

In this file...

Our Flying Guests 1

Town bird match cards	2–7
Match cards – answers	8
Town bird pictures	9–14
Our Flying Guests 2 ans 3	
Bird food game	15
Let's make a bird table	16–17
Bird table menu	18
Birdwatching calendar	19–20

Flower Detectives 1 and 2

Life on a flower	21–22
Wild flowers	23

Flower Detectives 3

Flower cards	24–28
A Shore Thing 1	
Shore catch	29
Shore Life Cards	30–31
Shore Life Info	32–34
Shore Habitats	35–36
A Shore Thing 2	
Action photo	37
Promise Concertina	38–39



Match cards for Sardinian Warbler

I am smaller
than a
sparrow . . .

I live in trees
and bushes
around . . .

. . . and my
beak is very
thin.

. . . towns and
villages.

I live in
Malta . . .

Girl
Sardinians
have a grey
head but . . .

. . . all year
round.

. . . boy
Sardinians
have a black
head.

I love the
food that nice
people . . .

I eat small
insects . . .

. . . put out
for us on bird
tables.

. . . and
berries.

Match cards for **White Wagtail**

I come to
Malta in
autumn . . .

My thin beak
helps me . . .

. . . and I leave
in spring.

. . . to catch
small insects.

I am black,
white and
grey . . .

At night I
sleep in big
trees . . .

. . . and my
tail is very
long.

. . . with many
other wagtails.

I can't hop
like sparrows
. . .

I eat small
insects . . .

. . . but I can
walk and run.

. . . like
flies and
mosquitoes.

Match cards for Spanish Sparrow

I am a small bird . . .	I love the food that nice people . . .	. . . but my beak is very strong.	. . . put out on bird tables.
I live in Malta . . .	Girl sparrows are grey, but boy sparrows . . .	. . . all year round.	. . . have a brown cap and a black bib.
I eat seeds, fruit . . .	I make my nest in trees . . .	. . . and insects too.	. . . and in ventilators too.

Match cards for **Black Redstart**

I come to
Malta in
winter . . .

I like to perch
on roofs . . .

. . . and I leave
in spring.

. . . and other
high places.

I eat
insects,
which I . . .

Girl black
redstarts are
brown . . .

. . . catch
from the air.

. . . with a
red tail.

Boy black
redstarts are
black . . .

When I don't
find insects
. . .

. . . with a
red tail.

. . . I eat
berries and
seeds.

Match cards for Starling

I come to Malta in autumn and I stay . . .	I am shiny black . . .	. . . until the end of January.	. . . with lots of small white spots.
I like to eat berries and fruit . . .	In the evening we go to sleep . . .	. . . especially olives!	. . . in nice big town trees.
I also eat juicy worms . . .	We fly in big flocks . . .	. . . and crunchy bugs.	. . . sometimes thousands of us!

Match cards for Robin

I come to
Malta in
October . . .

I have a
brown back . . .

. . . and I
stay here till
March.

. . . and
my famous
orange breast!

Nice people
put out food
for me . . .

I have a
beautiful
song and . . .

. . . on their
bird table.

. . . I have two
different calls.

I eat lots of
bugs, which
I find . . .

My bright
breast tells
the other
robins . . .

. . . on
leaves and
branches.

. . . to stay
away from
my tree!



Answers for match cards

Spanish Sparrow

I am a small bird ... but my beak is very strong.
 I love the food that nice people ... put out on bird tables.
 I live in Malta ... all year round.
 Girl sparrows are grey, but boy sparrows ... have a brown cap and a black bib.
 I eat seeds, fruit ... and insects too.
 I make my nest in trees ...and in ventilators too.

Starling

I come to Malta in autumn and I stay ... until the end of January.
 I am shiny black ... with lots of small white spots.
 I like to eat berries and fruit ... especially olives.
 In the evening we go to sleep... in nice big town trees.
 I also eat juicy worms ... and crunchy bugs.
 We like to fly in big flocks ... sometimes thousands of us!

Black Redstart

I come to Malta in winter ... and I leave in spring.
 I like to perch on roofs ... and other high places.
 I eat insects, which I ... catch from the air.
 Girl black redstarts are brown ... with a red tail.
 Boy black redstarts are black ... with a red tail.
 When I don't find insects ... I eat berries and seeds.

White Wagtail

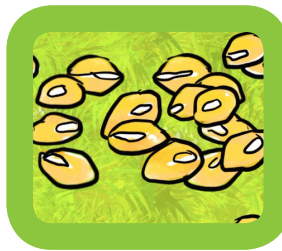
I come to Malta in autumn ... and I leave in spring.
 My thin beak helps me ... to catch small insects.
 I am black, white and grey and my tail is very long.
 At night I sleep in big trees with many other wagtails.
 I can't hop like sparrows ... but I can walk and run.
 I eat small insects ... like flies and mosquitoes.

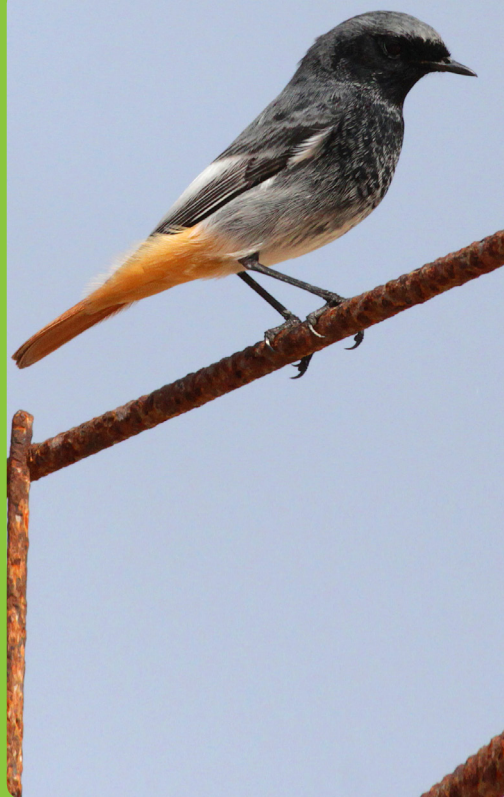
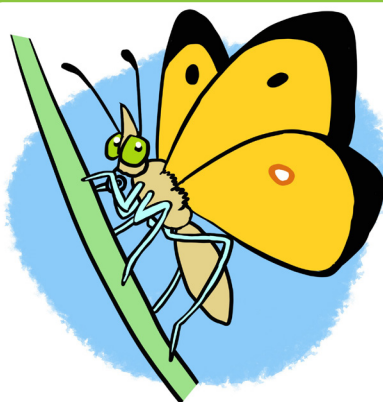
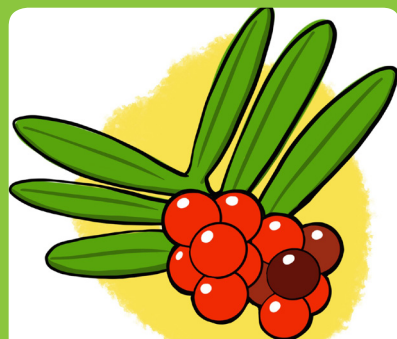
Sardinian Warbler

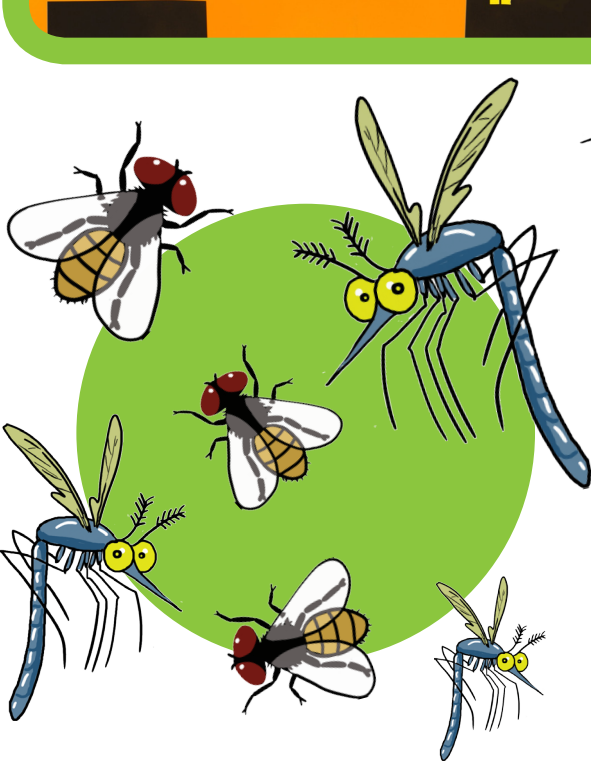
I am smaller than a sparrow ... and my beak is very thin.
 I live in trees and bushes around ... towns and villages.
 I live in Malta... all year round.
 Girl Sardinians have a grey head but ... boy Sardinians have a black head.
 I love the food that nice people ... put out for us on bird tables.
 I eat small insects ... and berries.

Robin

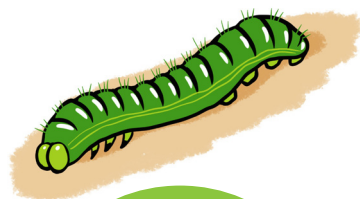
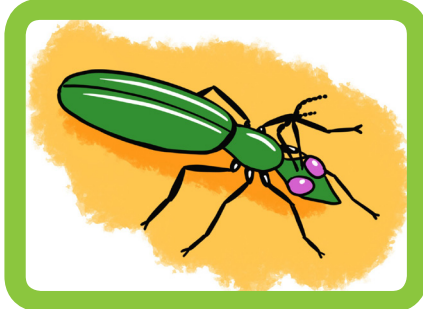
I come to Malta in October and I stay here till March.
 I have a brown back ... and my famous orange breast!
 Nice people put out food for me . . . on their bird table.
 I have a beautiful song and ... I have two different calls.
 I eat lots of bugs, which I find ... on leaves and branches.
 My bright breast tells the other robins ... to stay away from my tree!

