**Bird Beaks and Feet**

Introduction: A bird's beak and feet can tell us much about their habitat and lifestyle. Most birds are even classified according to structural similarities between their beaks and feet. In this exercise, you will look at pictures of birds and make inferences about their lifestyles.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Description** | **Function** |
| Beaks |
| short & rounded | multipurpose, eating insects and seeds |
| spear shaped | spearing fish |
| chisel shaped, flat & pointed | drilling for insects |
| flat and square-shaped | straining algae |
| long and fat, like a scoop | scooping up fish |
| hooked | catching and tearing prey |
| long and tubular | sucking nectar from flowers |
| Feet |
| long muscular legs | running |
| long skinny legs | wading |
| short legs with blunt claws | scratching, ground walking |
| three toes in front, one behind | perching |
| webbed | swimming |
| large hooklike claws (talons) | grasping prey |
| tiny short legs | hovering |
| two toes in front, two behind | climbing |

Examine the images of birds and write your inference about what the bird eats, and where it lives



Data Table

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Bird | Type of Feet | Type of Beak | Probable Diet | Probable Habitat |
| Bluebird |  |  |  |  |
| Chicken |  |  |  |  |
| Duck |  |  |  |  |
| Eagle |  |  |  |  |
| Sparrow |  |  |  |  |
| Flamingo |  |  |  |  |
| Heron |  |  |  |  |
| Kingfisher |  |  |  |  |
| Owl |  |  |  |  |
| Pelican |  |  |  |  |
| Hummingbird |  |  |  |  |
| Woodpecker |  |  |  |  |

**Analysis**

1. What features of a hummingbird make it adapted for its style of feeding?

2. Imagine an ideal flying predator. What type of beak and feet would it have?

3. Different birds may have similar beaks and diets. Loons, herons, and kingfishers, for instance, all have long sharp pointed beaks for spearing fish. Their feet, however, are quite different. Describe how the loon, heron, and kingfisher differ in the method by which they hunt for fish (using their feet to help you answer)

4. Owls have large eyes that enable it to see well at night. Both the hawk and the owl hunt similar things: small rodents or snakes. How do the hawk and the owl avoid competing with each other?

5. Birds the live on the prairie have short but muscular legs (like the pheasant). Prairies are large grasslands that have few numbers of trees. What do you think the legs of a pheasant are adapted for?