

The Fable of

THE FIRST FATAL FLIGHT



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How Much Wood Can a Woodpecker Peck?

Our cover shows a red-headed woodpecker in action. Notice, especially the stiff tail feathers ending in sharp spines. These are very necessary to prop up a woodpecker as he pecks. He also has viselike toes — perfect pincers for grasping bark.

These are just two of the many unusual — but necessary characteristics — that make the woodpecker PERFECTLY adapted for pecking wood! (See our cartoon on page nine.)

Evolutionists claim birds evolved from reptiles. They say this idea is proved by ONE fossil species — *Archaeopteryx*. The actual fossil finds — when understood properly — prove no such thing. And the woodpecker is on the spot to hammer in his piece of evidence against this false idea.

Of course, the woodpecker is only ONE of a vast number of bird types. Each is built to survive in its own geographical and environmental niche — proof of the fact that birds were created!

Every type of environment has its own peculiar type of bird. It has even been claimed that if there were no birds in existence, insects would multiply so rapidly they would “take over” the earth.

The woodpecker plays a VERY VITAL role in keeping insects within the balance of nature that God set up. You’ll read of it in this exciting installment.

Many birds search for insects in trees. These include wood warblers, nuthatches and woodcreepers. But none are more unusual than the living jackhammers of the bird world — the woodpeckers!

Goodpaster — National Audubon Society

THE FABLE OF

THE FIRST FATAL FLIGHT

Millions of years ago, according to evolution, reptiles reared ugly, slimy heads from fetid seas, and slithered ashore. Over uncountable aeons of time, they climbed trees, leapt from branch to branch — and gradually grew feathers! As time kept passing, they “learned,” says evolution, to hover, glide, soar, flutter, and even fly backward! BIRDS CAME FROM REPTILES — or so say the textbooks. But is such a theory LOGICAL? Can it be PROVED? Read, in this eye-opening article about a “fowl” hypothesis — one for the birds!

by Garner Ted Armstrong

WHAT DOES it take to fly? Flight has fascinated man, with his superior intellect, for thousands of years. Still, instead of sprouting wings, man has learned to make *machines* to carry him through the skies, and even into space.

But is there any person who did not, as a child, gaze at the fantastic array of beautiful birds everywhere in nature, and wish he could fly?

There are birds that soar, birds that flutter, birds that dive, sail, migrate thousands of miles, and even birds that fly backward.

The huge albatross, roaming the vastness of the Pacific Ocean, may attain an unbelievable wingspread of TWELVE FEET.

Tiny hummingbirds, not much bigger than big bumblebees, fly straight ahead with remarkable speed, and even back up in midair!

And these birds, and all the other myriads of colorful, winged creatures, say evolutionists, came from slithering lizards!

A Fabulous “Link” to Reptiles!

Universally heralded as the one great “link” between all birds and reptiles is *Archaeopteryx*. The extinct genus is comprised of two fossilized, bird-like creatures, found in stratified rocks in Bavaria, Germany. *Archaeopteryx* means, simply, “ancient wing.”

But what is so unusual about *Archaeopteryx*?

The creature has characteristics that are strangely like those of reptiles, say the evolutionists — though *also* possessing the appearance of a *bird*.

Here is how evolutionists imagine *Archaeopteryx* may have been preserved as a fossil.

Imagine, says an ornithologist “a strange bird-like creature the size of a crow” gliding over an ancient Bavarian lake.

“Or was it more reptile-like? *We cannot be sure,*” continues the story — for “it appeared to have some of the features of both reptiles AND birds.”

“Suddenly,” goes the dramatic tale, “our bird-like creature, with its feeble powers of flight, was unable to cope with a sharp gust of wind and fell into the shallow waters below and drowned.” (*Biology of Birds*, Wesley Lanyon, page 1).

This is the layman’s introduction into bird biology — the imaginary story of how something MIGHT have happened to preserve two fossil finds of *Archaeopteryx* in Bavaria; ones which claim to link birds with reptiles.

What a tragic end to a short flight!

If, of course, the bird EVER FLEW.

The Missing Evidence

Evolutionists readily admit the paucity of fossils to *substantiate* such a theory — but insist their theories are “clear” “IN SPITE OF THE PATCHINESS OF THE EVIDENCE”!

You are about to see, with your own eyes, another example of the classic “FAITH” of evolution!

Because evolution, after all, IS A FAITH! It is a dogmatic assertion that certain changes DID occur, and an almost religious-like CLINGING to that



notion, IN SPITE OF all logic, contradictory evidence, or rational thought!

Now notice the strange faith ornithologists have in their theories.

"IN SPITE OF the patchiness of the evidence it is clear that birds are closely related to the reptiles. The older forms have many characters in their skeletons that suggest their derivation from that group" (*Fossil Birds*, W. E. Swinton, 1965, p. 2).

Speculation Necessary

Evolutionists admit they must SPECULATE about the origin of birds. But they insist that the layman need not even question the validity of their theories!

Notice! "In attempting to reconstruct the early evolutionary history of many groups of animals a certain element of judicious speculation . . . may be a valuable weapon" (*Evolution*, ed. by De Beer, p. 321).

Granted, evolutionists say such conclusions must be "constantly checked and tested with reference to such fossil types as may be known and to such characters of modern forms as may have a bearing on the subject." But if a certain fossil type, COMPLETELY UNIQUE, and totally developed has NO known fossil or modern counterpart, then how, we might ask, can "constant checking" and "testing" ever occur?

