



Exercise 4

Read the blog about birdwatching, written by a young man from London called Abdu Gcobani, and then answer the questions.

Focus on birds

Focus on Birds is a birdwatching club set up by a young Londoner called Abdu Gcobani.

Whilst I was still at school, my class had to do an extensive piece of work on wildlife. I'd never thought much about wildlife before apart from watching the occasional nature documentary, so when I got home, I spent some time researching and decided to focus on urban areas. I got really good feedback from my teacher and will always be grateful to her for helping me discover a new passion. My dad was delighted to see my enthusiasm and it's since become a shared interest. In fact, he now often tells me if there's a new podcast out about birds in large cities.

My curiosity for birds developed, and by the time I left school I was taking photos of any that I saw in my local parks. I posted some on social media sites and almost immediately I saw that a young woman called Hazeema had left a few comments. We continued chatting and she encouraged me to start a birdwatching club, which I did – and called it Focus on Birds. I organised the club's first birdwatching walk in a park near my flat and posted details online. I suggested that people should wear a waterproof jacket and was glad I did as the forecast was awful. I hadn't thought to post a map, though, which meant we had to wait for people to find us, and set off a little later than scheduled. Overall, it was a great success – even the rain and mud didn't bother us – and we planned another walk.

The club got more popular and so I thought it would be a great idea if we took part in an annual bird survey, set up by a national bird charity several years ago. The survey involves identifying birds and counting species over a certain period of time. Although for the charity it was crucial that everyone taking part gathered accurate information, my main objective was to get older and newer club members supporting each other. More broadly, the charity hopes that if people have a greater awareness of bird habitats, this will help bird populations in urban areas to rise.

My ultimate goal is to have enough material to write a detailed guide on how to observe and protect the birds in London. The problem is it's such a large city with so many diverse habitats that this is going to take me years to properly research. I have lots of photos already but recently, I've become aware that they are not as good as I'd like them to be. Actually, I entered one of my shots of a group of birds into an online competition – it didn't do very well, but one of the judges said he would be interested in talking to me about the Focus on Birds club. So for now, I've decided to work on improving my editing skills using some sophisticated software.

If you are looking for a hobby that will stimulate your brain, and help you meet new people, then birdwatching could be for you. You don't have to buy expensive birdwatching gear. To begin with, you could just look out of your window and watch birds. For me, its main appeal is that it offers something to those who are happy to spend time by themselves and to those who enjoy being part of a group. Birdwatching doesn't require you to commit to giving up lots of time either. Whether you are on holiday, or busy with other things or only have an hour at the weekend, it's the perfect hobby.

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Question 13

Why did Abdu want the club members to participate in the annual bird survey?

A to practise using bird identification techniques

☐

B to experience working as a team

☐

C to support birds in cities

☐

[1]

