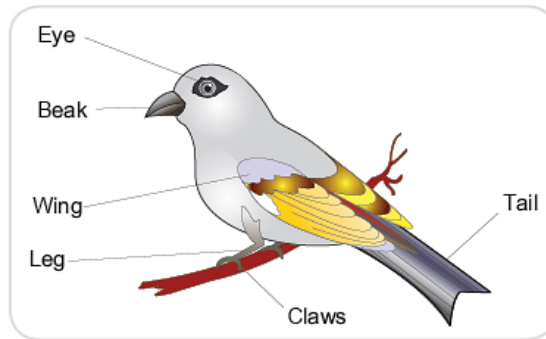


Birds - Food and More

Birds have wings and a body covered with feathers. It makes them different from other animals. All birds cannot look same, they differ in size and Colour. Birds such as pigeon, crow, sparrow, hen and parrot are commonly seen in our surroundings.



Body parts of a bird

Body Parts of A Bird

A bird has a beak, two wings, feathers, two eyes, two ears, two legs, and a tail.

Eyes

A bird has two eyes. Flesh-eating birds have sharp eyesight to find the food.

Ears

Birds do not have external ears. They have two tiny spots covered with thin skin, which help them to hear. The ears are located behind the eyes.

Beak

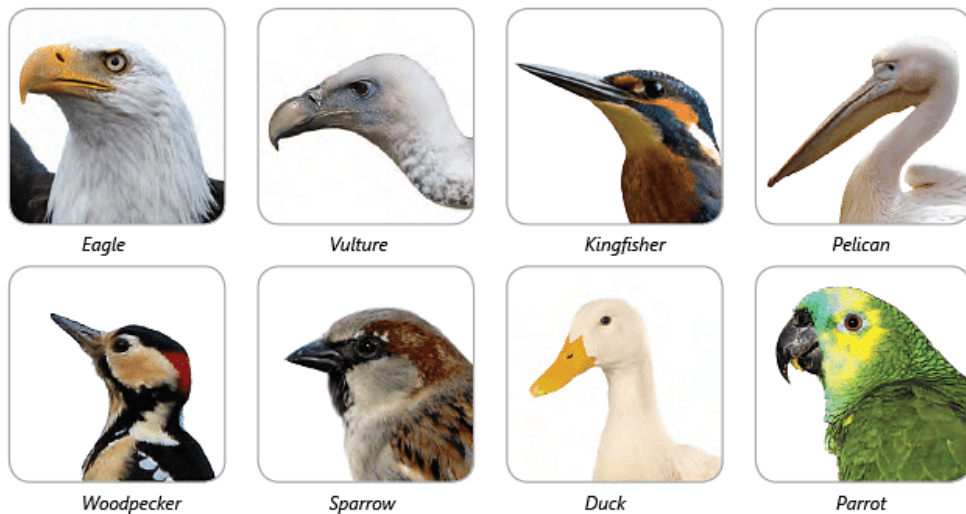
A bird has a beak. Birds do not have teeth. Beak is useful to the birds in many ways:

- The bird breathes through tiny openings on its beak.
- To pick up food and break it into tiny bits and to feed their young ones.
- For preening (cleaning and combing feathers with beaks)
- To protect themselves and to build their nests

Beaks of different birds are different. The size and shape of beaks depend on the type of food they eat.

- A flesh-eating bird such as eagle or vulture has a strong, sharp beak, which is shaped like a hook. It helps to tear the flesh.

- Birds like kingfishers and pelicans have long, scissor-like beak for catching small fish.
- A woodpecker has a long, sharp beak which helps it to tap the bark of trees and Pull out insects.
- An insect-eating bird such as swallow has a short and broad beak used to trap insects while flying.
- A parrot eats seeds, nuts and fruits. It has a strong, curved beak, which it uses to crack nuts and seeds.
- A duck has a beak with holes on its sides. It takes muddy water in its beak. Mud and water flow out through the holes. Plants and insects remain in the mouth and are eaten.
- A sparrow has a short, pointed, strong beak to crack seeds and eat insects.



Different types of beaks

FEATHERS

The most basic function of bird feathers is protection. Birds need their feathers to protect their body. When it's cold, feathers help birds to keep them warm. When it's hot, they compress the feathers to increase air flow. Bird feathers also serve as raincoats.

