



# What is a Bird?

## Overview

Using a Venn diagram, participants learn the basics of animal classification by exploring the characteristics of birds, mammals, and reptiles.

## Objective

Identify the characteristics of a bird

## Recommended Ages

- > Families
- > Children 5 and up

## Activity Time

Approximately 10 minutes

## Materials

- > Chicken bone
- > Feathers
- > Beak
- > Fur
- > Egg
- > Scales
- > Teeth
- > Baby bottle (for nursing)

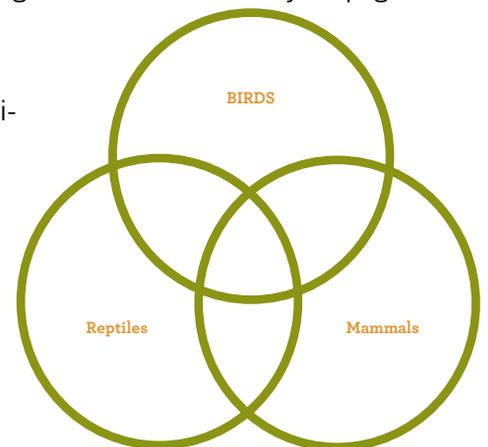
## Activity in Action

Send us your pictures and comments on this activity to [bday@birdday.org](mailto:bday@birdday.org).

Birds are in a class all their own called Aves. What makes a bird, a bird? How are they like and different from other animals? This activity explores the special characteristics that are unique to birds and compares them to other familiar animal groups.

## Activity Directions

1. **Print the pictures and title cards** provided, or make your own to represent common mammals, birds, and reptiles from your area.
2. **Make a Venn Diagram.** Create three large circles (try hoola hoops or make circles from poster board)—large enough to fit the title cards and some of the items inside each circle. Draw the circles as shown in the circle layout below.
3. **Ask participants to place each item in the correct animal group.** Characteristics that are shared by two or more groups should be placed in the correct overlapping areas. See answer key on page 6.
4. **Use the additional information** in this activity to further participant understanding of animal classification .



## Venn Diagram

**Get Involved!** Discover easy, fun ways to learn and connect with others while spreading bird conservation awareness—[join the EFTA Flock at BirdDay.org](http://jointheEFTA.com)

Find free educational materials (and much more) at [BirdDay.org](http://BirdDay.org)

Have you registered your IMBD event? It's easy, free, and an important way to measure IMBD success each year. To register, go to [birdday.org](http://birdday.org) or send your event info to [bday@birdday.org](mailto:bday@birdday.org).



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## BIRDS



## Mammals



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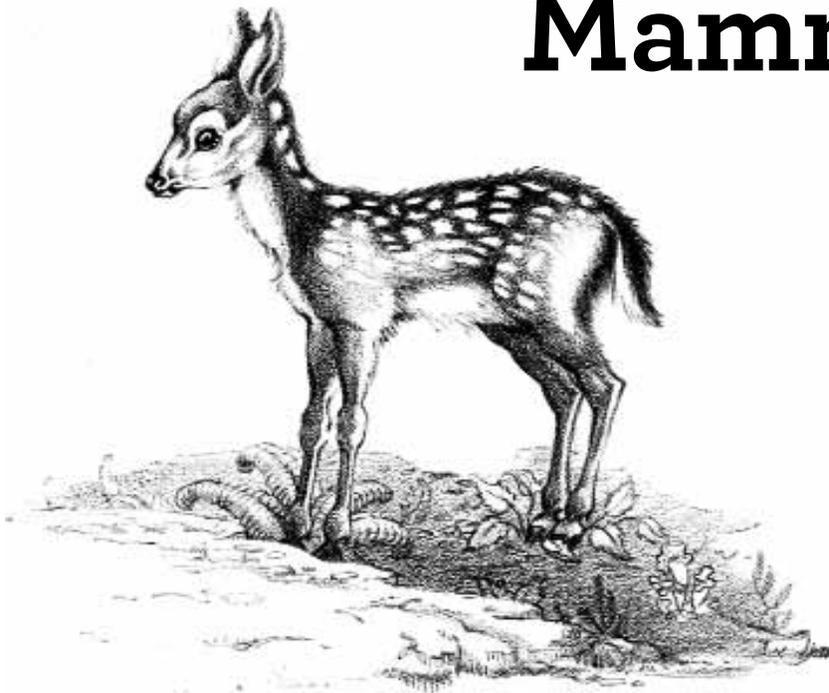


