

# Birds And Their Feeding Habits

## 4



We see different types of birds everyday. They live in all parts of the world. There are about 9,300 types of birds. Most birds are very beautiful and we all love to look at them and listen to their songs.



*Different types of birds*

What differentiates a bird from every other kind of animal ? The answer is just one word **FEATHERS**. Birds are the only creatures that have feathers. All birds have wings. Most birds fly. All birds hatch from eggs.

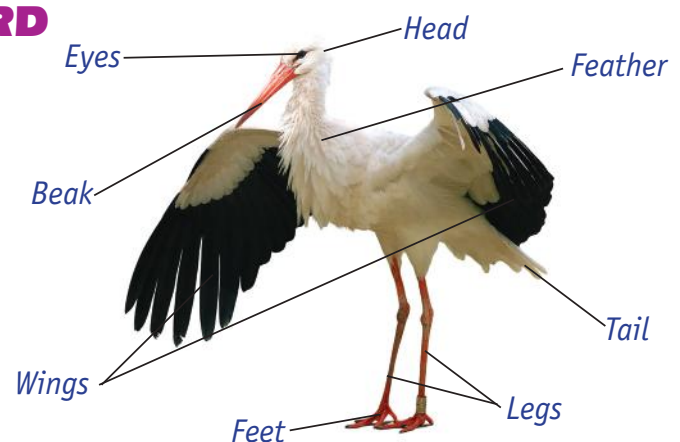
### **EXTERNAL STRUCTURE OF A BIRD**

A **bird's** body consists of the head, tail, wings and legs. The most striking external feature of a bird is its feathers. Feathers cover all the main parts of a bird's body except the eyes, beak, legs and feet.

### **Feathers**

A feather is not a live part of a bird, like its skin. You could cut a feather in two and it would not bleed. In fact birds change their feathers at least once a year. This is called **moult**ing. There are three kinds of feathers :

1. **Down Feathers** : These feathers help to keep the bird warm.





2. **Body Feathers** : These feathers help the birds to give its shape.

3. **Flight Feathers** : These feathers are long and found on the wings and tail. They help the bird to fly.

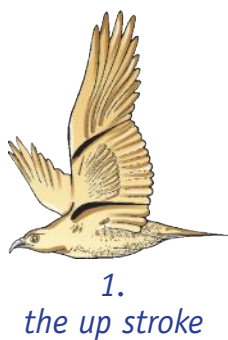


## How Birds Fly

A bird's body is well-suited for flying.

Let us see how :

1. A bird's **body is boat shaped**. This helps it to cut through the air easily.
2. Its **bones are light and hollow**. This makes its body very light which is good for flying.
3. A bird has **wings instead of arms**. The wings are joined to its body with very **strong muscles**. The muscles help the wings to flap up and down.
4. Its **tail** helps it to change the direction while flying.



*Flight of a bird*

The wings of a bird make two movements : the **upstroke** and the **downstroke**. It is quite like how we move our arms when we swim.

## FLYING DIFFERENTLY

- Some birds like swallows, crows, cranes, geese and pigeons fly over long distances.



*Swallow*



*Crow*



*Crane*



*Geese*



*Pigeon*



## Do You Know ?

Some flocks of bar-headed geese fly over the world's highest mountains, the Himalayas in Asia at a height of more than 7,500 metres.

- Some birds like eagles, kites and vultures fly at great heights.



*Eagle*



*Kite*



*Vulture*

- Some birds like sparrows and bulbuls can only fly very short distances and at very low heights.



*Sparrow*



*Bulbul*



*Hen*



*Peacock*

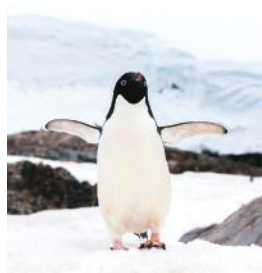
- The bodies of some birds like the hen and peacock are so heavy that they cannot go up beyond a roof top.

## FLIGHTLESS BIRDS

Most birds fly. Only a few kinds of birds cannot fly. Some of these flightless birds are kiwis, penguins, ostriches, emus and rheas.



*Kiwi*



*Penguin*



*Ostrich*



*Emu*



*Rhea*

## WATER BIRDS

Some birds spend most of their time in water. Water birds have webbed toes to help them swim in water. Common water birds are ducks, gulls, pelicans and cranes.



Duck beak



Gull beak



Pelican



Crane

## BEAKS

Different birds eat different foods. So their beaks are also of different shapes and sizes. Birds have no teeth to help them break up their food. Most of their 'chewing' is done inside their body after food is swallowed.

**Strong, Sharp and Curved Beaks :** Birds of prey have such beaks. They help them to tear animal's flesh. Kite, eagle, vulture, owl etc. have such beaks.



Kite



Eagle



Vulture



Owl

**Short, Hard and Heavy Beaks :** Seed-eating birds like pigeon, peacock, hen and sparrow have such beaks. They help them to pick up and crush seeds and grains.



Peacock



Pigeon



Sparrow

## Do You Know ?

- Kiwis come out to feed at night.
- Flightless birds do not have hollow bones.
- Ostrich is the largest living bird.
- Penguins are unusual birds that stand up right on very short legs.





