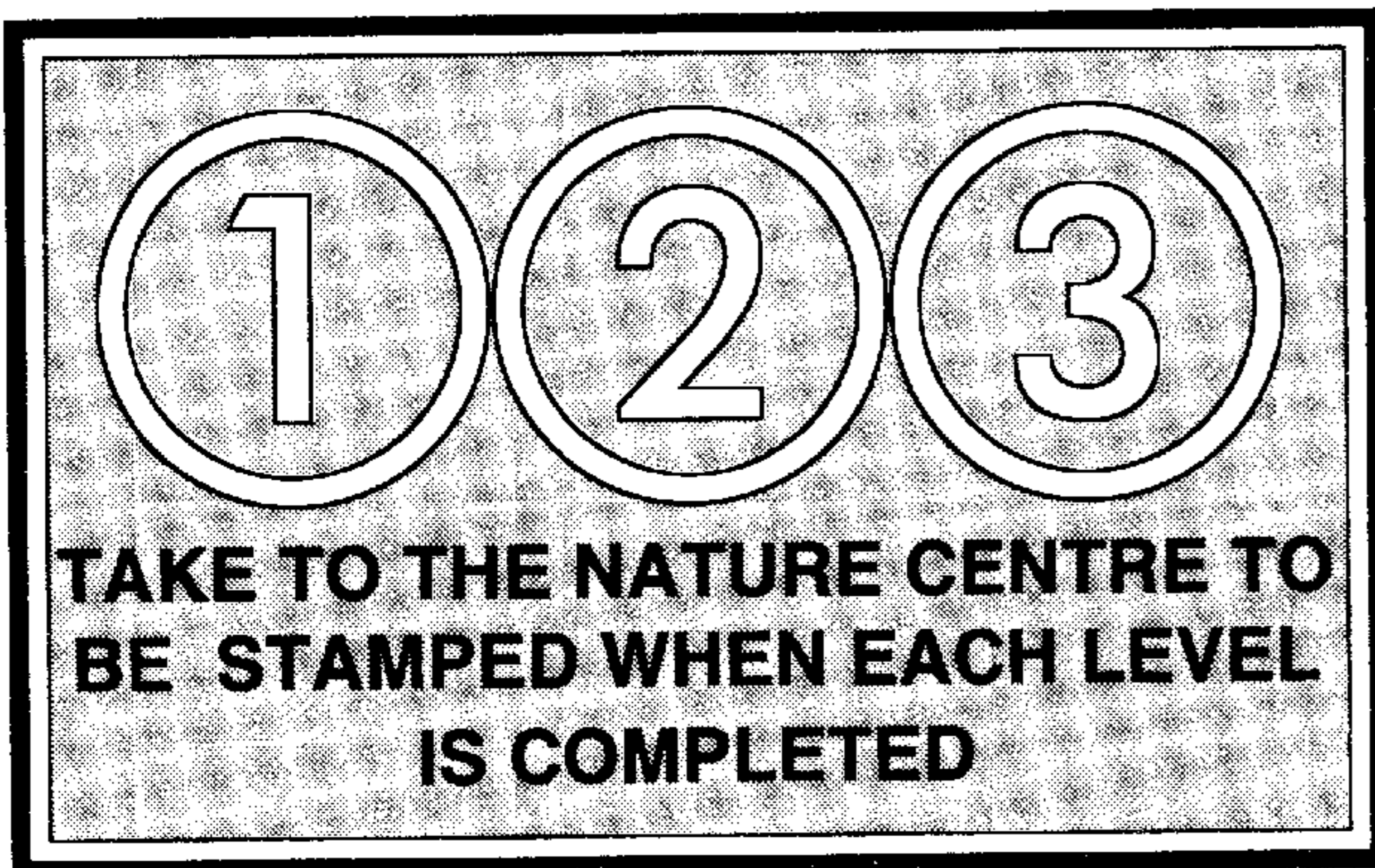