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## Reptiles

## Mammals

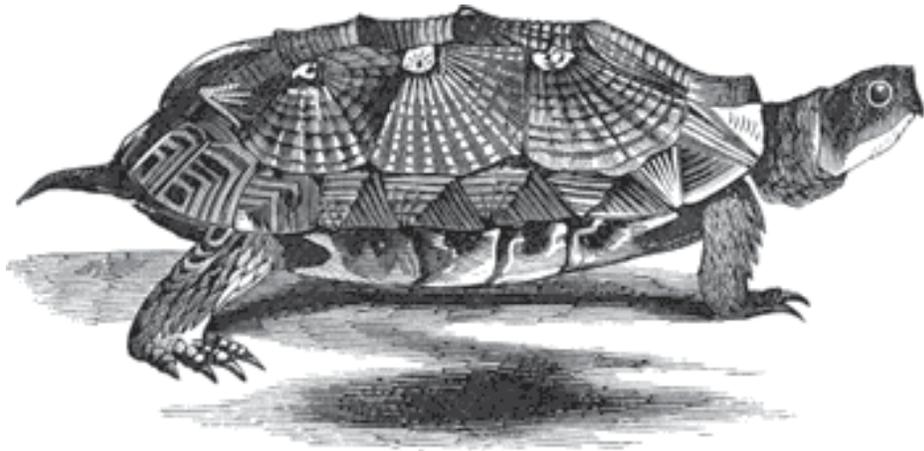




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## Reptiles





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# Birds

# Mammals

# Reptiles



## Answer Key

Please note this list is not complete a complete list of the differences and similarities between these animal groups.

Features Unique to Each Animal Group		
BIRDS	Mammals	Reptiles
Feathers	Nurse young	Soft-shelled eggs
Hollow bones (chicken bone)	Mammary glands	Cold-blooded
Beak--no teeth.	Fur/Hair	3-chambered heart
Hard-shelled eggs	Teeth	
Crop		
Features Common to Birds and Mammals		
4-chambered heart		Bipedal
Flight (shared with bats)		Parental care
Warm blooded		Use tools
Features Common to Birds and Reptiles		
Scales		Common ancestor
Cloaca		Lay eggs
Features Comon to Mammals and Reptiles		
Teeth		Live birth



## Understanding Bird Classification

To study animals, scientists classify each animal using a classification system. Scientific classification and names are recognized worldwide. Common names are not a reliable way to share information because common names may be different between countries, and even within regions of one country.

Birds belong to the Kingdom Animalia. They are then grouped with reptiles and mammals in the Phylum Chordata. Birds then diverge from reptiles and mammals into the Class Aves--the birds. Within each Class, animals are grouped into an order, a family, a genus, and species. The table below compares the classification between a bird, a mammal, and a reptile.

	<b>Canada Goose</b>	<b>Box Turtle</b>	<b>White-tailed Deer</b>
<b>Kingdom</b>	Animalia	Animalia	Animalia
<b>Phylum</b>	Chordata	Chordata	Chordata
<b>Class</b>	Aves	Reptilia	Mammalia
<b>Order</b>	Anseriformes	Testudines	Artiodactyla

The animal kingdom family tree on the following page illustrates and explains animal classifications and relationships.



