



What are birds?

The Differences and Usages of Plumage

Birds are animals that are easily distinguished from other animals by one unique feature...



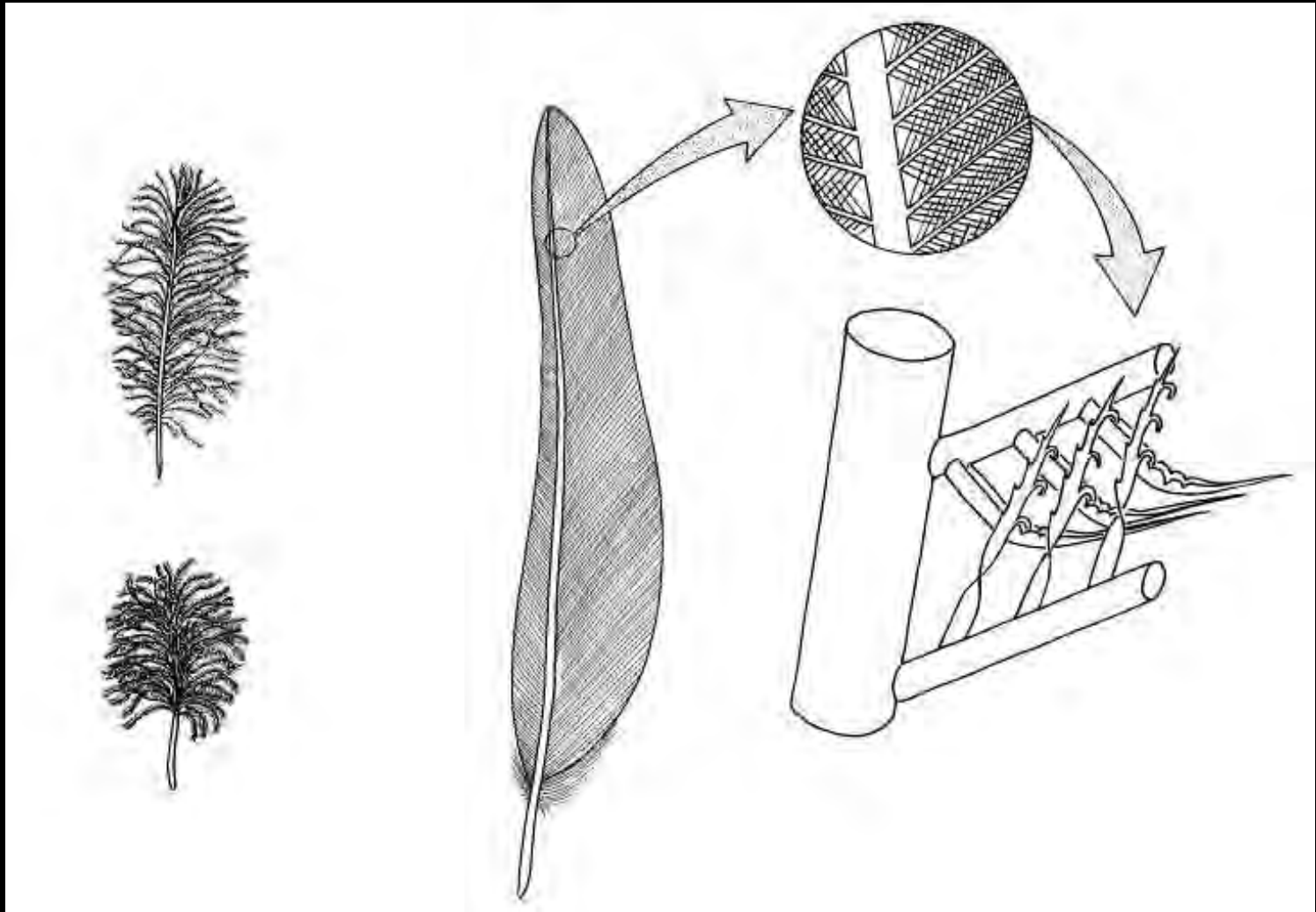
Red-eyed Vireo

A close-up photograph of a large pile of feathers. The feathers are of various sizes, shapes, and colors, including dark brown, light brown, tan, and white. Some feathers have distinct patterns or bands. The pile is dense and overlapping, creating a textured background.

Feathers!

Feathers come in many sizes,
shapes, colors and textures.

