

Wild Birds

The Big Schools' Birdwatch

The RSPB is a charity which helps to look after birds and it is also known as the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. They hold the Big Schools' Birdwatch every year where they encourage people to take part in birdwatching and report which species they see.



Why are birds important?

Birds scatter seeds which help plants to develop in different places. They are also important in controlling the levels of insects as many birds eat them. Some birds eat dead, rotting animals that could otherwise cause diseases.

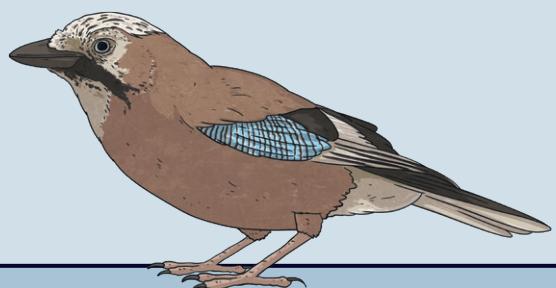


Numbers of common garden birds

A wide range of birds can be seen throughout UK gardens and green spaces although there have been changes to population numbers in recent years.

House Sparrows are the most widely spotted bird but their numbers have reduced significantly since the 1970s. The number of Starlings has also greatly declined. It is thought that their food supply has possibly been affected by farming or dry summers.

There has recently been an increase of sightings in Jays, which are members of the Crow family. Jays are known for hiding acorns in the autumn to help feed them during the winter.



Did You Know...?

One Jay can store around 8000 acorns each year!

Different species of birds

Each species has different features and their beaks have evolved differently to support them in different ways, such as feeding themselves and their young.



Goldfinches are a small species of birds and adults have a red face with a black cap around the eyes. Their fine beak helps them to extract and crack seeds within thistles and teasels.



Woodpigeons are often found in parks and towns **scavenging** for scraps of food. Their beaks are adapted to suit their diet, which mainly consists of seeds, nuts and berries.



Barn Owls are easily identified due to their heart-shaped face. They hunt during the night for small mammals, such as voles, rats and mice. Their sharp claws and curved beak allow them to catch and tear apart the flesh of their **prey**.



Glossary



prey: An animal that is hunted by another animal.

scavenging: Searching through unwanted things or waste for something to eat.



Questions

1. Which bird has a heart-shaped face? Tick one.

- Jay
- Woodpigeon
- Barn Owl
- Goldfinch

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order in which they appear in the text.

- A wide range of birds can be seen throughout UK gardens and green spaces.
- Woodpigeons are often found in parks and towns scavenging for scraps of food.
- The RSPB is a charity which helps to look after birds.
- One Jay can store around 8000 acorns each year!

3. Draw **four** lines to complete each sentence.

Birds scatter seeds...

their numbers have reduced significantly since the 1970s.

House Sparrows are the most widely spotted bird but...

scavenging for scraps of food.

Woodpigeons are often found in parks and towns...

such as voles, rats and mice.

They hunt during the night for small mammals,...

which help plants to develop in different places.

4. What do Woodpigeons eat? Tick **two**.

- other birds
- nuts
- rodents
- berries

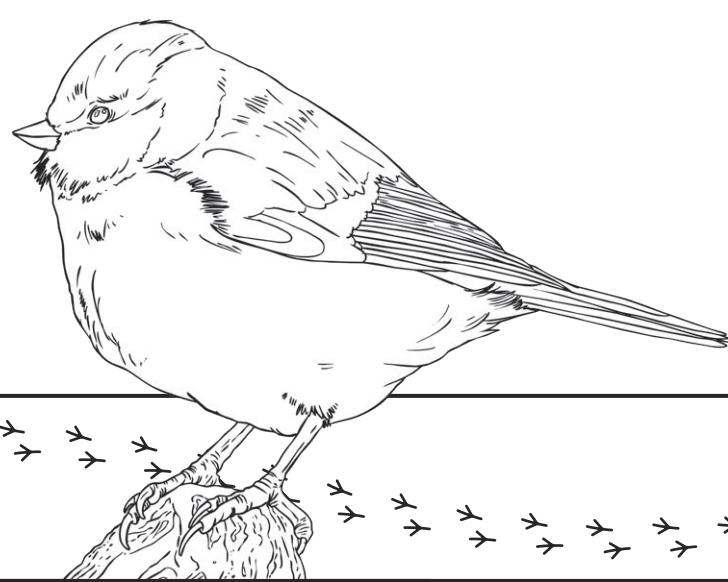
5. Fill in the missing word.

