

A STORYTELLING RESOURCE FOR SCHOOLS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY GROUPS WITH CHILDREN

Please adapt and expand as is right for your audience!

(Story based on a first-person experience told to Outreach Worker Joan)

A Local Loch for Local Birds?

Once upon a time at Lochend Loch, a hardworking bird called a waxwing was collecting litter and putting it in the bin. He and his fellow waxwings did this all week long, in between eating the tasty berries on the bushes there.

He stopped on the water's edge to rest on a log in the loch, eat some flies and dry his feathers in the sunshine. He stretched his wings out, separating the feathers and enjoying the heat on his back, drinking cool water. Although he wasn't originally from Scotland, he'd been living there at the loch for a while and was a friendly fellow, well known as a good litter-picker whose work helps everyone. He chirped with the other birds and was well understood, though they knew he used to come from somewhere else.

One night, a bird that had always lived at the loch came up and said, "What are you doing at this loch? This is a local loch for local birds only! if you're not local, why are you here drinking the water, sitting on our logs?"

The hard-working bird said, "But we *are* locals. We sleep in that tree just there and we've been coming here for years. We are local and this is our home." He and his friend, another hard-working bird who would always help anyone, ended up flying away to stay quiet, high up in their tree as they felt scared and unwelcome.

Later, when they saw the mean bird and his pals, they tried to talk with them, saying "You know that was a bit rude and unfriendly, what you said to us that last time."

"Who's rude? Which one?" the other birds asked.

He didn't want to be rude and say the other one was fat. But that one had clearly had more than his fair share of worms and flies, and had a well-fed belly. He was trying to not offend or stir up trouble.

He replied, I was meaning you, the chubby one.

The chubby one called all his mates, who flocked in, and they ganged up on the bird who was just trying to talk and get some understanding.

They started to bully the immigrant bird for calling their pal chubby.

But just then the local teenage birds came along and squawked, "WAIT A MINUTE! Leave him alone! We know what it's like to get bullied and we're not going to let you do that any more!" They called for Inspector Lochender-Bird.

"I see what's happening here," said Inspector Lochender-Bird. "I've seen you bully-birds doing this before. Enough is enough. To teach you a lesson, you lot will all spend a week doing the litter-picking our friends here usually do for us!"

And so the gang of bully-birds had to work hard for a whole week looking for all the litter and picking it up for the recycling, garden waste and rubbish collections. And they weren't very good at it either. In fact, they had to go and ask our clever waxwing friends how to manage it better.

"Now we can see just how hard you work. We're sorry we bullied you. Can you give us some tips?"

"Here's our best secret tip," said the waxwings. "Sing while you work, and it goes much faster!"

So they all learnt to sing the songs the waxwings taught them from their country, and started to work together so the litter got picked up much better from then on. And the bullying of immigrant birds got much less in Lochend Park.

So next time you're there, look out for the clever birds who sing while they work – and maybe pick up some litter to give them a wee hand!