

# Red kite



I am a red kite.

I am a large bird with a hook-shaped beak.

Can you see my V-shaped tail and the white patches under my wings in this picture?

In April my brother and I were hatched from our eggs.

How many red kite chicks were there?

My nest was built from sticks, high up in a tree.

When I was a chick my mother kept me warm and looked after me.

My father brought small dead animals to the nest and would pass them to my mother.

She would tear the animals up into small pieces and then feed us.

Why does the mother have to prepare the food for her chicks?

We went to toilet over the side of the nest, being careful not to fall out.

The ground below was splattered with white mess.

As we grew stronger we could squirt the mess further.

Why do red kite chicks not do their toilet in their nest?

I usually fly in a straight line, but I prefer to soar and glide in the wind. This is less tiring and uses less energy.

Try flapping your arms and see how tiring this is. If you stop flapping you might fall out of the sky.



The wind helps me circle in the sky which allows me to look for food over a wide area.

Take a piece of paper and blow under it to see how the paper can be kept up.

I like to eat dead animals and my favourite food is rabbit, although I will eat earthworms if I am hungry.

When I see food I try to grab it in my talons and tear it apart with my beak.

What other dead animals might a red kite eat?

Crows will try to keep me away from their nests and you may see one chasing me in the sky.

Why do you think crows do this?

## **Survival**

A few hundred years ago red kites were more common.

People would throw animal waste into the streets, and the red kites would eat the waste. Red kites helped keep the streets clean and reduced disease.

When people stopped throwing their waste in the street, there was less food for the red kites to eat.

What do you think happened to the number of red kites in a town?

Game keepers would kill red kites as they thought the kites ate live game birds.

Today most people like to look at red kites and protect them.

Some red kites can live for 25 years or more.



See if you can find the following words:

Red, kite, hook, grab

H	O	O	K	Q
R	G	E	I	W
T	R	Y	T	U
I	A	R	E	D
O	B	P	L	K

How many points can you get?

Task	Tick	Points
Have you seen a red kite flying?		5
Did you notice its V-shaped tail?		3
Did you see the white patches on its wings?		2
Total points		

Please try to answer these questions

What shape is a red kite's tail?

What do they use to grab food with?

Why do they circle in the sky?

What is their favourite food?

Do you think it would be a good idea to throw our animal waste into the streets again to help the red kites?