

Bird of the Year 2024

Bateleur

Lesson 1

TOPIC: Introduction to the Bateleur and identification	
GRADE: 4-6	
CRITICAL & DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES: Understanding identification of the Bateleur	
LINKS WITH PREVIOUS LESSONS: Nil	LINKS WITH NEXT LESSONS: Further information
FORMS OF ASSESSMENT: Worksheet review	RESOURCES: Included worksheet/s
LEARNING ACTIVITIES & ASSESSMENT:	
<p>Background</p> <p>Ever wondered how the Bateleur got its name? Translated from French, bateleur means the street performer or tightrope walker due to its distinctive aerial acrobatics. Its scientific name, <i>Terathopius ecaudatus</i>, is from the name <i>teras</i> (Greek) for “marvellous”; <i>ops</i> (Greek) for “face”; <i>e</i> (Latin) for “without”; <i>caudatus</i> (Latin) “tail”. This bird was given its common name by François Levaillant, a French naturalist and explorer.</p> <p>The Bateleur is considered the most famous of the snake eagles. In particular, the Bateleur was suggested to be the closest living relations to the large <i>Circaetus</i> snake eagles. Even though, when compared with snake eagles, Bateleurs appear to differ greatly in plumage patterns but extremely different, in nearly every respect of appearance and life history. Genetic studies have also found a recent genetic relationship of the Bateleurs with the Old World vultures.</p> <p>The Bateleur is a mid-sized eagle and large raptor. The total length of the Bateleur is 55cm - 70 cm. Typical length of a full-grown bird is around 63.5 cm. The wingspan of Bateleurs can vary from 168cm - 190 cm. Body mass can vary from 1,8kg - 3kg. Adult Bateleurs are generally black in colour with a chestnut mantle as well as on the rump and tail. Adult males also have grey patches on the edges of their wings, which extends to the secondaries in females. Adults also show white greater coverts, contrasting with black remiges in males, grey patches on the underwing primaries and black wingtips. The bare parts of adult bateleurs are exceptionally noticeable, with the adult cere, bare facial skin and feet all being rather bright red, however in some they can also temporarily fade to pink, pale pink or yellowish at times, such as when they are perching in the shade or bathing. The bare parts are the reddest during times of excitement. The bill is black with a yellow centre and red base. The eyes are dark brown. Unlike most creatures, female Bateleur is larger than the male.</p> <p>The juvenile Bateleur is quite different, being drab brown with a bit of paler feather scaling. All Bateleurs have extremely large heads for their size, rather small bills, large feet, relatively short legs, long, bow-like wings and short tails, which are much smaller on adults compared to juvenile birds. The plumage of a one-year-old Bateleur is a uniform dark brown. The head of the juvenile Bateleur is paler and tawnier than elsewhere on its body while the eyes are brown, the cere a rather unique greenish-blue and the feet whitish in colour.</p> <p>At as late as two to three years of age, the immature Bateleur is still much the same in</p>	

appearance as the juvenile but by the fourth year becomes more sooty brown, with sexual differences already evidenced by the more extensive dark wing markings of males. In the fifth year, the plumage may show the first signs of chestnut and the grey colour about back and shoulders tend to manifest. Also, from three to five years old, the cere and feet turn yellow then to dull pink. By the sixth and seventh years of life, the plumage of subadult Bateleurs blackens and the chestnut portions of the plumage increase. The shoulders become fully grey by the eighth year, the likely age of maturity. As for the bare parts in juvenile Bateleurs, the cere and facial skin are a distinct pale grey-blue to green blue. The juvenile's feet are greenish white to greyish white, at four to five, the cere, facial skin and feet turn yellow, then pink before finally reddening. The eyes are similar in hue to those of adult Bateleurs but are a slightly lighter, being more honey-brown, while the bill of juveniles are mainly pale grey-blue in colour.

The other features in perched adult Bateleurs are rather oddly stumpy, short legs and exceptionally short tail, possibly the shortest proportionately of all raptors. It has an extremely upright posture when perched, making them look like quite a tall raptor despite its rather short legs. Even while perched, the body is dominated by their exceptionally large wings, which possess approximately 25 secondary feathers, perhaps more than any other raptor.

Bateleurs are highly aerial birds that spend much time soaring and will frequently fly with exaggerated embellishments, perhaps when excited or angered. In flight, the Bateleur appears as a rather large raptor with elongated, rather narrow, and slightly bow-shaped wings, which appear pinched in at the bases, broad across the secondaries and regularly narrow, pointed and upturned at the tips. Upon sighting, the wings often catch the eye before the large head. The tail is so short in adult Bateleurs that the feet extend below the tail tip, almost giving the impression that the raptor nearly has no tail.

The adult Bateleur's wingspan is an extraordinary 2.9 times greater than its total length. The juvenile Bateleur on the wing appears broader winged and especially longer tailed with a largely uniform brown coloration, including the greater coverts, with paler feathers mainly about the head as well as on the flight feathers.

