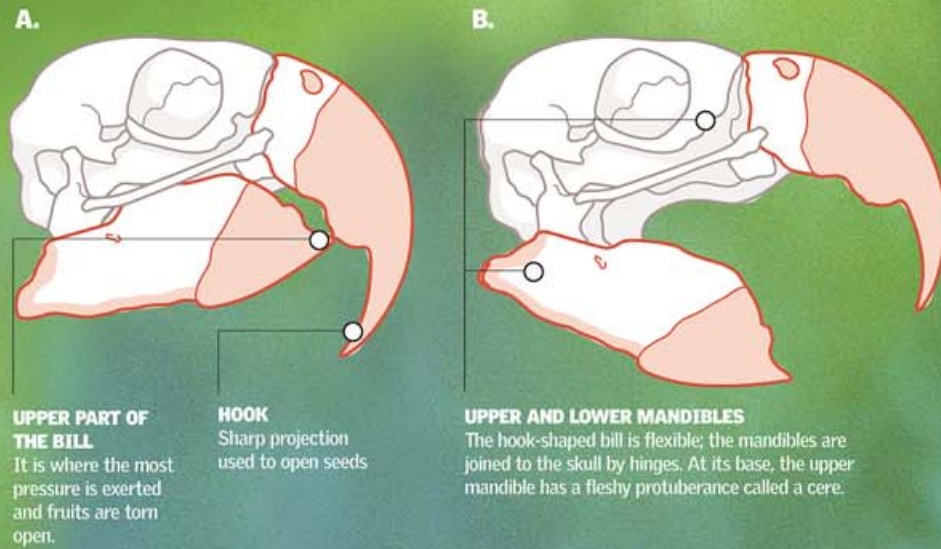


Talkative and Colorful

Parrots form a very attractive bird group with a great capacity for learning. This group comprises cockatoos, macaws, and parakeets. They share physical characteristics, such as a big head, a short neck, a strong hook-shaped bill, and climbing feet. They have plumage in many colors. Toucans and woodpeckers share with parrots the colors of their feathers and their type of feet. Toucans have a wider, thicker bill, but it is light. Woodpeckers are climbing birds with a strong, straight bill, a tail of stiff feathers, and a distinctive crest. They form numerous groups, and most nest in trees. ●

Eating, Climbing, and Chattering

Parrots use their bills to feed and to move about tree branches; they use their bills as an extension of their feet to give them support when they climb. Parrots also have a curved profile, a pointed tip on their upper mandible, and sharp edges on their lower one. These adaptations are practical when it comes to cutting and breaking fruits and seeds. The largest species like fruits with shells, such as walnuts, hazelnuts, and peanuts. The smaller ones prefer nectar and pollen, which they obtain with the help of brush-shaped bristles on their tongues. Their ability to imitate the human voice has made them very popular. However, they are far from being able to produce language. In reality, they are merely good imitators: they use their excellent memory to imitate sounds. They do this when they are hungry or when they detect the presence of unknown people.



WINGS
Usually they are short and rounded, suitable for flying among branches.

NOSTRILS
They are located at the base of the bill's upper portion.

HOOKEED BILL

WOODPECKERS
hollow out tree trunks with pecks in order to build a nest and to feed on insects that eat wood.

THE HABITAT OF WOODPECKERS

They live in the woods and can often be heard there. Their adaptations to arboreal life are demonstrated by their strong, thick bills and their stiff tails, which they use for support, together with their feet. They use their hearing to locate tree-boring insects; they then peck the wood incessantly until they find them.



TOUCANS
Their big bills have serrated edges that suit their diet of fruit. They live in the South American jungles.



QUETZALS
They belong to the family Trogonidae. They have feet adapted to arboreal life. Males have brilliant plumage and long, attractive tails.

COMPARISON

American parrots vary in size, from the monk parakeet (*Myopsitta monachus*), which is 12 inches (30 cm) tall, to the hyacinth macaw (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*) from South America, which is 33 inches (1 m) tall.



The Feet

are referred to as zygodactyl. This means that two toes project forward and two project backward. Parrots appear to strut because their feet have a tibiotarsus that is shorter than that of other birds.



FEET LIKE HANDS
In some species, the left foot is longer. They use it to grab fruits and tear them with their bills.

FEATHERS AND COLORS

They have tough and lustrous plumage. An abundance of green feathers helps them to hide among the leaves. In South America, the array of colors includes hues of blue, yellow, and red.

