



*Leabharlann
Náisiúnta
na hÉireann*
National Library
of Ireland

Birds and Botanicals

Become a naturalist and learn about the world around you!



Name: _____

Let's learn some key words before we get started!

Observation: when you look at something very closely

Naturalist: a person who explores how the natural world and living things exist and change

Botanicals: plants and their different parts

Species: a set of plants or animals that have similar characteristics to each other



Observation

All science starts with observation. Everyday we see different things in our environment—on our walk to school or at the park for example. When we think about what we see and ask questions about it, we are observing the natural world.

Many scientists and curious minds make notes of their observations or record it in some way. They might keep a field journal, take photographs or draw scenes they see.

THINK: What do you notice on your day-to-day activities?



Miss Battersby

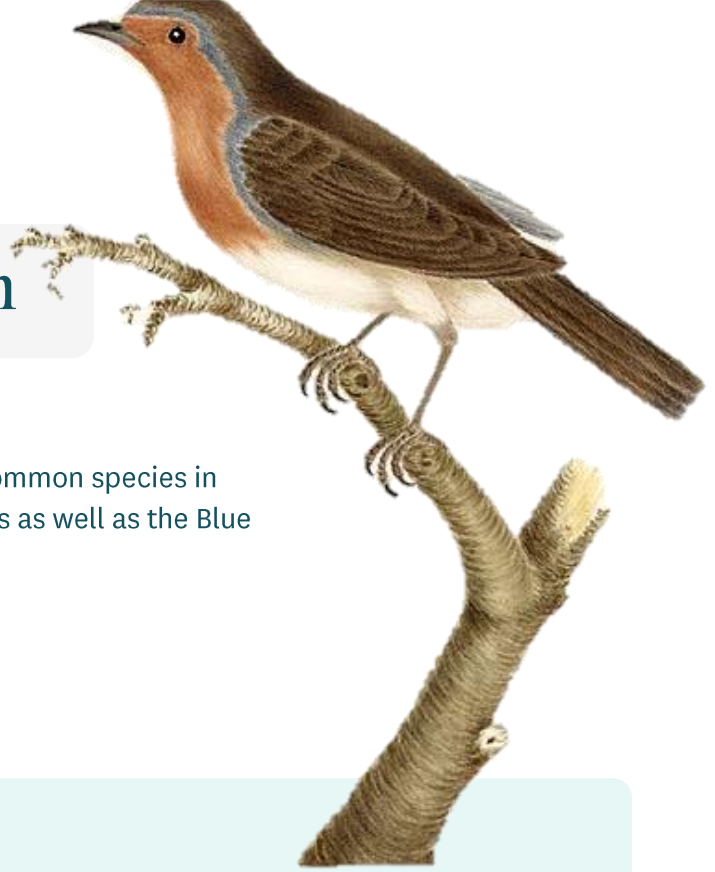
It is not just scientists that record observations and make studies. Everyday people can too! Here at the National Library, we have a collection of over 140 botanical and bird drawings and studies made by Miss Battersby. These drawings were originally donated to Royal Dublin Society before making their way into our collection.

Not very much is known about Miss Battersby. We know that she was from Meath and was active around Dublin and Belfast as well, completing most of her drawings sometime between 1800 and 1840. When she presented her collection to the RDS she said it was to express her gratitude for the “beautiful Botanic Gardens.”

RECAP: Where do you think Miss Battersby went to observe and draw most of her specimens?



Red Breast Robin



The red breast robin is one of the most common species in Ireland. Miss Battersby recorded this species as well as the Blue Robin.

THINK: Have you seen this robin? What other common species can you see in your neighbourhood?

ACTIVITY: Draw it here!



OBSERVE: Have you ever seen bird feathers on the ground at the park or maybe at the beach?

QUESTION: Why do you think birds lose their feathers?



Miss Battersby completed this watercolour drawing of moulted feathers from various types of bird

Moulting

Birds go through a process called moulting where they lose their feathers.

Smaller birds may regrow all new feathers at once over five weeks or so while larger birds of prey might take a few years to fully moult all of their feathers.

Moulting takes a lot of energy and birds will find somewhere safe to do it.

