AVOCET

The avocet has a curved beak, which it uses to catch food in shallow water, moving its head from side to side as it walks. This big, beautiful knitted avocet has stiff wire legs and needs to be glued to a piece of driftwood or similar solid base.

NOTES

The avocet is mounted onto a piece of driftwood to give it stability. The piece I used measured 18 x 10cm (7 x 4in), but the exact size is not important. The crucial thing is that it is large and heavy enough to keep your avocet upright.

The colours in parentheses indicate the yarn you should use for the stitches that follow.

The pattern contains notes on working with two balls of yarn for certain sections. Doing so makes your working easier because you do not have to carry the yarn across the back of the section.

Materials
- 80g (2¾oz) of cream DK yarn
- Small amounts of black and grey 8-ply (DK) yarn
- 31cm (12in) chenille stem
- Two 5mm (¼in) black beads for eyes
- 90cm (35in) of 18 gauge craft wire for the legs
- 20cm (8in) length of 20 gauge craft wire for the beak
- Small amount of grey felt
- Pliers
- Sharp darning needle
- 5mm (UK 6, US H/8) crochet hook
- Toy stuffing
- Glue gun or craft glue
- A heavy piece of driftwood

Needles
- 4mm (UK 8, US 6) knitting needles

Tension
- 6 sts and 7 rows per 2.5cm (1in)

Size
- 24cm (9½in) long from head to tail, 30cm (11¾in) tall including legs

BODY AND HEAD (MAKE ONE)
Worked in st st. Using 4mm (UK 8, US 6) needles and cream cast on 8 sts.

Row 1: *inc 1, K2, inc 1*, rep from * to * to end of row [12 sts].
Row 2: purl.
Row 3: *inc 1, K4, inc 1*, rep from * to * to end of row [16 sts].
Row 4: purl.
Row 5: *inc 1, K6, inc 1*, rep from * to * to end of row [20 sts].
Row 6: purl.
Row 7: *inc 1, K8, inc 1*, rep from * to * to end of row [24 sts].
Row 8: purl.
Row 9: *inc 1, K10, inc 1*, rep from * to * to end of row [28 sts].
Row 10: purl.
Row 11: *inc 1, K5, inc 1*, rep from * to * to end of row [36 sts].
Rows 12–26: beginning with a purl row, work st st.

Row 27: K16, K2tog, K2tog, K16 [34 sts].
Row 28: purl.
Row 29: K15, K2tog, K2tog, K15 [32 sts].
Row 30: purl.
Row 31: K14, K2tog, K2tog, K14 [30 sts].
Row 32: purl.
Row 33: K13, K2tog, K2tog, K13 [28 sts].
Row 34: purl.
Row 35: K12, K2tog, K2tog, K12 [26 sts].
Row 36: purl.
Row 37: *K2tog, K9, K2tog*, rep from * to * to end of row [22 sts].
Row 38: purl.
Row 39: *K2tog, K7, K2tog*, rep from * to * to end of row [18 sts].
Row 40: purl.
Row 41: K7, K2tog, K2tog, K7 [16 sts].
Rows 42–46: beginning with a purl row, work st st.

From this point onwards, work with two balls of cream yarn.
Row 47: (cream) K6, (black) K4, (cream) K6.
Row 48: purl, keeping colour sequence.
Row 49: (cream) K6, (black) K4, (cream) K6.
Row 50: purl, keeping colour sequence.
Row 51: (cream) K6, (black) K4, (cream) K6.
Row 52: purl, keeping colour sequence.
Row 53: (cream) K6, (black) K4, (cream) K6.
Row 54: purl, keeping colour sequence.
Row 55: (cream) K6, (black) K4, (cream) K6.
Row 56: purl, keeping colour sequence.
Row 57: (cream) K1, inc 1, K4, (black) K4, (cream) K4, inc 1, K1 [18 sts].
Row 58: purl, keeping colour sequence.
Row 59: (cream) K1, inc 1, K5, (black) K4, (cream) K5, inc 1, K1 [20 sts].
Row 60: purl, keeping colour sequence.
Row 61: (cream) K1, inc 2, K5, (black) K4, (cream) K5, inc 2, K1 [24 sts].
Rows 62–64: beginning with a purl row, work st st, keeping colour sequence.
Work all in black from this point to the end of the head.
Rows 65–68: beginning with a knit row, work st st.
Row 69: *K1, K2tog*, rep from * to * to end [16 sts].
Row 70: purl.
Row 71: K2tog to end [8 sts].
Cut yarn, thread trailing end through remaining sts on needle.

