

Birds I

“All flesh is not of the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds.” 1Corinthians 15:39

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Vertebrata

Class Aves

- ornithologist studies birds; approx. 9000 species of birds
- smallest - bee hummingbird, largest - ostrich

Feathered vertebrates

- most birds designed for flying; majority fly at altitudes under 3000 ft.
- characteristics for flying:
 1. compact, lightweight, very strong skeleton
 2. nearly rigid backbone
 3. hollow skeleton
 4. bipedal (two-footed) anatomy
 5. ridge on breastbone for strong tendons
 6. three bones in shoulder area (clavicle, coracoid, scapula)
 7. lightweight beaks and skulls
 8. four-chambered heart
 9. powerful wing muscles
- backyard birds
doves only birds which drink with heads down; other birds lift heads to swallow
backyard provides protective cover, nesting sites, food, water
(story of dog hair nest)
- roadside birds
crows, jays, eagles
- characteristics:
 1. tails - positions
 2. field markings
 3. calls
- perching birds: 60% of birds in this category; three toes pointing forward and one toe pointing backward [Fig. 17.1 p.340]
robin, bluebird
- birds of prey
 - fierce and precise hunting skills
 - acute vision during day (eagle, falcon) and night (owls)
 - powerful talons for grasping and killing prey
 - strong, hooked beaks for eating flesh
- California condor - largest living land bird of N. America (body 4ft./wingspan 11ft.)
bald eagle, golden eagle - only two eagles native to N. America

- peregrine falcon - fastest flying bird/fastest living creature; can dive up to 220mph
- swimming/wading birds: commonly live or feed in water
 - water-repellent feathers and webbed feet for swimming
 - ducks/geese oil preen feathers with oil from tail glands
 - some have long legs for wading (stork, heron, flamingo)
 - game birds: birds hunted for food and sport
 - nest on ground, sheltered in underbrush or small grass
 - flight muscles designed for quick strength instead of endurance
 - flight muscles provide white breast meat (quail, pheasant, wild turkey)
 - tropical birds: live in tropical forests
 - brightly colored
 - nest in dense forests and lay white eggs in treehole nests (parakeet, toucan, macaw)
 - flightless birds: ground dwellers
 - equipped with powerful running legs
 - ostrich - largest living bird (8ft. tall/ 350lbs.); largest eggs laid by nonextinct animal (emu, penguin, kiwi)
 - extinct birds: archaeopteryx - toothed bird