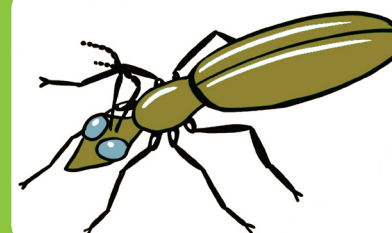
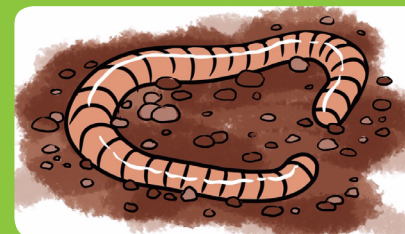
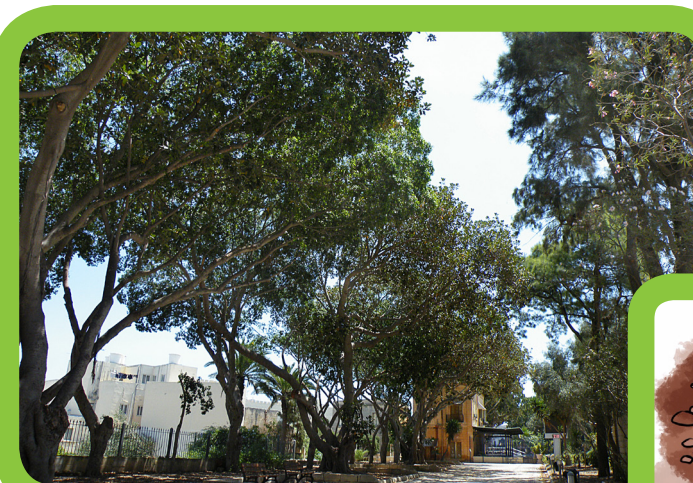


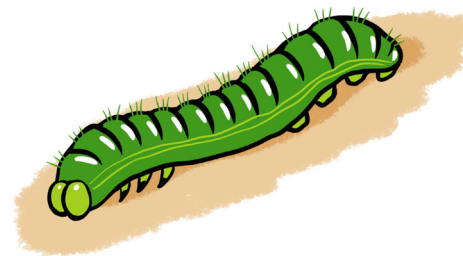
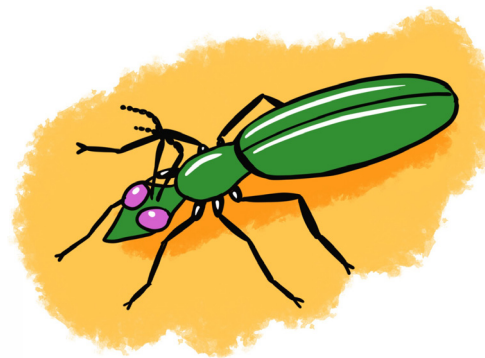
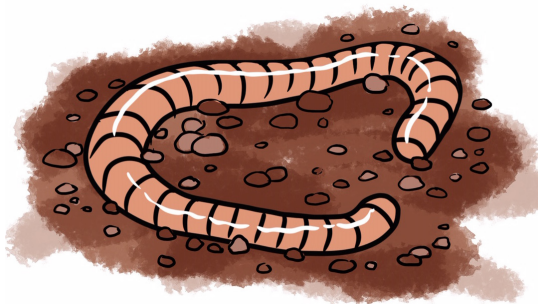
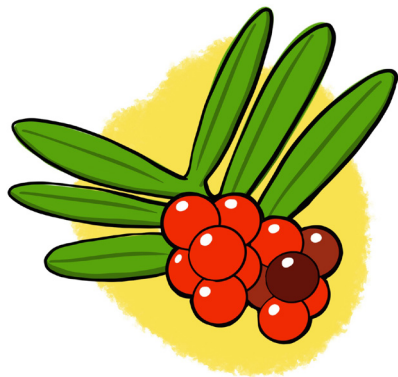
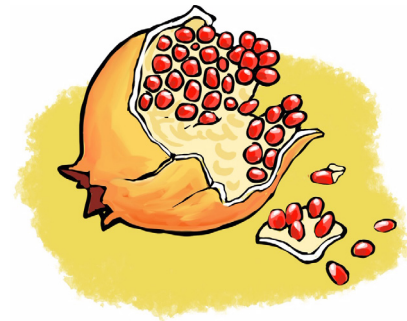
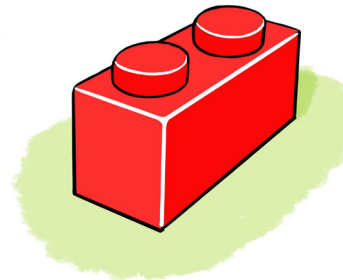
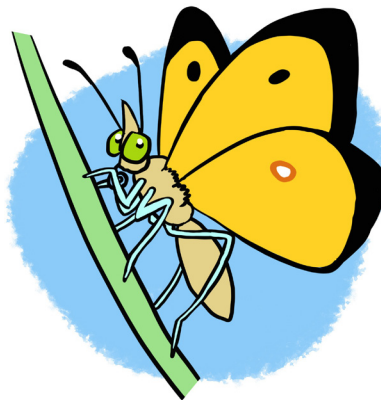
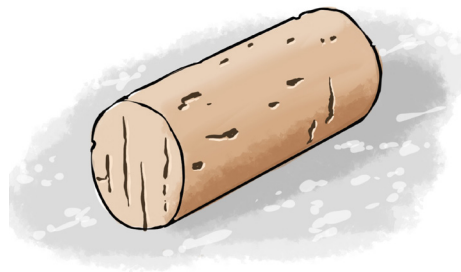
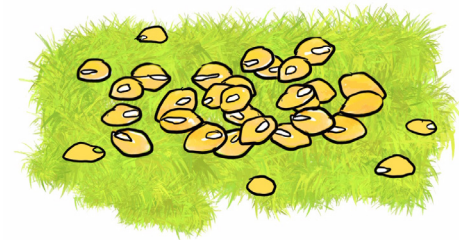
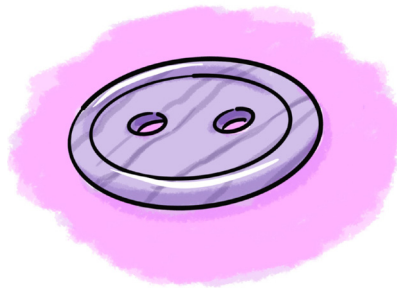
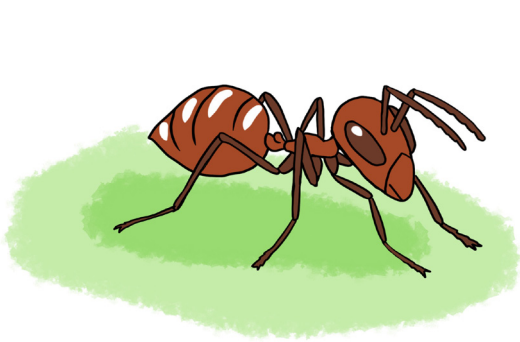




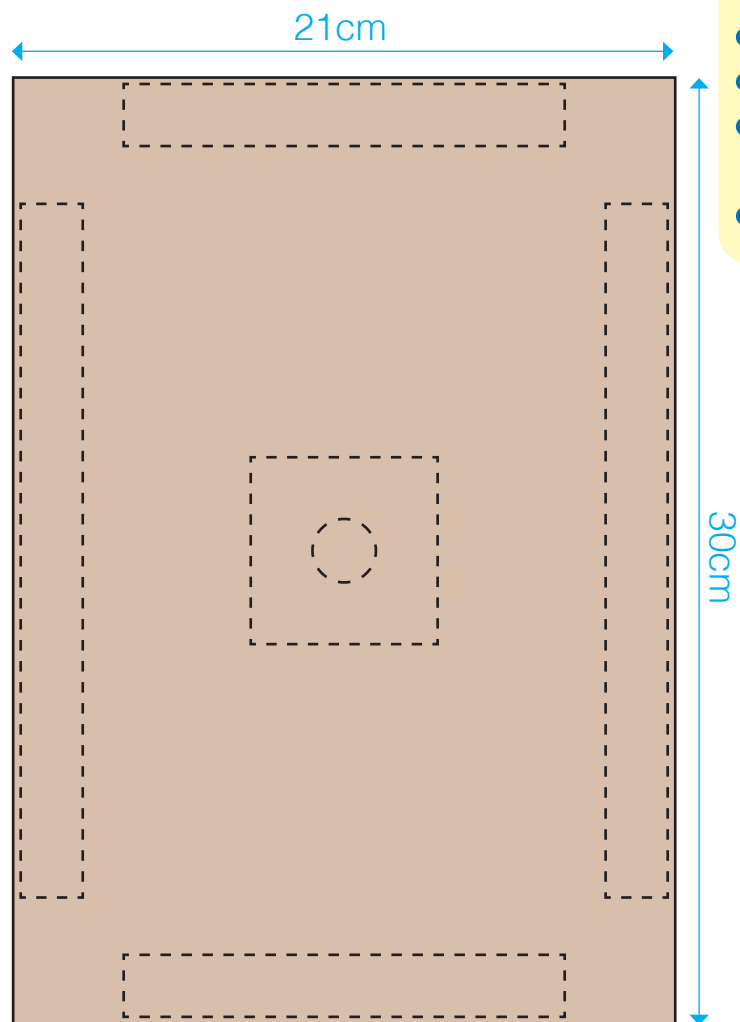






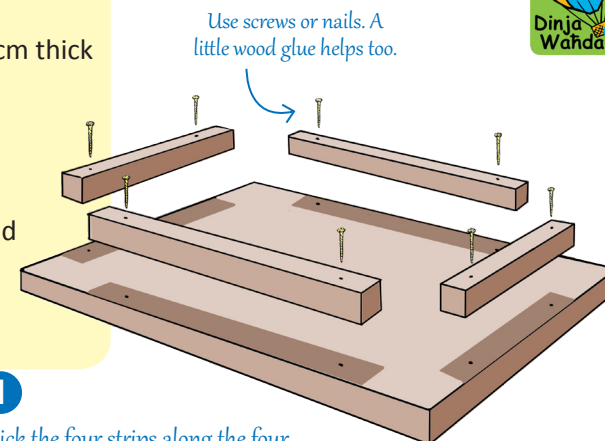


Let's make a bird table



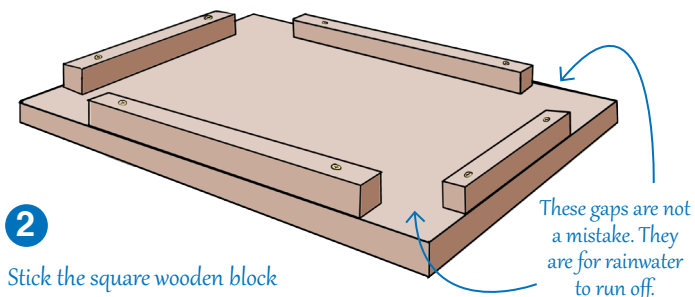
You will need

- 1 marine plywood board 30 x 21cm, about 2cm thick
- 2 wooden strips 22cm long, about 2cm thick
- 2 wooden strips 14cm long, about 2cm thick
- 1 wooden broomstick, pointed at one end
- 1 wooden block about 6 x 6 x 4cm, with round hole in the middle (to fit broomstick in)
- Screws, nails, wood glue



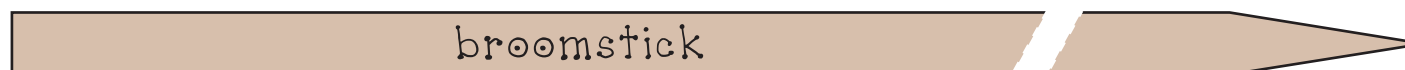
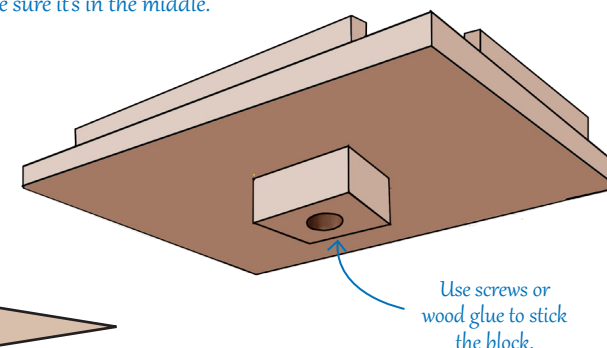
1