WING (MAKE TWO)

Worked in st st. Using 4mm (UK 8, US 6) needles and cream yarn, cast on 4 sts.

Row 1: K1, inc 2, K1 [6 sts].
Row 2: purl.
Row 3: K1, inc 1, K2, inc 1, K1 [8 sts].
Row 4: purl.
Row 5: K1, inc 1, K4, inc 1, K1 [10 sts].
Row 6: purl.
Row 7: K1, inc 1, K6, inc 1, K1 [12 sts].
Row 8: purl.
Row 9: K1, inc 1, K8, inc 1, K1 [14 sts].
Row 10: purl.
Row 11: K1, inc 1, K10, inc 1, K1 [16 sts].
Rows 12–22: beginning with a purl row, work st st.
Row 23: K1, K2tog, K10, K2tog, K1 [14 sts].
Row 24: purl.
Row 25: K1, K2tog, K8, K2tog, K1 [12 sts].
Row 26: purl.
Row 27: K1, K2tog, K6, K2tog, K1 [10 sts].
Row 28: purl.
Row 29: K1, K2tog, K4, K2tog, K1 [8 sts].
Row 30: purl.
Row 31: K1, K2tog, K2, K2tog, K1 [6 sts].
Row 32: purl.
Row 33: K1, K2tog, K2tog, K1 [4 sts].
Row 34: purl.
Row 35: K2tog to end [2 sts].
Row 36: purl.
Cast off remaining sts on needle.

Detail of the avocet's foot, showing the felt webbing

MAKING UP

Sew up the body seam from the tail to 2.5cm (1in) before the neck decrease. Stuff. Fold a chenille stem in half and insert it into the head and neck, with the sharp end stuck into the body stuffing, and the folded end in the head. Sew up the seam from the top of the head to the base of the neck, lightly stuffing as you go. When you are happy with the stuffing, sew up the rest of the body seam.

Overstitch all the way round the edge of both wings using black yarn to give the wings a black border. To make the black curved stripe that runs horizontally across the wing, work a 10cm (4in) length of crochet chain stitch using black yarn and a 5mm (UK 6, US H/8) crochet hook. Measure the length against the wing to ensure a good fit. Sew the wing into position, using the pictures for reference, then repeat for the other wing.

To make the beak, take the 20cm (8in) length of 20 gauge craft wire and bend it in half. The sharp ends of wire will be inserted into the head. Bend the wire into the slight curve of the neck, using the pictures for reference. Starting at the sharp end, and leaving 1.5cm (¾in) unwrapped, wrap the beak with black 8-ply (DK) yarn. Thread a darning needle onto the yarn and wrap the yarn around both pieces of wire to bind them together, until you reach 1cm (½in) from the tip of the beak. Then, wrap the yarn around one piece of wire only, until you have worked your way all round the tip. This is the same technique as making a toe for posable legs (see page 15).

Next, squash the tip of the beak flat with pliers. When the beak is entirely wrapped apart from the 1.5cm (¾in), secure the yarn by weaving the end back though some of the wrapping using the darning needle.

Insert the unwrapped wire into the head and secure the beak to the head with black cotton, making sure that the cotton is sewn through your wool wrapping in several places to keep the beak stable. Sew two black beads on to the head for eyes, using black cotton.

You will need a piece of wire at least 86cm (34in) long to make the legs. Work with a longer piece until you have the legs formed to your liking and then trim off the excess.

Following the supporting legs instructions on page 16, create two legs with three toes each. The legs should be 10cm (4in) high, with each toe approximately 5cm (2in) long. Wrap the legs and toes using grey yarn.

The feet will be slightly a different shape, depending on how you bent the wire, so to create the webbed feet, place the avocet on grey felt and draw around the feet, using the pictures for reference. Cut out the felt and glue the pieces onto the bottom of the feet, using a glue gun or craft glue. Glue the finished avocet onto a piece of driftwood, using a glue gun.