In most books on the subject, authors first admit they are making "educated guesses," and then follow with a broad, all-inclusive, sweeping statement that such and such DID POSITIVELY OCCUR!

They have ALREADY DECIDED, on sheer FAITH, that birds evolved from reptiles!

Said the same author, "The reptilian ancestry of birds is so SELF-EVIDENT and so UNIVERSALLY RECOGNIZED BY ZOOLOGISTS that it can be taken as AXIOMATIC in any discussion"! (*Evolution*, ed. by De Beer, p. 322).

So they seem to imply: "Even though I must guess, imagine and speculate — YOU must assume my theory is SO CORRECT that you needn't bother even thinking about it"!

No Intermediate Stages Found

But if our myriads of birds evolved from slimy reptiles, is there any REAL fossil EVIDENCE of a part-bird, part-reptile? Is there such a thing as a HALF-scale, HALF-feather found?

Think of it this way. In any motion picture

sequence, in order for your eye to see a man walking from one side of a room to another, it necessitates many *separate frames*. Each is, actually, a "still" picture, snapped in a mere fraction of a second. *Two* of these frames would be all that is necessary for you to see the man, first at one side of the room, and then at the other. But in order to "see" him make the transition, you must view ALL the many frames IN BETWEEN!

The fossil "record" concerning the hazy hypothesis that supposes birds came from reptiles is much like dozens of feet of missing film! *Where are all the many HUNDREDS of VERY DIFFERENT creatures which would have represented the INTERMEDIATE stages of development?*

And remember, IF these notions of evolution could possibly be true — these "intermediate" stages would be NOWHERE NEAR so well equipped to survive as the "fully developed" ones. That means that if it took only a "sharp gust" to bring down *Archaeopteryx*, his imaginary ancestors would have been falling out of the skies like bricks! And the fossil record, therefore, would contain FAR MORE "INTERMEDIATE" species than it does of the ones which were supposedly "better equipped" to survive!

But there ARE no "intermediate" species!

Simple Deduction?

Notice what scientists admit. "The origin of birds is largely a matter of *deduction*. There is NO FOSSIL EVIDENCE of the stages through which the remarkable change from reptile to bird was achieved" (*Biology and Comparative Physiology of Birds*, edited by A. J. Marshal, 1960, p. 1).

Here is a similar admission:

"We shall see shortly how the first birds appear to have arisen from reptilian ancestors, but the transition from reptilian scale to the quite differently constituted and arranged feather of the bird IS STILL A MYSTERY!" (*Fossil Birds*, W. E. Swinton, 1965, p. 4.)

Ah, yes!

No tangible proof — but we assume it happened anyhow.

Scientists are *confused* about *Archaeopteryx*. They claim this creature is part "reptile" and part "bird." Yet, in order to *substantiate* this claim, evolutionists would have to submit positive *proof* of intermediate forms!

But there are no such intermediate forms.

Listen to this striking admission, "A certain amount of *educated guesswork* has been necessary to reconstruct how this ancestral bird *must have*

American Museum of Natural History

ARCHAEOPTERYX FOSSIL — (the Berlin specimen is pictured). Paleontologists claim this fossil provides evidence that birds evolved from reptiles.

looked and behaved" (*Biology of Birds*, Wesley E. Lanyon, 1963, pp. 2-3).

Notice it! Not only is *guesswork* necessary to reconstruct how this bird must have looked, but scientists readily admit they are guessing about how it *behaved*.

But in **SPITE** OF all the difficulties, ornithologists seem bent on **INSISTING** that *Archaeopteryx* is the "link" between **BIRDS** and **REPTILES**! Such is their *faith*. In any modern book on the subject, you'll probably find artists' reconstructions of *Archaeopteryx*. Then will follow elaborate discussions about how this and that "might have" occurred, and how this and that change "gradually" took place.

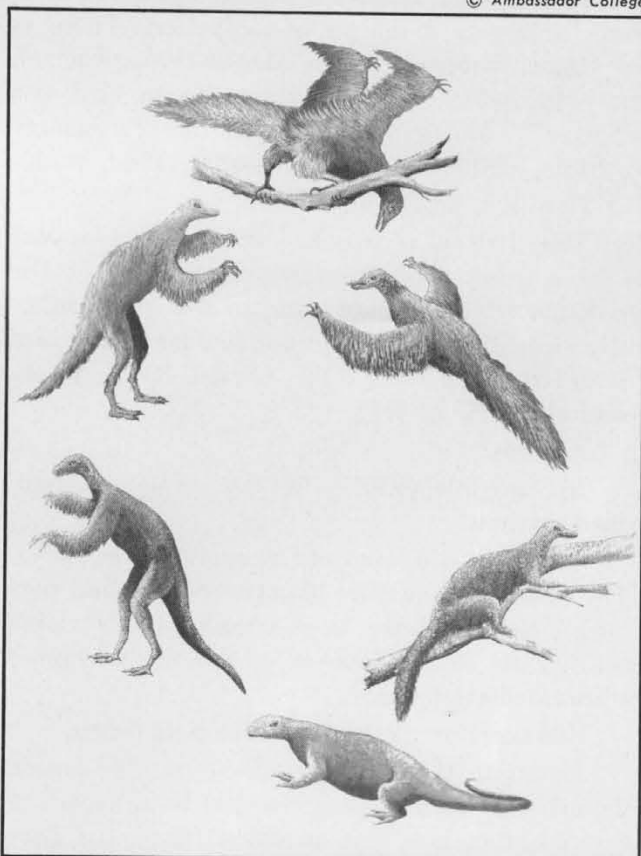
To simply call *Archaeopteryx* another of the many **UNUSUAL** creatures, and place it in a **SPECIAL** classification, has apparently never occurred to evolutionists. Rather, it is seized upon as a *connecting link* between birds and reptiles.

