

Green Pencil Award 2019



Going, going, gone:
Scotland's wildlife
in danger?

28 November 2019
Central Library
George IV Bridge
Edinburgh

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YOUR COUNCIL - YOUR FUTURE



Foreword



I am delighted to have been asked to write the foreword for this twelfth annual Green Pencil Award booklet, showcasing the top 20 prize winning entries from this year.

The Council's Green Pencil Award is our creative writing competition for Edinburgh children and young people in the P4 to S3 age range. The competition, which is organised by Edinburgh Libraries and our Edinburgh schools, was launched this year by author Vivian French with pupils from Davidson's Mains Primary at Blackhall Library. The competition has attracted a great response, with over 1,200 entries received from across the city.

The theme this year was **Going, going, gone: Scotland's wildlife in danger?** and it presented a great opportunity for our entrants to demonstrate their creative writing skills and incorporate their love of Scotland's diverse wildlife and their concern for protecting our native species from the harmful effects of climate change.

The shortlisted entries were judged by a panel drawn from our own Libraries and Literacy teams as well as Scottish Book Trust, Craigmillar Literacy Trust and National Trust for Scotland. Whilst the judging was no easy task, the exceptional quality of the entries this year ensured it was a very enjoyable experience for everyone involved.

I would like to thank all the schools, libraries, parents and carers who encouraged all our young writers to participate and I am grateful to the many people, including our generous sponsors, who contribute to the competition's success.

Finally, I would like to congratulate each of our 20 finalists. It is a fantastic achievement to be selected from so many outstanding entries and I look forward to reading more of your work in the future.

Councillor Donald Wilson
Convener of Culture and Communities Committee
The City of Edinburgh Council

Green Pencil Award 2019

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Primary 4–6

The Mountain Hare

I am the mountain hare but there's something I think is so unfair ...

I am in danger ...

I can change my furry coat to white and brown – do you like the sound?

I eat the grass and dash super-fast ... like a flame.

Zig-zag to confuse the predators.

SAVE ME, SAVE ME, HELP ME, HELP ME!

I am brown like creamy milk chocolate and white as the winter snow.

I live in the upland heather where I like the stormy weather.

My powerful hind legs to propel – I can do it really well.

SAVE ME, SAVE ME, HELP ME, HELP ME!

Help me survive and keep me alive.

Or you will never see me, me ... me ... me.

I am the mountain hare but there's something I think is so unfair ...

I am in danger!

Remember my name – THE
MOUNTAIN HARE!

SAVE ME, SAVE ME, HELP ME,
HELP ME!

Ewela Obo-Idornigie P4

St Margaret's RC Primary



Dolphin

Determined animal in the water
Oceans full of swimming dolphins
Losing the species day by day
Peacefully gliding through the sea
Hiding all over Scotland's waters
Interactive with one another
No more ... I hope not!

Isla Cannon P4W
Cargilfield

The Hedgehog

Do you want children who only know Scottish wildlife as pictures?

I have seen small eyes as dark as night

Noses as pink as the rubber on this pencil.

If humans destroy the environment, they destroy the animals.

I have heard snuffling and grunting in the leaves like miniature pigs rustling around.

500 spikes that are poisonous as poison ivy.

If we poison our wildlife, we poison ourself.

Dagger spikes; mini toothpicks.

Small as a brown spiky football.

I am proud of our wildlife – let's not lose our Scottish wildlife.

As gentle and shy as a snail in its shell.

Obsessed with shadowy spaces in leaves with the toads.

We don't want the guilt; keep our wildlife safe.

My favourite Scottish piglet, our little hedgehog!

Robyn Gilfether P5

Hermitage Park Primary





Seal's Playground

Sea green kelp forest playground.
Big dark eyes staring into the gloomy water.

Protect our animals or they'll be gone.
Save our wildlife.

Cat-like whiskers, super sense their way through
The green kelp forest playground.
A sensitive dog nose, leading them to dinner.

Lose our wildlife, lose our joy.
Save Scotland's wildlife.

Quick as a diving spear.
Robbed fish, trapped on jagged teeth.
Don't destroy the food chain, don't overfish!
Save Scotland's wildlife!

Chomping on fast food and fish suppers in the underwater
takeaway!
In the sea green kelp forest playground, spinning
Swirling, somersaulting games of tig.

Do you want our children only to see pictures of this joy?
We don't want the guilt!
Save Scotland's wildlife!

