

ACTIVITY SHEET I : KITES IN YOUR SKIES

The bird on the poster of the film 'All that breathes' is a black kite. You may have seen these birds soaring above waste dump yards and landfills looking for food (dead animals) or swooping down to catch live fish, rodents, bats, and other small animals. But these are only one of the four kinds of kites seen in India:



Observe and discuss:

- Take a few minutes to observe the photographs of the different kinds of kites in flight. Can you spot any features that are common to them and different from other kinds of birds you see in your neighbourhood?
- Can you tell the four kinds of kites apart? What are some of the most important differences you can spot between them?

- To the left of the table below are some features of these birds. One or more of these features may be visible to you when you see them in your sky. How would you describe these features to your friends? Think, for example, of what can you see of the size, shape, and colour of each feature in their photographs.

What does this look like?	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
Head				
Eyes				
Beak				
Wings				
Tail				
Body				

- People who regularly observe birds (bird watchers) call these kites by certain names. These 'common' names can help us identify each kite by the way it looks. Can you match the common names of these birds with their photographs?

Photographs	Common Names
(a)	Brahminy Kite
(b)	Black-winged Kite
(c)	Black-eared Kite
(d)	Black Kite



- Can you think of a different common name for any of these kites? It could be in English or any other language. Choose a name that can help your friends identify the bird (even when it is in flight). Try a name that is not too long and not too hard to remember.
- Look for these birds in your own skies. Then record your observations in the table below.

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
Have you seen this bird in your skies?				
When (which part of the day) have you seen this bird in the sky?				
How large is this bird? You could compare it with the size of a crow.				
How wide are its wings? You could compare it to the length of its body.				
How would you describe its flight to your friends?				
Have you seen this bird hunt or eat? What does it eat?				
How does it use its eyes, beak, and claws to hunt and eat?				
What other details did you observe about this bird?				

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- Activity Sheets I and II are designed as Environmental Science (EVS) projects for Grade III–V students. They can be connected to:
 - Unit 2 ('Life Around Us') of the Grade III EVS textbook (NCERT, 2024–2025). This unit invites teachers and students to enjoy observing the animals and plants around us: *"The more we watch them, the more we learn about their fascinating lives. This curiosity drives us to explore further, discovering new and exciting things. Recognising and respecting the well-being of both plants and animals is essential for maintaining ecological balance and fostering a more compassionate society"*.
 - Chapter 1 ('Super Senses') of the Grade V EVS textbook (NCERT, 2024–2025). In this chapter, children learn about the strong sense of sight that raptors have.
- Each activity can be done over 2–3 days. Each sheet has some tasks that can be done in the classroom and some that need to be done outside. Plan to allot three hours to the classroom tasks.
- For the classroom tasks:
 - Introduce the two activities by screening the film on a computer or mobile phone. If this is not possible, read the article titled 'All that Breathes: Why Raptors Matter' in this issue. Then briefly narrate the story of the kite 'carers' to your students.
 - Start each classroom session by giving students 5–10 minutes to observe the photographs of the four kinds of kites in Activity Sheet I and that of the other kinds of raptors in Activity Sheet II.
 - Share clear instructions for each activity. Remind students that they need to record their observations in the tables provided in each sheet.
 - Give students enough time to record their observations and answer the questions in each sheet. Facilitate a discussion based on students' observations and any questions they may have.
- For the tasks that can be done outside the class, encourage students to:
 - Work together if they live in the same neighbourhood.
 - Observe these birds carefully without disturbing or harming them. (You may want to draw your students' attention to the kinds of observations listed in the tables in the two sheets before assigning this task).
 - Talk to the elders in their community, listen carefully to what they tell them about these birds, and carefully record these details in their notebooks or activity sheets.
- Make a note of any student questions that have not been addressed during the class discussion. You could take these up later. Or assign them to your students to explore on their own and share their findings with the class.
- Encourage students to think about how interdependent all living beings are on each other and the environment that we are part of. By inviting students to observe their surroundings with attention and learn from the lived experience of their communities, we can help them develop care, empathy, and compassion even for beings that appear fearsome or disgusting to people.

Contributed by:

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