Really a "Link"?

One theory speculates ancient reptiles first climbed trees, and gradually extending their leaps,

REPTILES INTO BIRDS — According to evolution the ancestors of birds reared heads from the seas millions of years ago and slithered ashore. During uncountable aeons of time they climbed trees, leaped from branch to branch and grew feathers till they at last became birds.

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began to glide (by the help of scarred, broken, "half-formed" "feathers") from branch to branch.

Another theory (take your pick) supposes they first began to run along the ground, and finally flew.

Science does *not* claim that all birds share *Archaeopteryx* as their common ancestor — believing that some of the flightless birds of today *may* have come from an even more ancient "ancestor" of *Archaeopteryx*.

But notice this admission! "...it would be naïve for us to assume that the accidental drowning of *Archaeopteryx*... marked the beginning of the evolution of birds. It *seems probable* that similar and *possibly* other kinds of primitive reptile-like birds *had already existed* for some millions of years" (*Biology of Birds*, Lanyon, 1963, p. 9).

But even though science *admits* *Archaeopteryx* does **NOT** mark the beginning of the **IMAGINED** "evolution" of birds — the evolution of birds **IS** **NEVERTHELESS** **BASED** **ON** **ARCHAEOPTERYX!**

Most Valuable Evidence

Search the writings of ornithologists on the subject, and you find them **REPEATEDLY** citing *Archaeopteryx* as their **MOST VALUABLE SINGLE** **PIECE** **OF** "EVIDENCE."

And what a **STRANGE** theory. To suppose that the amazingly complex and wonderfully constructed creatures of **FLIGHT** came from the lumbering, ungainly **CREEPING** creatures of earth — this is **STRANGE!**

As evolution admits, "STRANGELY, few people would suspect that the closest living relatives of the birds are crocodiles!" (*Ibid.*, p. 8.)

True — **FEW PEOPLE WOULD EVER** suspect such a **STRANGE** thing — because all the combined powers of observation, comparison, deduction, reason and logic put together with the actual **EVIDENCE** would **PROVE OTHERWISE!**

Archaeopteryx was a *strange creature*. But nowhere near so strange as the theories about his *place* in the fossil record.

Scientists really **DO NOT** **KNOW** what *Archaeopteryx* was.

It does not *fit* the rigid classifications of known creatures — but then, neither do many **KNOWN** creatures. Look at the duckbill platypus, for example. Appearing to be part duck, part otter, part beaver, this strange creature *lays eggs*, and then suckles its young, like mammals! What kind of ridiculous picture would an artist conjure up if a platypus had been discovered as a **FOSSIL** form of life?

But the platypus is not a fossil. He's merely an extremely **UNUSUAL** creature — therefore "diffi-

Archaeopteryx and His First Solo Flight!



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cult" for evolutionists to "classify." But he's FULLY developed, PERFECTLY formed, and completely "adapted" to his environment, because he was MADE that way.

Listen to this admission!

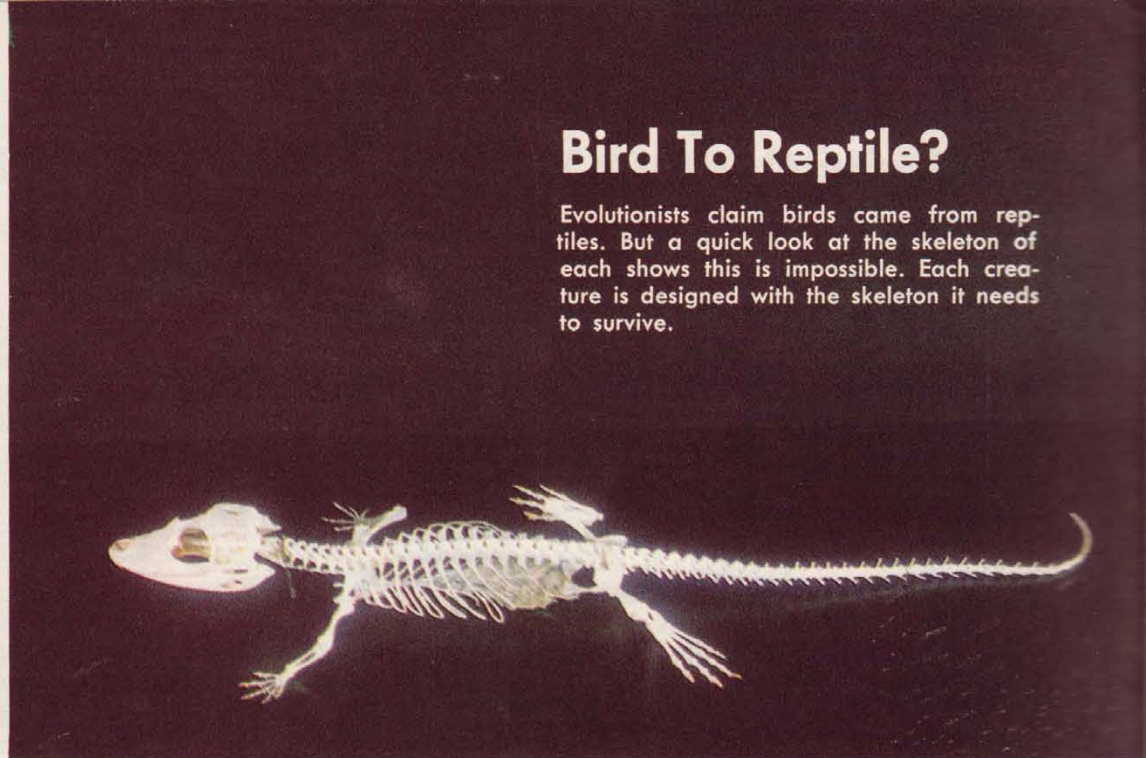
Archaeopteryx "Unstable"