Florence McKay P5
Hermitage Park Primary

Red Squirrel

Nut cracker
Fast runner
Pro climber
Seed nibbler
Tree dweller

Sudden banging
Tree falling
Squirrel dead.

Marcus Caldeira P5
St Cuthbert's RC Primary



Fox's Point of View

I was sitting outside my den watching an owl, a massive brown barn owl, fly low over the trees. I could only just make out the shape of it as it circled over and over again. When the barn owl disappeared from sight, I decided to turn in.

The next morning, I awoke to the sound of footsteps, loud footsteps. I hurried outside to see what was going on. What, or rather who, I saw was a man, someone I had seen before. This man in particular cut down trees in the forest I lived in. Cautiously I stepped back in to my den. About 500 yards away he started to cut down trees with the axe that he had brought with him. He swung his axe back and chopped down a tree, and another, and another!

When the man left, he also left the trees but came back with a massively monstrous machine! The machine had imprinted letters on the side which were F-O-R-K-L-I-F-T (and don't think that I can't read because I'm a fox. If you didn't know that maybe read the title please). Anyway, the man in the mechanical machine put something that looked like a gigantic fork under all the trees that he had cut down and pulled a lever and they were lifted into the air and carried out of the forest.

That night I went scavenging in some bins for food and I saw a hedgehog scuttle across the road and disappear from view. I returned to my den in the forest and ate the chicken I had brought home to eat and it was then that I realised how cruelly humans treated animals, with the problem of pollution and deforestation.

Magnus Urch P5A
Bruntsfield Primary

Our Bees are the Best

Less of us around
No more of our species to see.
I buzz from flower to flower, searching for nectar,
My signals are confused
I lose my route,
I can't see my way home,
Or navigate from plant to plant,
Which means no food will grow.
The extinction of us will mean
No more humanity.
My radar – it's failing.
What is that smell which is killing us?
We try and help but YOU stop us
Where is our habitat?
Destroyed ...
To make room for you!
Ignore our plight,
And it will be you humans
That will get
Destroyed!

Isla Robinson-Gleed P6A
South Morningside Primary



Going, Going, Gone

It starts off as a seed. Just a seed.
 But one morning a magical thing happens.
 The seed vibrates, getting louder and louder.
 But then it stops.
 Suddenly the seed bursts open,
 Making the world shake and groan,
 As a green shoot erupts from the seed.
 Days pass as the rain thunders down, hammering the soil
 where the shoot lies.
 As the rain fades, a flourish of rainbows and colours come
 out-the sun!
 Weeks pass, the seed grows longer and longer until POP!
 A leaf emerges from the soil.
 The shoot carries on twisting
 And turning until it is centimetres off the ground.
 The end of the shoot sprouts a large round bulb.
 The bulb cracks into quarters and
 A burst of colour opens up as
 The petal case falls away, revealing beautiful petals.
 They spread apart, showing pollen inside.
 But a shadow falls over this miracle and
 CRUNCH!
 A human foot crushes it, and it's destroyed.

Alice Walker P6
 Preston Street Primary

HIGHLY COMMENDED



Just Stop

Think before you buy
 More animals are going to die!
 Look at all the plastics in the sea
 It's totally destroying me!
 We should be saving
 All the animals
 The wonderful sea creatures
 And all of the mammals!
 Single use is just an excuse
 Harm to our planet we must reduce
 So let's work together and take
 small steps
 We can all save our planet
 And we can all help!

Miriam Forret 4LB
 ESMS Junior School



Primary 7—S3

A Job for a Pine Marten

I am one of those people who give ideas for jobs, so when they come in I ask them some questions and give them ideas.

'Mr Marten, do baby pine martens have beards?

Are they all called Marten? Wouldn't that be boring? What about Bob, Alice and Jeff? Oh, there's not so many now, so it's not as confusing. That's sad.

Do you all shave your beards – those strangely attractive beards?

Oh Tail, have you considered a job as a pipe cleaner? I hear it's quite well paid.

Mr Marten, what do you do for a living? Are you a lawyer in a monkey suit? A hairdresser in an apron covered in hair? Or are you a small mammal with a lovely fur coat?

Have you considered being a model with your luscious brown fur? I think you would be simply fabulous.

So consider your options – until then, goodbye!

Mr Marten: 'Hmm – small mammal? Bat it is then!'

