



The Learning Progression Frameworks describe significant signposts in reading and writing as students develop and apply their literacy knowledge and skills with increasing expertise from school entry to the end of year 10. This teacher support material describes the opportunities in “Bird of the Year” for students to develop this expertise.

## Overview

In this interview, Megan Hubscher of Forest & Bird talks to Iona McNaughton about the Bird of the Year competition – why it started and how it helps keep New Zealand native birds safe. Students can read about some of the past winners of the competition in an accompanying article, “And the Winner Is ...”

“Bird of the Year” requires students to “confidently use a range of processing and comprehension strategies to make meaning from and think critically about” text (*The Literacy Learning Progressions*, page 14).

There is a PDF of this text and an audio version as an MP3 file at [www.juniorjournal.tki.org.nz](http://www.juniorjournal.tki.org.nz) (The audio file begins and ends with New Zealand bird calls.)

## Related texts

Non-fiction texts that feature New Zealand birds: *Camouflage*, *New Zealand Birds* (Ready to Read, shared); *Blue Eggs* (Ready to Read, Gold); “Our Treasure Island” (JJ 37); “Tākapu” (JJ 45); “The Gulls of Sulphur Bay” (JJ 46); “Haast’s Eagle” (JJ 51); “Making Money”, “Take Note” (JJ 55)

Non-fiction texts about predators: *Too Many Possums* (Ready to Read, Purple); “Catching Mustelids” (JJ 43)

Stories and poems about New Zealand birds: *How Kiwi Saved the Forest* (Ready to Read, shared); *Did You Shake Your Tail Feathers?* (Ready to Read, Purple); *The Thief* (Ready to Read, Gold); “Endangered Bird” (a poem, JJ 29); “Hoiho” (a poem, JJ 43); “Tākapu” (JJ 45); “Tūi Returning to the City” (a poem, JJ 46); “Tūi” (a poem), “Ring! Ring!” (JJ 49); “Kāhu and Hōkioi” (JJ 51); “Stop, Thief!” (a play, JJ 55)

## Text characteristics

“Bird of the Year” includes the following features that help develop the reading behaviours expected at Gold.

The structure of the text as an interview

A mix of explicit and implicit content and some information that may be new, requiring students to make connections to their prior knowledge to make inferences, track information, and identify main points

Some words and phrases that may be unfamiliar, including subject-specific vocabulary (for example, “Forest & Bird”, “organisation”, “wildlife”, “native”, “extinct”, “endangered”, “endemic”, “stoats”, “predators”, “habitats”, “ocean”, “starving”, “Kiwi Conservation Club (KCC)”, “Prime Minister”, “petrel”, “former”, “Bethlehem School”), requiring students to use their processing systems

Some words in te reo Māori, including bird names and a proverb

A variety of sentence structures so that students are required to attend to punctuation (including parentheses), pronouns (“those”, “them”, “they”, “it”, “These”), and other linking words and phrases to clarify the connections between ideas

Visual language features, including subheadings, photographs, and captions

**BIRD OF THE YEAR**

by Iona McNaughton

Every year, people vote for their favourite New Zealand bird in the Bird of the Year competition. The bird that gets the most votes is the winner. The competition is run by Forest & Bird, an organisation that helps look after New Zealand's birds and wildlife.

I asked Megan Hubscher from Forest & Bird some questions about the competition.

**Why does Forest & Bird hold the Bird of the Year competition?**

We want people to know more about the wonderful birds we have in Aotearoa New Zealand and to learn how to keep those birds safe.

**Can people vote for any bird?**

No, the competition is only about native birds. That means birds that have always lived in New Zealand or birds that have flown here from other countries, but not birds like blackbirds and sparrows that have been brought to New Zealand by people.

Other features typical of non-fiction:

- the use of examples (indicated by terms such as “like”, “For example”, “such as”) to clarify and support ideas
- precise descriptive language including extended noun phrases (for example, “the bird that gets the most votes”, “this beautiful little native bird”) and subject-specific compound words (“wildlife”, “blackbirds”, “seabirds”, “seashore”, “Northland”, “website”) and hyphenated words (“black-billed”, “orange-fronted”)
- numerical references, such as years and figures

## Cross-curriculum links

### English (Reading)

Level 2 – Processes and strategies: Selects and reads texts for enjoyment and personal fulfilment.

Level 2 – Structure: Recognises an increasing range of text forms and differences between them.

### Science (Nature of Science)

Levels 1 and 2 – Participating and contributing: Explore and act on issues and questions that link their science learning to their daily living.

### Science (Living World)

Levels 1 and 2 – Life processes: Recognise that all living things have certain requirements so they can stay alive.

Levels 1 and 2 – Ecology: Recognise that living things are suited to their particular habitat.

For further information about the science content in this book, see Building Science Concepts, Book 3: *Birds: Structure, Function, and Adaptation* and [scienceonline.tki.org.nz/What-do-my-students-need-to-learn](http://scienceonline.tki.org.nz/What-do-my-students-need-to-learn)



The New Zealand Curriculum

## Suggested reading purpose

## Possible learning goals

What can the students expect to find out or think about as a result of reading this text?