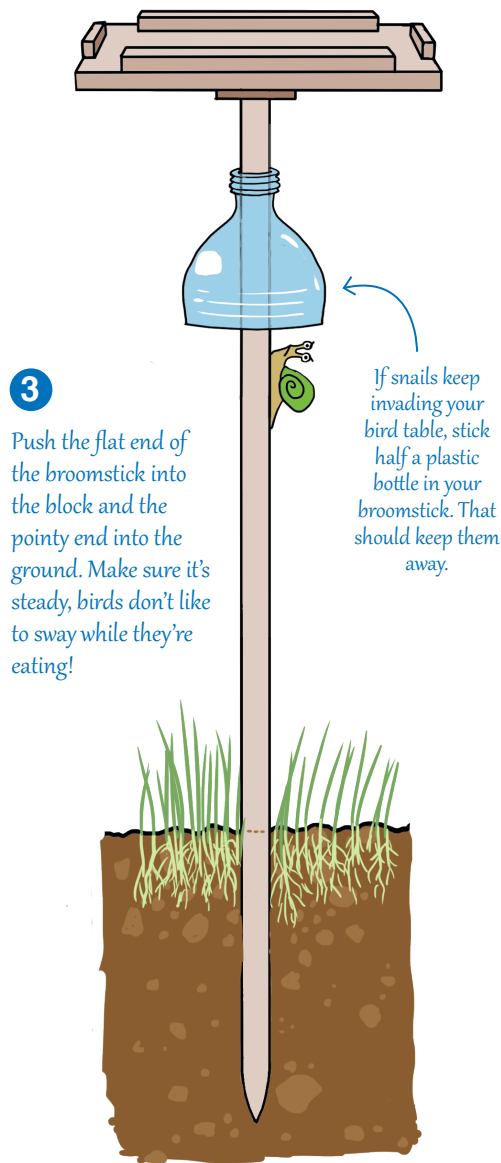
Stick the four strips along the four edges (long ones along the long sides, short ones along the short sides).



2

Stick the square wooden block to the bottom of the board. Make sure it's in the middle.





Where shall we put it?



Special spot?

Is there a spot that birds seem to like a lot? If you can set up the bird table there, the birds will find it more quickly.



Can you see it?

Don't hide your bird table. Set it up where kids can see it from far off, maybe even from their classroom windows.



Somewhere quiet

Don't put it up in a spot that people use a lot, like next to a path, or birds will be disturbed all time.



Somewhere safe

Don't stick the bird table in the middle of a bush, under a tree or near a wall or fence where cats can ambush the poor birds. Set it up in the open where birds can look about and feel safe.



Lookout post

A small bush 2–3m from the bird table gives birds a place where to perch and check for safety before they visit the table. A post or two to perch on are a good idea too, especially when birds are queueing up for lunch!

Do I feed them all year round?

No. In spring and summer birds can find their own food easily from nature. Start putting out food around October, and stop after March. In this way, birds who are nesting can feed their chicks proper natural food like caterpillars and bugs, not cake and biscuits!

Who will visit?



Spanish Sparrow (Għasfur tal-Bejt)

All year round. You can have a bunch on your bird table at the same time!



Sardinian Warbler (Bufula Sewda)

All year round. Usually a pair, sometimes the male visiting, sometimes his lady!



Robin (Pitirross)

October to March. Always alone, usually the same one all through the season.

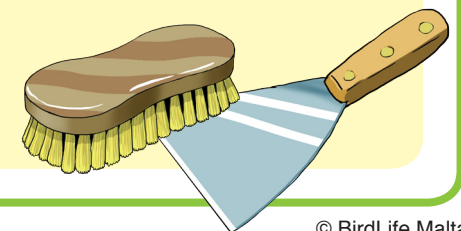


Black Redstart (Fjamma Sewda)

October to March. Alone or a pair, but always visiting the bird table one by one.

A clean table

Make sure you keep your bird table clean or the birds can get sick. A quick scrape and scrub with a wet brush every now and then (especially after sticky food) should do the trick. No need to use washing-up liquid, plain water is enough.



Bird table menu

Here's a quick look at what to have on the bird table menu, and which bird likes what.



Try other food...

You can experiment with other foods, like *ross il-forn*, pastry, *pastizzi*, etc. Don't put out gooey food – it will mess up your bird table and birds probably won't like it anyway.

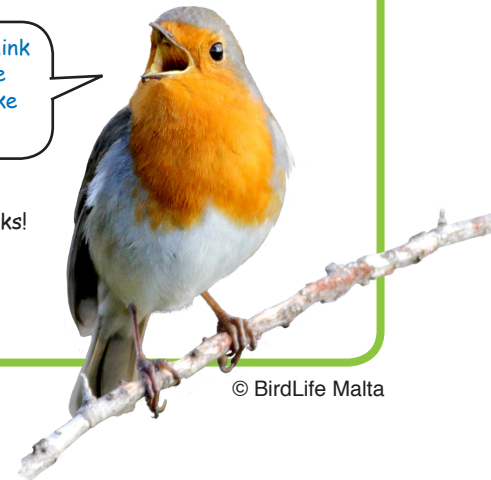
No-nos!



Don't put out bread. Some birds will eat it but it's not very nutritious food. It will fill their tummy but it won't give them much energy. Chocolate too is not good for birds.

Why do you think three of the birds don't like seeds?


















































Hint:
Look at their beaks!



Birdwatching calendar

Here's how your birdwatching month would look like.

And here's six bird circles to copy, cut out and stick on your birdwatching month.

month <i>February</i> year <i>2021</i>				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1    	2   	3   	4    	5  
8    	9   	10    	11   	12   
15   	16   	17  	18   	19   
22  	23	...etc...etc.		26



Sardinian Warbler



Spanish Sparrow



Robin



Black Redstart



Starling



White Wagtail



month		year		
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>

Bees and bugs on a crown daisy flower

Lellux!