## Curved and Hooked Beaks

Parrots have curved and hooked beaks. They crack seeds with them. Their beaks also help them to climb up trees.



*Hoopoe*



*Sunbird*

**Long and Slender Beaks :** Hoopoes and Sunbird have long thin beaks. Their beaks pull out insects from holes in the ground.

**Strong and Chisel-shaped Beaks :** A woodpecker has a very strong and chisel-shaped beak. It can make holes in hard tree trunks. This is how it makes its nest. It also catches insects hidden in the trunk with its beak.



*Woodpecker*



*Swallow*

**Broad and Short Beaks :** A swallow has short and broad beak which is sticky from inside. When swallows fly, they keep their beaks open to catch the flying insects.

**Sharp and Pointed Beaks :** Kingfishers and herons are fish-eaters. They have sharp, pointed beaks. They dart into water and catch fish with them.

**Broad and Flat Beaks :** A duck's beak is special. It takes muddy water in its flat beak. Insects and plants remain inside. The water flows out of holes in its lower beak.



*Duck*

## FEET AND CLAWS

Birds have two legs and two feet. The shape and size of bird's feet and claws depend on where it lives. They also depend on what and how it eats.

## Perching Birds

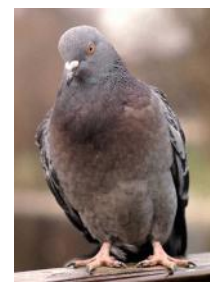
Birds like crows, sparrows, pigeons etc. perch on branches. They have three toes in front and one at the back. The back toe curls around the branch so the bird does not fall off. It stays on the branch when the wind blows hard and even when it sleeps.



*Crow*



*Sparrow*



*Pigeon*



*Hen*

## Scratching Birds

A hen has three toes in front and one short toe at the back. It also has a small fifth toe a little higher up at the back of leg. Each toe has a horny claw. These toes help the hen to scratch the earth and catch insects and buried birds.

## Swimming Birds

Swimmers like ducks and swans have webbed feet. They have skin growing between their toes. It is called **web**. A webbed foot is like a paddle. The bird uses its webbed feet to push the water back while swimming.



*Duck and its feet*



*Crane and its feet*



## Wading Birds

Birds like crane, heron etc. walk through mud and water. They have long legs so that they can walk in shallow water without getting wet. Their spreading toes make sure that they do not sink in the wet mud.

## Flesh-eating Birds

Eagles and owls are hunters. They have sharp claws called **talons** to catch and hold on to live rats, toads and other small animals.



*Owl and its feet*



*Woodpecker and its feet*



## Climbing Birds

Some birds like the woodpecker and parakeet can climb trees. They have two toes in front and two at the back. These help them to cling onto the tree trunk.

## Running Birds

The ostrich has just two toes and very strong long legs. It can run very fast. This is good because it has very short wings and cannot fly.



*Ostrich and its feet*





## Know the Keywords :

Striking	:	Attack suddenly.
Beyond	:	Outside the limits.
Chisel	:	Tool with a sharp end for shaping wood or stone.
Scratch	:	Mark or cut with claws.

## Point to Remember

- Birds are the animals that can fly.
- Some birds cannot fly.
- Birds have three kinds of feathers.
- Birds have different types of beaks, feet and claws depending upon the place they live in and the food they eat.

## EXERCISE TIME

### A. Multiple choice questions (MCQs).

Tick (✓) the correct option :

- \_\_\_\_\_ are the animals that can fly.  
a. birds  b. cows  c. fish
- Some birds cannot \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. run  b. fly  c. sleep
- Birds have \_\_\_\_\_ kinds of feathers.  
a. two  b. three  c. four

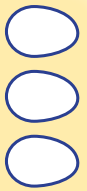
### B. Fill in the blanks :

1. A bird's body is well-suited for \_\_\_\_\_.
2. A bird has \_\_\_\_\_ instead of arms.
3. Water birds have \_\_\_\_\_ toes to help them swim in water.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ have curved and hooked beaks.
5. The ostrich has just two toes and very strong long \_\_\_\_\_.

### C. Write 'T' for true and 'F' for false statements :

1. Birds live in all parts of the world.
2. A bird's body consists of the head, tail, wings and legs.

3. A feather is a live part.
4. There are four kinds of feathers.
5. A hen has three toes in front and one short toe at the back.



**D. Name two birds of the following :**

1. Flesh-eating birds \_\_\_\_\_
2. Swimming birds \_\_\_\_\_
3. Climbing Birds \_\_\_\_\_
4. Wading birds \_\_\_\_\_
5. Perching birds \_\_\_\_\_

**E. Answer the following questions :**

1. Name the three types of feathers. How do they help a bird ?
2. How do these help a bird fly : (i) body shape (ii) bones (iii) wings (iv) tail
3. What kind of beaks do most grain-eating birds have ?
4. What is the function of the holes in the beak of a duck ?
5. What is a web called ?



**Creative Work**

- Try to identify the bird by its claws and feet :



\_\_\_\_\_

- Draw the picture of a bird in your notebook and label all its body parts.