Moulting allows birds to replace feathers that are worn or develop their plumage as they age.

QUESTION: Can you think of any other animals that replace or regrow parts of themselves as they grow?

DESIGN: Use this space to draw your own bird and moulted feathers. What is the relationship between the old and new feathers? Does your bird grow different coloured feathers after moulting?



Your Field Journal

Site Name: _____

Date: _____

Weather Description: _____

Observations

Plant life: _____

Wildlife: _____

Keeping a detailed record of what you see can help you notice changes in the natural world around you! You can use the guidelines above to track your daily observations.

Field Entry #2

Site Name: _____

Date: _____

Weather Description: _____

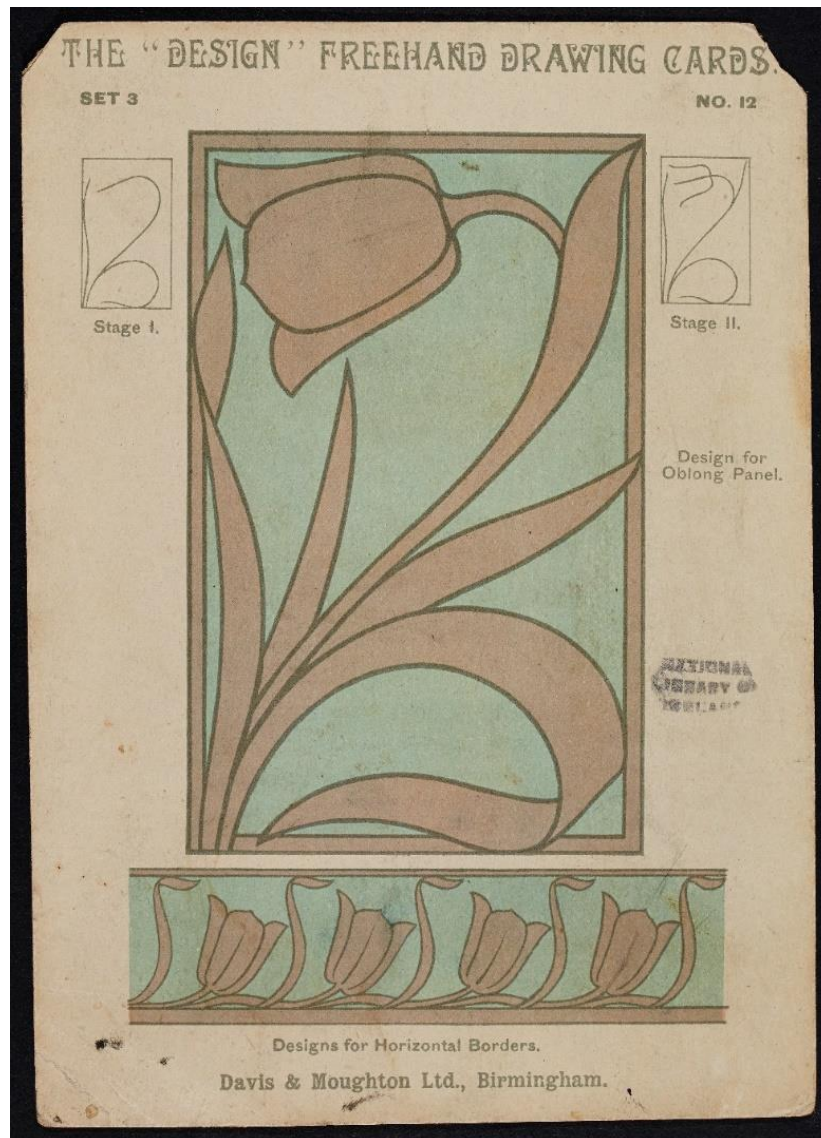
Observations

Plant life: _____

Wildlife: _____