Activities

1. Word Search

Ensure you have sufficient copies of the word search found below. There are two versions of the word search, a more complex one for older grades and a simpler one for younger grades.

2. Vocabulary

Ensure you have sufficient copies of both the vocabulary activity found on the following pages for all the learners or sufficient for group work. The learners are required to define each of the terms and then to write a paragraph about the Bateleur using as many of the terms as possible. There are two versions of the vocabulary activities, one for seniors and one for juniors.



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Senior Word search

C	A	Q	B	W	H	Z	P	N	I	T	B	X	J	O	Z	C
O	B	L	A	C	K	D	R	U	G	R	E	Y	E	G	A	S
U	M	V	T	Y	A	L	H	Y	D	Q	I	R	J	L	B	E
R	P	C	E	K	G	F	R	A	P	T	O	R	F	H	U	D
T	E	J	L	O	S	N	P	T	D	Z	A	B	C	M	C	O
S	W	O	E	B	J	L	X	G	A	V	R	K	Y	F	I	K
H	F	H	U	R	C	G	Q	L	C	H	E	S	N	U	T	E
I	S	T	R	E	E	T	P	E	R	F	O	R	M	E	R	P
P	E	V	X	D	M	I	T	A	O	Y	U	N	K	O	D	A
M	T	I	S	P	J	G	Q	K	B	R	I	T	S	A	J	E
A	H	J	N	Z	L	H	I	G	A	P	E	M	J	C	N	R
N	E	W	V	W	V	T	B	U	T	Z	H	S	X	C	T	O
T	R	B	R	O	B	R	S	C	I	X	Y	I	U	I	A	D
L	M	X	S	C	G	O	Y	D	C	O	W	L	Z	P	R	Y
E	O	I	J	N	K	P	I	H	S	T	F	E	Q	I	E	N
C	R	W	H	I	T	E	L	D	W	M	B	N	V	T	U	A
P	E	G	W	A	F	W	P	E	Q	O	S	T	A	R	G	M
Q	G	B	O	R	C	A	E	R	I	A	L	X	D	I	P	I
H	U	A	X	G	Y	L	Q	Z	W	B	V	F	A	D	Y	C
G	L	I	F	W	J	K	H	K	P	H	O	E	N	I	X	S
H	A	M	W	K	G	E	R	D	E	N	S	C	L	Z	E	D
O	T	R	G	V	M	R	U	F	O	U	S	E	J	H	T	Y
F	I	L	V	N	H	U	S	L	I	W	J	M	N	I	M	Z
P	O	Q	F	A	C	I	A	L	S	K	I	N	X	K	F	L
E	N	D	T	U	O	M	T	G	C	L	U	B	K	M	N	A

Find the following words in the table above:

- Acrobatics Accipitrid Aerodynamics Aerial Bateleur
- Black Courtship Chestnut Cowl Facial skin Grey
- Gape Mantle Phoenix Raptor Red Rufous Silent
- Street performer Tightrope walker Thermoregulation White



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Junior Word search

B	L	A	C	K	Q	W	P	M	W	B
A	N	D	H	D	E	J	C	F	I	R
T	J	X	E	A	Z	I	R	E	G	O
E	S	K	S	O	A	R	Y	A	N	W
L	R	E	T	B	F	V	E	T	S	N
E	G	S	N	T	W	U	L	H	P	V
U	R	L	U	F	H	I	L	E	A	H
R	E	D	T	A	I	L	O	R	N	E
B	Y	C	G	C	T	Y	W	S	L	J
M	K	T	N	E	E	U	F	O	I	G
O	Y	F	Z	P	A	H	G	Q	B	K
A	E	A	G	L	E	X	C	H	D	W

Find the following words in the table above:

BATELEUR

BLACK

BROWN

CHESTNUT

EAGLE

FACE

FEATHERS

GREY

RED

SOAR

TAIL

WINGSPAN

WHITE

YELLOW



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Senior Vocabulary Activity

Acrobatics -

Aerodynamics -

Aerial -

Courtship -

Cowl -

Facial skin -

Gape -

Mantle -

Raptor -

Tightrope walker -

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Junior Vocabulary Activity

Cut out the following word blocks. Ensure that there are sufficient copies for each learner of group of learners.

1. Arrange the word blocks in alphabetical order from A-Z – check the learners.
2. Arrange the words into groups of colours, names/noun, verbs, and bird body parts – check the learners.
3. Arrange the groups from the question above in reverse alphabetical order, from Z-A.
4. Choose three words per learner and let them write a sentence about the Bateleur using these selected words.

BATELEUR

FACE

TAIL

EAGLE

CHESTNUT

WINGSPAN

BLACK

WHITE

RED

YELLOW

SOAR

FEATHERS

RAPTOR