The number of _____ has also greatly declined.

6. Look at the paragraph which starts **Barn Owls are easily identified...**

Find and copy one word which means the same as 'rounded'.

7. Explain how you think someone could encourage birds to come to their garden.



Answers

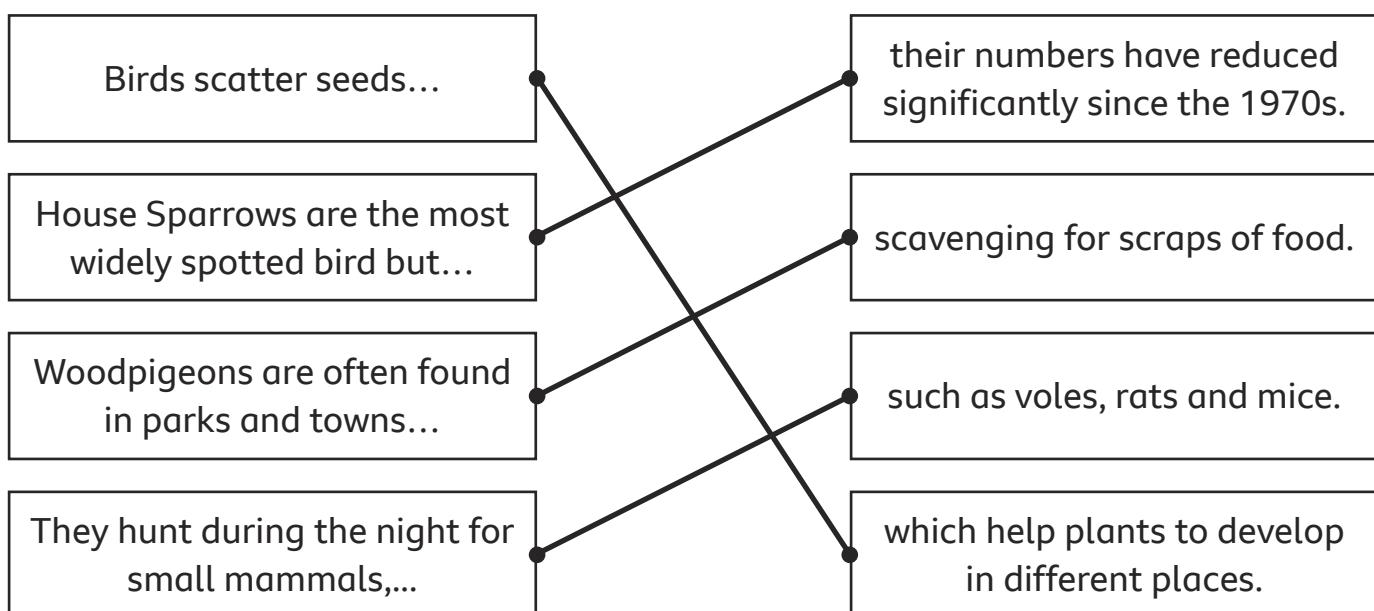
1. Which bird has a heart-shaped face? Tick one.

- Jay
 - Woodpigeon
 - Barn Owl
 - Goldfinch

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order in which they appear in the text.

- 2** A wide range of birds can be seen throughout UK gardens and green spaces.
 - 4** Woodpigeons are often found in parks and towns scavenging for scraps of food.
 - 1** The RSPB is a charity which helps to look after birds.
 - 3** One Jay can store around 8000 acorns each year!

3. Draw **four lines to complete each sentence.**



4. What do Woodpigeons eat? Tick **two**.

- other birds
 - nuts
 - rodents
 - berries



5. Fill in the missing word.

The number of **Starlings** has also greatly declined.

6. Look at the paragraph which starts **Barn Owls are easily identified...**

Find and copy one word which means the same as 'rounded'.

curved

7. Explain how you think someone could encourage birds to come to their garden.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think someone could encourage birds to come to their garden by hanging bird feeders and providing fresh water for the birds to drink or bathe in.