"There is no justification for making *Archaeopteryx* the progenitor of all subsequent birds," says one scientist, "for it would be an extreme coincidence if the most ancient bird, so inadequately represented in the geological record, were indeed so fortunately placed in the evolutionary picture. The preservation of *Archaeopteryx* is almost certainly *due to its instability*," continues

the amazing admission — and please PAY CAREFUL ATTENTION TO THAT FACT — "to the fact that, having left the shelter of its trees in a high wind, it was borne over the Solnhofen lake and was drowned in the comparatively quiet waters near the shore" (*Biology and Comparative Physiology of Birds*, edited by A. J. Marshall, 1960, pp. 11-13).

But carefully consider *this!* If *Archaeopteryx*, a "fully developed" species, having clearly defined FEATHERS, was admittedly downed by a "sharp gust" and so preserved as a fossil form, then how about the dozens and dozens of INTERMEDIATE species NOWHERE NEARLY so "equipped to fly" as *Archaeopteryx*?

To simplify matters, let's go back in our



Bird To Reptile?

Evolutionists claim birds came from reptiles. But a quick look at the skeleton of each shows this is impossible. Each creature is designed with the skeleton it needs to survive.

Gentry, Wells — Ambassador College

FEATHER CLOSEUP! A tiny section of feather magnified approximately 200 times and then blown up four times. Note, black circle — shows where interlocking barbs grip other strands to make feather one of the most powerfully built, yet lightest structures.

imaginations (since the whole story of evolution is purely imaginary, anyhow) and make up a story about the first, “almost” *Archaeopteryx*. Our little creature — let’s call him “Archy” for short — since he’s not yet developed into a full-fledged, feathered *Archaeopteryx*. Archy is tired of sitting on his perch, a swaying limb, to which he had laboriously struggled with his claws and beak.

Up to this point, neither Archy nor any of his relatives had been successful in flight. Archy remembers dear old Uncle Willie, and all his brothers and sisters, and so many other relatives who had been leaping to their deaths from cliffs, pinnacles, towering rocks, trees, and shrubs. And then there was dear old aunt Martha-opteryx (meaning, “Winged Martha”), who, when she attempted to flutter through the tightly woven limbs of a thorn tree, lost all her feathers, and had been wearing an old discarded snake skin ever since. (We’re kidding of course!)

But, Archy is undaunted. In spite of repeated failures, he knows he is destined, somehow, to fly! He’s never SEEN anyone fly, mind you. His feathers aren’t long enough, and his “reptilian-like” bony structure is too heavy, and he’s aerodynamically unsound. But fly he must — or so science guesses.

So, as a steady gust shakes his limb, he stretches out his ancient, bedraggled (bedraggled, since he’s been dragging them along the ground, up



through mazes of brush and trees, and has never used them in actual flight) feathers, and with an ancient "CROAK!" of triumph leaps into the air!

FLOP! FLUTTER! THRASH! CRASH! RIP! TEAR! STRUGGLE, STRUGGLE, STRUGGLE! AAAAAaaaaaagghh! Serene quiet. Archy is dead.

He died of broken wings, a sprained back, a broken neck, crushed skull, and fractured feet.

Actually, Archy never existed! He couldn't have — since his ancestors weren't "equipped" to survive!

But let's go back to the admissions of scientists about *Archaeopteryx* — and his poor powers of flight! It makes MUCH more sense and is FAR MORE LOGICAL that, just as *Archaeopteryx* MAY HAVE BEEN DOWNED by a gust — HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS of his more POORLY EQUIPPED ANCESTORS broke their necks, drowned by the thousands, fell by the ten thousands, and piled up in veritable massive, fossil graveyards in their disastrous, feeble, futile efforts to fly!

And if true — the fossil record would ABOUND with such evidence.

Where Are the Feathers?

You would see fossil lizards with just a TINY HINT of a feather, growing from one elbow. You'd see dozens of other strange creatures, with feathers growing from their tails, their knees, and their heads. There would be broken, sprained, bedraggled, water-soaked feathers ALL THROUGH the fossil record — since evolution would have you believe the development from scales to feathers took MILLIONS and MILLIONS of years!

