

WEIRD AND WONDERFUL

The Indigo Bunting

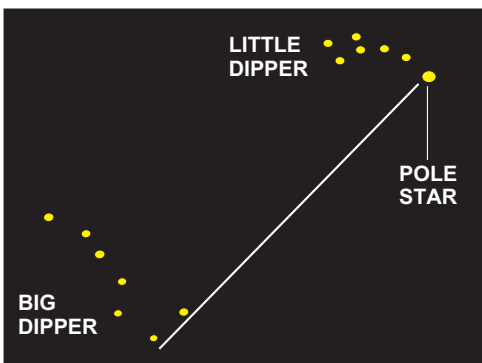
FOR centuries sailors have navigated by looking at the stars. The North Star (Pole Star) is important, because it stays in the same spot, over the North Pole. As the earth turns, all the other stars appear to rotate around the Pole Star once a day, so it can be used as a fixed point. You can find this star by making a straight line from the 'Big Dipper' (see picture below).

A bird called the Indigo Bunting also uses the stars. These birds spend the summer in the USA and Canada, where they hatch their young. When summer ends they fly south to spend the winter in Mexico, South America or the West Indies,



The Indigo Bunting

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covering distances of up to 3,220 km. (2,000 miles).

Some scientists experimented to discover just how these birds use the

stars to guide them. Indigo Buntings placed in a cage turned to face south in the autumn and north in the spring. Others were placed in a planetarium where a picture of the night sky was projected on to the roof. This showed they used the North Star which had never seen the night sky only took two weeks to learn how to "read" the stars.

Evolution can't explain how these birds navigate. They must have been "programmed" to recognise the star patterns by God the Creator.

MEET THE MAKER!

Have you ever admired a beautiful building or a clever invention? Did you think about the people who built or designed it, and how great it would be to be able to meet them?

Now think about all the wonderful creatures we see in the world around us, the clever things many of them do, and the amazing homes some of them build. These creatures didn't just happen. They couldn't have evolved, but had to be designed by someone much wiser. We believe that Someone is God, the Creator. Surely He must be very great and powerful, and we can read of His greatness in the Bible. The Bible also tells us that God made us. 3,000 years ago David said to God, 'I praise you because You made me in an amazing and wonderful way.' (Psalm 139: 14). Wouldn't it be wonderful to be able to meet our Maker?

Well, the Bible also tells us that God came to earth in the Person of Jesus to show us that He loves us. Jesus is the Maker of all things: 'All things were made through Him. Nothing was made without Him' (John 1:3). He died on the cross for all the wrong things we have done. If we are sorry for those wrong things, God forgives us and makes us members of His family, and because Jesus came back to life, we can live with Him for ever. Have you met Him?



PUZZLE CORNER ANSWERS

- MIXED VEG:**
 1. Carrot. 2. Parsnip. 3. Cabbage. 4. Potato. 5. Radish. 6. Lettuce. 7. Marrow. 8. Broccoli. 9. Celery. 10. Turnip.

- SPOT THE DIFFERENCE:**
 1. Smiley face on shirt missing. 2. Notice on display missing. 3. One of bird's colour changed. 4. Girl's hat colour changed. 5. Colour of two branches changed. 6. Second tree has two extra branches. 7. Bird's beak colour changed. 8. Girl's hair colour changed. 9. Missing hole in nest. 10. One bird has disappeared.

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NATURE'S BUILDERS

Many animals, birds and insects are excellent builders. Did they get their skills by gradual evolution, or did God create them that way?

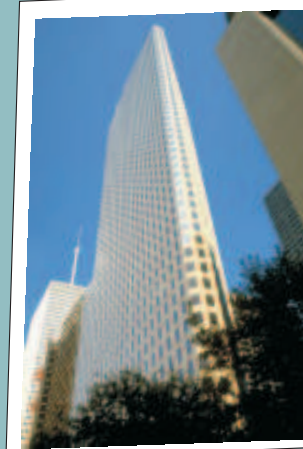
Tiny insects build 'skyscrapers'

Termites are tiny insects about 12½ mm (1/4 inch) long, yet their nests are sometimes nearly 9 metres (30 feet) tall. This is the same as humans building a skyscraper 7 miles high! These nests are made of a mixture of mud and termite saliva, and can last for up to 100 years! They also have an underground "basement" which can be 2-3 metres (6-9 feet) deep.

Several million termites may live inside one of these huge mounds, which is like a city, with the queen's "palace" in the centre, and food storage warehouses, nurseries and factories around it. The nests have a network of chambers and passages which allows air to flow through to keep them cool. Sometimes, the insects dig deep tunnels to find underground water. They will even plant "gardens" of fungus for food. Termites have such tiny brains that they could never have learned how to do all this. God must have given them this instinct when He created them.



The large mound above is a nest built by tiny termites from a mixture of mud and saliva.



WASPS ARE EXPERT BUILDERS

Some wasps live in large colonies, where only the queen lays eggs. But there are also "solitary wasps" which live alone. Although some just dig holes in the ground, others are expert builders, making very intricate nests on buildings or in trees. The Paper Wasp chews wood to make a paper nest. Some, like the "Organ-Pipe" and Potter Wasp, use mud. Did they learn these skills, or were they created with these instincts?



A wasp collecting mud for its nest



Nest of Paper Wasp



Tubes of Organ-pipe Wasp



Nest of Potter Wasp

Photos from Wikipedia free on-line encyclopedia.

The Nest-building Fish!

We don't usually expect fish to build nests, but one that does is the male stickleback. He makes it on the bed of a stream from scraps of vegetation, and sticks it together with special "glue" from his kidneys. He then finds a female, which is attracted to him by his colour, and leads her to the tunnel-shaped nest (right). He persuades her to go in by putting his nose inside. Once inside, she lays her eggs.



Painting by E. H. Fitchew

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- Safe and Sound!
- Nature Notes: Grass
- Busy Beavers & Living Underground
- Puzzle Corner
- Weird and Wonderful: The Indigo Bunting
- Meet the Maker!

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