

THE CERE

WHAT IS IT, WHAT DOES IT DO?

The cere (from the Latin *cera*: wax) is a soft, fleshy swelling found on the beaks of certain birds. Hawks, parrots, doves, skuas are among the birds that have ceres. The word 'cere' is often used synonymously with 'beak' or 'nose', although the two are not identical. The cere plays a role in indicating the reproductive stage of some dimorphic birds¹, and also has a key function in respiration.

The cere is located at the top of the beak, and is often waxy in texture. The colour and shape of the cere may vary from species to species, and also depends on the season. The cere contains the nares (nostrils). In falcons, the opening of the nares is roughly circular in shape.

The nares are located within the cere. The nares connect to the inner beak, which is in turn connected to the respiratory system. Thus, the cere plays an important role in respiration, and the protection of the nares.



¹An example is the budgerigar. In most budgie colour phases the cere turns bright blue in mature males, while a mature female's cere is brownish. A female budgie's cere can also appear wrinkled, particularly when in full breeding condition. Immature budgies have pale pinkish ceres that are smooth and shiny.

Source: Wikipedia