

All About Birds



God created birds on the 5th day of creation. There are over 10,000 species of birds. They are all different colors, shapes, and sizes.



There are red birds.



There are black birds.



There are blue birds.



There are yellow birds.



Some birds are small.



Other birds are big.



Most birds can fly.



Other birds cannot.



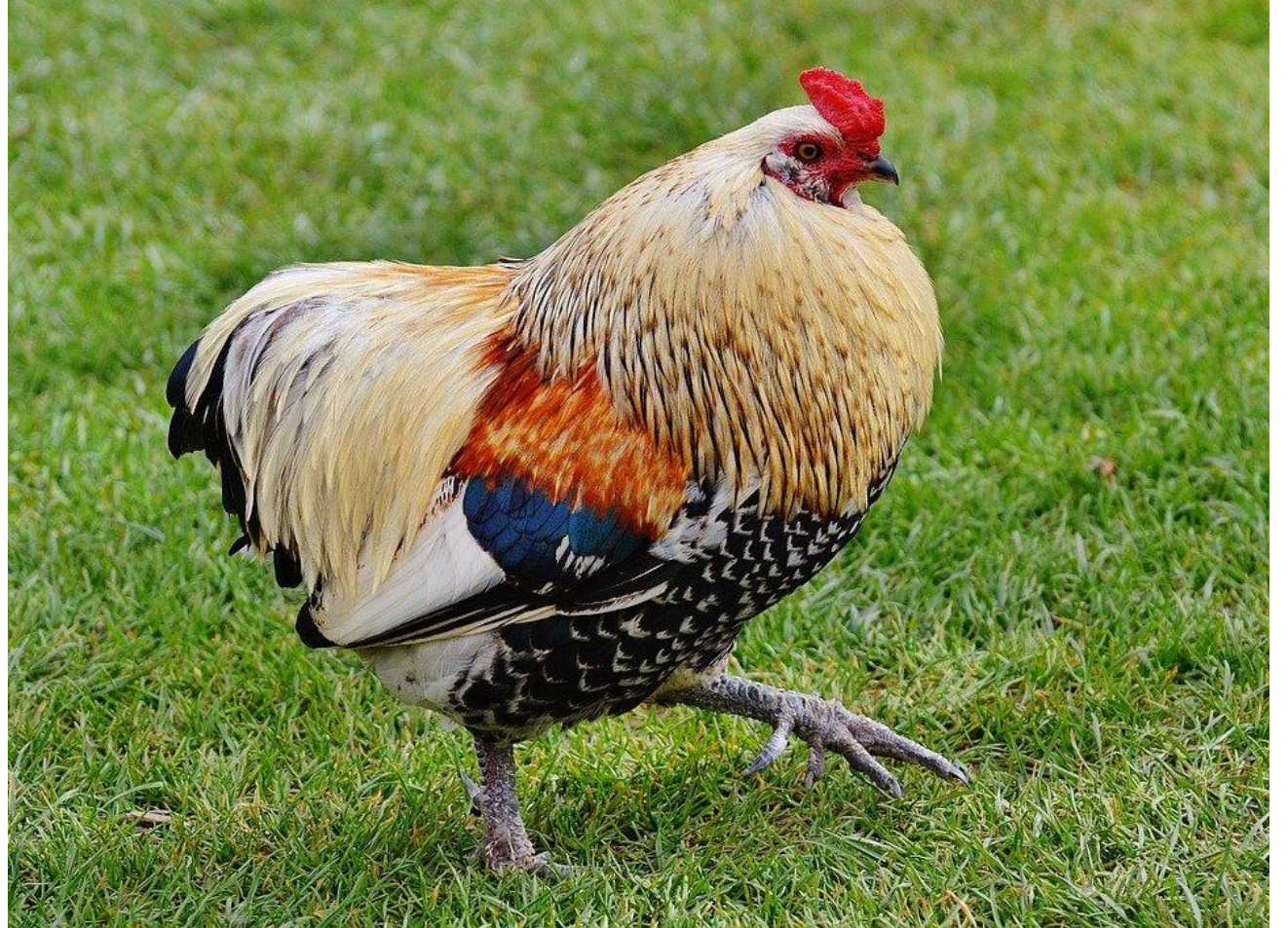
Despite their differences, birds all share some common characteristics.



Like other animal groups, birds are vertebrates. Vertebrates have a backbone as in a spine.



Birds are also warm-blooded. This means that they can maintain a body temperature higher than their surroundings.





Birds lay eggs that can be colorful and spotted. However, laying eggs is not unique to birds.

Amphibians, insects, fish, and reptiles also lay eggs.

The hard outside shell of the egg is made up mostly of calcium. Inside the egg, an embryo receives nutrition from the yoke and egg white.



Most birds create a nest for their eggs.

This provides protection and a place to care for their hatchlings once born. Parents will sit on their eggs to keep the embryos warm.



The amount of time it takes for a baby bird to hatch from its egg is called the incubation period. Depending on the species of bird, the incubation period can range from 11 days to 80 days!

