

Mutation Handout: Birds, Beaks, and Natural Selection Activity

No change in beak length:

Mutation does not change beak length. Protein codes for a beak length the same size as the wild-type beak.

Same as parent generation: two tongue depressors connected together (15 cm)

Long beak:

Mutation changes beak length. Protein codes for a beak longer than the wild-type beak.

Construct the long beak by using the long tongue depressors made of two tongue depressors glued together. Use a screw and rubber bands to secure the top of the beak like tongs. Wrap the rubber bands very tightly. Make sure that the beak will fully close!

Short beak:

Mutation changes beak length. Protein codes for a beak shorter than the wild-type beak.

Mark the halfway point of the tongue depressors in the wild-type beak. (7.5 cm) Using scissors, cut the wild-type beak in half along the 7.5 cm line.

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