

Birds in Australia

Stage 3 - Student Activities



- Animals can be grouped based on their similarities or differences. This is called classification.
- Birds can be classified according to where they live, what they eat and how they get their food.

Introduction

Go to the *Birds and Insects* exhibition on Level 2. The birds are in the display cases located around the outer walls of this exhibition. The collection holds a range of birds commonly seen in Australia; these birds are native Australian and introduced bird species.

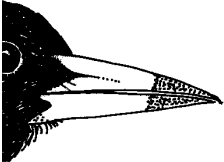
1. Take a walk around the exhibition and have a look at all the birds. Choose one you like and draw it in the box below. Make sure you draw its bill and a foot in detail.

Name of Bird: _____

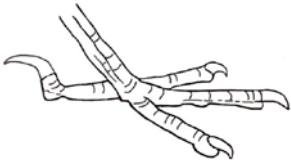
2. a) Look at the bill and feet more closely.
b) Where do you think the bird lives (habitat)? _____
c) What types of food does the bird eat? _____
d) How does the bird get its food? _____
3. a) Go to the 'Characteristics' display case just inside the main entrance of the *Birds and Insects* exhibition. Read 'What is a Bird?'
b) You will have noticed that your chosen bird was covered in feathers. List three other characteristics that are special to birds.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

4. Look at the information about bird bills and draw a diagram (side on view) of the four main types of bills in Table 1 below. All other birds can be classed as having an 'all purpose' bill.
5. About half of all birds have feet which are used for perching on branches. The rest can be divided into four main groups. Look at the information about birds' feet and complete Table 2.

Bird Bill Shapes – Table 1

Bill Function	Diagram
All purpose	
Tearing flesh	
Picking food out of mud	
Strain food from water	
Cracking seeds	

Bird Foot Shapes – Table 2

Foot Function	Diagram
Perching	
Walking on floating vegetation	
Grasping and killing prey	
Running	
Swimming	

6. The table below has been completed for the Golden Whistler bird which has an 'all purpose' bill. Find four birds each with a different type of bill and complete the rest of the table.

Name of bird	Bill	Foot					Food	Habitat
		For perching	For walking on floating vegetation	For grasping and killing	For running	For swimming		
Golden Whistler	All purpose	✓					Picks insects from leaves and bark	Lower branches of trees in woodland areas
	Tears flesh							
	Picks food from mud							
	Strains food from water							
	Cracks seeds							

7. Did you find any relationship between what a bird eats and where it lives? Explain

8. Most birds have three toes which face forward and one backwards. Find a group of birds which have two toes facing forward and two backwards. Why do you think this might be?

9. Now that you know more about bird's bills and feet, check whether you still agree with your responses to question 2. Write a brief description of the bird's habitat, diet and means of getting its food.
