

DID YOU KNOW?

The most recent estimate puts the number of bird species that have ever lived on Earth at 166 000.

A bird's plumage is two to three times heavier than its skeleton. Because some bird bones are hollow.

In a common starling, the eyes make up 15% of the weight of the head; in humans, it is only about 1%.

One gram of urea requires 60 ml of water to excrete, while one gram of uric acid requires only 3 ml of water.

Birds die faster from heat stress than from cold.

At very low temperatures the bird shivers - involuntary muscle contractions produce heat.

Birds with larger fat stores can tolerate lower temperatures better than those that store less fat.

Zoologist William Tinsley Keeton carried out the following experiment: He attached brass rods to pigeons, which flew home from an unknown place, whether the sun was shining or the weather was overcast. However, when he attached magnetic rods to the pigeons, they oriented themselves in much the same way as before, when the sun was shining but not when it was overcast. The magnet seems to have disturbed them when there was no celestial object to help them find their way.

The eggs produced by elephant birds are the largest of any known species. These birds lived in Madagascar, but they became extinct. Its eggs were 7.5 litres and 34×24 cm. The Jamaican Vervain Hummingbird has the smallest egg, it is less than 10 mm long. An elephant bird egg would hold 33 000 of these tiny hummingbird eggs.

Birds are about 10 times more sensitive than humans to rapid fluctuations in pitch and sound intensity.

Parrots often feed by holding their food in one leg and lifting it to their beak, much as humans use their hands to eat.