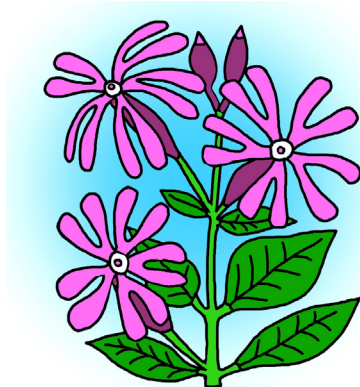
Bees and bugs on a boar thistle flower

Xewk Abjad





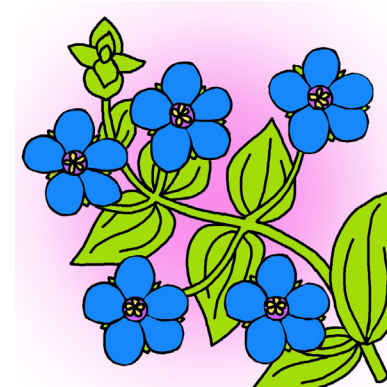
Thyme • Sagħtar



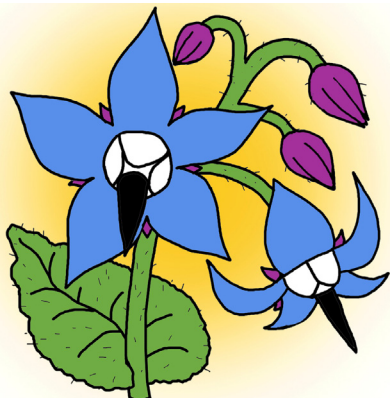
Red Campion • Lsien l-Għasfur



Crown Daisy • Lellux



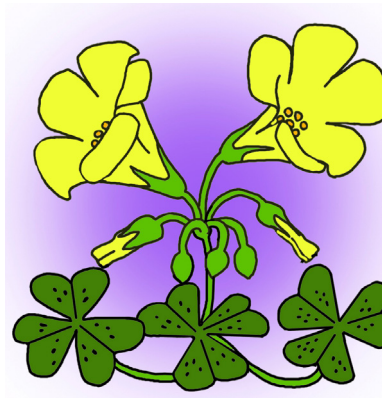
Blue Pimpernel • Ħarira Kaħla



Borage • Fidloqqom



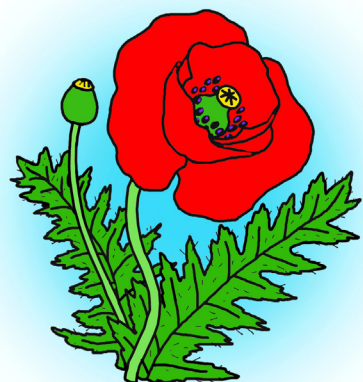
Fennel • Bużbież



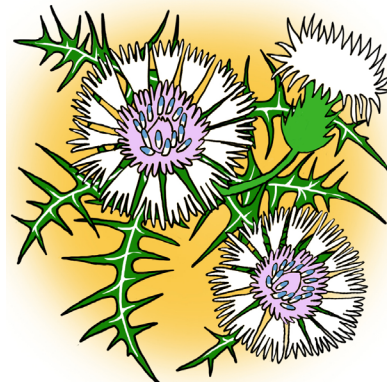
Cape Sorrel • Qarsu



Squirting Cucumber • Faqqus il-Ħmir



Poppy • Pepprin



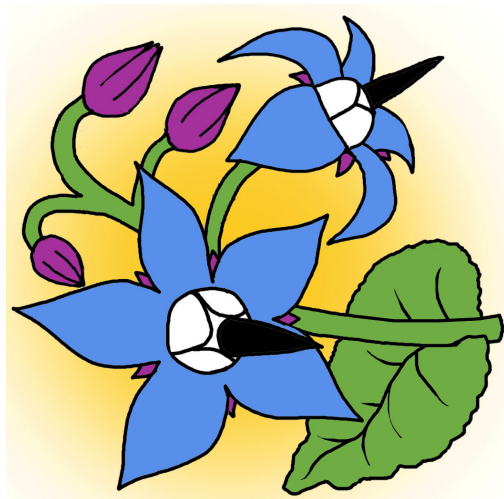
Boar Thistle • Xewk Abjad



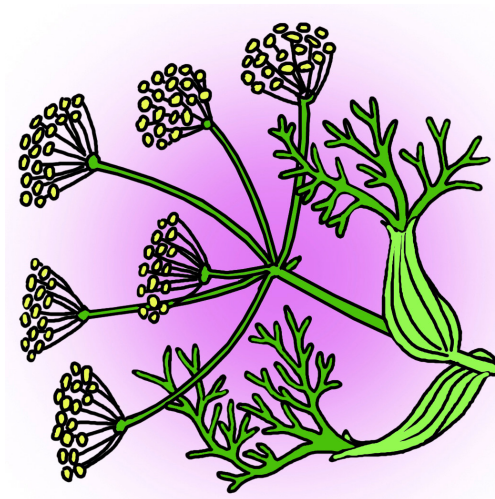
Mallow Bindweed • Leblieba



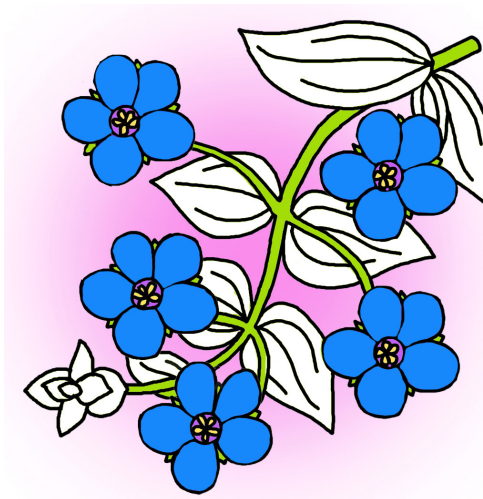
Snapdragon • Papoċċi Ħamra



Borage • Fidloqqom



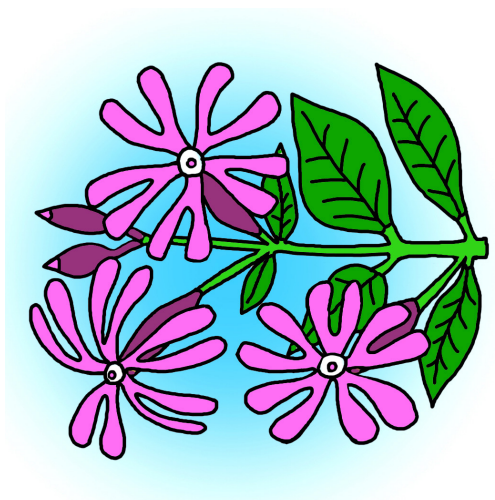
Fennel • Bużbież



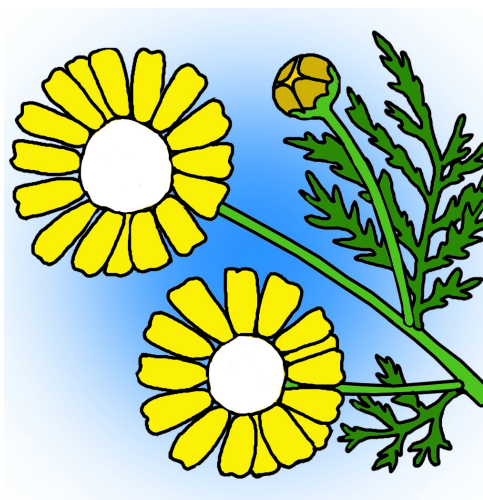
Blue Pimpernel • Harira Kaħla



Thyme • Sagħtar



Red Campion • Lsien l-Għasfur



Crown Daisy • Lellux

Borage • Fidloqqom

- Blue flowers are rare in Malta.
- The flowers open in winter and spring.
- The leaves feel rough because they are covered with spines.
 sand.
 hairs.
- People once boiled this flower and drank it as a medicine for cough.

Thyme • Sagħtar

- The plant makes many small violet flowers.
- The flowers open in late spring and early summer.
- This plant grows in rocky places.
- The leaves smell like

Fennel • Bużbież

- The flowers grow in yellow bunches.
- Fennel grows in spring and summer.
The leaves smell nice.
 have no smell.
- People eat fennel seeds and the bottom part of the stem.

Red Campion • Lsien l-Għasfur

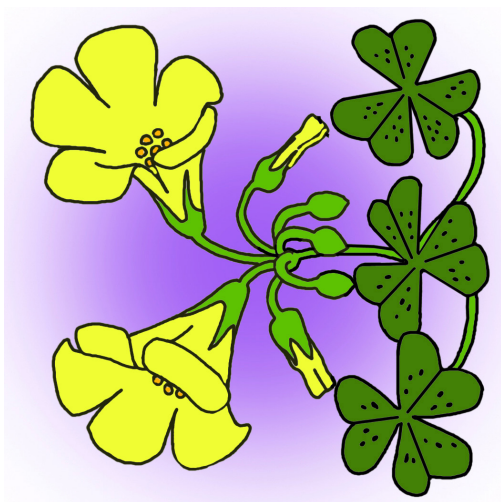
- The flowers are pink with five petals.
- Each petal is in two parts.
- The flowers smell nice.
 have no smell.
- It grows in winter and spring.
- The Red Campion grows everywhere, even on sandy beaches.

Blue Pimpernel • Ħarira Kaħla

- The flowers are small and blue.
- Sometimes the flowers are orange, and then it's called a Scarlet Pimpernel.
- The flowers open in spring.
- The Blue Pimpernel a very short plant.
- The leaves are bright green.
 dark green.

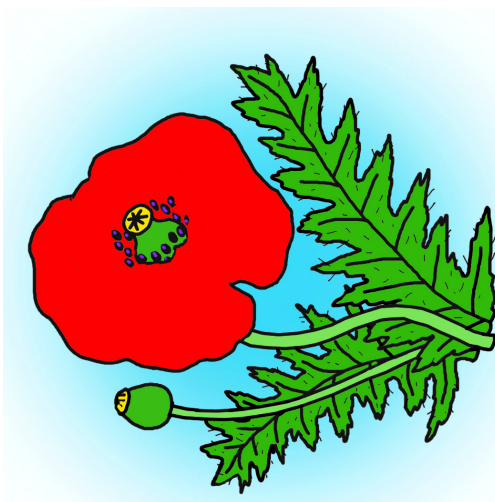
Crown Daisy • Lellux

- The flowers have yellow petals, with a white middle.
 a yellow middle.
 an orange middle.
- The flowers open in winter and spring.
- It is very common in fields and roadsides.
- If you see a petal folded in, check for a little spider hiding under it.

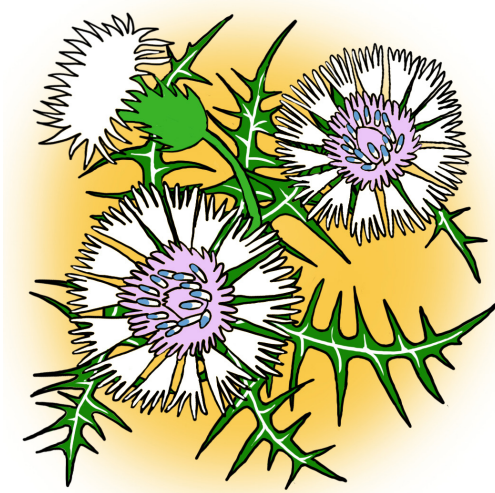


Cape Sorrel • Qarsu

Squirting Cucumber • Faqqus il-#mir



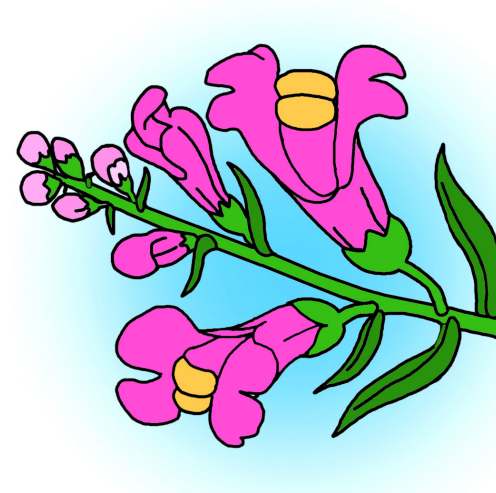
Poppy • Pepprin



Boar Thistle • Xewk Abjad



Mallow Bindweed • Leblieba



Snapdragon • Papo#i #amra

Squirting Cucumber • Faqqus il-#mir

- The flowers are pale yellow and they have five petals.
- The Squirting Cucumber makes flowers all year round.
- The leaves are ☐ prickly.
☐ smooth.
☐ sticky.
- The ripe fruits shoot out the seeds – watch your eyes!

Cape Sorrel • Qarsu

- The yellow flowers look like trumpets.
- The flowers open in ☐ summer.
☐ autumn.
☐ winter.
☐ spring.
- The leaves look like three hearts stuck together at the points.
- This plant is very common and it grows everywhere.

Boar Thistle • Xewk Abjad

- The flowers are white and look like spiky hair!
- The middle of the leaves is ☐ yellow.
☐ green.
☐ white.
- Boar Thistles grow in winter and spring.
- Many insects love this flower because it has a lot of nectar and pollen.

Poppy • Pepprin

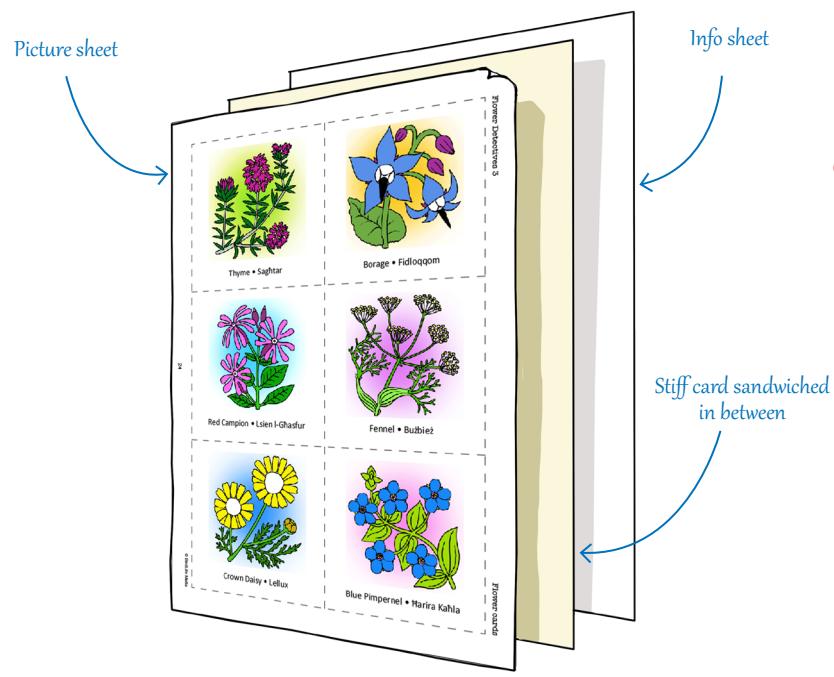
- The flowers have 3 4 5 6 bright red petals.
- The flowers open in spring.
- Poppies are very common in fields and roadsides.
- There are red poppies, violet poppies and yellow poppies.

Snapdragon • Papoċci #amra

- The flowers look like pink slippers!
- Snapdragons grow all year round.
- If you squeeze the flower gently from the sides, the petals open like a little dragon's mouth!
- We found our Snapdragons growing _____

Mallow Bindweed • Leblieba

- The flowers look like big pink trumpets.
- The Mallow Bindweed grows in spring.
- It is common in fields and rocky places.
- Each plant grows ☐ one flower.
☐ many flowers.



Answers to Flower Card questions

Borage

The leaves feel rough because they are covered with **hairs**. (children add hairs to picture)

Thyme

The leaves smell like... (up to them – see what the children come up with: pepper, pizza!, etc.)

Fennel

The leaves **smell nice**.

Red Campion

The flowers **have no smell**.