Feathers are made of a flexible protein called keratin (also found in hair and fingernails).



There are two types of feathers that cover a bird's body:

Flight feathers

- Wings, tail, and outside feather layer
- Long and strong



Field Sparrow Wing

Down feathers

- Underneath flight feathers
- Soft and fuzzy



Baby Northern Saw-whet Owl



Field Sparrow

What is the function of feathers?

What do they help birds do?

Feathers help birds fly!



Great Blue Heron

Feathers are strong yet lightweight, which give birds the ability to fly.



Broad-winged Hawk



Pileated Woodpecker

Feathers help keep birds warm!

Feathers provide insulation by trapping pockets of warm air close to a bird's body to help it conserve body heat.



Cardinal

All the feathers on a bird are called
plumage.

Birds use their plumage in a variety of ways!



Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Plumage can indicate a bird's age.



Baby
Northern Saw-whet Owl



Adult
Northern Saw-whet Owl

Plumage can show if a bird is male or female.

Female



Male



Belted Kingfisher

Male



Female



Northern Flicker

Plumage can provide camouflage for birds.

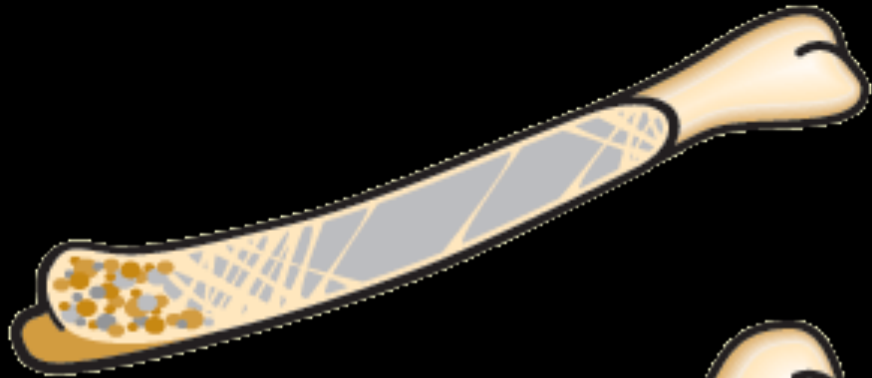


Brown Creeper

There are other important characteristics of birds!

Birds have lightweight skeletons made up of hollow bones.

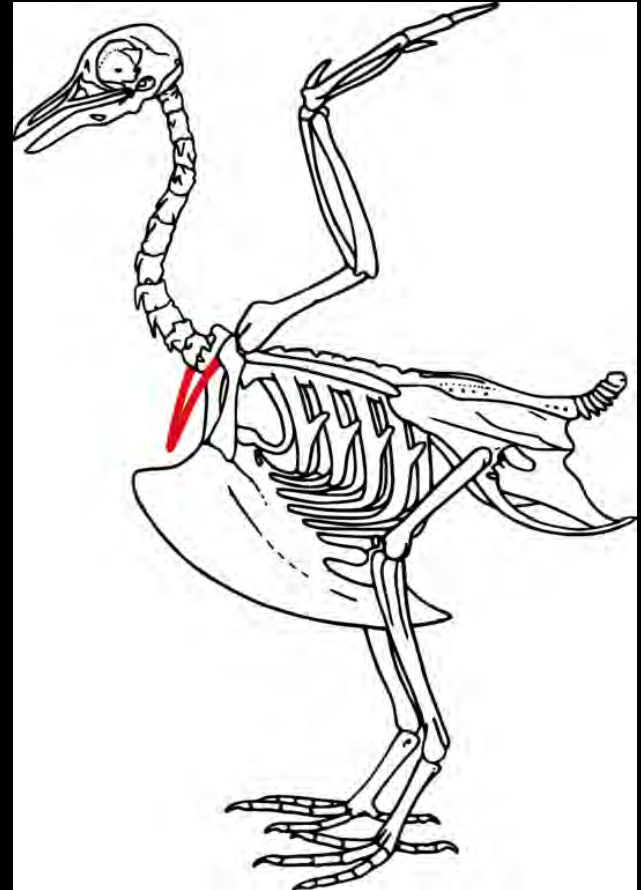
Bird Bone



Human Bone



Birds have a furculum or wishbone that can be compared to the collarbone in humans.



Birds have beaks!



