

KĀKĀ COLOURING

Beak: Black/grey

Head: White

Cheeks: Yellow

Chest: Red

Back: Brown

Wings: Brown

Underwings: Red

Tail: Brown

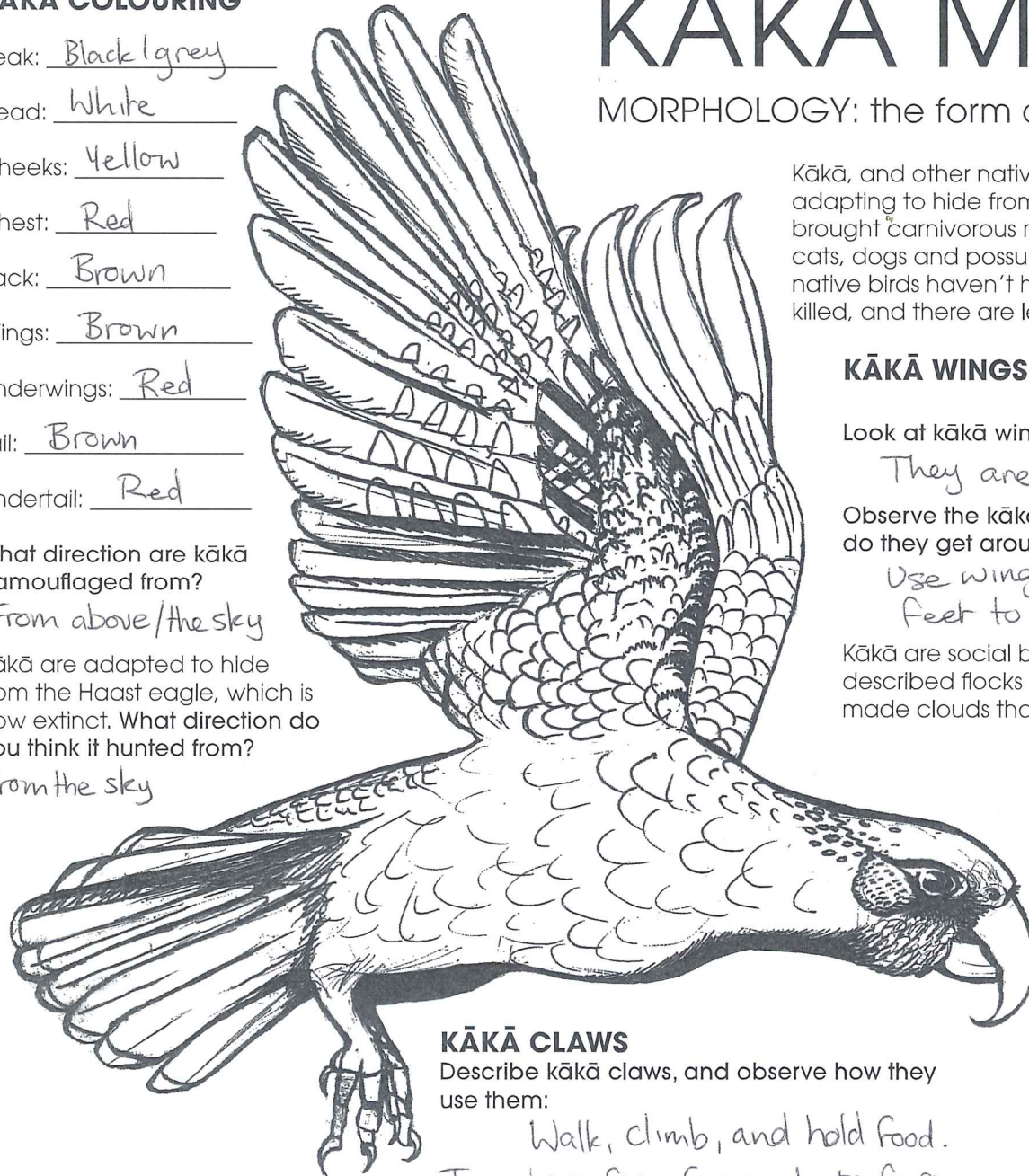
Undertail: Red

What direction are kākā camouflaged from?

From above/the sky

Kākā are adapted to hide from the Haast eagle, which is now extinct. What direction do you think it hunted from?

From the sky



KĀKĀ MORPHOLOGY

MORPHOLOGY: the form and structure of an animal or any of its parts

Kākā, and other native birds such as kiwi and kākāpō, spent a long time evolving and adapting to hide from the Haast eagle, which was the main predator before humans brought carnivorous mammals to New Zealand. Mammals such as stoats, weasels, rats, cats, dogs and possums were introduced very recently in the big picture, and our native birds haven't had time to adapt. This makes them very vulnerable and easily killed, and there are less and less of them. Soon some might even go extinct.

KĀKĀ WINGS

Look at kākā wings. Do you think kākā are good fliers?

They are very good fliers.

Observe the kākā in the enclosures. Where do they hang out most of the time? How do they get around? What body parts do they use?

Use wings to fly, beak and claws to climb, feet to walk. Perched on branches or ground.

Kākā are social birds that like to form flocks. When European settlers first arrived, they described flocks of kākā to be so loud and noisy that they were deafening and made clouds that blocked out the sun.

KĀKĀ BEAK

Describe a kākā beak shape:

Big, curved and pointy.

Kākā are mostly vegetarian, strip bark from trees and have a tongue like a brush to mop up liquids.

Circle the foods below you think are part of a kākā's diet:

Grubs Chocolate Fruit Bread Honeydew Mushrooms
Seeds Butterflies Leaves Tree sap
Rats Mice Flies Flowers Nectar
Sticks Sand Lizards Other birds

KĀKĀ CLAWS

Describe kākā claws, and observe how they use them:

Walk, climb, and hold food.
Two toes face forward, two face back (good grip). Sharp claws.

KĀKĀ ECOLOGY

ECOLOGY: how organisms interact with each other and with their physical environment.

WORD BANKS



KĀKĀ NESTING

Nesting begins in early Summer. Nests are built in the holes of large old trees.

Entrance holes are often surprisingly narrow. The same nesting holes can be used over multiple years. Nests are shallow bowls of decayed wood dust. Timing of

breeding is linked to "mast events", which are random fruiting times of native trees.

The small opening of the nest means there is no escape when stoats attack.

WOOD
NARROW
YEARS
SUMMER
STOATS

KĀKĀ CHICKS

Juveniles (chicks) leave the nest at four or five weeks old in the South Island.

When they first leave, they cannot fly. They perch on low branches or on the ground, and are still fed by their parents.

This behaviour was helpful when they were hiding from Haast eagles in the sky, but now it makes them very vulnerable to ground-based predators like rats, stoats, and weasels. Kākā chicks are easy prey.

PREY
GROUND
PARENTS
CHICKS
BRANCHES
BEHAVIOUR
VULNERABLE
FLY

KĀKĀ COMPETITION

Different species adapt over time so they don't compete with other species for the same space or food or jobs.

Kākā have not had time to adapt to introduced species which are competing for the same food. Introduced wasps eat the honeydew that kākā need for energy.

Possums eat the mistletoe that kākā eat, leaving less for them.

HONEYDEW
POSSUMS
COMPETE
ADAPT
SPACE
FOOD