Blue Pimpernel

The leaves are **bright green**. (children add missing colour)

Crown Daisy

The flowers have yellow petals, with a **yellow middle**. (children add missing colour)

Squirting cucumber

The leaves are **prickly**. (children add hairs to picture)

Cape Sorrel

The flowers open in **winter and spring**

Boar Thistle

The middle of the leaves is **white**. (children add missing colour)

Poppy

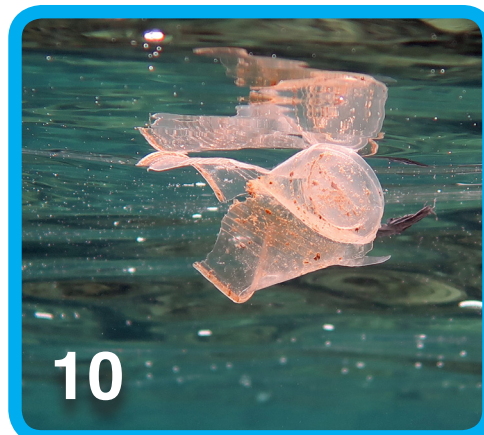
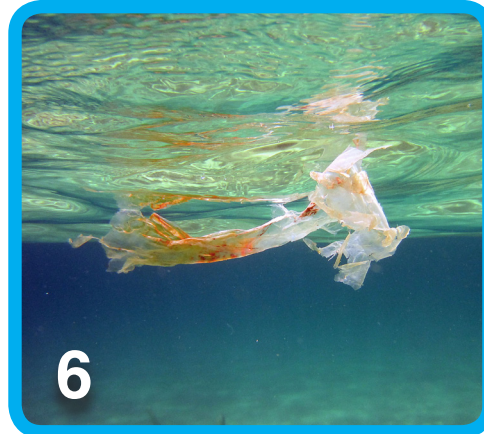
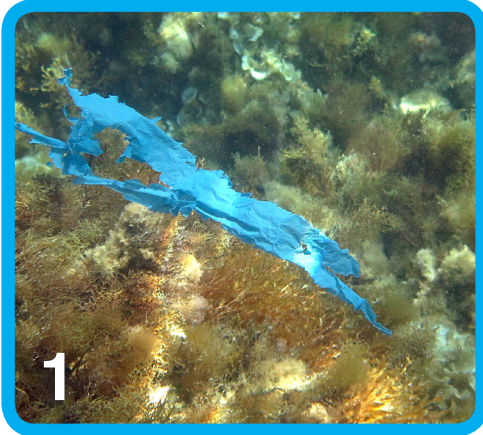
The flowers have **4** bright red petals (children circle correct number and draw petal outlines in picture).

Snapdragon

We found our snapdragon growing... (write the habitat you found it in – roadside, rubble wall, rocky place, around a field, pile of rubble, etc.)

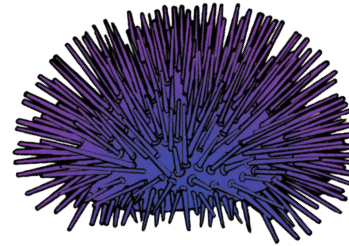
Mallow Bindweed

Each plant grows **many flowers**.



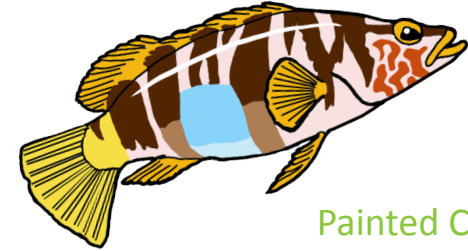
Shore Life Fun Facts

There is so much to know about
our friends who live in the sea



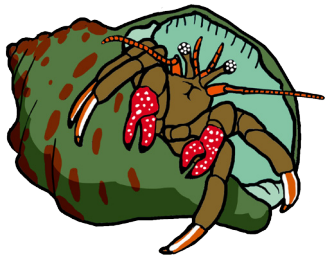
Sea Urchin
Rizza

- Sea urchins live in holes among rocks • Their spines keep them safe from predators • Sea urchins also have hundreds of soft thin tentacles among the spines • They use these tentacles as legs to walk about on the rocks! • Sea urchins eat seaweed mostly • The sea urchin's mouth is on the underside •



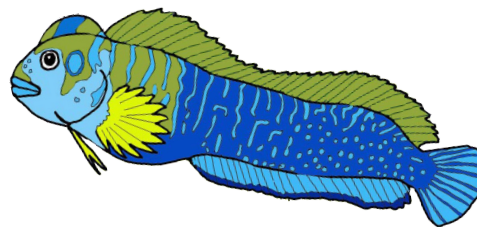
Painted Comber
Burqax

- The Painted Comber likes to live alone • It swims among rocks on the sea bottom • It hunts small fish, crabs and shrimps • It has a bright blue spot and a stripey pattern • The colours and the pattern tell other Painted Combers to stay away • This fish likes to stay near octopuses to eat bits of food that the octopuses drop •



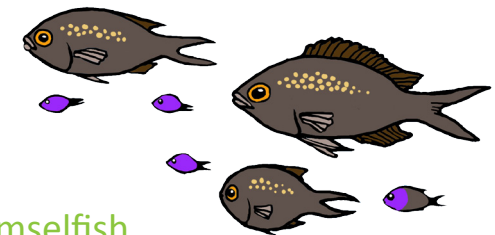
Hermit Crab
Grani
tal-Bebbuxu

- Hermit crabs live in empty snail shells, so be careful when you pick shells on the beach • When crawling about, a hermit crab only pokes out its face and its legs • The rest of the body is soft and stays safe in the shell • It eats seaweed and bits of dead fish • When the hermit crab grows too big, it moves into a bigger shell! •



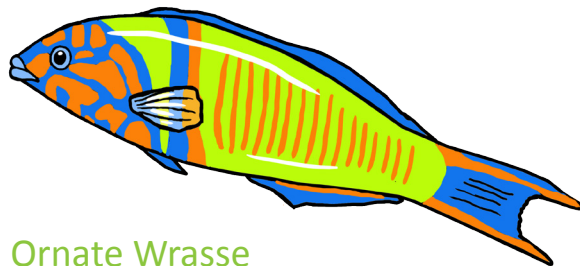
Blenny
Budakkra

- Blennies are small fish and there are many kinds • Many blennies live in shallow water • They hide in little holes in the rocks to be safe from predators • In rough water the blennies grab the rocks with their front fins • They eat tiny animals and seaweed • If you are gentle some blennies will check out your finger! •



Damselfish
Ċawla

- The Damselfish is common around our shores • It's small and dark brown, and it has a forked tail • It likes to stay in big groups • They swim about slowly in shallow water or just 'hang' there • Damselfish eat tiny animals and plants called plankton • Baby damselfish are bright purple-blue • In Maltese, ċawla is also a black bird! •

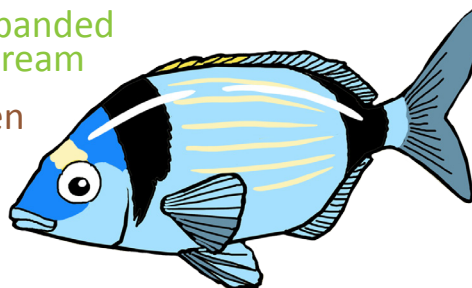


Ornate Wrasse
Lhudi

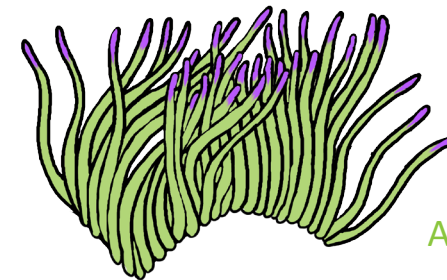
- The ornate wrasse has bright colours and patterns, it looks like a tropical fish • It swims near rocks looking for snails and crabs to eat
- This fish does not like to stay in big groups
- The young fish are first girls, and when they grow up they change into boys! •

Two-banded
Sea Bream

Xirgien

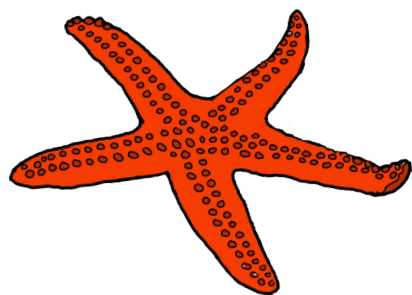


- There are many kinds of sea bream. • The young live in shallow water near the shore
- They eat snails, worms, shrimps and crabs
- The Two-banded Sea Bream has two black stripes • People catch many bream for food but we should always let young fish live, so they can grow up and lay eggs too •



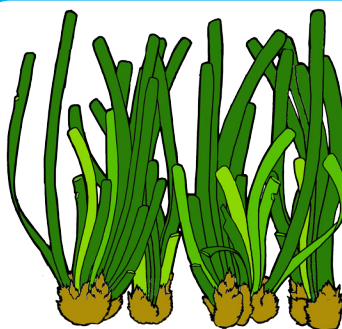
Anemone
Artikla

- Anemones look like plants but they are animals!
- They are cousins of jellyfish but they stick to rocks • Some anemones sleep by day and open their tentacles at night • Anemones have stings on their tentacles to catch small animals • It's easy to see the Snakelocks Anemone (Artikla Hadra) in shallow water around rocky shores •



Starfish
Stilla
tal-Baħar

- There are many kinds of starfish • Some live on sandy bottoms and others live on shady rock faces • Most starfish have five arms but some have more • They walk on many tiny tubes • A starfish's mouth is on the underside of its body
- Starfish eat clams and mussels • If a predator bites off a starfish's arm, it can grow back! •



Neptune
Grass
Alka

- Neptune grass is very important for life in the sea • Its roots keep the seabed in its place • Many young fish live among the leaves to hide from predators • In big storms a lot of dead neptune grass washes up on the beach • This stops big waves from washing the beach sand away • Another name for this plant is Posidonia •

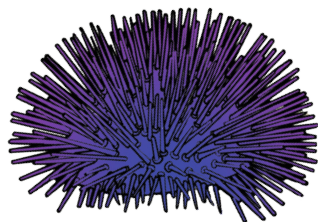


Shore Crab
Grani
tax-Xatt

- This crab lives on rocky shores • It can crawl into small holes and cracks • It has good camouflage to hide from predators, like birds • It hunts at night mostly • It picks small animals and seaweed with its claws • It can walk in all directions but sideways is the fastest •

Shore Life Fact File

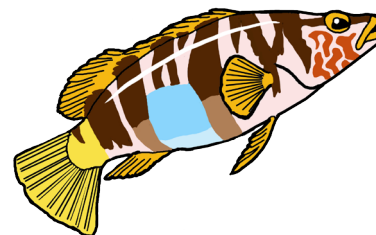
Background information for the teacher about each living organism (or groups of organisms) featured in this activity.



Sea urchins
(Rizzi)

Sea urchins live among rocks and are covered in spines which protect them from predators. Besides spines, an urchin also has hundreds of very thin tentacles with suckers at the end. The urchin uses these like legs to move about. The urchin's mouth is at the bottom. By day, urchins snuggle into holes that they scrape out with their sharp mouths; at night they come out to graze on algae covering the rocks. If food lands on an urchin's spines, the tube-feet pass the food down to the urchin's mouth. An urchin also breathes through its tube feet. Sea urchins can live up to 30 years!