Types of Feathers

We can group feathers into three types:

1. Bird's body is covered with small feathers. These are called body feathers.
2. The tail and wings of birds have another kind of feathers. These are long and flat. These help in flying and are called flight feathers.

3. Some small and fluffy feathers found under the flight feathers are called down feathers. Many baby birds are covered with down feathers when they are born.



What Makes Birds Fly

Birds have wings made of feathers which do the work of arms. The wings have strong muscles called flight muscles. The flight muscles help to move the wings.

Would you be able to fly if you had a pair of wings?

No, because along with wings, birds have some other special features which help them to fly. These are:

The body of a bird is boat shaped so that it can float in the air just like a boat floats on water.

Bones of birds are thin, hollow and filled with air, which make the body light so that it can fly.

It has a tail which helps the bird to change direction during flight. It is like the steering wheel of the car.

Ostrich, emu, cassowary, rhea, kiwi and penguin are some flightless birds. Because their heavy bodies will not support flying.

Birds such as hens, turkeys and peacocks can fly only short distances because their bodies are heavy for flying long distances. Birds such as pigeons, swallows and crows can fly long distances. Birds such as sparrows and mynah fly at very low heights. Eagles, vultures and kites fly at a great height. They have sharp eyesight to see their prey on the ground and are called preying birds or birds of prey.



Turkey



Swallow

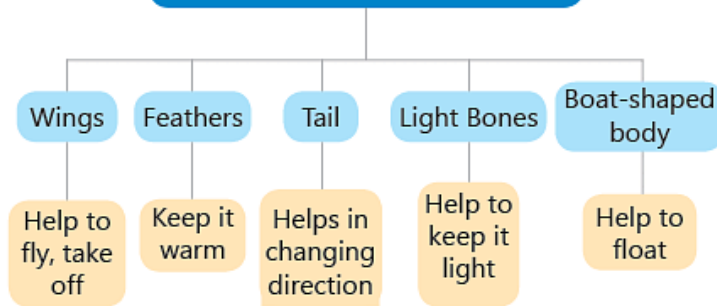


Mynah



Kite

WHAT MAKES BIRDS FLY?



Feet And Claws

Birds have two legs to move around. Most birds have four toes on each foot. Each toe has a curved and pointed claw at its end. Birds use their feet and claws to catch food, to protect them and to sit on tree branches. Different birds have different types of feet and claws.

Swimming Birds



Webbed feet of duck

Water birds such as duck and swan have three toes in front and one toe at the back. The front toes are joined together by skin called web. Such feet are called webbed feet. They help the bird to swim by pushing the water backwards.

Climbing Birds



Parrot

Birds such as parrot and woodpecker have two toes that point forward and two toes that point backwards. Such toes help them climb trees.

Perching Birds



Sparrow

The feet of birds such as crow, sparrow and mynah have three toes in front and one at the back. They use their toes to perch or sit on high branches without falling even while sleeping.

Wading Birds

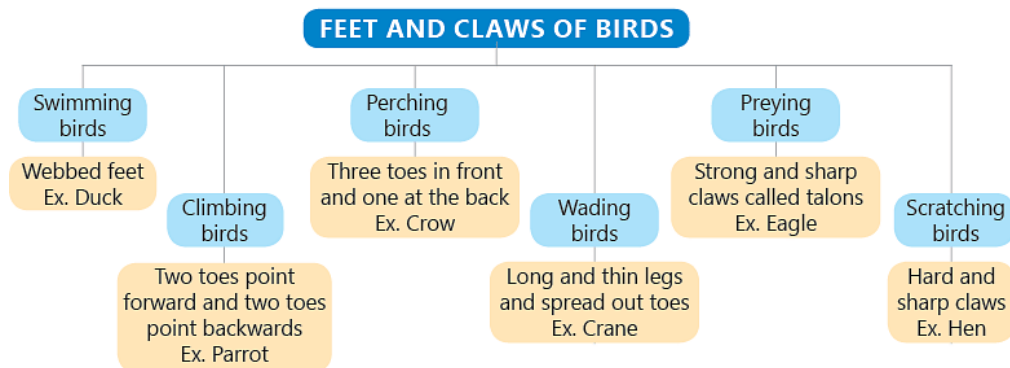
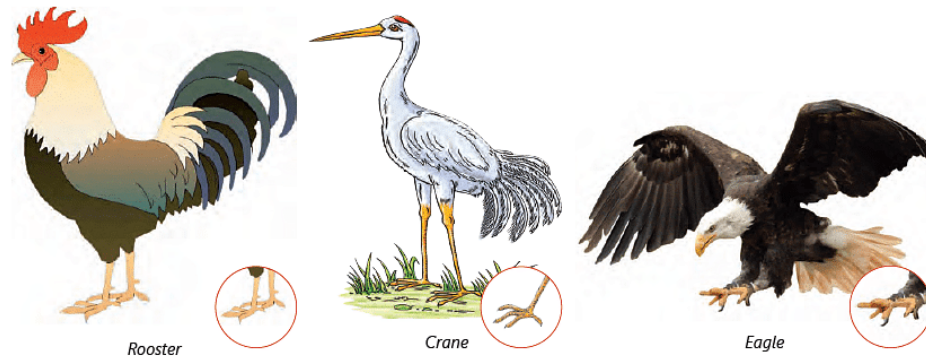
Water birds such as cranes and herons have long and thin legs. The spread out toes prevent the birds from sinking into the muddy water. These help them to walk through water in search of food. This movement is called wading.

