

Shearwaters of the Sea

Read the following shearwater script aloud to the students. Along the way ask the students to create parts of the story with their playdough. These actions are written in bold.



Every morning at dusk, the shearwaters wake in their burrow. Deep down in the sand of the island, they are woken from a sound seabird sleep. The first rays of sunlight break over the sea. The birds leave their homes and head out for a day of hunting. Skimming over the sea, the birds are looking for anything shimmering in the water; a fish flash or a sparkle of a squid. Diving down, down, down, the shearwater chases a fish. Snap, snap, snap goes the beak, in search of this tasty treat.

Back to the island home the shearwater goes. As the sun sets, this is the way of the birds. Finding its home among the forest and grasses. Into a burrow deep and warm.

**With your finger push into the playdough to make a burrow in your island.
Be careful to make some homes for your shearwater friends, they live here
too on the island.**

Deep down in the burrow your mate is waiting, tomorrow it will be their turn to go to the sea. Sitting carefully on one perfect egg. The egg will hatch soon.

**Roll one tiny egg for the bottom of your burrow.
Make 2 little shearwater birds.**

A small fluffy chick with a big appetite. Two parents will be flying in search of food, scouring the ocean, bringing home its riches. A chick hatches out of the egg. Safe, warm and protected in the burrow the shearwater has all of the things its needs. Food, water and a family.



Make one little shearwater chick.

Each day the parents return with bellies of fish and squid, regurgitating the catch into the chick's beak and belly. Each day the chick is growing bigger and bigger.

**Make some little fish and squid.
Feed the fish to the chick by adding the playdough fish into the bird.**

The shearwaters head out to sea, flying further and further searching for food. Finding all different types of sparkles and flashes. Diving down and eating. Ohh no, what's that?!

Make some little fish and squid.

**Add some sparkles to your fish (this is plastic).
Feed the fish to the chick by adding the playdough fish and squid into the bird.**

Back in the burrow the baby awaits. Plastic is served with this evening meal. The chick keeps growing until it's time to leave. A feeling is growing, it's time to fly. Once the feathers are fully formed it's time to fly.

The shearwaters are off on a long migration to follow the summer sun to the top of the world. Up to the Aleutian Islands at the top of the Pacific Ocean. They migrate to dive and eat on all types of tasty oceanic treats. Along the way, they will not touch land. Forming rafts of birds sitting wingtip to wingtip on top of the sea.



Make your shearwater fly with a small group (table groups are great for this)

Until the birds feel that feeling again. To return to where it all began. An ancient call is bringing them home. Flying home together, they'll make it soon. They see the island in the distance, and they are ready to land. Feeling tired and exhausted and so so hungry, they arrive with a thud onto the beach, into the forest, back to the burrow. It's been such a long trip.

So, where is the shearwater chick? Well, it's all grown up now, looking just like its parents with fine feathers. The chick stays out to sea. Its time has not come yet to land on the sand. The chicks will make rafts out in the ocean until it is time for them to breed.

Adapted from *Shearwaters Secrets* by Tracey Gray.