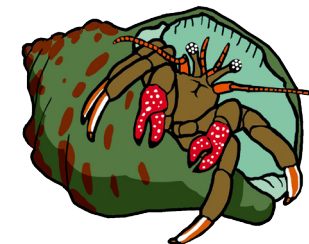
We have two common species of sea urchin around our shores: the rock-urchin which can be greenish, brownish or purplish, and the black sea-urchin, which is always black. It is a pity that many beach-goers only see these creatures as a source of casual snacking, bringing them ashore and breaking them open for the tiny orange organs inside, which are considered edible.



Painted Comber
(Burqax)

There is a reason for the striking colours and pattern of the painted comber: this is a territorial fish that leads a solitary life rather than stay in groups, so the bright blue spot and yellow tail is most likely a message for other painted combers to keep away. This fish is easy to see if you look among rocks. It likes to stay still, sometimes tilted upwards, keeping a lookout for other combers as well as for possible food: smaller fish and crustaceans (crabs, shrimps), sometimes worms and snails. You will not see this fish nibbling at the seaweed as it is a carnivore. Sometimes it gets a free snack by eating leftover scraps from octopus meals.

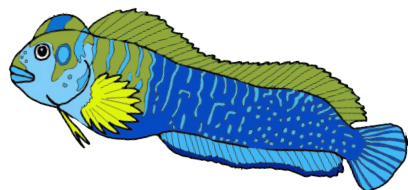
The painted comber is a hermaphrodite, which means it has both male and female sex organs. The eggs are laid among the rocks, close to the shore. This beautiful fish is mainly found in the Mediterranean.



Hermit Crab
(Grani tal-Bebbuxu)

Hermit crabs are fascinating creatures that have a habit of wearing – and living in – old empty snail shells, so it is not surprising that many people mistake them for snails. Hermit crabs take up residence in snail shells in order to protect their soft bodies from predators, since they have no hard protection of their own as other crabs do. It is only the legs and outer parts of the hermit crab's body that are hard shelled. The part hidden inside is soft and curly, and is used as an anchor to hold the snail shell tightly as if it were the crab's own. When the crab grows too big for the shell, it finds a bigger one, slips quickly out of the old one and into the new.

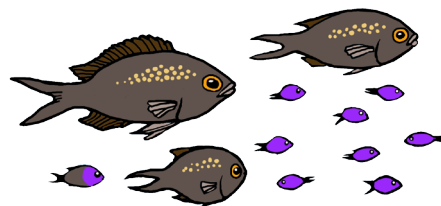
When you see a snail shell moving, look for the tell-tale legs underneath and you will know it's not a snail! These animals crawl over rocks eating anything small, even bits of dead fish or plants, and generally help to keep the place clean.



Blennies (Budakkri)

These small fish are perfectly adapted for life in shallow water. Wave action is strong close to the shore but blennies can grip the rocks and avoid being washed away thanks to specialised fins that are modified into thin, almost hand-like limbs. You can see several kinds of blennies popping out of a hole among rocks and 'sitting' still. Some are curious and will check out your finger if you approach slowly. Blennies eat invertebrates that they find in shallow water crawling over rocks, as well as seaweed. Blennies that live in rock pools on the shore can even hop out of the water and 'walk' short distances over the rocks to another pool. This happens when a rock pool gets too small, hot or salty due to evaporation.

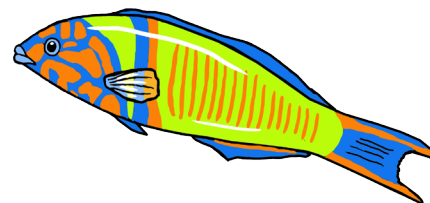
The blenny in the picture is the Peacock Blenny (Budakkra tal-Għalla). It is common in rocky and pebbly shores, patrolling the stones and pebbles just below the water line.



Damselfish (Ċawla)

Damselfish are dark brown (hence Maltese name) with no striking colours or pattern, but it is still unmistakable because of its deeply forked tail and also because it's often seen in shoals of hundreds. In summer they are often accompanied by hundreds of tiny electric-blue babies, who lose this vivid colour as they grow. Damselfish live near the surface in shallow waters near both rocky and sandy shores, as well as over neptune grass meadows. They eat plankton, microscopic plants and animals that float near the surface. This is why damselfish swim around the surface rather than among rocks looking for snails.

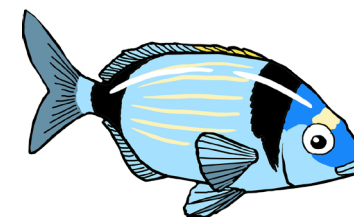
Damselfish mate in summer. The male chooses a location for his 'nest' and lures the female to lay eggs there. After she lays, he chases her away and carefully looks after the eggs by fanning water over them and defending them from predators.



Ornate Wrasse (Lhudi)

This striking fish has the kind of colours you usually see in tropical fish. Indeed, it's the only species of its kind that is found in the Mediterranean (the other wrasses live in the tropics). It stays mostly in very small groups but is also often seen alone among rocks, looking for snails and small crustaceans such as shrimps.

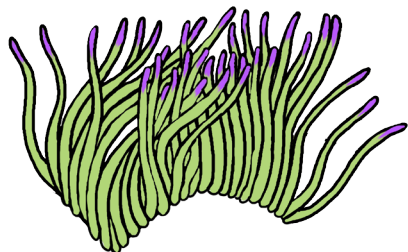
The ornate wrasse has an interesting life history: when young, this fish is female with bright blue borders around orange-yellow squares and a distinctive black spot on its back. But as the wrasse grows older, it becomes a male, loses the black spot and changes the pattern of its blue and yellow colours, while growing two outer points on its tail. It is the females that stay in small groups, because the males become very territorial and chase other males off their patch.



Two-banded Sea Bream (Xirgien)

There are several types of sea bream, and all have the characteristic flattish body with a high curved back. Sea bream stay alone or in small groups rather than in shoals. They eat small snails, worms and crustaceans (shrimps and crabs). Sea bream are very edible and some species have been fished to beyond a level where their population can recover. Apart from commercial fishing, this fish is also a target of spearfishers, who do great damage in our small bays where local fish should be allowed to live, grow and be enjoyed by bathers.

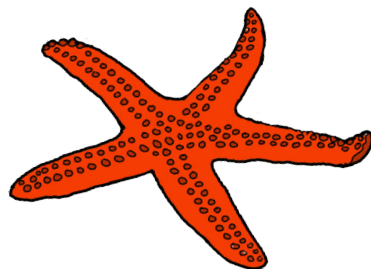
The Two-banded Sea Bream is easy to tell from the other breams because it's the only one with two black bands across its body. It's common around our shores and likes to stay alone or in small groups.



Anemone
(Artikla)

Anemones are relatives of jellyfish and, like them, they have stings and catch their food by stinging small creatures that touch their tentacles. Anemones spend most of their life attached to a rock waiting for small fish to pass close enough to get trapped. We have a few species around our shores, and the most common is the snakelocks anemone (artikla ħadra) pictured here. It is harmless to the skin of our hands and feet.

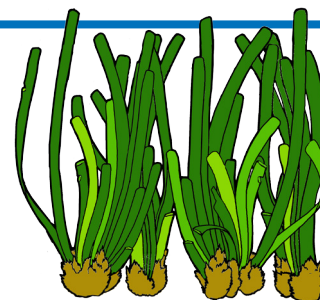
The body of an anemone is made of an adhesive base (or foot), a cylindrical body, and a forest of tentacles around a central mouth. The tentacles are triggered by the slightest touch, firing a microscopic harpoon-like filament into their victim, which paralyses it. The tentacles then pass the prey down to the mouth. There are many different species of anemones around the world, many with amazing colours.



Starfish
(Stilla)

These beautiful icons of shore life are related to sea urchins. They move around by means of tiny suckers on the underside of their 'arms'. Most starfish have five arms, but some have more. The one in the pictured is the common starfish (stilla ħamra), which is red and has five arms. Their bright colour makes them very visible to predators, but they are not as soft as they look, as their skin is covered with a layer of tiny hard spines.

A starfish's mouth is on the underside of its body. The mouth can be extended forward, a useful trick when tackling clams and mussels, which are the starfish's main food. The starfish wraps itself around the shell and forces it to open slightly, then extends its mouth into the opening and eats the soft flesh inside. Starfish can live up to 30 years and if an arm is broken off (or eaten by a predator) it can grow it back, though it may take a year. At the end of each arm is an 'eye' that can detect light or dark.

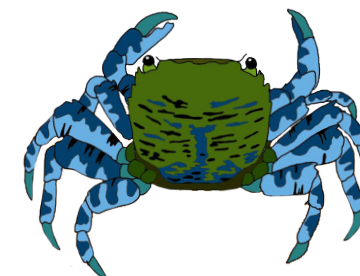


Neptune Grass
(Alka jew Posidonja)

Neptune grass is an important part of the sea ecosystem. Its root system stabilises the seabed, holds the sand in place and creates a habitat for many marine organisms. Patches of sea grass – or posidonia meadows, as they are called – produce as much oxygen as rainforests, and provide habitat and food for many fish and invertebrates, and shelter for their young. Neptune grass is endemic to the Mediterranean Sea.

Following a storm, large amounts of posidonia are often washed up on our beaches. Although they may look unsightly, these mounds protect the beach from erosion. Although we call it *alka* in Maltese, neptune grass is not an alga but a flowering plant.