- To find out about the Bird of the Year competition and why it is important

What opportunities does this text provide for students to learn more about how to “read, respond to, and think critically” about texts?

The goals listed below link to the descriptions of reading behaviours in *The Literacy Learning Progressions* and the Learning Progression Frameworks. **Select from and adapt** them according to your students’ strengths, needs, and experiences – their culture, language, and identity (*The Literacy Learning Progressions*, page 7).

This text provides opportunities for students, over several readings, to:

- **make connections** between information in the article and their prior knowledge to **make inferences**
- **ask questions** and look for or think about possible answers
- use text and visual language features to identify and track information (**summarise**)
- **identify and discuss main ideas** about the competition and New Zealand native birds
- **monitor** their reading and, when something is unclear, take action to solve the problem, for example, by checking further sources of information, rereading, and/or reading on.



Sounds and Words



The Literacy Learning Progressions

## Introducing the text

Before introducing this article to your students, you could familiarise yourself with the pronunciation of bird names that are new to you by listening to the [audio version](#).

Use your knowledge of the students to ensure that your introduction to the text is effective in building or activating their prior knowledge and providing appropriate support for a successful first reading. A short video on the importance of introducing the text is available at <https://vimeo.com/142446572>

Several options are provided below for you to **select from and adapt**.

For English language learners, you could talk through the article to introduce key vocabulary (in English and in their first language if possible) and provide support with text features that may be unfamiliar. You can find further information about features of texts that may need support at [ELLP](#).

- Expect the students to recognise from the layout of pages 2–3 that this is a non-fiction text. Have them use the title and visual language features, including the image of the trophy, to make connections to what students know about the Bird of the Year competition.

- Focus on the photos of the two people and the link between the author’s name and the caption on the top photo. Read the text on page 2 together to clarify that this is an interview, with Iona (the “I” referred to in the second paragraph) asking the questions. Prompt the students to notice the colour coding of the question and answer backgrounds that match Iona’s and Megan’s photo labels. Explain that the ampersand (&) in “Forest & Bird” stands for “and”.
- You could provide explicit support for vocabulary by writing some key words (for example, “native”, “extinct”, “endangered”, “endemic”, “predators”, “habitats”) on a chart and having the students share their ideas about what they mean and why they might be important in a text about birds. Record the students’ ideas, leaving room on the chart to add further information after the reading.
- Set a reading purpose together and share the learning goal(s). Tell the students that there are several birds’ names in the article that might be new. Encourage them to have a go on their own first, and remind them that you will discuss these names afterwards. Give them sticky notes to mark questions or ideas that arise as they read and to note aspects they want to come back to. If you feel the students need more support, you could have them read and discuss the rest of the interview questions to introduce the ideas of native birds and the birds being in danger.

## Reading the text

For the first reading, encourage the students to read the text by themselves, intervening only if it's clear a student needs help. Much of the processing that they do at this level is "inside their heads" and may not be obvious until the discussion afterwards. There will be many opportunities to provide support with word solving and comprehension on subsequent readings.

### Student behaviours

Examples of the sorts of behaviours (often overlapping and developed over several readings) that will help students achieve their learning goal(s).

#### The students make connections between information in the article and their prior knowledge to make inferences.

- They infer from her answers that Megan Hubscher cares a lot about saving New Zealand birds.
- They infer from the phrase "keep those birds safe" on page 3 that New Zealand birds may be in danger. On page 4, they infer from the example of the fairy tern that the situation is really serious for some birds.
- They infer from the examples on page 5 that people are a major cause of changes to bird habitats.
- They make connections between the name Forest & Bird and the references to wildlife in the introduction and on page 6 to infer that helping keep birds safe is just one of the things that Forest & Bird does.

#### They ask questions and look for or think about possible answers.

- For example, they might wonder:
  - (on page 4) why so many native birds are in danger of becoming extinct
  - if it's too late to save the fairy tern
  - what a stoat is

- why no bird has won more than once
- why Bethlehem School chose the black robin.

#### They use key words and visual language features to identify and track information.

- They use the question headings to clarify what each section is about and look for answers in the following paragraphs.
- They identify the main point in the opening sentence on page 5 ("three main reasons why New Zealand birds are in danger") and use key phrases ("the biggest danger", "Another danger", "can also be dangerous ...") to track the three reasons.
- They use linking words to track the connections between ideas, for example, "... animals such as possums, rats, and stoats. These animals are predators. They kill the birds and eat their eggs".

#### They demonstrate self-monitoring and problem solving.

- They use a range of strategies to clarify word meanings, for example, they use the photographs and captions on page 5 to build their understanding of "habitat".
- They reread to check phrasing and meaning within longer sentences, including sentences with extended noun phrases.
- They note aspects that they are not sure about to come back to later.

### Deliberate acts of teaching

Examples of how you can support individual students (if needed).