Slam! (that was the door)

Finn Sheldon P7A

Leith Primary



A Peaceful Place



It was such a peaceful place ...
The fresh scented breeze rustled the leaves,
Vivid birds swooped and soared in a magnificent blue sky
And below, the forest floor was littered with tiny, bright
bluebells.
Brilliant butterflies fluttered light-heartedly,
And hairy bumblebees droned freely
All over the place.
In the trees, red squirrels scurried up and down so quickly
That all you could see was an orangey-red blur with a
bushy tail.
It was such a peaceful place ...
Until the humans came ...

Lily Chazelas P7A
Preston Street Primary

Sonnet of the Birds

Birds going back home, rushing and rushing
Flying over hilltops, over tall trees
Swooping down waterfalls, running, gushing
Soaring smoothly in the cool autumn breeze.

Spinning finely in perfect harmony
Soaring and diving, reflecting in lakes
Conkers falling, a stream of burgundy
All the beautiful things that nature makes.

But the trees are leaving, and the lakes are no more
Now nature's not safe, all because of us
Over tree ruins, the birds sadly soar
Saving wildlife's now really a must.

Back at the nest at the crack of the dawn
The birds have seen nature that soon will be gone.

Aliyah Faulds P7A
Preston Street Primary



The Mountain Hare

Up in the highlands
Lives the mountain hare
Their species aren't endangered
And they're treated pretty fair.

They hop around
With their large furry feet,
Looking for something
That they can eat.

Their diet changes
Depending on the weather
In summer it's leaves
And in winter it's heather.

Mountain hares can get worried
Just like you and me
They run in a zig-zag pattern
As fast as fast can be.

Though they're still not endangered
They still have things to fear
Because 38,000
Get killed every year.

I hope I've persuaded you
To help the mountain hare
So stop them from getting shot
And show you really care.

Caoimhe Byrne P7C
Blackhall Primary



My Plea

When I look out into nature, a world that's pure and clean,
The bluebells blooming in the woods, the contrast blue and green,
And where the little foxes play, safe in their hidey den,
Away from stuffy city air, the work of thoughtless men.
But too soon their innocence is spoiled,
The thought of safeness soon recoiled
The trees are gone that hide their den
When will they grow back up again?
The mother birds are sad and weep
The sadness from their heart does seep
The deer peek out from dewy grass
Can they come out now, has the danger passed?
And all the bees are sad as well
For there's no one here to tell
How they lost their home and flowers
The gorgeous sunny springtime hours

That once with love and life were filled
Now, slowly are getting killed.
So this is a plea to everyone
Who's on this earth, beneath the sun,
Help us save this pretty land
The one on whose firm soil you stand
Help us save our much-loved earth
And give her what you know she's worth.
And you alone can make a change
A pot of flowers for bees to range
Or a plate of milk for a little hedgehog
A stick for an ant, or an ant for a log.
So why not give a little thought
To those who for so long have fought
To keep their homes and keep their lives,
To keep their children, mates and wives.
Help them live, don't let them tear,
Nature rewards those who care.

Hannah-Louise Phethean Class 6 (P7)
Edinburgh Steiner School

Pine Marten

It's terrifying how much twenty years can change a place. It only seemed like yesterday I was here last, racing through the coniferous forest, running away from Billy and his gang.

Billy and his gang had been the bullying type, picking on younger and weaker kids like me. However, I was never concerned by them. I was faster than they were and I always had the forest to run to. A towering maze of spindly trees and rocks which I know like the back of my hand.

It was on one of those evenings when I was leaning with one hand against the rough bark of one of the looming trees, catching my breath after another easy escape. I was out later than usual, the sun dipping low to the ground, extending the low shadows cast from the thin trees, and the first moths and bats were beginning to leave their daytime homes.

I remember slowly gaining my breath and soon I was slowly walking back

home, my footsteps muffled by the soft, needle-covered ground. And there it was, emerging from a hole in the tree in front of me, its long body and cream-coloured chest following after the head peering out of the hole.

Martes martes, pine marten.

I stood stock still, staring in curious wonder at the elegant creature before me. I remember my dad telling me about them, carnivorous mammals that were largely nocturnal, and lived in forests much like this one.

