

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

# Submitters Perspective

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## Birds

I was driving my street and my windows were open and I experienced something I've experienced before but this particular time it caught my attention more than usual. The air was full of the sounds of birds singing their praises.

*[67:19] Have they not seen the birds above them lined up in columns and spreading their wings? The Most Gracious is the One who holds them in the air. He is Seer of all things.*

*[16:79] Do they not see the birds committed to fly in the atmosphere of the sky? None holds them up in the air except GOD. This should be (sufficient) proof for people who believe.*

There are just eight groups of animals with learned vocalizations: songbirds, hummingbirds, parrots, bats, cetaceans, humans, elephants and pinnipeds. Vocal learning in birds has evolved to enable members of a group, flock, or colony to communicate and pass on information necessary for group success and survival. Other animals recognize sounds (e.g., pets recognizing commands) but cannot learn and vocalize those sounds.



Songbirds in particular use their voices, singing elaborate songs to attract mates or defend their territory. They recognize each other by their voices. Birds also use shorter, less complex sounds known as calls. They stay in touch with each other when foraging with soft calls of contact. And there are alarm calls to alert to a predator. Some birds use non-vocal sounds, like a woodpecker drumming on a resonant surface, owls snapping their bills together, and pigeons flapping their wings. In addition, birds can communicate without sound, especially a large group of different birds around a feeder—bobbing their heads, lifting their wings, raising

their feathers or crests. And mating displays can be elaborate and colorful. The males want to show off their most attractive features, like bright colors and long feathers. And some displays include choreographed dances or exhibitions of flying prowess.

Birds can communicate over long distances, which is helpful in dense forests or after dark. Owl hoots tend to travel long distances because of their low frequency, plus the stillness of the night. Owls often occupy large territories and they have excellent hearing. Some owl hoots can be heard for miles.

Birds can communicate in flight, which can help in a migrating flock, especially one that travels at night. The soft regular calls help the birds maintain their spacing and keep the flock together.

What about birds communicating with humans? Certainly, pet birds do. They can communicate vocally and visually in ways that attentive owners can learn to understand. And many learn to speak words.

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[2:171] *The example of such disbelievers is that of parrots who repeat what they hear of sounds and calls, without understanding. Deaf, dumb, and blind; they cannot understand.*

Parrots are very intelligent creatures. They understand what their owners say to them, and can even learn to do tricks on command. But do parrots understand what they say when they're talking? The short answer is yes because parrots have been studied



in scientific settings. They can do simple math, count, and respond to questions accurately. Many parrots and macaws mimic human speech, just as the

verse above says. But they also can show that they understand what they're saying. This requires "abstract representation. Parrots are able to translate spoken words into their own body language, thus creating an entirely new code." Many of these birds don't just mimic words spoken to them, but answer with appropriate phrases. "The macaws, in particular, tend to pick up on small details in conversations and repeat them back later with different people." Many parrots learn their names and recognize their owners. They have excellent memories.

Another highly intelligent bird is the raven. There have been many experiments with ravens figuring out how to get food through a series of complex actions. And we know of the raven's intelligence because the Quran tells us.

[5:30] *His ego provoked him into killing his brother. He killed him, and ended up with the losers. [5:31] GOD*

*then sent a raven to scratch the soil, to teach him how to bury his brother's corpse. He said, "Woe to me; I failed to be as intelligent as this raven, and bury my brother's corpse." He became ridden with remorse.*

There are ten raven species throughout the world, with two of those inhabiting the United States. The common raven is the most common!

And the Quran tells us of another intelligent bird, the hoopoe. The hoopoe is a medium-sized bird with broad black and white wings which enable it to be a strong flier. The rest of its body varies from a bright rust to dull tan shades. It also has a prominent rust-colored crest on its head with black feather-tips. Hoopoes are generally found in Europe, Asia and Africa, living in areas of sparse vegetation.

The primary call of a hoopoe is 3-syllable 'oop-oop-oop'. One can also observe croaks and hisses, when spotting predators or other sources of alarm. Hoopoes sing to attract mates, then stay with one mate throughout the season, nesting in a tree or wall, then laying 10-12 eggs. The female sits on the nest and the male brings the food. They protect the nest with a foul-smelling secretion from the female, which she uses to coat the chicks. The chicks can shoot streams of their feces towards predators, while hissing like a snake. They also stab with their sharp bills when threatened.