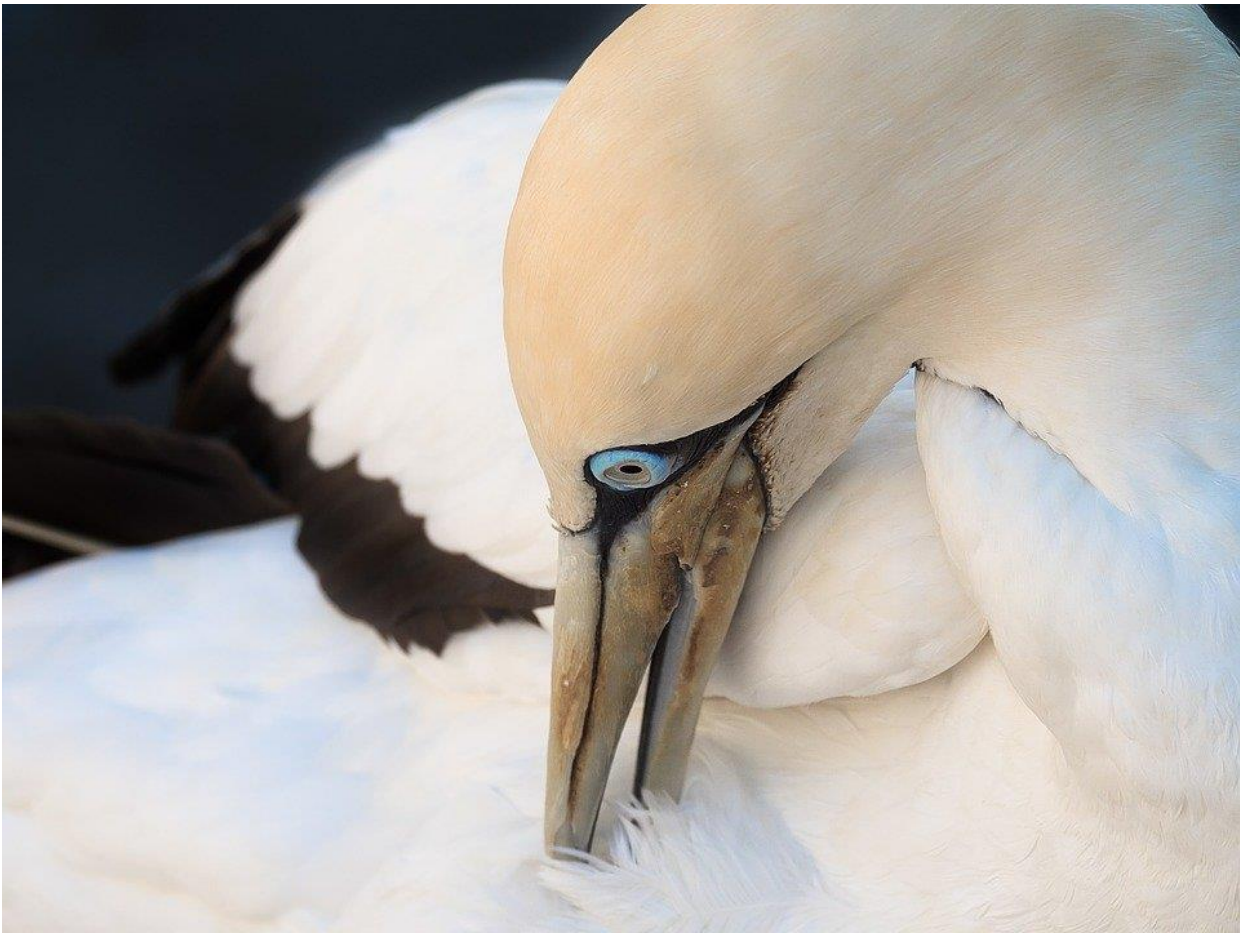


The most defining characteristic of birds is feathers. They are made of keratin, which is the same substance as your nails and hair.





Feathers are important for warmth, protection, and flight. Downy feathers provide insulation. Contour feathers streamline the head and body with coloration. Flight feathers give lift on the wings and tail.



Fast Fact: Once or twice a year, a bird will shed, or molt, their old feathers.

Feathers are waterproof due to an oil that is secreted from their preen gland. Birds can be seen several times a day preening their feathers. This grooming ensures that feathers stay in healthy and clean condition.

For some species of birds, feathers are also important in the art of attracting a mate.



Besides feathers, birds also have wings. Wings are not just for flying. A penguin has flipper-shaped wings for swimming. The falcon has a curved wing for speed. Songbirds' narrow wings are perfect for quick and narrow movements within their nests.



Along with feathers, birds also have beaks, or bills. Beaks are made of bone and keratin. Since birds do not have teeth, they grind or tear their food into smaller pieces.