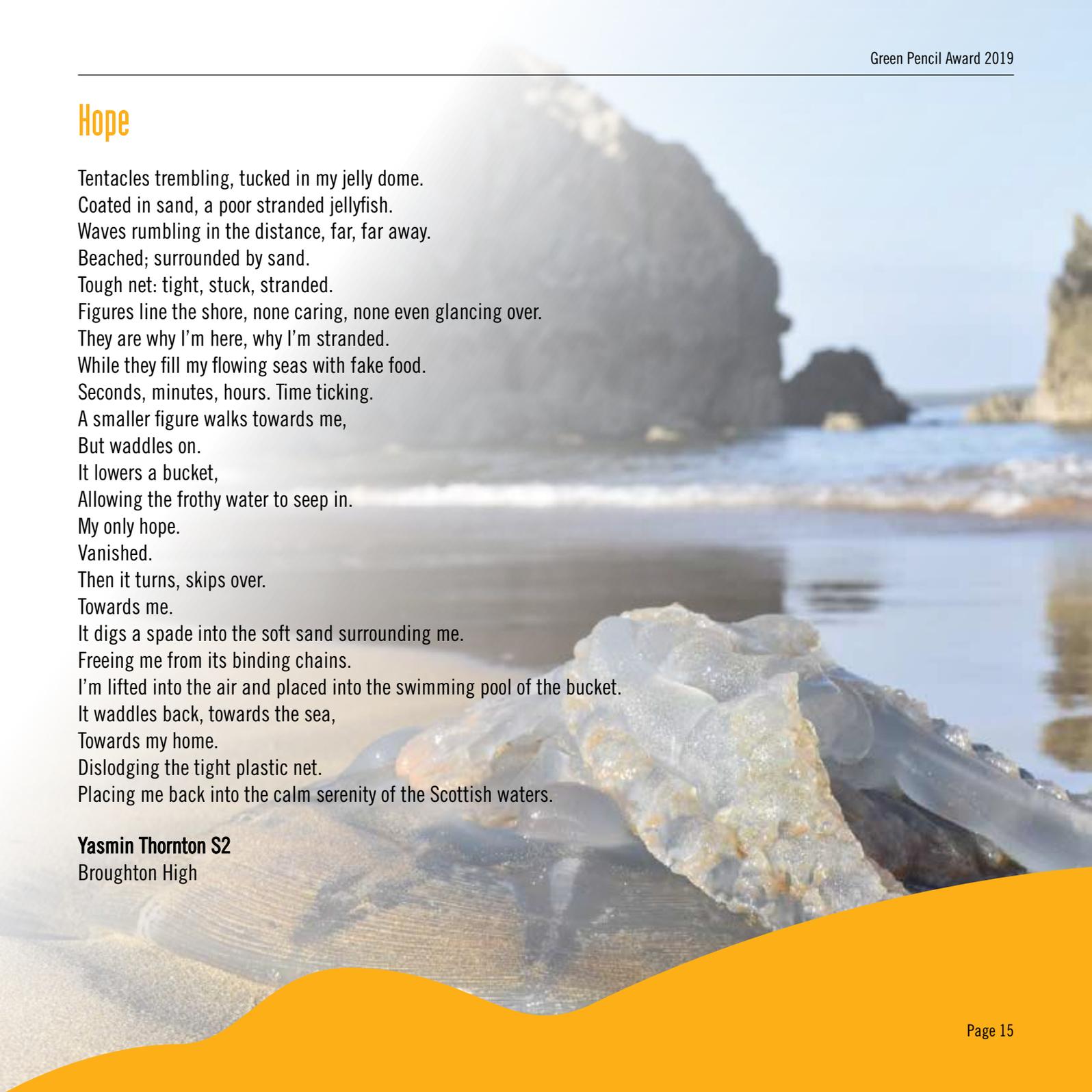
The creature's jet-black eyes snapped to me, and it climbed down the tree trunk with surprising agility before darting away to the left, bounding off into the forest.

And as I stood in that same spot twenty years later, staring motionlessly at the soulless tree stump in front of me, with dead twigs beneath my feet and the once magical trees reduced to rotting stumps, I couldn't help but wonder what happened to the pine marten.

Ailish Young S2
The Royal High School



Hope



Tentacles trembling, tucked in my jelly dome.
Coated in sand, a poor stranded jellyfish.
Waves rumbling in the distance, far, far away.
Beached; surrounded by sand.
Tough net: tight, stuck, stranded.
Figures line the shore, none caring, none even glancing over.
They are why I'm here, why I'm stranded.
While they fill my flowing seas with fake food.
Seconds, minutes, hours. Time ticking.
A smaller figure walks towards me,
But waddles on.
It lowers a bucket,
Allowing the frothy water to seep in.
My only hope.
Vanished.
Then it turns, skips over.
Towards me.
It digs a spade into the soft sand surrounding me.
Freeing me from its binding chains.
I'm lifted into the air and placed into the swimming pool of the bucket.
It waddles back, towards the sea,
Towards my home.
Dislodging the tight plastic net.
Placing me back into the calm serenity of the Scottish waters.

