

DRINKING BEHAVIOUR IN BIRDS

Most birds are unable to swallow by the "sucking" or "pumping" action of peristalsis in their oesophagus (as humans do), and drink by repeatedly raising their heads after filling their mouths to allow the liquid to flow by gravity, a method usually described as "sipping" or "tipping up". The notable exception is the Pigeon Family (Columbiformes); in fact, according to the eminent Austrian Noble Laureate, zoologist, animal psychologist and ornithologist Professor Konrad Lorenz in 1939:

"one recognizes the order (Columbiformes) by the single behavioural characteristic, namely that in drinking the water is pumped up by peristalsis of the oesophagus which occurs without exception within the order. The only other group, however, which shows the same behaviour, the Sand Grouse Family (Pteroclididae), is placed near the doves just by this doubtlessly very old characteristic."

Although this general rule still stands, since that time, observations have been made of a few exceptions in both directions. The Gouldian Finch, *Erythrura gouldiae*, and some other Australian finches, are notable exceptions to this characteristic.

In addition, specialized nectar feeders like Sunbirds (Nectariniidae) and Hummingbirds (Trochilidae) drink by using protrusible grooved or trough-like tongues, and some Parrots (Psittacidae) lap up water.

Many seabirds are able to drink sea water as they have glands near the eyes through which excess salt is eliminated. Many desert birds get all the water they need entirely from their food. They eliminate their nitrogenous wastes as uric acid, this reduces their physiological demand for water.

Source: Wikipedia