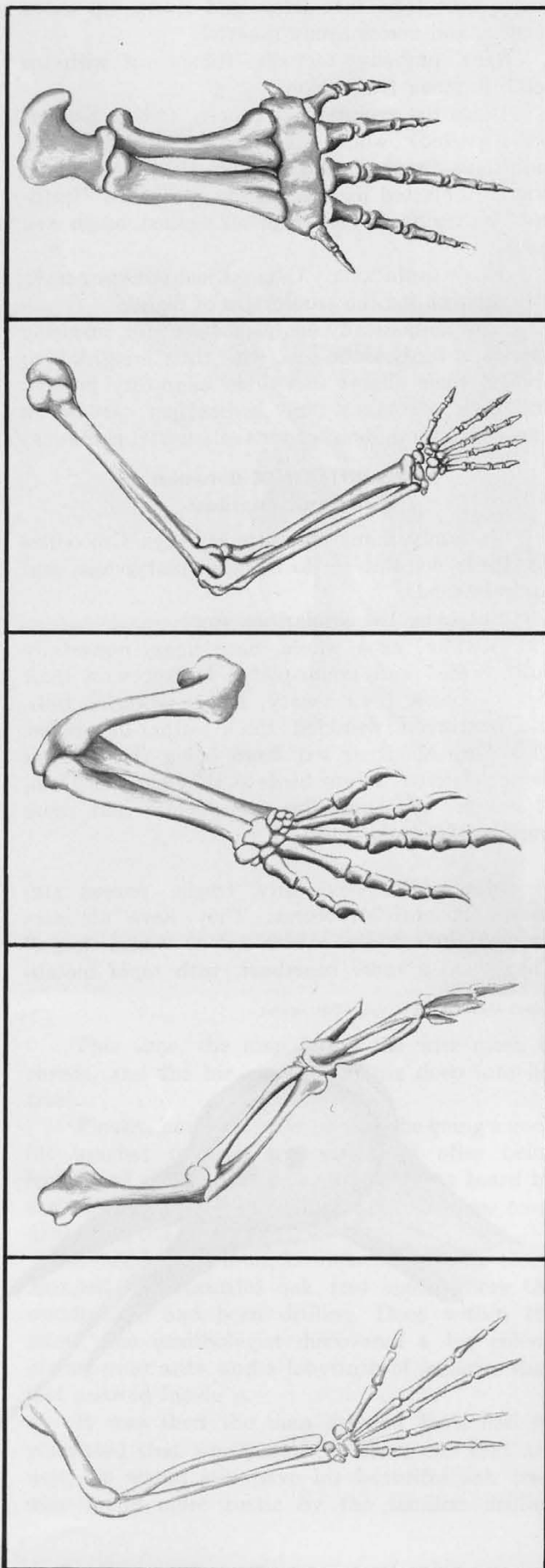
But why not look at it in REVERSE? What if, as the first "feathers" made their appearance on lizards, they were UNWELCOME?

How would YOU feel about a feather growing from your body?

Probably — a little weird! Probably, you'd PLUCK IT OUT! (After all, people shave and shave and shave — and still the hair grows back — and people burn, and electrocute, and shave, and pluck, and even remove whole patches of skin, just to get rid of unsightly body hair.)

How would any self-respecting, slithery lizard feel when he suddenly found FEATHERS on his fore-arms? Think of what kind of feathers they'd be, with him dragging them in and out of holes in the

ALL BUILT ON SAME PLAN — Top to bottom, whale flipper, human arm, frog's appendage, bird's wing, monkey arm. All are constructed on a similar plan but each serves the creature in a special way. Shows that one Designer thought out many slight variations each animal or humans needed to survive.



rocks, over logs, into lakes and rivers, up thorn bushes, and across sandy deserts!

He'd probably tear the things out with his teeth in sheer frustration!

Then the evolutionary process (which has not been proved) would have been halted at this ridiculous "stage," and to this day, you would observe dejected lizards, pulling at broken "feathers," or trying to rub them off against brush and rocks.

No — evolutionary thought just DOES NOT HAVE THE ANSWER for the true origin of flight!

The fantastically complex, beautiful, inspiring species of birds around us, with their breathtaking ability, their almost incredible migratory powers, and their SPECIALLY built bodies just CANNOT BE EXPLAINED by millions of tons of MISSING EVIDENCE!

Vast DIFFERENCE Between Birds and Reptiles!

Certainly, many creatures lay eggs. Crocodiles do. Birds do. But so do duckbill platypuses, and so do insects.

But here, the similarities stop!

Reptiles, as a whole, have huge, powerfully built, scaled and armor-plated bodies, with their gigantic jaws, their meaty, bony, powerful tails, and weathered, wrinkled, thick leather-like hides. These are about as FAR from being the "closest living relatives" to our birds as they can be! Then, of course, other reptiles are *smaller* and more fragile than some birds.

Think of it!

Many birds have tiny, fragile, porous AIR-FRAME skeletal structures. They have air sacs through their bodies, which act as "extra lungs." They have a *rapid* heartbeat, with *rapid* metab-

olism. Others, have ponderous huge skeletons — and *cannot* fly. They have a myriad of *different kinds* of beaks, claws, wings, and heads — each for a SET, SPECIFIC and very SPECIAL PURPOSE!

Man will stop at nothing — no matter HOW preposterous it seems — in his attempt to explain the marvelous CREATION without a great and Wonderful CREATOR!

One of the GREAT PROOFS OF GOD is DESIGN! It is FAR more logical to point to egg-laying, bony frames, and various similarities in characteristics in ALL creatures, as proof of ONE GREAT DESIGNER, who utilized ONE GREAT MASTER PLAN in His Creation, than to say one "evolved" from the other!

When you view a row of similar buildings, you observe they were designed by the SAME ARCHITECT — you don't reason the little ones "evolved" from the big ones.

And when you see the similarities in "nature" you are seeing the SAME SELF-EVIDENT TRUTH! One GREAT ARCHITECT designed ALL LIFE — CREATED IT — PUT IT ON THIS EARTH FOR A GREAT PURPOSE!