Yasmin Thornton S2
Broughton High

Going, Going, Gone!

A single splash of red
The broken wings hang over the nest, hidden in the
woodlands of the Cairngorms.
His feathers midnight black, lace the forest floor.
He is an impressive sight, a fan of feathers at his back,
and his head held high
With one flash of red on his neck he is the boldest in the
wood,
Leaves tearing down beneath his talons.
A journey to the top of a small mound, across the muddied
grass.
This is his kingdom – he looks upon the ground.
This single bird, a taunting cry he stands on the twigs
But now he spots an unfamiliar sight; the large feet and
long legs is quite a daunting sight.
An intruder to the forest. He turns his head and runs.
What was this creature, the bird thought to himself?
Interrupting his peaceful day and trampling through his
woods.
The woods are a dangerous place for this single bird.
Slowly his home is destroyed, with deer fencing as sharp
as thorns.
This bird is brave and remains strong in the harshest of
winters.
So help this bird, and all its home – stand strong like the
capercaillie.

Isobel Hendrie S3
Balerno Community High



HIGHLY COMMENDED

Hedgehog

Cloaked in spines, a hedgehog slumbers.
In its sleep it softly mumbles.
The autumn sunrise, streaked with gold,
Shines upon the spiked ball.
Its endless struggle through the night,
Ends with the morning light.
With the winter drawing near,
The hedgehog must disappear.
It must sleep alone for three months at least,
Until the winter cold has ceased.

Lucy Whitehead P7
Craiglockhart Primary

HIGHLY COMMENDED



Red Fox

Silky red satin coat
Gleaming in the midnight stars.
Sly. Stealth. Sneak.
Catch. Caught. Eat.
Elegant leaps!
Dazzling dives!
The red fox thrives!
Into the thicket, into the trees,
Red fox go wherever you please.
Under the bush, over the hedge
Into the garden, under the ledge
Graceful jumps.
Playful cubs.
Red fox alive.

Lucky to live, lucky to thrive.
Endangered once, you survived.
Now you are of least concern
But don't take chances,
Times could turn.
Red fox deprived.
Red fox alive.

Sleek and shiny, soft as night.
Watchful eyes, as green as the grass,
Reflected in the silver stars.

Soft, damp ,black nose
Sniffs at every corner.
Full of surprise
The red fox thrives.

Sly beauty.
Roaming in the night.
Rusty red runner,
Running in the trees, in the dark,
Over human boundaries.
Red fox revived.
Red fox survives.

Slowly, slowly, dawn is breaking.
Silver stars disintegrating.
Day will chase you,
And encase you.
Run fast, leap quick.
Red fox quick.
Red fox slick.

The red fox slows.
Gives in, gives up.
Take your last breath.
Take your last leap.
Dawn is nigh.
Red fox slows.
Red fox dies.

Malayka Hetherington 8M (S1)
Cargilfield



OVERALL WINNER

The Different Perceptives

**Human**

A puffin you can see resting in a cosy nest atop the Bass Rock. It awakens and shifts around a little, yet it looks eager to set off and fly.

Puffin

I awaken. The urge to fall back to sleep washes over me, but the fighting feeling of wanting to fly drowns out sleep, so I leave the nest and walk off to the edge of the Bass Rock.

Human

I see a puffin. Perhaps I should describe it better, its beak a fiery red combined with charcoal black and daffodil yellow.

Let's move on to the rest of the puffin. Its feet are a vivid orange and his eyes a startlingly bright blue.

Puffin

I begin to flap my wings. Within a few minutes I'm off flying. I feel elated. I look down at beautiful cobalt shimmering sea.... but wait! I turn my beak to the ocean and dive, wings tucked close to my body. I am submerged. I see something. I swim towards it. I think it's a fish but now I am not so sure. I'll eat it anyway. Oh.....

Human

I see the body of a dead puffin float to the surface of the water. What a sad scene to behold the other puffins crying out their lament as if it was their version of a funeral. As the day began to seep into nightfall, I trekked home.

STOP USING PLASTIC AND SAVE THE PUFFINS!

Charlotte Schlegel P6
Preston Street Primary

