

Animal Classifications

Birds



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Some words are shown in bold, **like this**. You can find out what they mean by looking in the glossary.

Meet the Birds

Owls, hens, penguins, and parrots are all birds. Birds are a group of animals that have wings and **beaks**, and whose bodies are covered with feathers.

Flying allows birds to move quickly from place to place.





Parrots often have very brightly colored feathers.

Scientists sort living things into groups. This is called **classification**. Each group is different from other groups in particular ways. Only birds have feathers.

Body Shape

Birds belong to a bigger group of animals called **vertebrates**. This group includes **mammals** and reptiles. A vertebrate has a **backbone** and a hard **skeleton** inside its body. The skeleton gives the animal its shape.

Pigeons are one of the most common birds in cities around the world.



beak



A flamingo uses its long legs and long neck to stand in water and reach down for food.

Birds come in many different shapes and sizes. All birds have two wings and two legs. Instead of teeth, they have a hard **beak**.

Birds of Prey

Eagles, hawks, and falcons are **birds of prey**. These fierce birds all hunt other animals for food. Some fly high in the air looking for **prey**, such as mice or smaller birds, to catch.

When a falcon spots its prey, it hovers above it before diving.





A bird of prey has long, sharp talons.

These birds dive and grab their prey with curved claws called **talons**. They use their curved **beaks** to pull the flesh from their prey.

How Birds Fly

Most birds use their wings to fly through the air. Different birds have different shaped wings. An albatross has huge wings, which allow it to **glide** for thousands of miles.

An albatross's wings measure up to 11 feet (3.5 meters) from wingtip to wingtip.

