

To Fly or Not to Fly?



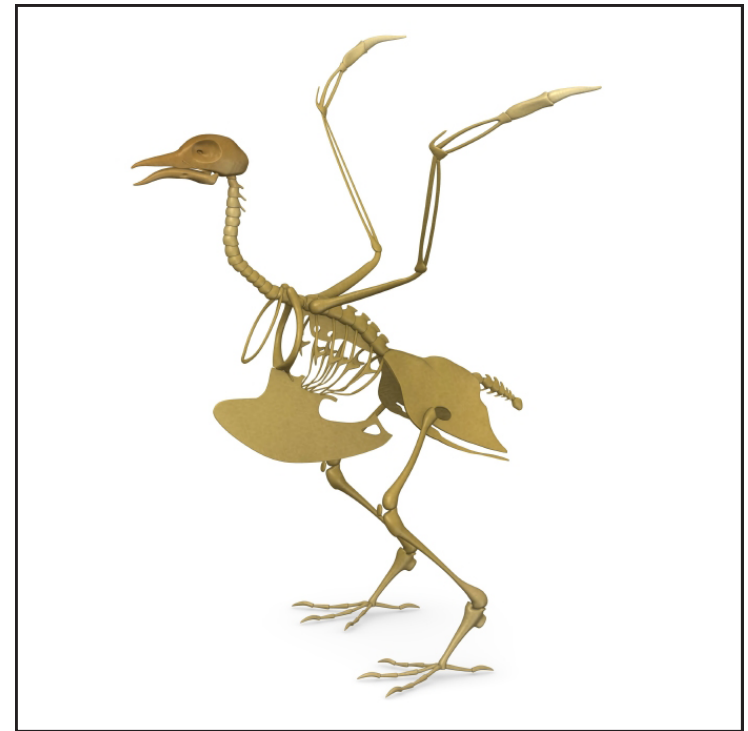
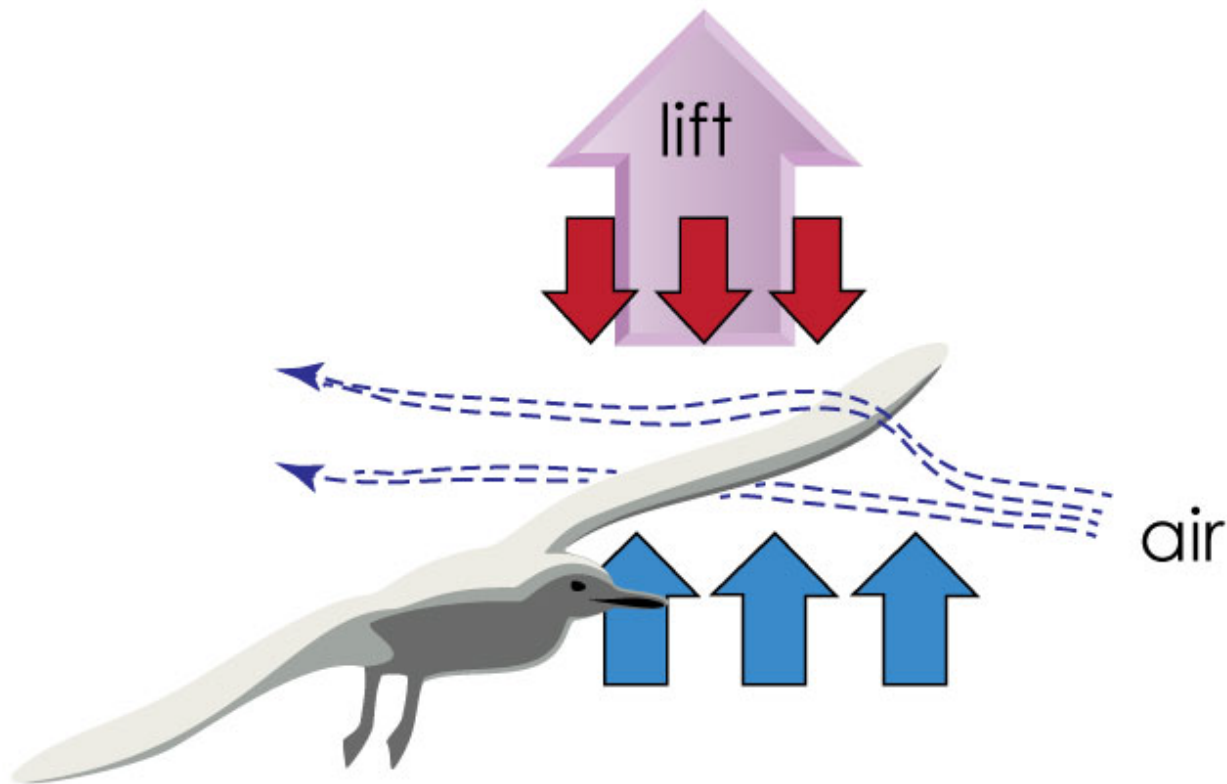
- 1) How do birds fly?
- 2) Why do some birds migrate?
- 3) Which birds are flightless?

How Do Birds Fly?

Birds skeletons are very light. Their bones have a honeycomb-like structure inside them to make them strong.

Air needs to be moving over and under the wing for a bird to fly. Birds flap their wings to get the air moving.

Air travelling over the top of the curved wing speeds up because there is a greater distance for the air to travel. This lowers the air pressure above the wing. Because the air pressure under the wing is greater than the air pressure above the wing, lift occurs and the bird rises in the air.



Migration

Many species of birds migrate seasonally. Some travel only short distances and others travel great distances to find places where food is more abundant. For example, Canada Geese migrate thousands of kilometres to their breeding grounds in the north. They fly in distinctive v-shaped flocks, taking turns to be the leader. With the approach of the colder months, as food supplies diminish, they begin their migration south.

Scientists are not sure how birds find their way to the same breeding grounds each year. It is thought they use a variety of factors to navigate their way, including by sense of smell or by sensing changes in the magnetic field of the earth.



Describe the features of these flightless birds.



Did you know?

Flightless birds often have well developed feet and legs for running on land. The ostrich is the tallest and the fastest of the flightless birds that run. An ostrich can maintain a steady 60 km/h, with a top speed of 70 km/h.



Describe the ways penguins move their bodies.