Other Notes

Design Style

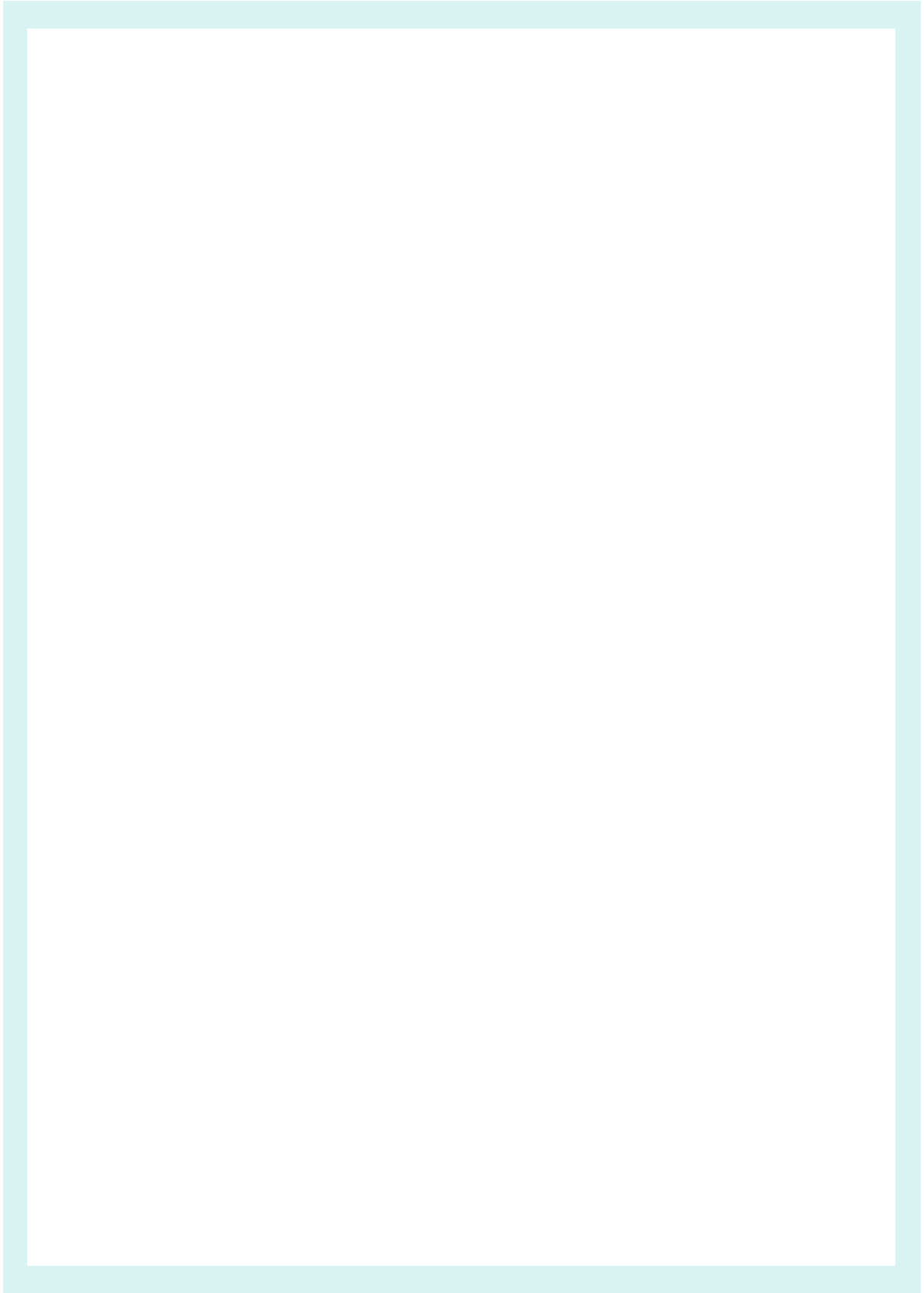


One part of naturalism is observing the world around us. In the previous activities you have done this by thinking about what you see in your neighbourhood around you and what different birds may look like when they moult.

Sometimes, the natural world can be depicted in a simplified or basic form. This means that the image may not look exactly like what we see before us with our eyes. Instead, it represents what the object may typically look like.

This can be taught very easily! Below is an item from the collection that dates sometime from the early 20th century. It is a "Design Freehand Drawing Card" which offers instructions for how to draw a tulip.

DRAW: Can you follow the guide to recreate the tulip below?





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