



The Bird Gazette



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A Home Made Of Twigs

Birds are amazing builders. They make nests of all sizes and shapes to keep their eggs and babies safe from bad weather or predators. Nests could be twigs in a tree, a hole in a tree or in the ground, pebbles on the ground and even the cool grass.

Some birds have nests in a hole in a hollow tree. Hoopoes like hollow trees because they are secure and cozy and have grass and leaves to build a nest.

Some birds use other bird's nests or abandoned animal homes for a nest. The Shelduck nest in old rabbit burrows and lay up to 16 eggs. Cuckoos lay eggs in other bird's nests. The baby cuckoo hatches and pushes the other eggs out.

Some birds have their nests by the sea. The giant petrel laid their eggs in a stony nest. The blue-eyed Cormorant nests are on a cliff, close to the sea, and made of seaweed, feathers and bones all stuck together from their droppings.

Some birds have their nests in the desert. The Elf Owl lives in hole in a cactus in the hot desert and drinks the water from inside the cactus. They also feed on insects and grub.

Some birds have a nest of twigs together in a tree to make a nest. Ospreys make their nests by piling large sticks in the top of a tree. It is too big and strong to blow away and is too high for any predators to reach. Weaver birds build as many as 40 nests in the same tree. They weave grasses or rushes together to make a strong nest hanging on a stick in a shape of a ball.

Birds can make extraordinary different kinds of nests. They can make things or find things. Some build their nests out of twigs. Others out of rocks. But each nest is special.

A Long, Long Time

Birds have been around a long time actually since the dinosaurs.

Some birds were related to raptors. Others to the flying ones. But birds are all related to dinosaurs.

Birds from the dinosaur times were very big and tall. They also had a very long wing span. But then they shrunk and got really small like some of the birds today. Still birds today are a little like the dinosaurs flyers back then.

Written by: Brett Mozarsky

Meat, Fruit, Vegetables and Plants

Birds are amazing hunters. They can find food anywhere. But it depends on their habitat. A habitat is the environment they live in. Some birds fly up to a tree top and grab some fruit. Some snatch fish right out of the water. Others snatch an insect right out of the air or on the ground.

Some birds are herbivores. Others are carnivores. Some are even omnivores. Owls and birds of prey like falcons, vultures and hawks are carnivores which mean they only eat meat.

Some birds are very skilled hunters. Owls track down their prey by using eco-location. Then they swoop down and grab them with their talons. Birds of Prey have very sharp eyesight and sharp talons to find their food. They also have a hooked beak for tearing meat into pieces.

Some birds are fast flyers to catch their food. The

Harpy Eagle hovers above their prey and swoop down at a speed of 50mph to catch its prey such as monkeys and sloths. When the Peregrine Falcon dives it reaches a speed over 105 mph. That's fast. At this rate they often snatch tiny birds in mid-air.

Some birds are herbivores. They only eat plants, fruits or vegetables. The African Green Pigeon flies quickly through the trees to find their favorite food, juicy, plump, ripe figs. The Macaws favorite foods are large, oily nuts. Their beak is very strong so they can break open the shells easily.

Some birds love to eat fish. The Osprey has very sharp, hooked talons to catch its fish easily. Ducks are skilled divers so they can dive deep down into the water and catch fish with their beaks instantly. Puffins beaks have little spines on the inside of their beaks to hold onto slippery fish.

Some birds have strange or different ways of getting food. Adult Pelicans spit up their half digested food and the young ones take it from their parent's beak. The raven lives in the arctic near human settlements and feeds off of garbage for food. The tiny redpoll gets its food by squeezing underneath the snow cover searching for food.

Some birds like grub or insects. The Buff-headed wood hoopoes look at the tree bark of a tree to find insects or grub for a meal. Some birds can catch bees out of the air.

Birds can find food anywhere. Some love fish and insects. Others like fruits and vegetables. Others like meat or even garbage. But each one has a special kind of food.



Flying, Feathers and Mating



All birds can fly. Birds start flying by flopping their wings like oars. Strong downward beats of their wings lift the birds up into the air and drive them forward.

Some birds glide and others soar on upward moving air-currents hardly moving their wings at all. This saves energy. Large soaring birds have wide-spaced primary flight feathers. When they fly the feathers spread apart giving them an extra lift.

There is only one bird that can hover in mid-air like a helicopter and fly forwards and backwards. That is a hummingbird. They beat their wings 80 times a second. They can

also fly both forwards and backwards.

Feathers go with the mating season. The mating season is when the female bird chooses a male bird to be her husband and have babies with her. The reason why feathers go with mating season is because the female bird usually chooses the male with the most color. The male birds are more colorful than the female birds is because so they can show off to the ladies.

Some birds have other ways to attract females. The male Blue Footed Boobies do not have colorful feathers so they wave their blue feet to a female until she waves back. The

male Satin Bowerbird builds a twig bower and puts blue pebbles, shells and flowers. He will even use human garbage as long as it's blue. Cranes find love by dancing, flapping their wings and bobbing their heads to the sound of their calls.

Birds may have different ways of finding love than humans, but it's just their way of saying I love you. Like I said female birds choose the male with the most colorful feathers. A male Painted Bunting has a lot of colorful feathers. Birds have different ways to love each other.