Hoopoes are regularly seen on the ground, enjoying sunbathing with

their heads tilted back, and taking dust or mud baths.

Science does not record hoopoes using language, but the Quran gives us the wonderful story of Solomon and the hoopoe (27:20-37).

[27:22] *He did not wait for long. (The hoopoe) said, "I have news that you do not have. I brought to you from Sheba, some important information. [27:23] "I found a woman ruling them, who is blessed with everything, and possesses a tremendous palace. [27:24] "I found her and her people prostrating before the sun, instead of GOD. The devil has adorned their works in their eyes, and has repulsed them from the path; consequently, they are not guided."*

We know that both Solomon and David were blessed to be able to communicate with birds.

[21:79] *We granted Solomon the correct understanding, though we endowed both of them with wisdom and knowledge. We committed the mountains to serve David in glorifying (God), as well as the birds. This is what we did.*

[38:18] *We committed the mountains in his service, glorifying with him night and day. [38:19] Also the birds were committed to serve him; all were obedient to him.*

[27:16] *Solomon was David's heir. He said, "O people, we have been endowed with understanding the language of the birds, and all kinds of things have been bestowed upon us. This is indeed a real blessing."*

[27:17] *Mobilized in the service of Solomon were his obedient soldiers of jinns and humans, as well as the birds; all at his disposal.*

Do we need to listen to birds? Well, there really is meaning to all those crazy sounds and movements they make. With practice, you can learn to hear and interpret what birds are saying to some degree. It's amazing to

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step outside and within a few moments, have a read on what's happening in the landscape just by tuning your ears to what birds are saying. They can tell you where food sources are; they can tell you when they're in love, and maybe when they've lost their mate; they'll tell you whose territory this is.

Just listening to birds will help form a connection with nature, with all of God's creations. They are communities like us and they are always singing God's praises.

*[6:38] All the creatures on earth, and all the birds that fly with wings, are communities like you. We did not leave anything out of this book. To their Lord, all these creatures will be summoned.*

References: [birdfact.com](http://birdfact.com) and [birdtherapy.blog](http://birdtherapy.blog)

Bob

\* \* \* \* \*

## Lined Up in Columns

*[24:41] Do you not realize that everyone in the heavens and the earth glorifies GOD, even the birds as they fly in a column? Each knows its prayer and its glorification. GOD is fully aware of everything they do.*

*[67:19] Have they not seen the birds above them lined up in columns and spreading their wings? The Most Gracious is the One who holds them in the air. He is Seer of all things.*

An article in the Los Angeles Times (accessed online) from 3 February 2015 was entitled: **Birds flying in a V take turns in the top spot, study finds.** And I'm using that study for this article.

The V formation isn't a revelation to anyone who has ever looked up in the sky



and watched a flock of birds migrating by. It's classic and it's amazing. We all know that being in the front is a tiring job, whether it's running, bike racing, whatever. And sports teams have learned from the birds to take turns being the leader. You get to rest a bit while drafting off the guy in front of you. So, it's no surprise that the birds take turns being in front. But how do they decide whose turn it is?

"I've been waiting for 40 years for someone to solve this problem," said Robert Trivers, an evolutionary biologist at Rutgers University. "V-formations are very, very obvious. They cannot be accidental and they cannot be trivial, because the birds do them. They do them all the time."

A study by the Austrian-based conservation group Waldrappteam decided to find out more about the V formation and the process of flying in one. They equipped a flock of 14 ibises with data loggers, containing very precise GPS monitors. These devices could pinpoint within about 20 centimeters where each bird was in relation to the other birds. They tracked the birds from the ground.

"As it turned out, no single bird took the top spot for an extended period of time. Each ibis would typically spend less than a minute, perhaps just a few seconds, at the vertex of the V before quickly switching with one of the next birds in the formation.

