



Reader's Guide

Grzimek's Student Animal Life Resource: Birds offers readers comprehensive and easy-to-use information on Earth's birds. Entries are arranged by taxonomy, the science through which living things are classified into related groups. Order entries provide an overview of a group of families, and family entries provide an overview of a particular family. Each entry includes sections on physical characteristics; geographic range; habitat; diet; behavior and reproduction; animals and people; and conservation status. Family entries are followed by one or more species accounts with the same information as well as a range map and photo or illustration for each species. Entries conclude with a list of books, periodicals, and Web sites that may be used for further research.

ADDITIONAL FEATURES

Each volume of *Grzimek's Student Animal Life Resource: Birds* includes a pronunciation guide for scientific names, a glossary, an overview of birds, a list of species in the set by biome, a list of species by geographic location, and an index. The set has 640 full-color maps, photos, and illustrations to enliven the text, and sidebars provide additional facts and related information.

NOTES

The classification of animals into orders, families, and even species is not a completed exercise. As researchers learn more about animals and their relationships, classifications may change. In some cases, researchers do not agree on how or whether to make a change. For this reason, the heading "Num-

ber of species” in the introduction of an entry may read “About 36 species” or “34 to 37 species.” It is not a question of whether some animals exist or not, but a question of how they are classified. Some researchers are more likely to “lump” animals into the same species classification, while others may “split” animals into separate species.

Grzimek’s Student Animal Life Resource: Birds has standardized information in the Conservation Status section. The IUCN Red List provides the world’s most comprehensive inventory of the global conservation status of plants and animals. Using a set of criteria to evaluate extinction risk, the IUCN recognizes the following categories: Extinct, Extinct in the Wild, Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable, Conservation Dependent, Near Threatened, Least Concern, and Data Deficient. These terms are defined where they are used in the text, but for a complete explanation of each category, visit the IUCN web page at <http://www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/redlists/RLcats2001booklet.html>.

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COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

We welcome your comments on *Grzimek’s Student Animal Life Resource: Birds* and suggestions for future editions of this work. Please write: Editors, *Grzimek’s Student Animal Life Resource: Birds*, U•X•L, 27500 Drake Rd., Farmington Hills, Michigan 48331-3535; call toll free: 1-800-877-4253; fax: 248-699-8097; or send e-mail via www.gale.com.