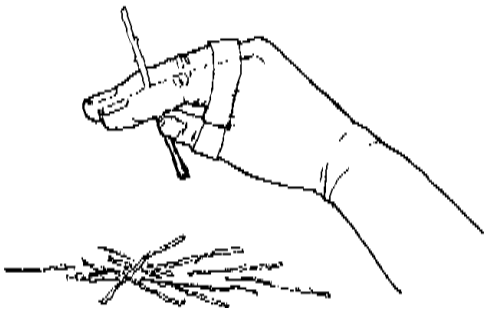
Build A Bird Nest

Subject: Science
Duration: 30 minutes
Location: Outdoors
Key Vocabulary: Adaptation
Related Activities: Camouflage Critters; Why Alligators Look Like They Do; Win, Lose, or Adapt; Animal Olympics
Florida Sunshine State Standards: SC.F.2.2



Objectives. The student will be able to: a) discuss and demonstrate the evolutionary advantage of the thumb, and b) describe the physical and behavioral adaptations that allow animals to live successfully in their environment.

Method. The students will build a bird's nest without the use of their thumbs.

Background. Adaptations are often taken for granted. Humans, just as animals, have adapted for survival. This activity will allow students a chance to see just how important our thumbs (an evolutionary adaptation) can be.

Materials

- Masking tape
- Blackline master "Bird Adaptations"

Suggested Procedure

1. Discuss the concept of adaptations with your students. Show them the blackline master "Bird Adaptations." Tell them that humans, just like other creatures, have adaptations that help us to survive. Have them tape their thumb to the side of their hand, so that they can't move it.

2. Now ask students to collect materials from nature (only dead or fallen materials) and instruct them to build a bird's nest (with their thumbs still taped).

3. Remind students that birds do not have thumbs. Encourage them to work slowly and patiently to see if they can make a nest. (Have the students return the materials to their natural environment following the discussion).

Evaluation

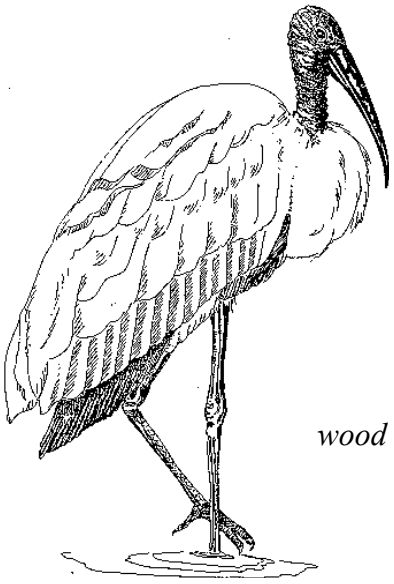
Begin a discussion of the importance of the human thumb for gripping. Do we tend to overlook the importance of our thumb? What other adaptations do we take for granted? How do these adaptations assist in our survival? What types of adaptations do animals need to survive in the Everglades/South Florida?

Extension

What might happen if you gave yourself a new adaptation? Name it and tell how it would help you survive better. Do the same for an animal.

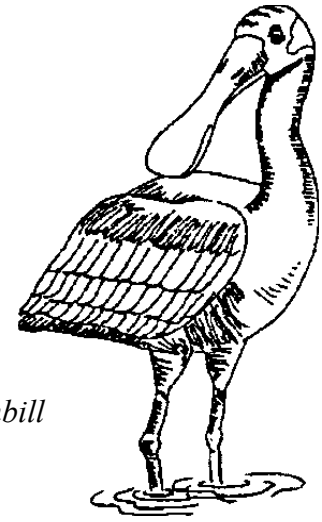
BIRD ADAPTATIONS

Wading Birds



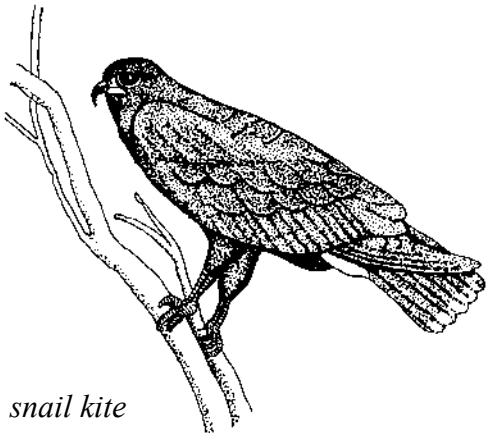
wood stork

Characteristics of Wading Birds:
- Bill - long, straight or curved
- Long, slender legs used for wading out into the water
- Either sight or touch feeders
- Includes: wood stork, egret, heron, ibis, roseate spoonbill
- Status - the wood stork is an endangered bird species



roseate spoonbill

Birds of Prey



snail kite

Characteristics of Birds of Prey/Raptors:
- Bill - short, hooked shape
- Talons for claws - used for grasping
- All are sight feeders
- Includes: snail kite, American bald eagle, red-shouldered hawk
- Status - the snail kite is an endangered bird species

red-shouldered hawk