## Animal Kingdom Family Tree

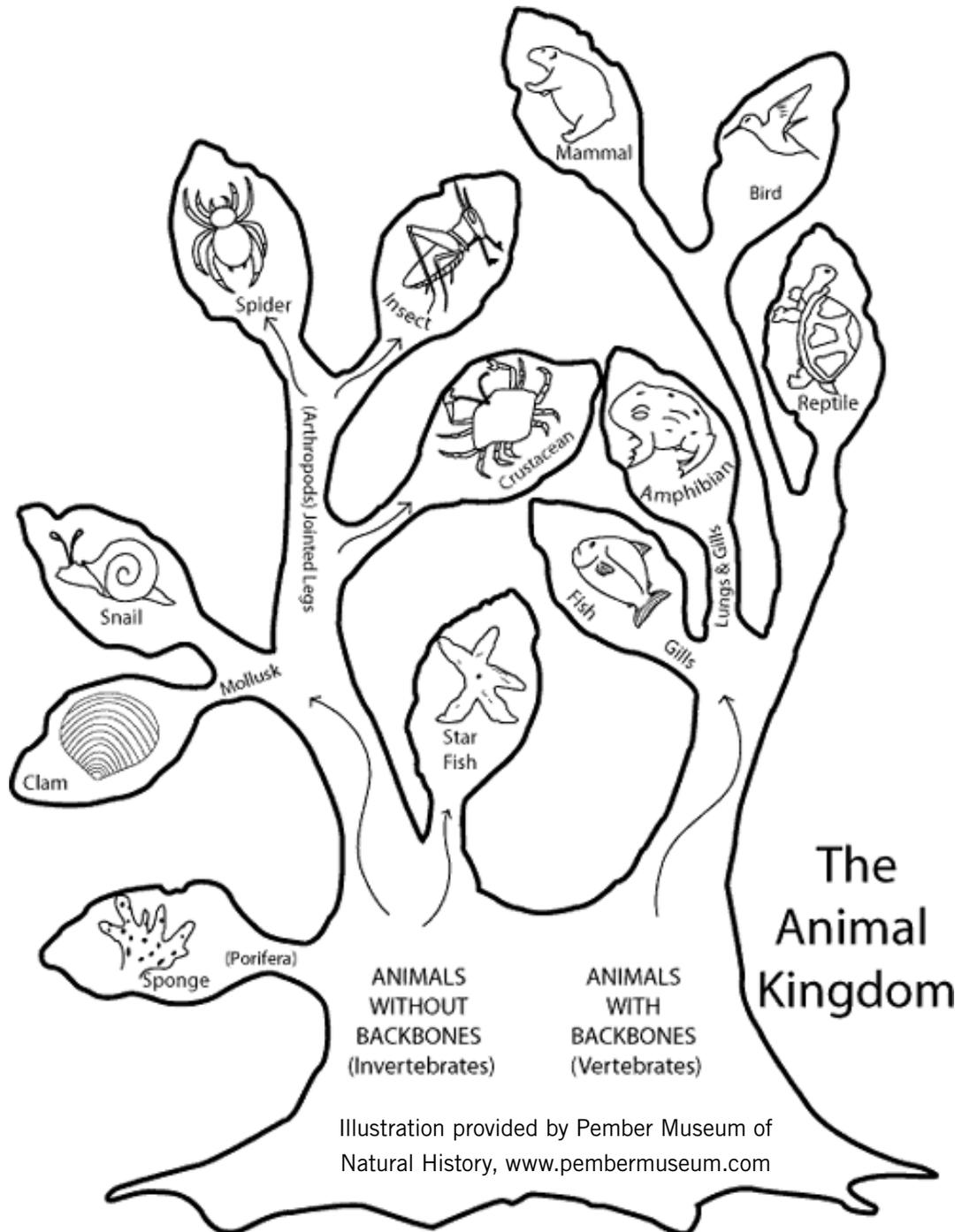


Illustration provided by Pember Museum of Natural History, [www.pembermuseum.com](http://www.pembermuseum.com)