Scratching Birds

Hen, rooster and peacock have hard and sharp claws. Their hard claws help them to scratch and dig the ground and pull out insects and worms.

Preying Birds (Flesh-Eating Birds)

Eagles, hawks and vultures are flesh-eating birds. They have strong and sharp claws called talons. They use their talons to catch live rats, toads and other small animals and hold their prey between their talons while flying.



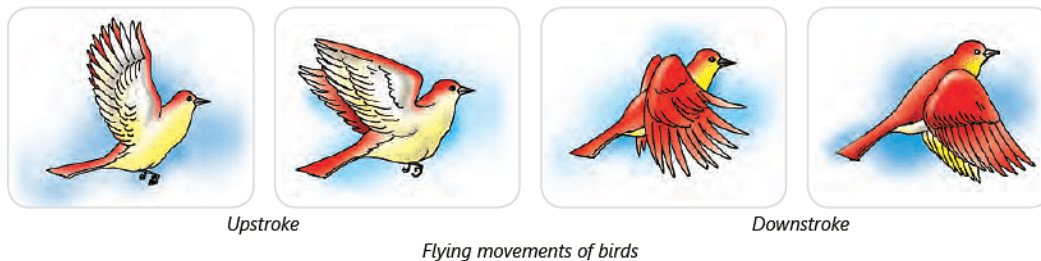
How Does A Bird Fly?

The bird first flaps its wings up and down to rise up in the air. When it reaches the desired height, it stops flapping its wings and simply glides through the air.

The two types of flapping movements that birds show are:

Upstroke: When the wings move upward and backward.

Downstroke: When the wings move downward and forward.



Nesting Habits of Birds

Birds build nests. They use twigs, grass, feathers, cotton, wool, leaves and sometimes even mud to build their nests. The nest acts as the shelter for the birds.

- It keeps them safe from bad weather.
- It protects them from their enemies.

- Birds lay their eggs in nests.

They take care of their young ones in the nests till they are ready to fly.

Different birds make different kinds of nests. Once their young ones grow and fly away, birds do not use their nests. Most birds make a new nest every year.

Nests in holes: A woodpecker makes a hole in a tree trunk with its beak. The hole is used as a nest.

Nests in rocks: Eagles make their nests on the higher branches of tall trees or on rocks.

A woven nest: A weaver bird uses grass, twigs, and leaves to weave a nest on a tree with its beak. The nest hangs from the branch of a tree. It pulls the grass in and out with its beak as it weaves the nest. There is a tunnel shaped opening for the bird to enter.

A stitched nest: A tailor bird makes its nest out of large sized leaves. It uses its beak like a needle to stitch the leaves together using cotton threads or threads from a spider's web. That is why it is called a tailor bird.

Nests on open ground: Penguins and partridges make their nests on the ground with a few stones or pebbles. This prevents the eggs from rolling away.



Weaver bird



Tailor bird



Partridge

How Do Birds Help Us?

Birds are our feathered friends. They are very useful to us in many ways:

Some birds eat insects that can harm the crops. They also help in spreading seeds so that more plants can grow.

Some birds like crows and vultures feed on dead remains of animals and thus help to keep the environment clean.