Craft:
Explain Countershading to Your Family

WILD PLANET TRUST

Learning Intention

We are explaining how camouflage can help animals survive.

Introduction

Can you make a model or draw a picture, to explain to your parents how penguins' black and white feathers help them hide in the sea?
We've explained the main points below but you might also want to find pictures or videos online.

- Penguins have a dark back and a light tummy: why?
- Penguins need to hide from predators, such as sharks, killer whales and leopard seals that would eat them. They also need to sneak up on fish, krill and squid that they want to eat
- When seen from above, a penguin's dark back helps it hide against the dark depths
- When seen from below, a penguin's light tummy helps it hide against the light coming down from the surface
- This is seen again and again in animals – particularly in the sea, but also on land. Even mice have a dark back and a light tummy

Main Task: Making Model Penguins

Using dark and light card, construct a model of a penguin to show how it disappears against the light surface/dark depths.
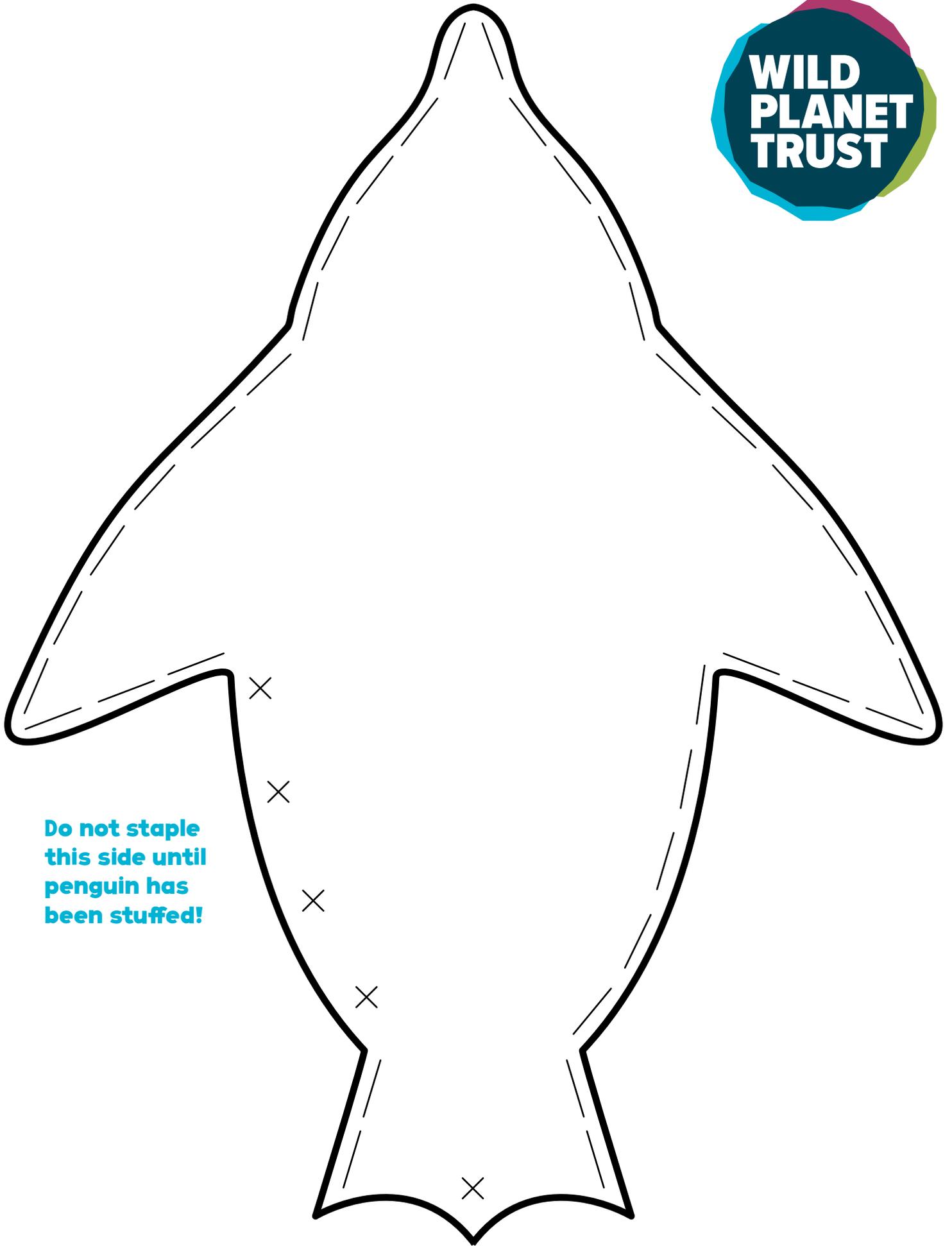
- Copy the template onto thin white card.. Thin card works best, but sugar paper or paper could be used
- Using paperclips or tape, fasten a sheet of thin black card to the template, back to back
- Cut out the outline of the penguin, cutting both black and white card at the same time to produce two matching shapes
- Use a stapler to fasten the edges of the two outlines together, along the dashes, but leaving a gap at the feet and on one side to allow for stuffing (marked with x)
- A pencil can be used as a stick to make a 'lollipop' penguin (this will help you hold the penguin as it would be when swimming underwater)
- Use a small amount of tissue to stuff the shape, making it 3D, before stapling the side closed
- Crayons can be used to add a colourful beak, feet, and yellow feather crests
- Use the model to explain to your families how penguins' colours help them hide

NB: With older children this model could be made using felt to make a stuffed 3D shape, which could be stitched together, in the same way that simple Christmas decorations are made.

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Do not staple
this side until
penguin has
been stuffed!

Insert stick here to help swim!