

I was sure I could also do something that would be good for the environment - I just couldn't think what.

Oh, I had an idea. "I know! I could write stories for children to tell them what I learn from my humans at the Green House!"

Activity suggestion:

Can you spot any sunbirds in your school or home garden?

Why do sunbirds have long curved beaks?

What do sunbirds eat?

Explain in your own words what "pollination" means?

Which insects also pollinate flowers?



A Whale Coast Conservation
Youth Environment Programme project



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THE SUNBIRD



BY STRIPES
THE ECO-CAT

I was hanging out in my garden one day to see if the bees were enjoying the flowers. There are some really pretty flowers where the bees love to collect nectar and pollen. I also like to look at their bright colours and pretend I'm not sleeping in the sun.

I opened one eye just to show I'm not asleep, and I saw a cheeky little bird eating nectar from one of my flowers.

"Hey", I said, jumping up. I nearly fell over laughing at that little bird. He got such a fright he flew off faster than a rocket.

"Stripes! Don't be naughty!" It was my Sheraine human. She is forever sneaking up on me to take photographs. She says it's for my web page. I know spiders have webs, but I'm not sure they have pages. I must be special to have a page.

"Stripes, you know you're not supposed to catch birds." I wanted to tell her I know that - I was just telling the bird not to eat the bee food, but she didn't wait to hear my explanation.

"Birds are really important in nature and we should be happy when we can provide them with

flowers that feed them. And the bees really don't mind sharing. There is plenty for everyone."

"That little bird is called an orange-breasted sunbird, and it is only found here where we live - nowhere else on the entire planet. We are so pleased that they visit our garden and show us their beautiful colours."

I had to admit the colours are pretty cool - shiny blue and green with a bright orange chest.

"Did you know, Stripes, birds are very important in nature. When they visit a flower to find nectar, the pollen of that plant sticks to their foreheads and when they fly to the next plant for more nectar, the pollen goes with them and can pollinate that plant."

I remembered pollinate means to take pollen from one flower to another flower so that it can make seeds that will grow into more little plants.

"That's not all", Sheraine continued. "Some birds also help us by eating insect pests. Other birds eat seeds and then fly far away where they drop the seeds and so they help to spread the plants."