page) or search for bird poems in poetry books in their school or public library. They may want to memorize a favorite poem and recite it for the whole class.

Haiku—A haiku is a three-line poem using the format: 1st line = 5 syllables; 2nd line = 7 syllables; 3rd line = 5 syllables. Haiku deals with a fleeting moment in nature. Students can read and listen to some examples of haiku (see Online Resources below) and then they can write their own haiku about birds. They can also illustrate their poems and compile them into a classroom book.

Geography/Art

Using Maps—The ending pages of the book present a map of the world showing where each of the forty birds lives. Students can find pictures of the birds to use as models and can then draw their own pictures of each bird. They can create a bulletin board display using a large wall map, yarn, and pushpins, placing their pictures around the periphery of the map and then connecting each picture to its appropriate location on the map with a length of yarn.

Another option is to divide students into groups—one group for each continent (probably two or three groups for North America). They can draw a large map of their continent on butcher paper using an atlas as a model, then draw pictures of the individual birds on 3 x 5 inch cards, label the pictures with the bird's name and city or country, then glue them to the appropriate location on the map.

Science

Feathers—Students can be on the lookout for feathers as they walk around the school yard or their neighborhoods. They can search the online Feather Atlas provided by the National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory to help them identify the feathers. They can also search this site to see a close-up of the feathers for each of the North American birds cited in the book.

Nests—The book suggests, on the last page, things that students can do and materials they can collect to help birds build their nests. After reading about the birds in their particular area (using the map at the end of the book), students can begin to collect the needed materials, and following the directions in the book, start to watch the birds retrieve the materials for their nests.

Online Resources

www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/646

Presents **detailed descriptions of how bird-watching is accomplished** and provides lesson plans for teachers.

images.google.com/images

Students can enter any of the forty names of birds mentioned in the book and see a large **selection of photographs showing how the birds actually look**. These photos can be used as models for their drawings.

www.apples4theteacher.com/holidays/bird-day/poems-rhymes/

Presents a large selection of **poems about birds** that students can enjoy. Clicking on the poem's title brings up the entire poem.

www.wild-bird-watching.com/bird-haiku.html

Presents a selection of **haikus about birds**. There are also many links—on the left-hand side of the page—to other information on birds and bird-watching.

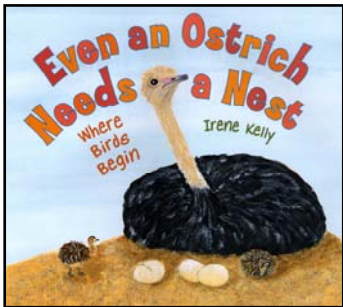
www.lab.fws.gov/featheratlas/

Presents high-resolution **scans of feathers of North American birds**. Directions for using the site are clearly stated on the home page.

For more books on birds, visit www.holidayhouse.com

About the Author/Illustrator

Irene Kelly is a children's book author and illustrator. Her books include *A Small Dog's Big Life: Around the World with Owney*, *It's a Hummingbird's Life*, and *It's a Butterfly's Life*. She lives in New Jersey with her family. Visit her online at www.irenekellybooks.com.



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Classroom Activities prepared by Sandy Schuckett, school library consultant.