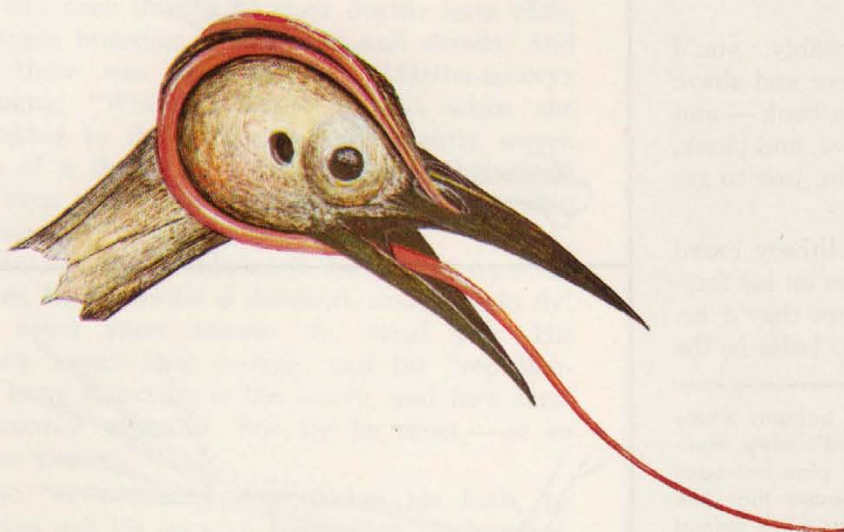
What a truly breathtaking study it would be if, throughout ornithology, the wondrous, warm, loving, and oftentimes HUMOROUS wisdom of GOD were taught to our children, in place of the empty suppositions of the no-God theories of today!

In this article, let's just look at one of the myriad forms of bird life.

The common — but humorous — woodpecker!

What Makes a Woodpecker Peck Wood? Or: How Much Wood Can a Woodpecker Peck?

One of the most interesting sights you probably recall from childhood experience was a wood-

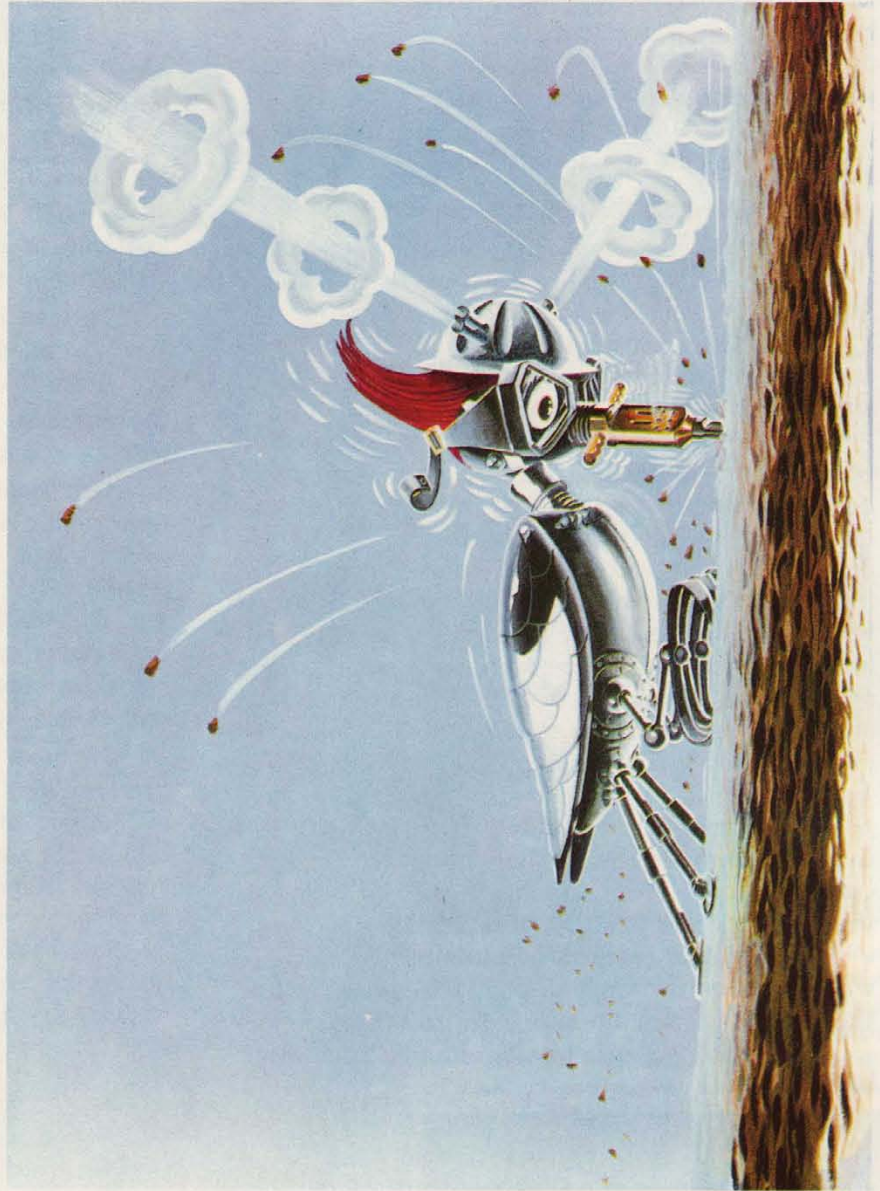


WOODPECKER TONGUE — A woodpecker has an elastic tongue — especially adapted for penetrating deep into trees and snaking out its food. The tongue goes under the jaw, over the head — and into the right nostril. The left one is free for breathing. A remarkable example of God's engineering creativity.