A spear shaped
beak for spearing
fish



A short and thick
beak for cracking
seeds



A strong, chisel like
beak for drilling into
bark for insects



A short and thin
beak for probing
insects and berries

There are many different types of beaks. The shape of a bird's beak identifies its diet.



A long pouch-like
beak is for scooping
fish



A long and
flattened beak for
straining algae



A long, thin, slightly
curved beak is for
eating nectar



A sharp, curved,
and pointed beak is
for tearing flesh

Most birds have lightweight, but sturdy skeletons with hollow bones. This is essential for birds to fly.



Flightless birds like the penguin have bones filled with marrow. This helps them to stay warm in their frigid home.



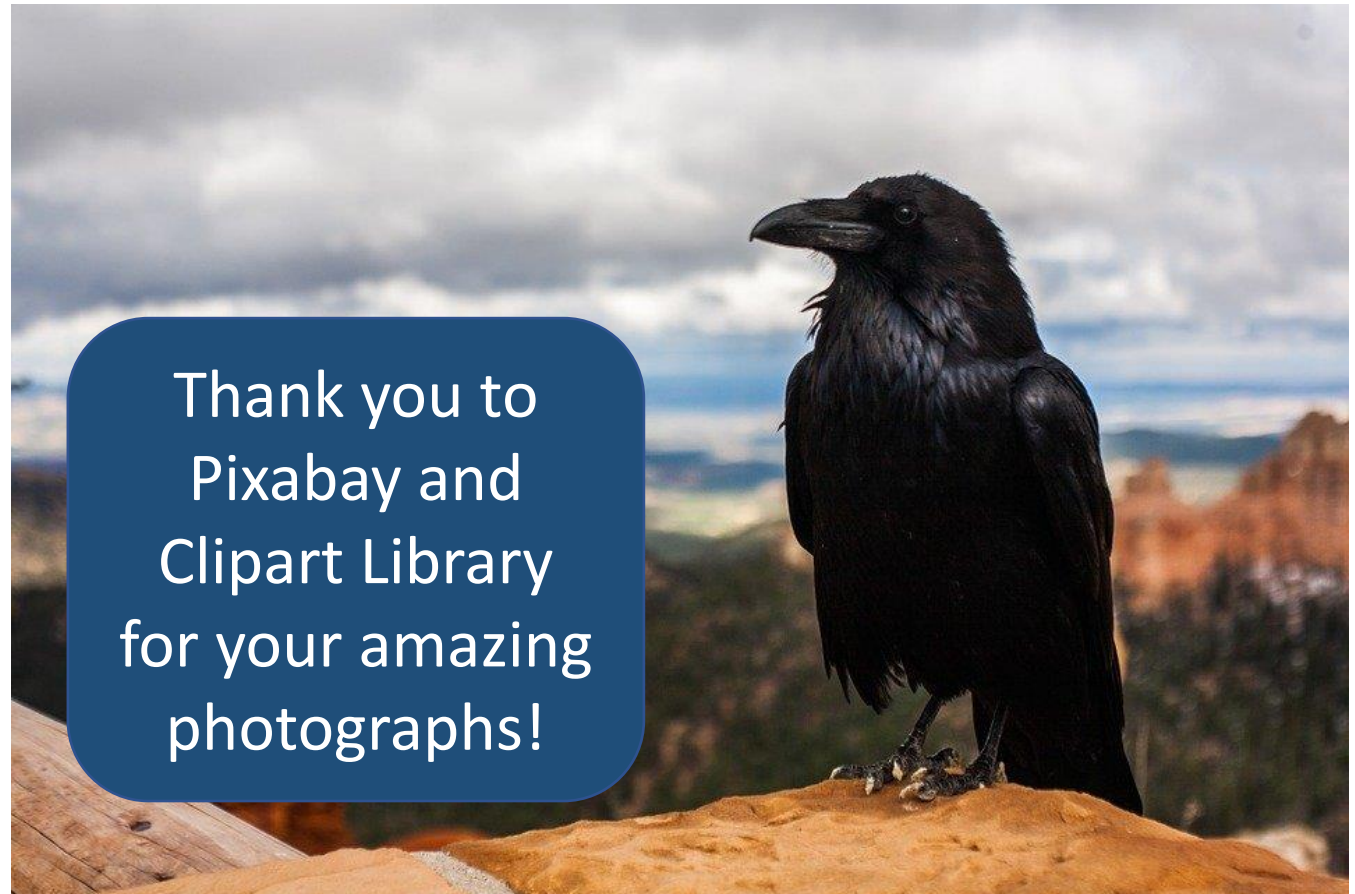
Another flightless bird is the ostrich. Their solid bones allow them to run fast and protect themselves from predators.

Birds are one of God's beautiful creations. They are mentioned countless times in the Bible. From the holy spirit descending out of heaven as a dove to the black raven delivering food to Elijah in the wilderness, birds are a reminder of God's goodness.



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Consider the ravens:
for they neither sow
nor reap; which
neither have
storehouse nor barn;
and God feedeth
them: how much
more are ye better
than the fowls?
Luke 12:24



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