

Activity 3: GDS piece G - report on the discovery of new species

In the past month, scientists have made a fascinating discovery deep in the heart of the Amazon rainforest. What is thought to be a new species of bird has been discovered nesting on the forest floor: it has been named the Ju-Ju bird, after the Japanese scientist who ^{first spotted} ~~discovered~~ it.

It is thought that this fascinating creature had not been previously seen due to its unusual transparent feathers which camouflage it against the colours of the rainforest. Using a special, infra-red camera, the Ju-Ju bird can now be photographed for the first time, which is an exciting breakthrough for scientists who are now studying it carefully.

Although its feathers are transparent, the Ju-Ju bird has a bright, emerald-green beak which also ~~is~~ blends in with the exotic plants of the rainforest. It uses its beak to catch small insects, such as moths and caterpillars which live on tree creepers; when it hunts it stands like a statue and rests its beak on the surface of a plant until a ~~cross~~ unsuspecting insect ~~with~~ scuttles across. Scientists believe that the stealth and speed of its strike could help develop new weapons in the fight against terrorists.

When it is ready to nest, the Ju-Ju digs out a small ~~hole~~ crater under the dark, moist earth. It lines the crater with moss, ferns and decayed fungi to help protect it from predators such as wild

pigs and armadillos. It lays eggs once a year and its chicks take two months to hatch. When the chicks are born, they are covered in tiny white feathers which turn transparent after three months. They can then safely leave the nest but up to that time they are vulnerable as they are often eaten by reptiles.

At dusk, the Ju-Ju bird likes to fly up into the forest canopy, so that it can socialise with other birds. As it flies its feathers reflect the vivid colours of the plants and flowers and it looks like a shooting rainbow. It is thought that its unique feathers could be sold for large amounts of money to the fashion industry and scientists are hoping it will be granted protected status.

The Ju-Ju bird is a unique bird and, in the future, the world may be a better place because of it.