















Bird Adaptations - Beaks

Did you ever wonder why there are so many types of bird beaks (scientists call them bills)? The most important function of a bird bill is feeding, and it is shaped according to what a bird eats. If you want to learn more about birds, you may want to pay attention to bill shapes! You can use it as one of the characteristics you use to identify birds. If you have already identified a bird, you can learn more about its behavior by looking at the bill and thinking about what it eats. Then you may think about where it lives, and so on. To help you get started, here are some common bill shapes and the food that they are especially adapted to eat:

SHAPE	TYPE	ADAPTATION
	Cracker	Seed eaters like sparrows and cardinals have short, thick conical bills for cracking seed.
	Shredder	Birds of prey like hawks and owls have sharp, curved bills for tearing meat.
	Chisel	Woodpeckers have bills that are long and chisel-like for boring into wood to eat insects.
	Probe	Hummingbird bills are long and slender for probing flowers for nectar.
	Strainer	Some ducks have long, flat bills that strain small plants and animals from the water.
	Spear	Birds like herons and kingfishers have spear-like bills adapted for fishing.
	Tweezer	Insect eaters like warblers have thin, pointed bills.
	Swiss Army Knife	Crows have a multi-purpose bill that allows them to eat fruit, seeds, insects, fish, and other animals.

Bird Adaptations - Feet

If you want to learn more about birds, you may want to pay attentions to feet shapes! You can use it as one of the characteristics you use to identify birds. If you have already identified a bird, you can learn more about its behavior by looking at the feet and thinking about where it lives. To help you get started, here are some common feet shapes and the environment they are especially adapted to live in:

SHAPE	TYPE	ADAPTATION
	Grasping	Raptors like Osprey use their large curved claws to snatch fish from the water.
	Scratching	Pheasants and other birds that scratch the soil for food have nail-like toes.
	Swimming	Ducks and other webbed lined swimming birds use their feet like paddles.
	Perching	Robins have a long back toe, which lets them grab a perch tightly.
	Running	Many fast-running birds have three toes rather than four.
	Climbing	A woodpecker's hind toes enable it to climb without falling backward.