

Bird Feet Scavenger Hunt

A bird's foot is a tool, and each kind of bird has its own tool to help it survive. For example, birds that live in the water will have vastly different feet than birds in trees, and a bird that eats meat will have different feet than one that scratches the ground in search of seeds. This scavenger hunt will focus on bird feet in the Bird Room. Good luck!

1. As you walk into the Bird Room, a large Golden Eagle is in a case on the ground to your left. Next to it is a vulture called a Lammergeier (pronounced "lam-er-gi-er"). Compare the claws (called talons) on the feet between the two birds; which one do you think is better for catching and killing prey? Circle your answer.

Golden Eagle

Lammergeier



2. Based on your answer above, which one do you think is a *scavenger*, an animal that eats prey that is already dead?

Golden Eagle

Lammergeier

3. Many birds have feet to help them perch on branches with three toes in the front and one toe in the back. This is called *anisodactyl* (an-is-o-dact-il). There are many anisodactyl birds here; find one and write the name of your favorite below!



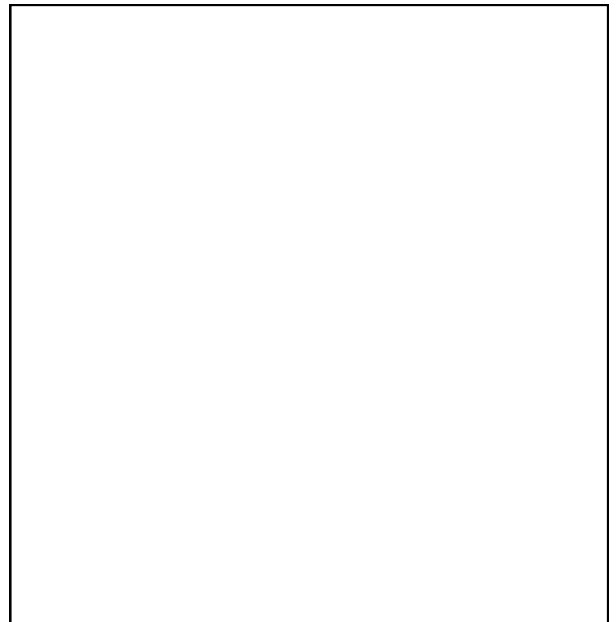
Anisodactyl

4. Some birds have excellent climbing feet that look x-shaped, called *zygodactyl* (zi-go-dact-il) feet. What type of bird climbs up the sides of trees and pecks at wood to find food?



Zygodactyl

5. Lobate and palmate feet are two different tools for the same task; swimming in water! We only have a few birds with lobate feet (grebe and coot) but we have many with palmate feet (ducks, geese, etc.). Draw a bird with either palmate or lobate feet here; be sure to write the bird's name and what kind of feet it has!



6. Some birds can switch between anisodactyl or zygodactyl feet. One of these is the Northern Saw-whet Owl, the smallest owl in the owl case (all the way at the end), whose feet help it perch and hold tighter onto prey. Do both Saw-whets have three toes in front (anisodactyl), two toes in front (zygodactyl), or both?

7. Birds that live on the ground in cold areas have feet that help them in the snow, a lot like snowshoes! The Spruce Grouse is one of these birds. What do you notice about the Spruce Grouse's feet that will help it in the cold winter?

Challenge! In this image are feet from a hawk that is often found near water. As you can see, it has very sharp talons that help it hunt fish, and one foot has three toes forward while the other has two toes forward—it can switch like an owl! This raptor is black-and-white, but it is *not* an eagle. What bird is this?



Hint: When you walk into the bird room, look up!