

Waterproofing

Feathers in good condition "mesh" together a bit like raincoat fabric, with gaps too small for water to get through. To keep them in good condition, we "preen". This is when we clean and straighten up our feathers and rub a special waxy oil over them with our beaks. We get the oil from our uropygial or preen gland near our tails. Waterproof feathers mean I'm able to float and dive for food in our wild rivers.

Do this fun activity to see how the oil helps...

You'll need

- Paper
- Scissors
- Cooking oil
- Cup of water
- Sponge/eyedropper (or similar)



Whio | Blue duck.
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- Step 1** Cut out two paper feathers
- Step 2** Rub a small amount of cooking oil onto just one of the paper feathers and let it soak in.
- Step 3** Use a dropper or sponge to squeeze drops of water onto the paper feathers.
- Step 4** Tilt the feathers and watch what happens.



TRACE ME!

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HINT: the oil keeps feathers in good condition much longer.