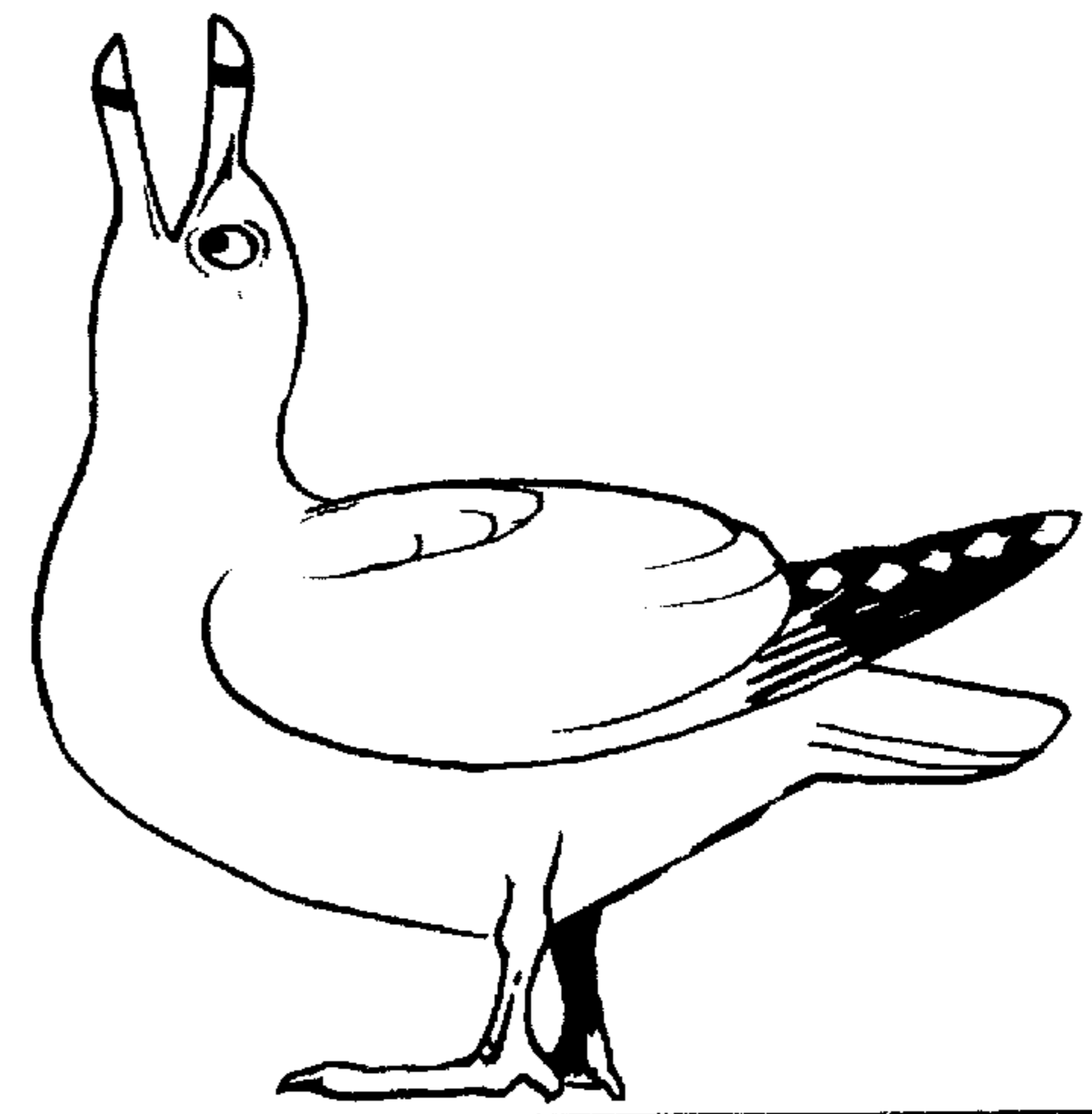