Wild Birds

The Big Schools' Birdwatch

The RSPB is a charity which helps to look after birds and it is otherwise known as the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. Every year, they hold the Big Schools' Birdwatch where they encourage people to take part in birdwatching and report which species they see.



Why are birds important?

Birds help the environment in a number of important ways. They are key in helping to develop plant life as they scatter seeds which help plants grow in different places. They are important in controlling the levels of insects as many birds eat them. Additionally, some birds consume rotting animals that could otherwise cause diseases.



Numbers of common garden birds

Throughout UK gardens and green spaces, a wide range of birds can be seen, though changes in population numbers have been witnessed in recent years.

According to previous results of the Big Schools' Birdwatch, House Sparrows are the most widely spotted bird. Despite this, their numbers have reduced significantly since the 1970s. In addition, the number of Starlings has greatly declined. Although the exact reason is unknown, it is thought that their food supply

may have been affected by farming practices or dry summers, with creatures such as earthworms and crane fly larvae less available.

Recently, there has been an increase of sightings in Jays, which are members of the Crow family. Jays are known for hiding acorns in the autumn to help feed them during the winter.



Did You Know...?

Amazingly, one Jay can store around 8000 acorns each year!

Migration

Some birds **migrate** from the UK during the winter months and return when the weather becomes warmer. Swifts migrate to Africa, sometimes flying 200 miles in a day.



Different species of birds

Different species of birds have specific features. Beaks of different types of birds have evolved to support them in various ways, such as feeding themselves and their young.



Goldfinches are a small species of birds and adults have a red face with a black cap around the eyes. Their fine beak helps them to extract and crack seeds within thistles and teasels.



Regularly found in parks and towns, Woodpigeons often **scavenge** for scraps of food. However, their beaks are adapted to suit their diet, which mainly consists of seeds, nuts and berries.



With their distinctive heart-shaped face, Barn Owls are easily identified. As nocturnal creatures, they hunt during the night and scour open areas for small mammals, such as voles, rats and mice. Their sharp talons and curved beak allow them to catch and tear apart the flesh of their prey.

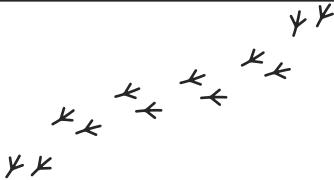


Glossary



migrate: To move from one place or habitat to another.

scavenge: To search through unwanted things or waste for something to eat.



Questions



1. Which bird migrates to Africa during the winter months? Tick one.

- Jay
- Swift
- Goldfinch
- Barn Owl

2. Underline **one** word in the quotation below which shows that something is being dropped.

They are key in helping to develop plant life as they scatter seeds

which help plants grow in different places.

3. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order in which they appear in the text.

- The number of Starlings has greatly declined.
- Every year, the RSPB holds the Big Schools' Birdwatch.
- Beaks of different types of birds have evolved to support them in various ways.
- Birds help the environment in a number of important ways.

4. Draw **four** lines to match the species of bird with the corresponding sentence.

Barn Owls

They are regularly found in parks and towns.

Woodpigeons

They are the most widely spotted birds in the UK.

Jays

They have heart-shaped faces.

House Sparrows

They hide acorns in autumn to help them feed during winter.

5. Fill in the missing words.

They are _____ in controlling the levels of _____ as many birds eat them.

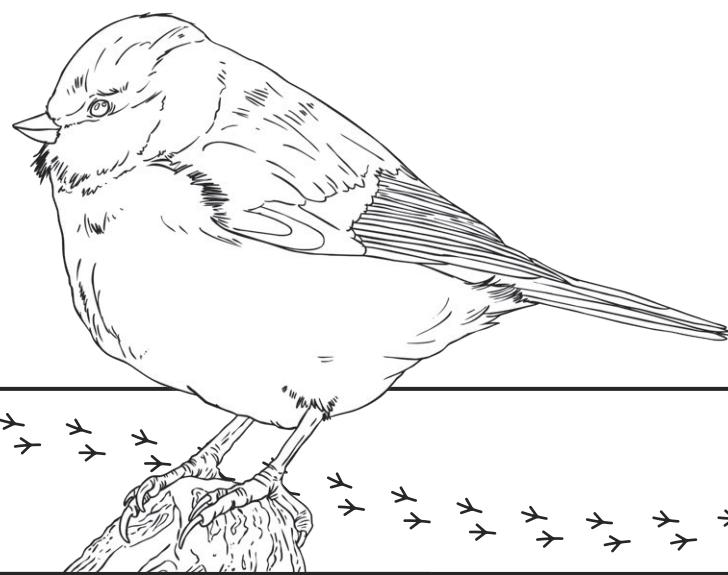
6. Look at the section with the sub-heading **Different species of birds**.

