

Like Water Off a Duck's Back

Today we're going to explore how birds keep their feathers dry.

Before we get started, write down your hypothesis, or a guess as to how you think birds' feathers stay dry.

Experiment

1. Take two strips of paper
2. Coat one with oil
3. Dip both strips of paper into a container of water
4. Watch how the water reacts with the paper

What happened to the first piece of paper --without oil on it?

What happened to the second piece of paper with the oil on it?

How does this apply to birds and their feathers?

Water and oil do not mix. In nature, some feathers are coated in a natural oil that keeps water from soaking into them. Birds spread that oil throughout their feathers in a process known as preening to make themselves waterproof!

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