Northern Flicker



Great Crested Flycatcher



Eastern Bluebird

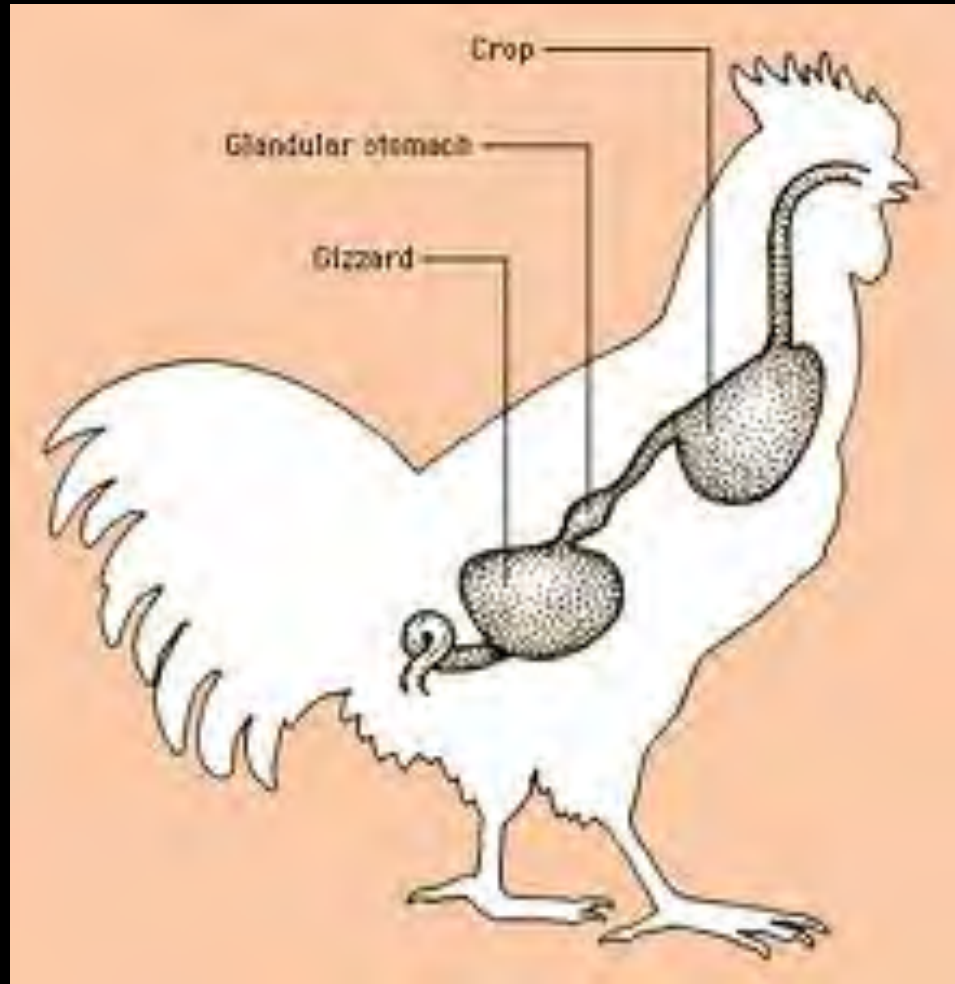


American Goldfinch



Yellow Warbler

Birds have an organ called a Gizzard that helps them to grind their food since modern birds don't have teeth.



Birds lay hard-shelled eggs.



Types of birds

- There are over 10,000 species of birds in the world!
- About 300 of these can be found in the Tug Hill Region but only about 60 stay for the winter!
- Birds can be grouped according to common diet, habitat, body and bill shapes, and lifestyle.

Raptors

Raptors are birds that eat meat. They are also called birds of prey.



American Kestrel



Snowy Owl

Gallinaceous Birds

Gallinaceous birds are ground birds and do not fly often.



Wild Turkey



Ruffed Grouse

Waterfowl

Waterfowl spend most of their time in the water.



Common Loon



Canada Goose

Waterbirds and Shorebirds

These birds can be found by water and usually have long legs, long beaks, and sometimes webbed feet.



American Bittern



Great Blue Heron

Perching Birds

Perching birds are the most common types of birds. They have similar feet that allow them to grab on to trees and other high places.



Brown Creeper



Golden-crowned Kinglet



Wood Thrush

What birds will you see?

White-breasted Nuthatch



House Sparrow



Dark-eyed Junco



Blue Jay



Northern Cardinal



House Sparrow