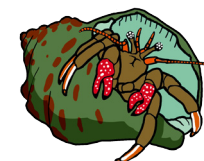
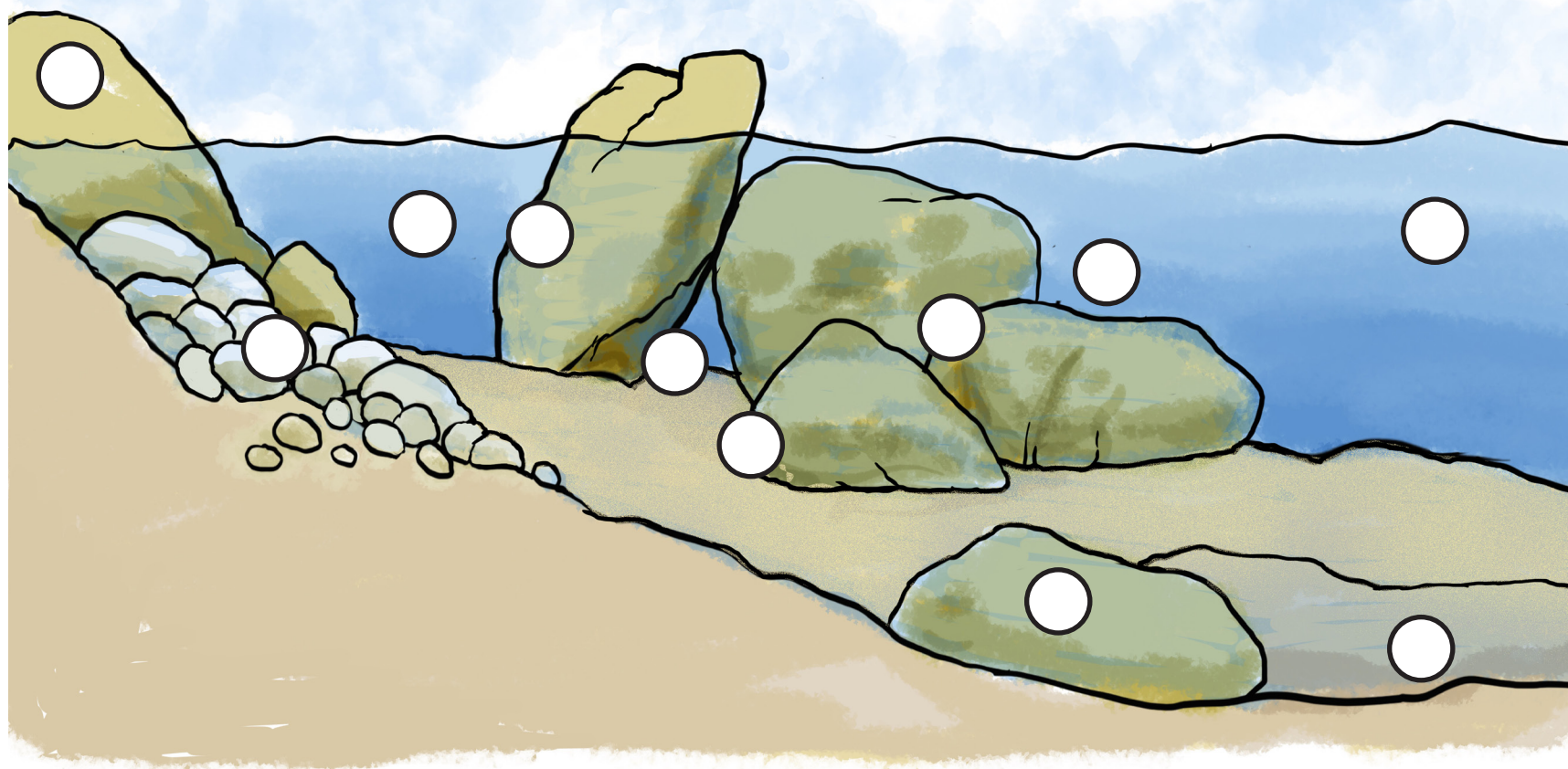
As a community, posidonia meadows are among the largest, slowest growing, and longest-lived organisms in the world: some meadows can be 1000s of years old! Unfortunately, they are today threatened by coastal construction, trawling, fish-farming, pollution, dredging and climate change.



Shore Crab
(Grani tax-Xatt)

A very shy animal, moving quite fast if you approach it, and squeezing into tight cracks to hide. Its colour blends very well with the rocks and algae, providing excellent camouflage and protection from predators. It hunts mostly at night, and eats both animal and vegetation material. It can do this because it has mouthparts that can scrape and tear alga as well as claws that can grab and tear flesh off smaller animals (shellfish, snails, etc.) Despite what many people believe, crabs do not only walk backwards: they can walk in all directions, but sideways is their fastest.

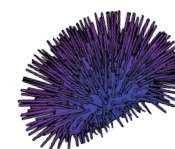
There are several kinds of crabs living in shallow waters around our shores, but the Mediterranean shore crab is the one we are most likely to see as it often walks out of the water and scuttles about. The others usually stay below the surface.