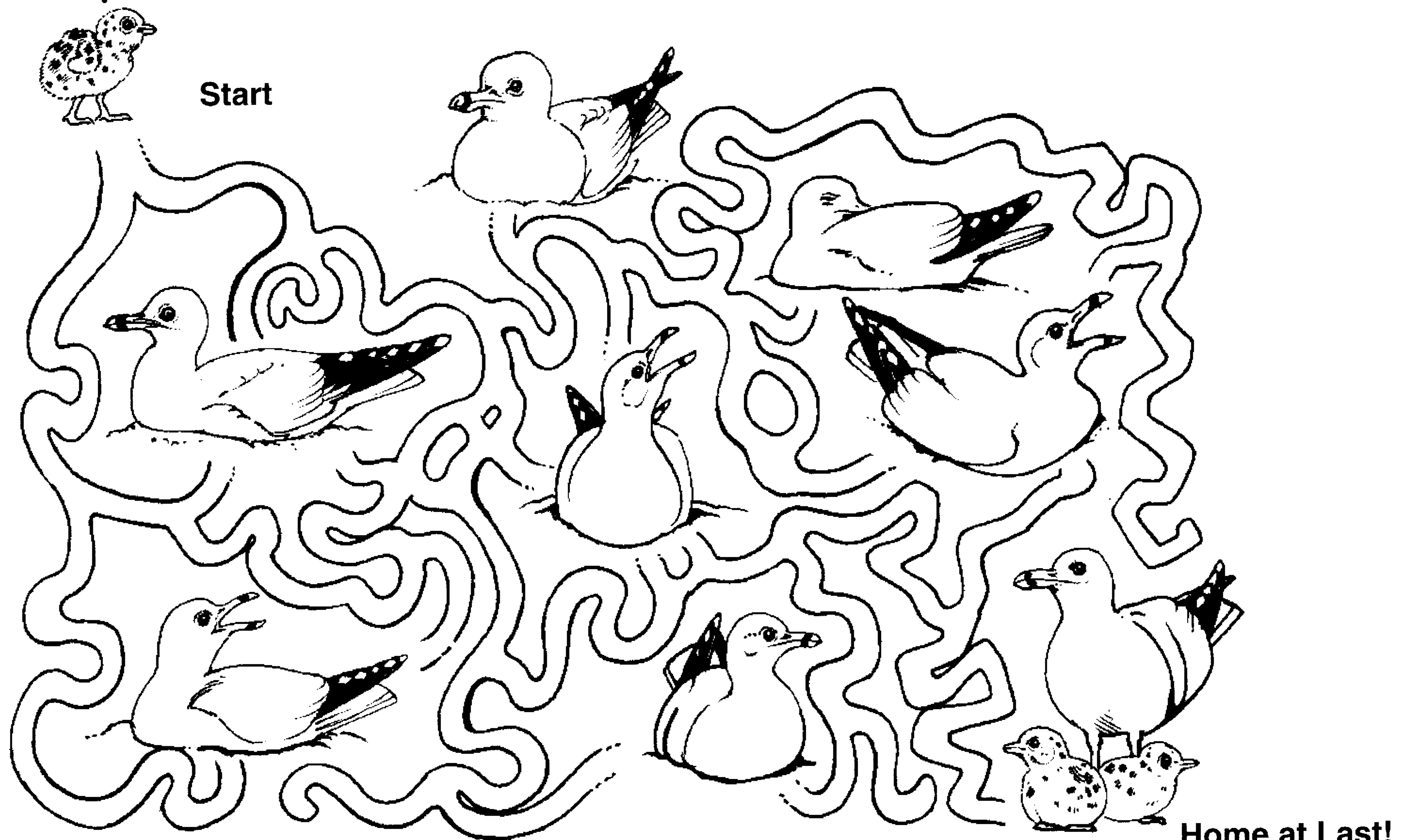
**ISLANDS**

Finally! A page about my home! When a group of birds live closely together it is called a colony. I live in a colony on the islands with other gulls, terns, cormorants and Black-crowned Night Herons. I'm afraid I can't invite you out to visit because the islands are a restricted wildlife zone. You can, however, get a good look at them from the viewing station at Owen Point. Go there now and I'll describe my Isle!