Find and copy one word which means the same as 'claws'.

7. Apart from feeding themselves and their young, what else do you think birds use their beaks for?

8. **As nocturnal creatures, they hunt during the night and scour open areas for small mammals, such as voles, rats and mice.**

What do you think the author means by their choice of the word 'scour' to describe the Barn Owls' behaviour?



Answers

1. Which bird migrates to Africa during the winter months? Tick one.

- Jay
- Swift
- Goldfinch
- Barn Owl

2. Underline **one** word in the quotation below which shows that something is being dropped.

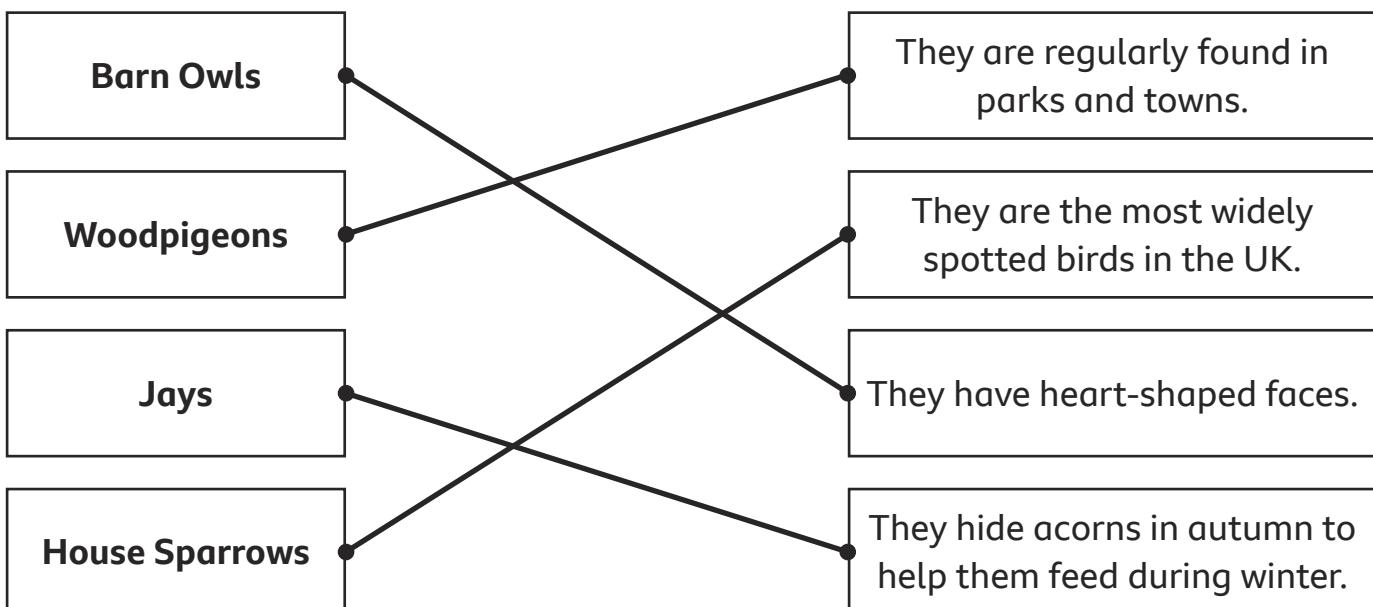
They are key in helping to develop plant life as they scatter seeds

which help plants grow in different places.

3. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order in which they appear in the text.