1



2



3



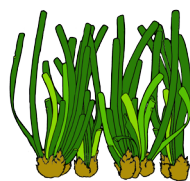
4



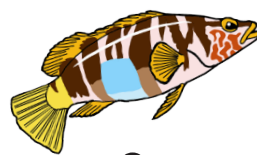
11



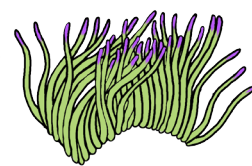
10



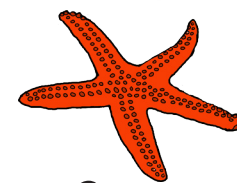
9



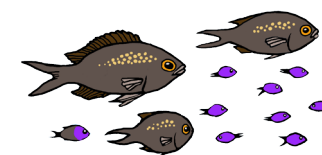
8



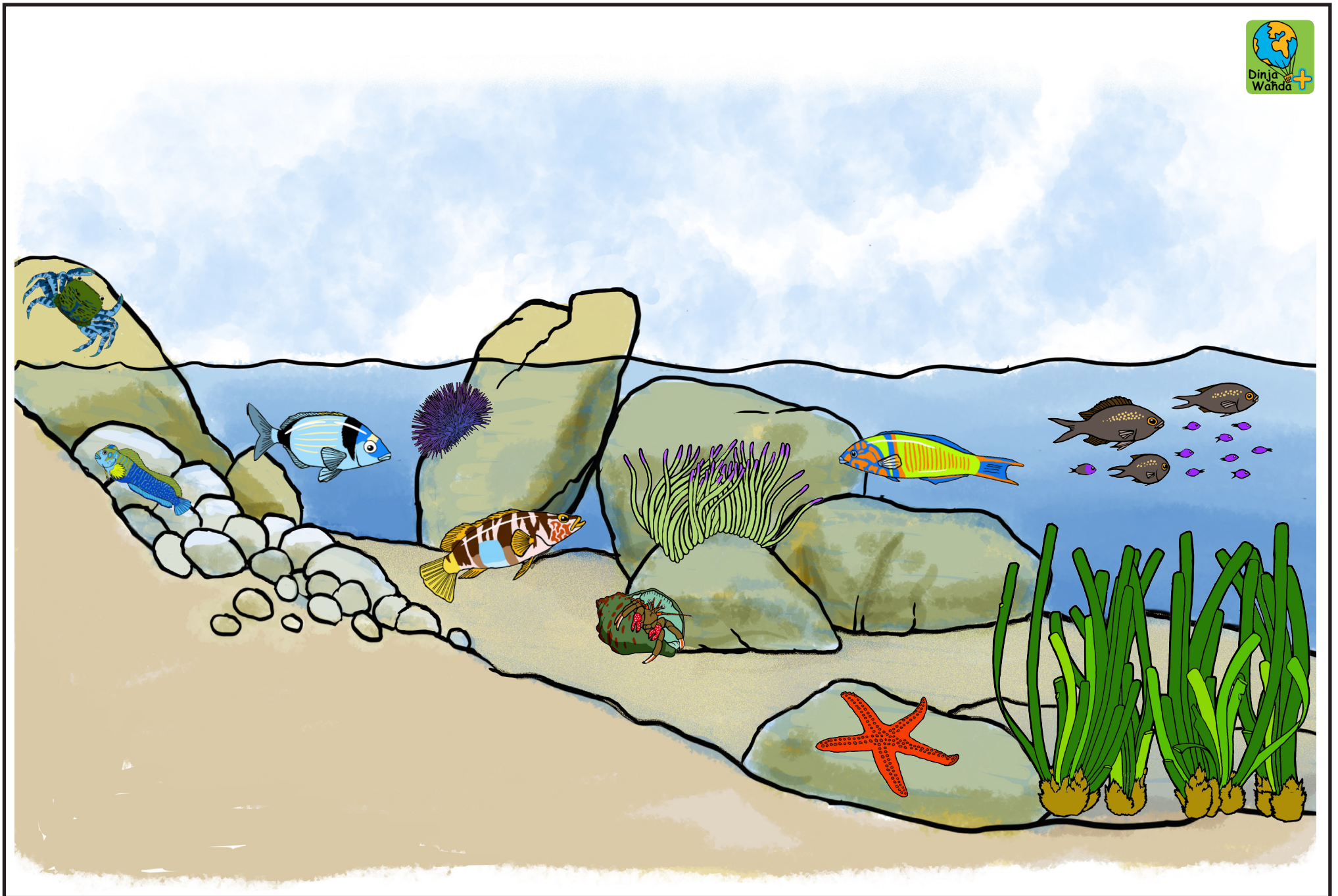
7



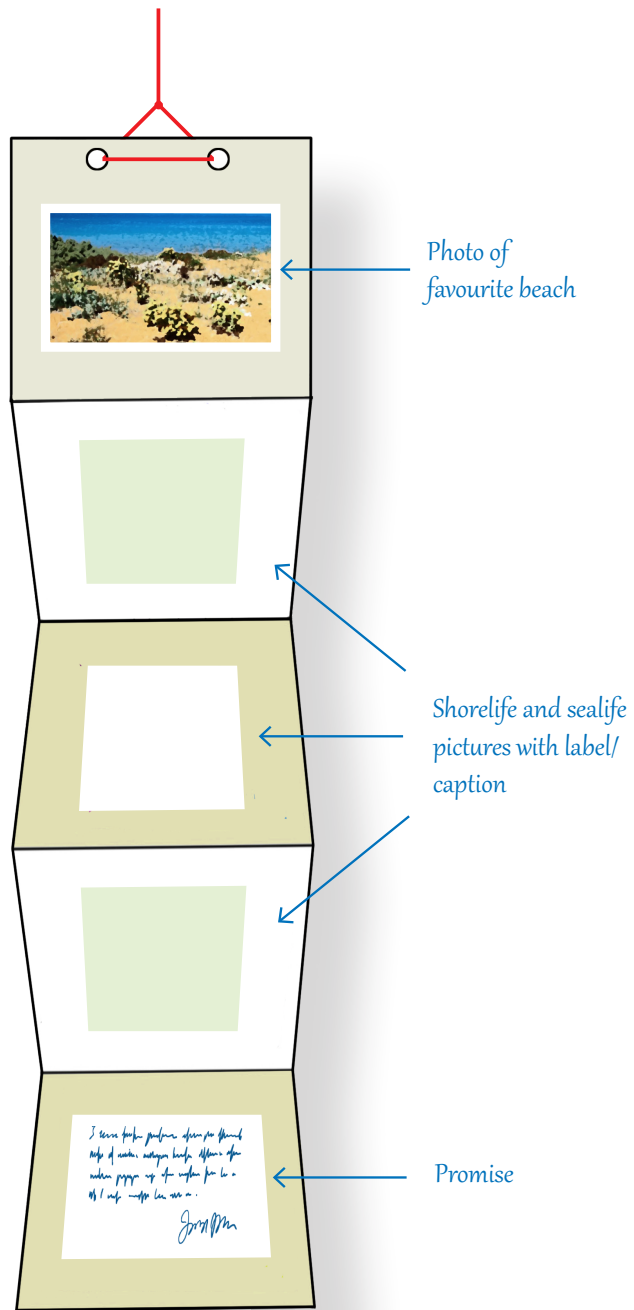
6



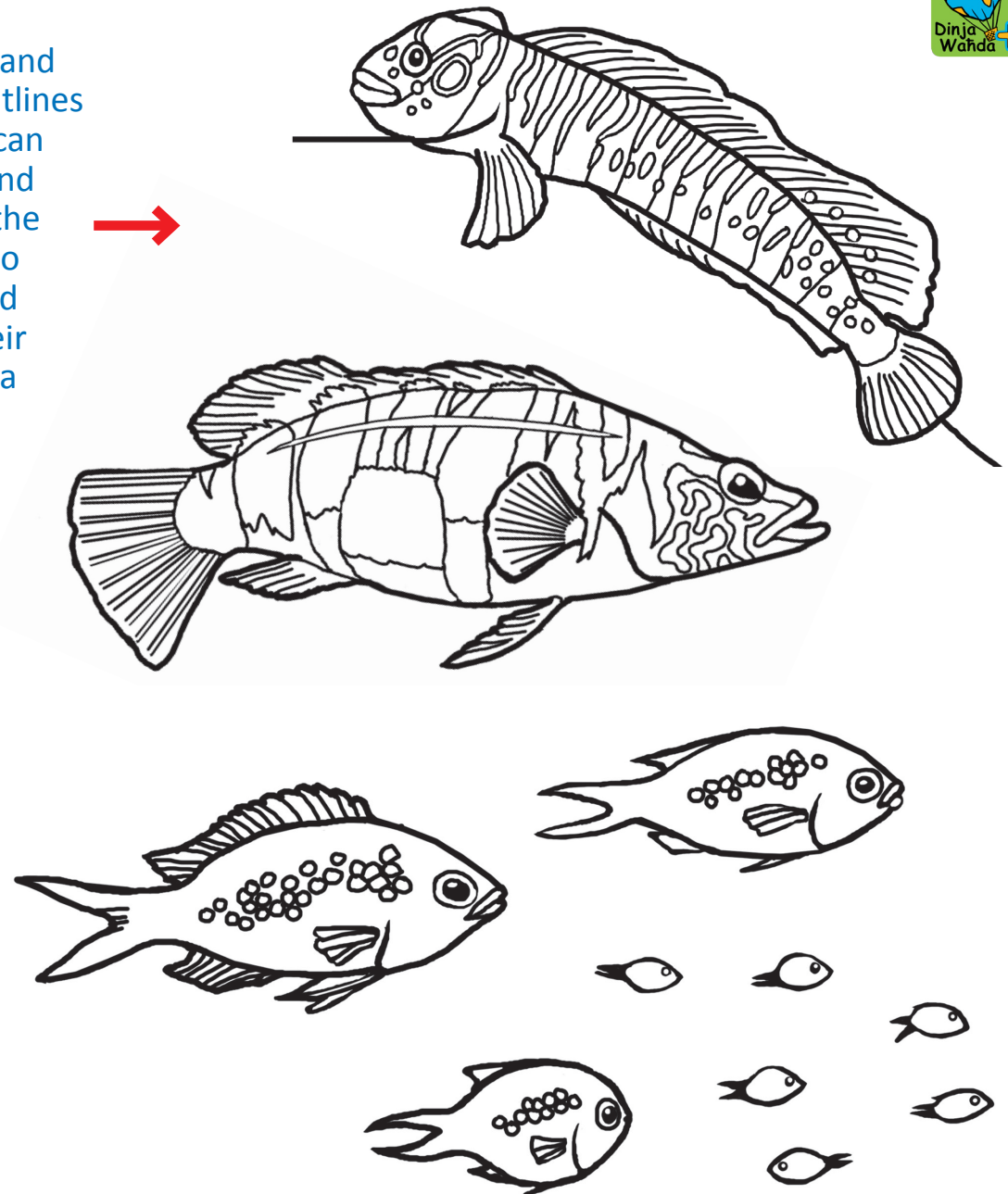
5

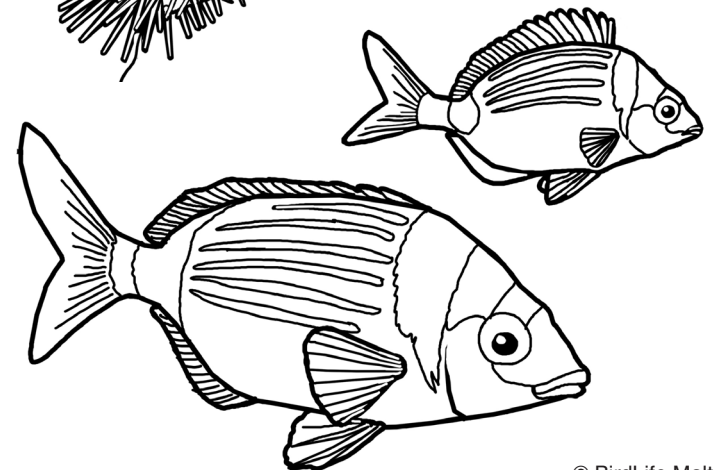
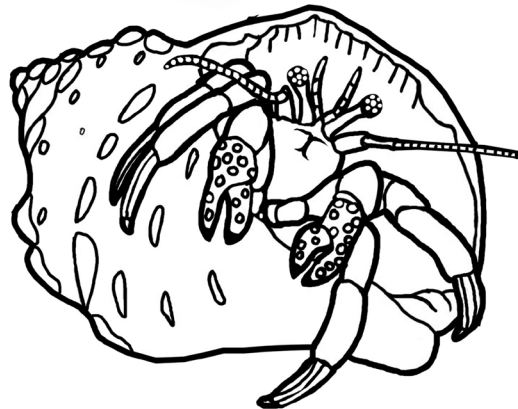
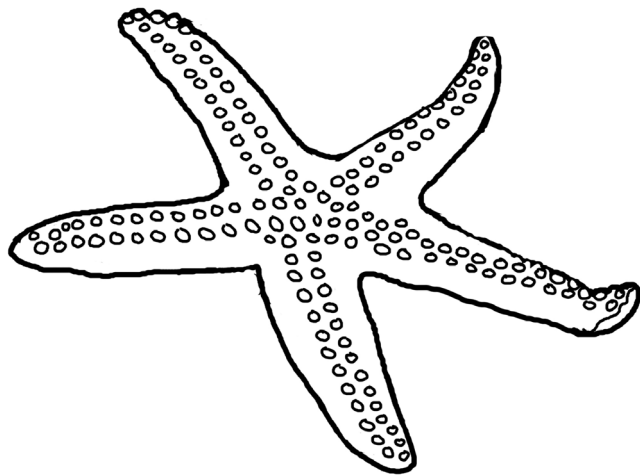
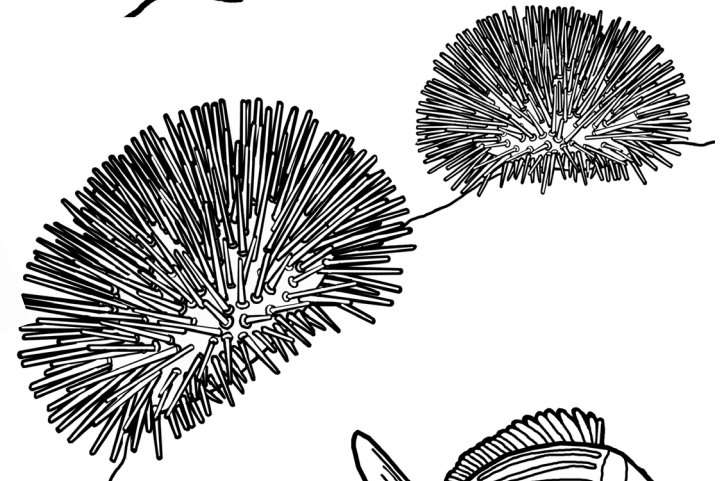
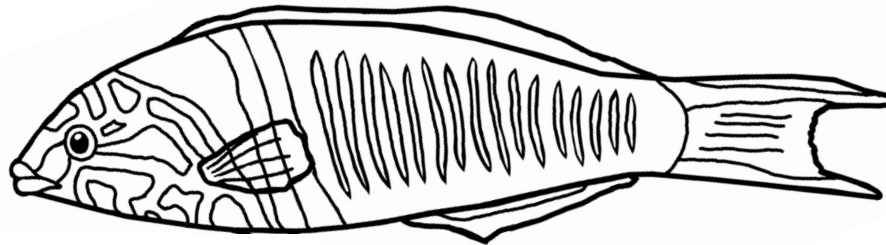
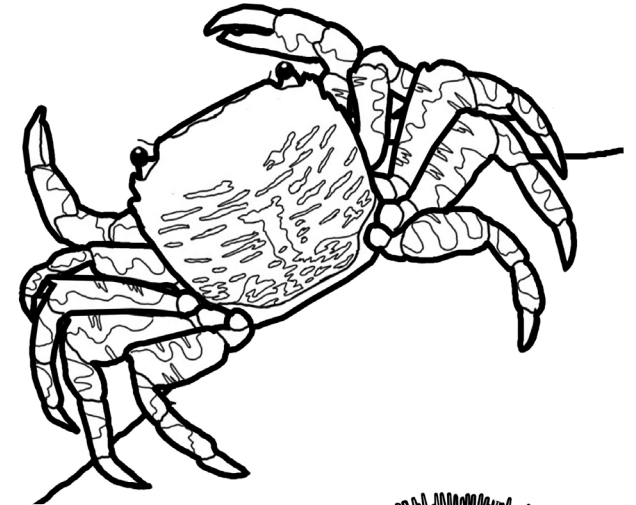
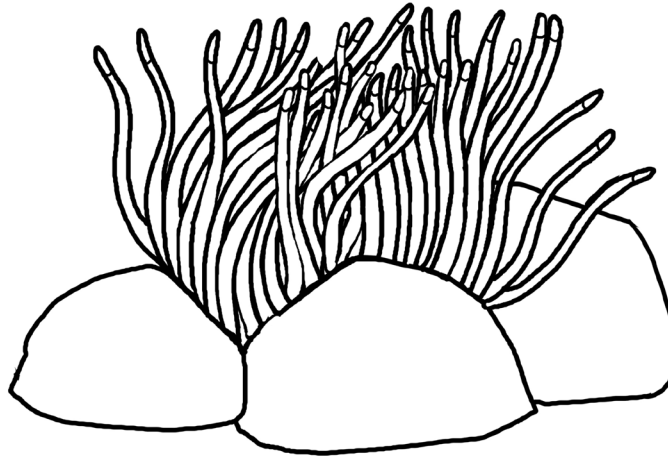
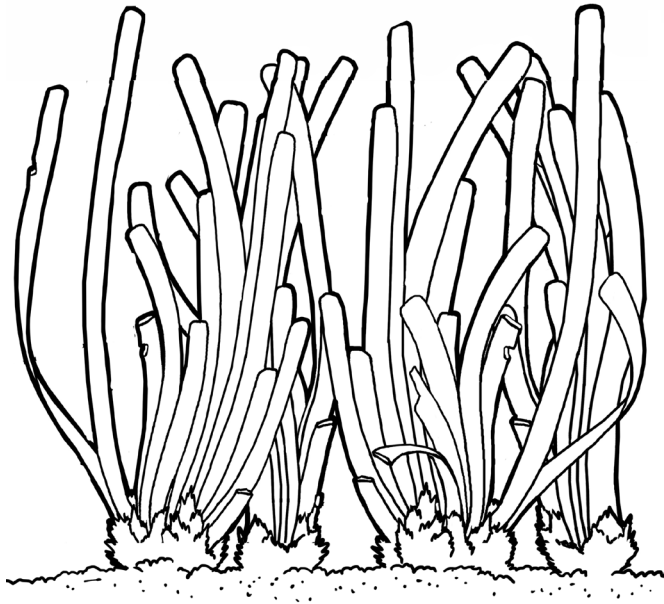






Shorelife and sealife outlines that you can enlarge and print for the children to colour and use in their concertina project.







This is a
Dinja Waħda
school



This is a
Dinja Waħda
class





Din skola
Dinja Waħda



Din klassi
Dinja Waħda