"In a one-hour flight, each bird would do a pair-switch with its nearest neighbor an

average of 57 times, Voelkl said. On a typical flight, which could last around three to eight hours, each bird would perform hundreds of switches. The transitions were nearly seamless, Voelkl said, usually taking about a second to execute."

I found this whole article fascinating, and most amazing to me was that they discovered that the birds, with these hundreds of shifts, ended up doing roughly the same amount of work. They would shift positions, even break up into smaller formations and then come back together, reshuffling smoothly and without conflict. No one tries to cheat and avoid the tougher lead position. They simply do what they are commanded to do, on instinct. They glorify God by following His commandments, submitting to His will. And they all benefit from the support and cooperation of the flock.

*[16:79] Do they not see the birds committed to fly in the atmosphere of the sky? None holds them up in the air except GOD. This should be (sufficient) proof for people who believe.*

*[17:44] Glorifying Him are the seven universes, the earth, and everyone in them. There is nothing that does not glorify Him, but you do not understand their glorification. He is Clement, Forgiver.*

May God give us the strength to learn from the birds' cooperation, submission and sacrifice for others so that we can become better Submitters.

Lydia



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## On Birds

“But ask the beasts, to teach you,  
or the birds of the air to tell you;  
or the reptiles on earth to instruct you,  
and the fish of the sea to inform you.  
Which of all these does not know  
that the hand of God has done this?  
In his hand is the soul of every living  
creature  
and the life breath of all mankind.  
(Job 12:7-10)

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry  
about your life, what you will eat or  
drink, or about your body, what you  
will wear. Is not life more than food  
and the body more than clothing?  
Look at the birds in the sky; they do  
not sow or reap, they gather nothing  
into barns, yet your heavenly Father  
feeds them. Are not you more im-  
portant than they? Which of us by  
worrying can add a moment to his  
lifespan?  
(Matthew 6:25-26)

but those who hope in the Lord  
will renew their strength.  
They will soar on wings like eagles;  
they will run and not grow weary,  
they will walk and not be faint  
(Isaiah 40:31)

I know every bird in the mountains,  
and the insects in the fields are  
Mine.  
(Psalm 50:11)

## The Little Bird's Song

by Anonymous

A little bird, with feathers brown,  
Sat singing on a tree;  
The song was very soft and low,  
But sweet as it could be.

The people who were passing by,  
Looked up to see the bird  
That made the sweetest melody  
That ever they had heard.

But all the bright eyes looked in vain;  
Birdie was very small,  
And with his modest, dark-brown  
coat,  
He made no show at all.

“Why, father,” little Gracie said  
“Where can the birdie be?  
If I could sing a song like that,  
I'd sit where folks could see.”

“I hope my little girl will learn  
A lesson from the bird,  
And try to do what good she can,  
Not to be seen or heard.

“This birdie is content to sit  
Unnoticed on the way,  
And sweetly sing his Maker's praise  
From dawn to close of day.

“So live, my child, all through your  
life,  
That, be it short or long,  
Though others may forget your looks,  
They'll not forget your song.”

I think people who don't believe in  
God are crazy. How can you say there  
is no God when you hear the birds  
singing these beautiful songs you  
didn't make? *Little Richard*

Birds are a miracle because they  
prove to us there is a finer, simpler  
state of being which we may strive to  
attain. *Douglas Coupland*

The more often we see the things  
around us—even the beautiful and  
wonderful things—the more they  
become invisible to us. That is why  
we often take for granted the beauty  
of this world: the flowers, the trees,  
the birds, the clouds—even those we  
love. Because we see things so often,  
we see them less and less. *Joseph B.  
Wirthlin*

There are joys which long to be ours.  
God sends ten thousand truths, which  
come about us like birds seeking inlet;  
but we are shut up to them, and so  
they bring us nothing, but sit and  
sing awhile upon the roof, and then  
fly away. *Henry Ward Beecher*

Birds are the most popular group in  
the animal kingdom. We feed them  
and tame them and think we know  
them. And yet they inhabit a world  
which is really rather mysterious.  
*David Attenborough*

Birds have wings; they're free; they  
can fly where they want when they  
want. They have the kind of mobility  
many people envy. *Roger Peterson*