

## OOPS! MISSED THE APPLE



A seagull in the UK has been flying unaffected despite having a dart lodged in its skull, according to the sharp-eyed photographer who spotted it.

Gallery owner Graham Rhodes managed to grab a series of photos of the bird, which appeared to have been struck between the eyes with a crossbow bolt, the *Scarborough Evening News* reported.

The bolt had pierced through the seagull's skull and was coming out the back of its head, but Mr Rhodes said the animal was flying completely normally.

"It is incredibly hard to believe that the bird is still flying with a bolt in its head because you would think the weight of the object would restrict its movement," he said.

"However the bird seems absolutely normal."

It is the second reported attack on a seagull in the town in recent weeks, with another bird suffering from an injured wing.

### THE CIRCULATORY SYSTEM IN BIRDS

Birds have a four-chambered heart, in common with humans, most mammals, and some reptiles (namely the crocodilia). This adaptation allows for efficient nutrient and oxygen transport throughout the body, thus providing birds with energy to fly and maintain high levels of activity. The fastest known heart rate of a bird is that of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird, *Archilochus colubris*, which beats up to 1200 times per minute.

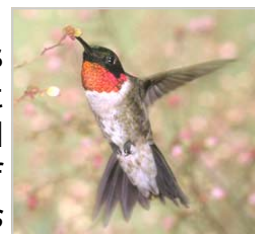


Photo: United States Fish & Wildlife Service

### THE DIGESTIVE SYSTEM IN BIRDS

Many birds possess a muscular pouch along the oesophagus called a crop. The crop functions to both soften food and regulate its flow through the system by storing it temporarily. The size and shape of the crop is quite variable among the birds. Members of the order Columbiformes, such as pigeons, produce a nutritious crop milk which is fed to their young by regurgitation. Birds possess a *ventriculus*, or gizzard, composed of four muscular bands that rotate and crush food by shifting the food from one area to the next within the gizzard. The gizzard of some species contains small pieces of grit or stone swallowed by the bird to aid in the grinding process of digestion, serving the function of mammalian or reptilian teeth. The use of gizzard stones is a similarity between birds and dinosaurs, which left gizzard stones called gastroliths as trace fossils.

Source: Wikipedia