- Remind the students of strategies they can use for solving unfamiliar words (for example, looking for the biggest known word chunk and applying their knowledge of letters, sounds, and word structure) and for clarifying meaning (rereading or reading on, looking for definitions in parentheses, checking the photographs, and/or thinking about the overall meaning of the sentence or paragraph). If necessary, provide specific support, for example, clarifying the past-tense verb "swam" (not "swimmed"), reassuring a student that "petrel" is a name of a bird (and different from the word "petrol"), or explaining the meaning of "former".
- Prompt the students to note things they are not sure about or that are of particular interest to discuss after the reading. Reassure them that when reading non-fiction, they may sometimes need to read more slowly, reread parts, and/or check aspects such as photos or captions to build their understanding.

### Discussing and rereading the text

You can revisit this text several times, providing opportunities for the students to build comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency. **Select from and adapt** the following suggestions according to your students' needs and their responses to the reading. Some of the suggestions overlap, and several can be explored further as after-reading activities.

 For some suggestions, you may find it helpful to project the PDF of the article so that you can zoom in on relevant sections.

- Remind the students of the reading purpose. *What did you find out about the Bird of the Year competition?* Support them to identify the main ideas in the article (that many native birds are endangered and that the competition is a way of helping to keep them safe).
- If you explored vocabulary when introducing the text, refer back to the words and discuss what the students found out about their meanings and how they were important in the article. Discuss how the meanings of subject-specific words or phrases are supported. Some words (for example, "Forest & Bird", "native birds", "extinct", "endemic", "habitats") are explicitly defined while others (such as "endangered", "predators") require students to search for clues and make inferences.
- Prompt the students to think critically. For example:
  - *What are the main things that Megan Hubscher wants people to know?*
  - *What examples does she give to help the reader understand the dangers to native birds?*
  - *Do you think the Bird of the Year competition is effective as a way of helping keep native birds safe?*
  - *Why do you think no bird has won more than once?*

- Have the students reread the article, stopping to discuss points of interest, including aspects they have marked with sticky notes. For example:
  - the interview format with colour-coded questions and answers. Choose one of the longer questions (on pages 4 or 5) and support the students to highlight information that answers the question. If necessary, use prompts such as: *Think about key words to look for or Is there another part that builds on this information?*
  - questions the students thought of as they were reading. Explain that reading non-fiction texts often leads on to asking (and researching) further questions. Discuss ways of finding answers to questions that are not answered in the article
  - the information (explicit and implicit) about what people can do to keep native birds safe, for example:
    - how people can become more involved (learn about native birds, support a bird in the competition, join KCC)
    - how to stop predators (trap possums, rats, and stoats)
    - how to save habitats (check that birds have safe places to live before cutting down trees, use less plastic).

Support the students to also add their own ideas.

- precise descriptive language to help the reader, such as noun phrases (for example, “native birds”, “the places where the birds live”) and the use of examples (indicated by words such as “like”, “For example”, and “such as”) to clarify and support ideas
- how the students worked out (or tried to work out) unfamiliar words or phrases. If necessary, provide support with the pronunciation of the Māori bird names and the proverb on page 9, drawing on any expertise within the group. You could also draw attention to such aspects as:
  - the subject-specific compound and hyphenated words. Discuss their meanings and enjoy using the component words to generate further examples
  - how to read the dates

Note any aspects you might want to follow up on later, perhaps as a mini-lesson or as an after-reading activity.

## After reading: Practice and reinforcement

After-reading tasks should provide purposeful practice and reinforcement of learning goals and address the needs you have noticed from your monitoring of students. Where possible, make links to other texts, including texts generated by the students, and to the wider literacy programme (for example, oral language, writing, handwriting, and word games and activities) and other curriculum areas. **Select from and adapt** these suggestions according to the needs of your students.

For English language learners, SELLIPS also has ideas for purposeful and relevant tasks.

- The students can reread the article as they listen to the audio version. Audio versions are particularly supportive for English language learners because, as well as clarifying pronunciation, they provide good models of the prosodic features of English, such as intonation and phrasing.
- Have the students choose four native birds mentioned in the article and write one thing they have learnt about each bird. The students could combine their findings on a group chart.
- Support the students to find out more about things that interested them, such as specific birds mentioned, the Kiwi Conservation Club, or predators.
- Have the students fill in a table (like the one below) for one or two of the birds shown on pages 4–5. (This activity also provides a useful introduction to the use of tables in the following article “And the Winner Is ...”) Have the students use information in the text and photographs to fill in the first three rows and then to work with a partner to think about possible dangers.
- Write some subject-specific vocabulary on cards and have the students match them with their definitions (some examples are shown below). The students could work in pairs, each with part of the information to complete the activity. Remind them to refer to the text and to discussions you’ve had before or after the reading. Alternatively, you could ask the students to write the definitions, drawing on information in the article. Ask them to use three of the subject-specific words in sentences.

Bird name	
Description (what it looks like)	
Habitat (where it lives)	
Possible dangers	

### Subject-specific vocabulary

Forest & Bird

native birds

to become extinct

endangered

endemic birds

predators

habitats

KCC

wildlife

### Definitions

an organisation that helps look after New Zealand birds and wildlife

birds that have always lived in New Zealand or birds that have flown here from other countries

to die out

in danger of dying out

birds that live only in New Zealand

creatures that kill birds and eat their eggs

the places where the birds live

Kiwi Conservation Club

birds and animals that are not pets or on farms