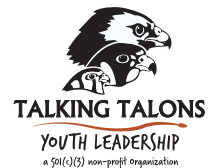


Talking Talons Youth Leadership Environmental Education

Bird Basics 3: Beaks & Bills

1. **Water Wading** birds, such as the [Great Blue Heron](#), have a long, slender, pointed beak for hunting fish, frogs, crustaceans, etc. in the water. These birds will usually grab their prey between their upper and lower beak. However, they will occasionally use their sharp beak to stab/spear prey. [Other species in this group: cranes, egrets, storks, ibises, and spoonbills.]
2. **Filter Feeders**, such as the [Northern Shoveler](#), have a wide bill for scooping and straining water. They strain out the small animals, insects, and plants using *lamellae* (the small, comb-like structures along the inside of the bill). [Other species in this group: swans, ducks, geese, and flamingos.]
3. **Coniferous-Seed Eaters**, such as the [Red Crossbill](#), have a thick, curved bill with crossed tips adapted for prying pinecone scales apart. They then use their strong tongue to remove the seed. They eat seeds from the cones of pine, spruce, and fir trees. [Other species in this group: finches, chickadees, woodpeckers, and nuthatches.]
4. **Granivorous** birds, such as the [Evening Grosbeak](#), have a heavy, robust, conical beak for cracking seeds. The diet of these birds consists mostly of seeds and grains. Many of the songbirds that you can observe visiting a backyard bird feeder belong in this category. [Other species in this group: sparrows, cardinals, canaries, doves, and parrots.]
5. **Carnivorous** birds (a.k.a. raptors or birds of prey), such as the [Golden Eagle](#), have a large, strong, hooked beak adapted for tearing meat. The diets of these birds include small to medium rodents/mammals, reptiles, fish, amphibians, other birds, large insects, and *carrion* (dead animals, such as roadkill). [Other species in this group: hawks, falcons, harriers, owls, vultures, buzzards, ospreys, kites, and caracaras.]
6. **Insectivorous** birds, such as the [Western Bluebird](#), have a short, straight, thin beak for snatching insects from the ground. Other bird species in this group catch insects while flying in the air with their mouths open and have shorter, wider, flatter beaks. [Other species in this group: phoebes, warblers, robins, swallows, wrens, and bee-eaters.]



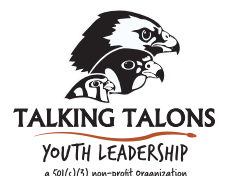
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Great Blue Heron

<https://tx.audubon.org/great-blue-heron-0>



Classification of Different Bird Beaks & Corresponding Diets

<https://www.raritanheadwaters.org/2020/03/28/eat-like-a-bird/>



Western Bluebird

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/ronfredrick/42070360401>



Northern Shoveler

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Northern_Shoveler/id



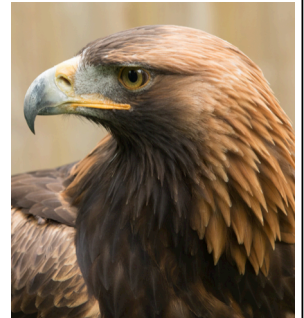
Red Crossbill

<https://www.coniferousforest.com/red-crossbill.htm>



Evening Grosbeak

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/45571539@N06/31639344200>



Golden Eagle

<https://www.bhe.scot/2018/09/15/golden-eagles/>

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