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How To Put A "Robot" Woodpecker Together

Here is some of the specialized equipment of the "common" woodpecker: 1. A powerful, heavy duty BEAK — perfect as a wood-boring tool. 2. Tough NECK MUSCLES, necessary to deliver staccato, "jack-hammer" blows with its beak. 3. A THICK SKULL, made flexible by tiny cross braces. 4. SHOCK ABSORBERS of heavy tissue between beak and skull — not found in other birds. 5. A long slender TONGUE, generally barbed and covered with sticky substance to "fish out" insects. 6. Short, powerful LEGS, unlike spindly legs of most birds. 7. Viselike TOES, two in front and two in back — a perfect pincer for grasping bark. 8. Stiff TAIL FEATHERS that end in sharp spines. These are essential to prop up the woodpecker as he excavates nesting site. Could all EIGHT of these specialized parts evolve at once? Impossible!



Schuler, McGuinness — © Ambassador College

pecker hammering furiously against a tree.

Anyone who has spent much time in the woods in almost any part of the United States has heard the familiar rat-a-tat-tat of a woodpecker banging his sharp, stout beak against wood.

Woodpeckers have some of the most remarkable habits of all living things. They're another amazing example of *highly specialized* creatures who obtain their food in a very unusual manner.

One ornithologist told of seeing a woodpecker land on his favorite oak tree.

Seeing the blurred head as the bird furiously hacked clouds of splinters and sawdust out of his favorite tree, the man shouted at the bird, then decided to girdle the part of the tree the woodpecker had attacked with a heavy wire mesh, in an attempt to discourage it.

But the woodpecker was soon back.

This time, the man found the wire mesh in shreds, and the bird busily drilling deep into his tree!

Finally, however, after finding the going a good bit tougher through the wire, and after being frightened away repeatedly, the bird was heard by the owner of the tree drilling away on trees more distant in the forest.

Several years later, he reports, a severe storm snapped his beautiful oak tree right where the woodpecker had been drilling. Deep within the trunk, the ornithologist discovered a big colony of carpenter ants, and a labyrinth of galleries they had gnawed inside it.

It was then the man decided that, had he permitted that woodpecker to clean out that ant nest, he would still have his beautiful oak tree, only made more rustic by the familiar drilling

marks of the bird families' answer to the jack-hammer, the woodpecker.

But how did the woodpecker *know* those ants were deep inside a tough old oak?

Why does a woodpecker obtain his food in the most difficult manner possible?

Picking Up Pecking "Gradually"?

COULD woodpeckers have "evolved" gradually — learning to "survive" in the only way possible for them, pecking deep into tough trees?

There are many different species of woodpeckers. One hundred seventy-nine in the world, and twenty-two of them in North America.

They range in size from the huge pileated woodpecker (19 inches from tip of tail to tip of beak — about the size of a crow) to the tiny downy. Each species finds its food in a slightly different fashion, and feeds on different things.

The little downy feeds on caterpillars found in small twigs and tiny crevices, while the red-headed woodpecker (the one with which most people seem at least partly familiar) feeds on ants and grubs inside the trees. The gaudily decorated pileated woodpecker can strip the bark completely from a tree (one ornithologist watched a huge pileated remove 30 feet of bark from a tree in less than 15 minutes!) that has been attacked by carpenter ants, thus preventing the spreading of the ants to other healthy trees nearby.

The flicker (named because of the flash of white color on its wings in flight) feeds on or near the ground, lapping up ants with its sticky tongue.

The woodpecker is totally different from other birds.

Unusual Anatomy

First and most obvious, is his beak. It is straight, *very* hard in comparison with most birds, and pointed. The head is constructed differently, too. The skull is much thicker than other birds, and the skull and beak are moved (sometimes more than 100 times a minute!) by powerful muscles. The bones between the beak and skull have their own built-in "shock absorbers," being constructed differently than those of other birds, which are usually directly joined together.

Rather, in the woodpecker family, the beak and skull are joined by connective tissue that is spongy and elastic.

Every part of the woodpecker's anatomy is specially constructed for the sole purpose of drilling into wood. Their claws are divided into two sharp and powerful toes forward, and two backward, like a pair of ice tongs, for gripping the bark. Their tail feathers act as a brace, steadying the bird on a firm tripod as it whacks away.

The tail feathers are unusually strong, and

during molting season, the main propping feathers do not fall out until *other feathers have already been replaced*, and can support the weight of the bird while the bigger, stronger feathers molt.

How do they locate their food?

Once, a pileated was observed whacking away on a tough old hickory. Ants were using a little knothole as an entrance into the tree — but the bird ignored the knothole.

Instead it began pounding on the trunk as it slowly circled the tree — tapping, then pausing.

Then it drilled its way into the very heart of the ant nest — five feet *below* the knothole the ants were using.

Ornithologists speculate the woodpeckers use their acute sense of hearing (*another* remarkable part of their anatomical structure) to locate the insects either by *hearing* the insects, or else detecting the subtle differences in the sounds of the woods over insect channels, or both.

The woodpecker's tongue is perhaps its most remarkable instrument.

