



Bird Beaks and Diet

- **Hummingbirds:** birds that have long, hollow beaks that protect the bird's tongue; they use their tongue to slurp up nectar – Ruby-throated and Anna's
- **Herons and egrets:** birds that hunt for fish in shallow water have long, sharp beaks that they use to catch or spear fish – Great Blue Heron and Snowy Egret
- **Birds of prey (raptors):** birds that eat other animals have strong, sharp beaks to tear the meat into pieces small enough to swallow – Great Horned Owl, Bald Eagle, and Cooper's Hawk
- **Shorebirds:** birds with very long, thin beaks that they use to probe for food in the sand or mud – Spotted Sandpiper, American Woodcock, and Wilson's Snipe
- **Woodpeckers:** birds that drill for food under bark have strong beaks which are sturdy and taper at the tip, forming a chisel for pecking holes in trees – Downy, Hairy, and Pileated
- **Seed eaters:** birds that have short, strong, triangular-shaped bills that can crack open seeds – Northern Cardinal, American Goldfinch, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak
- **Aerial insectivores:** birds that feed while in flight, catching and eating airborne insects have beaks that are very short and flat; their mouths open very wide and act like nets to trap flying bugs – Tree and Barn Swallow, Common Nighthawk, Purple Martin, and Chimney Swift
- **Flamingos and some ducks (only certain ducks are filter feeders.):** birds that have beaks that act like strainers; they filter their food, plants, seeds, and small animals, from the water using the comb-like edge of their beak; water enters at the tip of the beak and exits out the sides – Flamingo, Mallard, and Blue-winged Teal
- **Warblers and thrushes:** birds with sharp, pointed beaks; used to pick insects from leaves, logs, and twigs – Yellow Warbler, Common Yellow throat, American Robin, Wood Thrush, and Ovenbird

Cornell Lab of Ornithology offers free, online educational materials for K-12 Kids.

www.birds.cornell.edu/k12