

Little terns at Gronant

My little tern workbook, year 3 and 4

Lesson 1 - Breeding habits of the little tern.

The little tern is the smallest tern species you will come across in Britain, about half the size of a common tern and no bigger than the average banana! They have a yellow bill with a small black tip and a distinctive chattering voice. The adults only weigh a little over 50g, as much as a golf ball.

The little tern arrives back in Britain from West Africa at the end of April to breed on sand or shingle beaches, spits or small inshore islands. The beach at Gronant offers a good nesting habitat as it is made up of a perfect mix of shingle and sand.

Introduction to the little tern animation

Find out all about the little tern at Gronant: <http://littleterns.denbighshirecountryside.org.uk/>

Breeding animation

Learn about the breeding habits of the little tern

Glossary of helpful words

1	Pair	A male and female who come together to mate, build a nest and rear their young
2	Clutch	All the eggs in one nest
3	Chick	A baby tern covered in downy fur rather than feathers. It can't fly or find food and is dependent on its parents.

4	Fledgling	A young bird (like a teenager) that has grown its first coat of feathers and is turning from a chick into a young adult, starting to fly and feed itself
5	Incubation	When parent birds sit on the nest to keep the eggs safe and at the right temperature to develop into chicks. The little terns incubate their eggs for 21 days.

Top Fact: Little terns are no bigger than the average banana

Little tern breeding data table

Here is a table of information taken about little terns over three years. The table includes information about how many breeding pairs there are each year, how many fledglings, how many nests and how many eggs hatched.

Breeding data table			
The number of	2019	2018	2017
Male and female terns (pairs)	162	174	161
Fledglings	206	192	202
Nests	213	295	290
Eggs	527	600	650

Activity 1 – Little tern maths questions

Look at the table above and answer the following questions.

1. Add up the number of pairs for each year. How many pairs are there altogether?

2. Add the number of fledglings in 2019 to the number of nests in 2017. What does it add up to?
3. Subtract the number of eggs laid in 2019 than eggs laid in 2018. What is the difference?
4. Subtract the number of fledglings in 2017 from 2019. What is the difference?

Activity 2 – Bar chart activity

Use your graph paper and the data table from activity 1 to plot your bar charts.

Make sure that after your teacher has explained what to do, your group also reads and understands the following instructions.

1. Work as a team in groups of four and discuss your work with each other.
2. Don't forget to name your team!
3. Record what your group is doing to share with the class at the end.
4. Decide on roles for yourselves e.g. graph plotters, timekeeper, recorder, speaker.
5. Don't forget to label your graph and give it a title.
6. Each member of the group of four chooses one of the categories to plot as their bar chart. Write the name of each person, next to their category.
7. Compare your charts and answer the questions.
8. After 10 minutes the 'speaker' and 'recorder' should present the group's work to the rest of the class, the graph's name and any interesting points you have noted as a group.

Top Fact: Little terns nests are called scrapes

Questions

1. Which year was the most successful breeding year?
2. Why do you think that might be?
3. What do you think might affect successful breeding?

Year 4 bonus questions

Here are some extra questions that you can finish at the end of the lesson or at home.

1. What is 50% of the number of fledglings in 2017, 2018 and 2019? Show your working out and mark them on the graph in a different colour.
2. What is $\frac{2}{3}$ (two thirds) of the number of eggs laid in 2018?

Activity 3 – Little tern poem

This is an acrostic poem, written by James from Ysgol Gronant. He wrote it after visiting the little tern colony and seeing the terns in their environment.

Little terns at Gronant

I like terns

Travel from Africa

Tiny fluffy tern chicks

Love eating sand eels

Eggs in nest

Travel back to Africa

Extremely brave birds

Rough seas destroy nests

Nest on the shingle

Sweeping through the air

Question?

What is an acrostic poem?

Work with a partner or on your own, to create a poem about the little tern.

Think about what kind of poem you will write. Here are some questions to consider:

1. Will it be an acrostic poem made from the name little tern like James's?
2. Will your poem rhyme?
3. Will it be a Haiku? A Haiku is a poem made of three lines. The first and third lines have five syllables. The second line must have seven syllables.
4. Will your poem be about one little tern or the whole colony?
5. Will you name your little tern?
6. Will your poem have more than one verse?

Make sure that after your teacher has explained what to do, you read and understand the following instructions:

1. Work alone or, if in a pair, discuss your work with each other.
2. If you are in a pair, decide who will write and who will illustrate the poem, or if you will both do it.
3. If you are in a pair, decide who will read the poem to the class at the end and who will show the illustrations.
4. Consider the questions above and plan your poem. What is it going to be about? Think about how descriptive you can be in your poem.
5. Don't forget to give it a title!
6. At the end of the lesson your teacher might choose you to read out your poem to the class and show the class the illustrations you have done. Listen to how different everyone's poems are.

Well done

Visit our website at littleterns.denbighshirecountryside.org.uk to find out more about the little terns at Gronant.

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