Study Questions

to “Peck, Pluck, Probe, Preen”

Study and learn facts and ideas based on this Young Naturalists nonfiction story in Minnesota Conservation Volunteer, July-August 2019, www.mndnr.gov/mcvmagazine.

*Minnesota Conservation Volunteer* magazine is your guide to wild things. Every other month, six times a year, the magazine arrives in your school library. Each one has a story for Young Naturalists like you. **Are you curious about wild things?** Young Naturalists tells true stories that can answer all kinds of questions such as these—

**Have you ever heard of a purple wartyback?** How about a pink heelsplitter, pimple-back, or monkeyface? All are Minnesota freshwater mussels. Read Young Naturalists stories to learn which species (kinds) of critters live in Minnesota—frogs, salamanders, snakes, wild cats, wild dogs, weasels, mice, and rabbits.

Want to **peek inside the den of a red fox** and see how the kits grow up? Are you a rock hound searching for agates? Have you ever wondered what’s alive under snow? How animals see? Why is a bluebird blue? How birds fly?

Would you like to hear the true story of **giants of the ice age**? Young Naturalists also tells you about the underground universe. You can read the story of a tiny owl that went to a hospital with an injured wing. Find out about a boy who worked in a logging camp. Read the story of Ojibwe children today hunting and gathering like their ancestors did.

Learn how to get started **camping, snowshoeing, ice fishing, or canoeing.**

**Find these stories and more online** at www.mndnr.gov/young_naturalists.

*Your knowledge of wild things helps you explore and enjoy the outdoors. Have fun!*
“Peck, Pluck, Probe, Preen” Study Questions

Study and learn facts and ideas based on this Young Naturalists nonfiction story in Minnesota Conservation Volunteer, July-August 2019, www.mndnr.gov/mcvmagazine.

1. **Name four activities a bird uses its beak or bill for.**

   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

2. **How does rhynchokinesis help a hummingbird survive?**

   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

3. **Match the bird beak to its corresponding human tool:**

   barn swallow  sieve
   common loon  chisel
   hummingbird  needle-nose pliers
   pelican  butterfly net
   goldfinch  scoop
   peregrine falcon  scissors
   great blue heron  toothpick
   yellow-rumped warbler  nutcracker
   mallard  tweezers
   hairy woodpecker  spear
   snipe  soda straw
4. The bumps on a loon’s bill that help it grasp food are called
a. rhynchokinesis  
b. denticles  
c. gular sacs  
d. talons

5. True or false: A pelican uses its bill to scoop fish from a lake or river.

6. What is a mallard’s nail? ____________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

7. How do the hairlike feathers around the base of a hairy woodpecker’s bill help it survive?
   a. They help the bird attract mates.
   b. They help the bird keep wood chips out of its nostrils.
   c. They help prevent headaches.
   d. They let the bird know when it has chiseled far enough into wood.

8. What do the nerves in a snipe’s bill allow it to do? ______________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

9. Why can’t a snipe see its food?
   a. Because the food is underground.
   b. Because its eyes are on the sides of its head.
   c. Because its bill gets in the way.
   d. Because it shuts its eyes when it eats.

10. Match the bird beak or bill to the special feature:
    snipe  crevice on the top bill for cracking open seeds
    hairy woodpecker  comblike structures called lamellae
    mallard  hairlike feathers where the bill meets the rest of the head
    peregrine falcon  nerve-containing dents at the tip
    goldfinch  tomial tooth

Challenge: The article states that birds in cold climates tend to have smaller bills than those in warmer climates. How might a smaller bill help a bird survive in cold? ________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
1. What two birds described have been known to use their bills like spears?
   a. hummingbird and barn swallow
   b. pelican and peregrine falcon
   c. snipe and hairy woodpecker
   d. loon and great blue heron

2. The article calls the barn swallow’s bill “versatile.” What evidence does it provide to support this? ________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

3. Place the thistle seed-eating steps for a goldfinch in the right order.
   use top bill to separate the hull and the seed
   use tongue to place the seed between the top and bottom bill
   swallow the seed
   close mouth
   spit out the hull
   remove the seed from the thistle

4. Animals that mainly eat other animals are called carnivores. Animals that eat plant materials are called herbivores. Animals that commonly eat both are called omnivores. Based on the information in this story, classify the birds in this story:
   Carnivore:
   Herbivore:
   Omnivore:

5. True or false: Birds have tongues.
**Student Study Guide: Vocabulary cards**

*Cut along horizontal lines, fold in the middle and tape or staple. Blanks are provided to allow you or your students to add new words or phrases*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>An aerial acrobat</th>
<th>An acrobat that is active in the air can be called</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>is one that</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A crack</th>
<th>A crevice in a rock is</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in a rock is also known as</td>
<td>in a rock is</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The grubs</th>
<th>Some insect larvae are</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>some birds eat are</td>
<td>are</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A morsel</th>
<th>A tiny bit of food is known as</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>is</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When a bird preens, it</th>
<th>When a bird grooms its feathers with its bill, it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To poke with something sharp</strong> is</td>
<td><strong>To probe</strong> is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A feature that <strong>draws attention</strong> is</td>
<td>A <strong>striking</strong> feature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A feature that <strong>is added on</strong> to something is a <strong>supplement</strong> is</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A <strong>versatile</strong> tool is one that <strong>can serve different purposes</strong> is</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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