- 3** The number of Starlings has greatly declined.
- 1** Every year, the RSPB holds the Big Schools' Birdwatch.
- 4** Beaks of different types of birds have evolved to support them in various ways.
- 2** Birds help the environment in a number of important ways.

4. Draw **four** lines to match the species of bird with the corresponding sentence.



5. Fill in the missing words.

They are **important** in controlling the levels of **insects** as many birds eat them.

6. Look at the section with the sub-heading **Different species of birds.**

Find and copy one word which means the same as 'claws'.

talons

7. Apart from feeding themselves and their young, what else do you think birds use their beaks for?

Pupils' own responses, such as: Apart from feeding themselves and their young, I think birds use their beaks for building nests and grooming their feathers.

8. As nocturnal creatures, they hunt during the night and scour open areas for small mammals, such as voles, rats and mice.

What do you think the author means by their choice of the word 'scour' to describe the Barn Owls' behaviour?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think the author means that the Barn Owls search open areas thoroughly for mammals to eat by their choice of the word 'scour'.

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The Big Schools' Birdwatch

The RSPB is a charity which helps to look after birds; it is otherwise known as the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. Every year, they hold the Big Schools' Birdwatch where they encourage people to take part in birdwatching and report which species they see. After the information is gathered, it is analysed to see whether there are any changes in bird populations.



Why are birds important?

Birds help the environment in a number of important ways. Crucially, they help to develop plant life as they disperse seeds which help plants grow in different places. They are also important in controlling the levels of insects as many birds eat them. Additionally, some birds consume dead animals; Magpies and Crows are species which eat rotting creatures that could otherwise cause diseases.

Numbers of common garden birds

Throughout UK gardens and green spaces, a wide range of birds can be seen, though changes in population numbers have been witnessed in recent years.

According to previous results of the Big Schools' Birdwatch, House Sparrows are the most widely spotted bird. Despite this, their numbers have decreased significantly since the 1970s. In addition, the number of Starlings has greatly declined. Although the exact reason is unknown, it is thought that their food

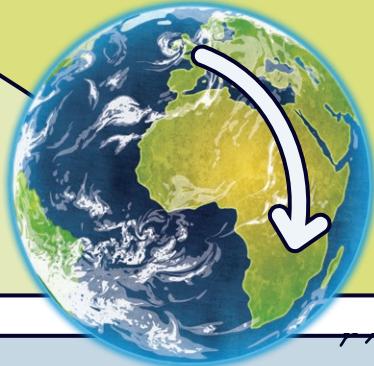
chain may have been affected by farming practices or dry summers, with creatures such as earthworms and crane fly larvae less available.



Recently, there has been an increase of sightings in Jays, which are members of the Crow family. Jays are known for hoarding acorns in the autumn to provide vital nourishment during the winter. Amazingly, one Jay can store around 8000 acorns each year!

Migration

Some birds migrate from the UK during the winter months and return when the weather becomes warmer. Swifts migrate to Africa, sometimes flying 200 miles in a day. Many die from starvation, exhaustion and storms.



Different species of birds

Different species of birds have specific features. Beaks of different types of birds have evolved to support them in various ways, such as feeding themselves and their young, building nests and grooming themselves.



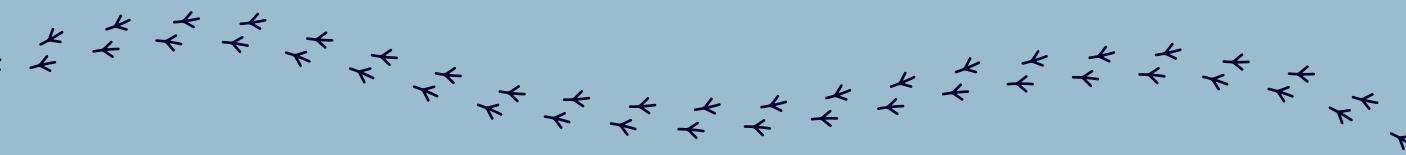
Goldfinches are a small species of birds, with adults exhibiting a distinctive red face and a black cap around the eyes. Their fine beak helps them to extract and crack seeds within thistles and teasels.



Regularly found in parks and towns, Woodpigeons often scavenge for scraps of food. However, their beaks are adapted to suit their diet, which mainly consists of seeds, nuts and berries. Woodpigeons are mostly grey and they make a cooing sound.



