

Bird Beaks

Use a field guide to look up the birds in the table below. Write the type of beak each bird has (they may have more than one kind – for example, a Great Blue Heron has a long and straight beak). Also write in their diet (what they eat).

At the bottom of the page match the type of beak with the descriptions.

Bird Species	Type of Beak	Diet
Brown-headed Cowbird		
Double-crested Cormorant		
Red Crossbill		
American Woodcock		
Yellow Warbler		
Hairy Woodpecker		
Hooded Merganser		
Northern Shoveler		
Ruffed Grouse		
Barn Swallow		

___ Wide	1. The beak curves upwards	___ Chisel
___ Lamellate	2. Has tooth-like ridges for filtering food	___ Terete
___ Hooked	3. Crosses at the end	___ Straight
___ Bent	4. Higher than it is wide	___ Crossed
___ Decurved	5. Tapers to a fine point	___ Spatulate
___ Toothed	6. Shaped like a spoon	___ Long
___ Conical	7. Much longer than the head	___ Acute
___ Stout	8. Much shorter than the head	___ Serrated
___ Depressed	9. Cylindrical in sharp (circular)	___ Compressed
___ Recurved	10. Has a large hump on it	___ Gibbous
___ Short	11. Shaped like a cone	
	12. Bends downward	
	13. Has a sharp curve in the middle of the beak	
	14. Straight line down the middle when the beak is closed	
	15. Upper mandible hooks over lower mandible	
	16. Wider than it is long	
	17. High and wide	
	18. Double notched in upper mandible	
	19. Straight with a beveled tip	
	20. Wider than it is high	
	21. Looks like a saw blade	

Types of Beaks

Long

The bill is much longer than it is wide.



Hooked

Sharp-curved at the end.

This beak is used for tearing and shredding. It is found in hawks, owls, and parrots.



Straight

As the beak closes, the line running down the middle is straight.



Chisel-like

Beveled at the end.

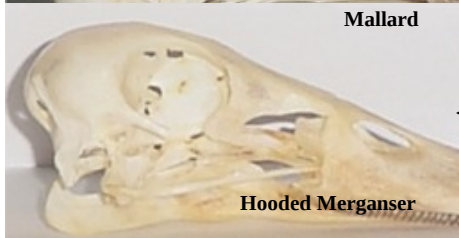
This bill is used for hammering into trees and is found mostly in woodpeckers.



Lamellate

Has sieves for straining.

This beak is used for straining tiny plants and animals out of water.



Serrated

The bill is saw-like.

This bill looks like it has small teeth. It is used for catching fish and found mostly in merganser.



Wide

Wider at the base than it is long.

This beak is found in birds that eat flying insects. The wide beak acts as a funnel or scoop, making it easier to catch bugs.



Short

The beak is much shorter than the head.

Spatulate

Wider at the end than at the base.

This unusual bill is found in very few birds. It helps the bird gather more food with the wider end.



Stout

A beak that is both high and wide (a thick, heavy beak).

This makes a good multi-purpose beak that is able to eat many different kinds of foods.