In most cases, it is barbed, and about four times as long as the beak. The woodpecker snakes his tongue in and out of his beak like a snake's tongue. In some species, the tongue is coated with a sticky substance, used as bait to catch ants. A woodpecker will drill into a tree, then snake out its long, sticky tongue, waiting until the ants, believing it to be a worm invader, swarm all over it. The woodpecker then whips the unsuspecting ants into his mouth.

Unusual Studies

Three woodpeckers were being studied in a cage by ornithologists when they decided to attempt an experiment. The experimenters tried holding food above and behind the bird's heads, and were astonished when they whipped their tongues up over their heads, snatching away the food, *without looking around, or turning their heads!*

Every different woodpecker performs a *special service* in policing a balanced forest.

As an article by Peter Farb, said, "Woodpeckers are the only creatures who spend most of their waking hours banging their heads against wood. They do this because of the role they seem to have been assigned in the living community: to glean insects from under the bark of trees" (*Reader's Digest*, Peter Farb, "Nature's Noisy Chiselers," September 1962, p. 239).

Yes, "seem to have been ASSIGNED," but by WHOM?

Said the article, "They are the only things able to locate and eradicate these insect hordes."



Top left, *pileated* woodpecker. Large photo, *gila* woodpecker. Below, *acorn* woodpecker. All have extremely specialized parts for pecking wood. Read article to find how they acquired these parts. Cruickshank, Thornhill—National Audubon Society Photos



The Very First Woodpecker

But when did the VERY FIRST woodpecker decide to PECK WOOD?

In the vague guesswork of evolution, coming to grips with such practical questions is rarely, if ever, done.

But think about it.

Let's "imagine" if we can, the very FIRST ATTEMPT of a woodpecker to peck wood. Remember, IF evolution "happened," it had to START SOMEPLACE!

What *made* that first "woodpecker" (or would-be woodpecker?) decide to peck wood? Was it necessary for him to *survive*? But how could *that* be? Millions of other birds are still with us; and they obtain food on the ground, on shrubs and leaves, in the air, in the water, or, like as not, from the backs and mouths of animals! WHY PECK WOOD?

How did he *know* there was any food INSIDE a tree? He didn't *see* it, didn't yet have his highly acute hearing to *hear* it. He didn't yet have his shock-absorbing cartilage between his beak and his head. His head wasn't yet thicker than other birds and his beak wasn't yet stronger, longer, or sharper.

His tail feathers had not yet "somehow decided" to molt in SPECIAL ORDER so he would always have his ready-made prop under him, and his tongue was just a little short thing, up inside his beak like most other birds.

But here is the poor little would-be woodpecker. About to peck wood.

Pick a tree. Don't even pick a hickory (like modern woodpeckers often do); pick a *softer* tree, say, an elm.

He begins banging away. OUCH!

Dying Would-Be Woodpeckers

Can you imagine it? The forest floor littered with dead and dying would-be woodpeckers, who broke their beaks, dislocated their necks, shattered their heads, or broke their tail feathers, and were rendered unable to fly.

Perhaps others fly wildly about, in the throes of blinding, dizzying, wrenching headaches — crashing blindly into trees!

For thousands — no, millions — of years this continues. No woodpecker obtains his food from a tree — for he hasn't yet developed all the elaborately specialized equipment he needs. All woodpeckers keep dying. None survive.

They don't survive for several reasons.

First, they MUST OBTAIN THOSE ANTS AND GRUBS INSIDE OF TREES to survive! And they can't develop all their special apparatus for food-getting until they NEED to. And if they NEED to — they had

better HURRY — because birds have rapid metabolism — and must eat more, proportionate to body size and weight, than almost any creature.

But they keep killing themselves in the attempt. Some are stuck in cracks, pulling with futile struggles to free their beaks, caught in a stiff old oak. Others die of migraine headaches.

No Survivors Left

All the rest die because they can't build nests. You see, woodpeckers build their nests inside trees.

But they don't pick "old hollow trees." Rather, they hammer out their *own* hole in a tree. Granted, the tree can be partly hollow, or have a knothole to start on, or have an ant colony inside it. But chisel away they *do* — and they had to start *sometime*.

The woodpeckers (who are not yet woodpeckers) keep dying.

None survive.

As the succeeding generations keep attempting to peck away, one little woodpecker (who doesn't exist, since none survived — since they couldn't survive if they failed to obtain their food from inside the trees) finally developed all the amazing special adaptive requirements for being a true, honest woodpecker.

Sound logical?

Is it credible? Can you believe it?

Mutations can't explain away the woodpecker. Vague ideas about birds "cleaning" their beaks on limbs, and just "accidentally" beginning to peck lightly on trees won't explain it. And remember, about 99 out of 100 mutations produce INFERIOR creatures, NOT equipped as well to survive.

No, millions of woodpeckers in the world have pecked holes in the theory of evolution.

What Is the Truth?

It's about time you got back to the TRUNK OF THE TREE — just like the woodpecker does — and prove to yourself GOD CREATED!

Every *one* of the hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of species of life on this earth has its own special story! And every one of them should be *studied, thought about, pondered*.

The amazing life forms around you were *made* — made to be appreciated, *admired*, and *enjoyed*! But unless you can constantly rejoice in the LOVE, WARMTH and BEAUTY your Creator has put all around you, continually recognizing His great designing ability, His humor and wit, His perfect planning and great Creative power — you're MISSING OUT on some of the truly savory moments of this life God has given you.

WORSHIP God — *HE* made the earth, and every creature in it.