With their distinctive heart-shaped face, Barn Owls are easily identified. As nocturnal creatures, they hunt during the night and scour open areas for small mammals, such as voles, rats and mice. Their sharp talons and curved beak allow them to catch and tear apart the flesh of their prey.



Questions

- Underline **one** word in the quotation below which shows that the Goldfinches are easily recognised.

Goldfinches are a small species of birds, with adults exhibiting a distinctive red face and a black cap around the eyes.

- Number the events from 1-4 to show the order in which they appear in the text.

- Jays are known for hoarding acorns in the autumn to provide vital nourishment during the winter.
- Swifts migrate to Africa.
- The RSPB is otherwise known as the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.
- Woodpigeons make a cooing sound.

- Name two ways in which birds help the environment.

- _____
- _____

- Fill in the missing words.

After the information is gathered, it is _____ to see whether there are any changes in bird _____.

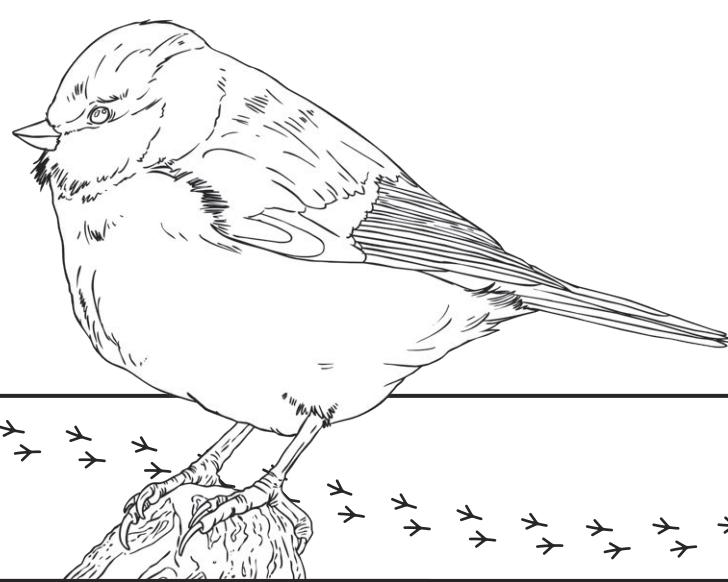
- Look at the section with the sub-heading **Numbers of common garden birds**.

Find and copy one word which means the same as 'reduced'.

- As well as helping the RSPB, what other benefits might people feel when birdwatching?

7. Predict a factor not already mentioned in the text which could affect the population of birds.

8. Compare Goldfinches with another bird. Explain one way in which they are similar and one way in which they are different.



Answers

1. Underline **one** word in the quotation below which shows that the Goldfinches are easily recognised.

Goldfinches are a small species of birds, with adults exhibiting a distinctive red face and a black cap around the eyes.

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order in which they appear in the text.

- 2** Jays are known for hoarding acorns in the autumn to provide vital nourishment during the winter.
- 3** Swifts migrate to Africa.
- 1** The RSPB is otherwise known as the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.
- 4** Woodpigeons make a cooing sound.

3. Name two ways in which birds help the environment.

Accept any two of the following: they disperse seeds; they control the level of insects; some birds eat rotting animals which could otherwise cause diseases.

4. Fill in the missing words.

After the information is gathered, it is **analysed** to see whether there are any changes in bird **populations**.

5. Look at the section with the sub-heading **Numbers of common garden birds**.

Find and copy one word which means the same as 'reduced'.

Accept either of the following: decreased; declined.

6. As well as helping the RSPB, what other benefits might people feel when birdwatching?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think as well as helping the RSPB, people may feel relaxed while birdwatching and appreciate being outside enjoying nature.

7. Predict a factor not already mentioned in the text which could affect the population of birds.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I predict that the development of new buildings could affect the population of birds as it could lead to them losing their habitats.

8. Compare Goldfinches with another bird. Explain one way in which they are similar and one way in which they are different.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Goldfinches are similar to Woodpigeons because they both eat seeds. They are different in their appearance as Woodpigeons are mostly grey while Goldfinches have a red face and a black cap around their eyes.