Probably, you've never seen so many birds in your life! That's because you are looking at one of the biggest colonies of water birds in North America! How many different kinds of birds can you see flying around, diving, sitting on Owen Point or in the trees on the islands? (You can use the pictures on page 11 to help you). Owen Point may be as close as you would ever want to get to the islands. The noise of a quarter of a million birds can damage your hearing and the smell makes the vault toilets seem like a rose garden!

So why do I like it out there? Well, I like living in a colony because there's safety in numbers! No one can sneak up on a gull colony! Plus, living on an island wildlife reserve means that we don't get much disturbance from predators or humans. In fact, our biggest worry is each other! We are so crowded together when we're nesting that we all have to defend our territories fiercely! If a chick wandered away from its nest into another gull's territory, it would be attacked.

**1** Help this lost chick to get back to its nest without meeting another gull!





## Level 2 The Natural Selection Game

You can play this game alone or with a number of people. All you need is a coin!

You are a Ring-billed Gull chick and you are beginning a dangerous life. Only the fittest and luckiest survive! At every stage each player must flip the coin 3 times. The combination of Heads and Tails that you flip will decide your fate! See who's first to grow up and be a successful parent!

### CAN YOU SURVIVE AS A YOUNG GULL? Flip a coin!

#### Stage 1 Nestling ... Flip the coin three times.

**2 Heads, 1 Tail.** You are the last chick to hatch and your brothers are already bigger and stronger than you. They beg louder, so they get all the food your parents bring. You don't survive. Go back to Stage 1!

**All Others.** You are the first chick to hatch and you get most of the food. You survive! Go to Stage 2.

#### Stage 2 Juvenile ... Flip the coin three times.

**3 Heads.** You get confused easily and you wind up on the road, not sure of where you are. There are lots of cars around and you don't know how to get out of the way. You don't survive. Go back to Stage 1!

**All Others.** You have the instincts to stay on the beach, islands and lake. You survive! Go to Stage 3.

#### Stage 3 Adult ... Flip the coin three times.

**2 Tails, 1 Head.** You get used to garbage and leftovers from the park store and you depend on people feeding you. When the campers leave you go hungry. You don't survive. Go back to Stage 1!

**All Others.** You just eat fish and natural foods that you can find all year long. You survive! Go to Stage 4.

#### Stage 4 Breeding Adult ... Flip the coin three times.

**2 Heads, 1 Tail.** You are too shy to find a mate and you lose a fight over nesting territory. You don't build a nest and can't have any young. Go back to Stage 1!

**All Others.** You are a show off which helps you attract a mate and you are aggressive enough to defend your territory. You build a nest! Go to Stage 5.

#### Stage 5 Parent ... Flip the coin three times.

**2 Tails, 1 Head.** While you were away from your nest a neighbour gull came and ate all your chicks. You don't raise any young. Go back to Stage 1!

**2 Heads, 1 Tail.** You guard your eggs carefully but it means you spend less time fishing and you only catch enough to feed one of your chicks. A great success none the less!

**All Others.**

**Congratulations! You guarded your eggs while your mate went fishing and caught enough food to raise all your chicks. You are one of the fittest gulls on Gull Island and have successfully raised your chicks.**

What Stage did you reach on your first try? (Circle One) Nestling / Juvenile / Adult / Breeding Adult / Parent

#### IMPORTANT NATURE NOTE!!

In the spring around 200,000 gulls are born on Gull and High Bluff Islands but they can't all survive. The result is that many birds die and only the fittest and luckiest survive. This is called 'natural selection'.

Only the birds that are best at staying alive will live to be parents themselves. Then all the right instincts and habits will be passed on, giving the new gull chicks a better chance of survival. It is very hard to watch an animal dying but it is a natural thing to happen. It's better that these birds die naturally without being frightened by well meaning people trying to rescue them. Of course, some gulls that look injured are just tired and might get better on their own!

Level 3 If you found a weak looking young gull what would you do. Why?