

Birds

Birds is the first book to examine bird remains in archaeology and anthropology. Providing a thorough review of the literature on this topic, it also serves as a guide to the methods of study of bird remains from the past. It covers a wide range of topics, including anatomy and osteology, taphonomy, eggs, feathers, and bone tools. It examines the myriad ways in which people have interacted with birds in the past. The volume also includes discussion on the consumption of wild birds, the domestication of birds, cockfighting and falconry, birds in ritual and religion, and the role of birds in ecological reconstruction, providing an up-to-date survey of current knowledge on these topics. *Birds* will be an invaluable resource for undergraduate and graduate students interested in zooarchaeology and human–animal relations, as well as professional zooarchaeologists, archaeologists, and anthropologists interested in birds and people of the past.

Dale Serjeantson is a Research Fellow in Archaeology in the School of Humanities, University of Southampton, UK. She is the co-author, with Alan Cohen, of *Manual for the Identification of Bird Bones from Archaeological Sites* and has contributed papers on birds and other zooarchaeological topics in journals and popular magazines. She is associate editor of the *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology* and a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, the Association for Environmental Archaeology, and L'Homme et l'Animal: Société de Recherche Interdisciplinaire.

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PREFACE

When I started studying bird remains from archaeological sites in Scotland and England in the 1980s, I would have been very grateful for a book which contained guidance on how to set about it and some ideas on how the bones might be interpreted. Later, when teaching the zooarchaeology of bird remains, I would also have found such a book very useful, so eventually I decided to write it myself. The literature on birds in archaeology has expanded greatly in the past 25 years, but it is not easily available except to specialists, as it is scattered in journals and collections of papers which have been published all over the world. This is my attempt to bring the scattered material together. It is intended as a guide to the subject, a synthesis of current research, and a basis for research in the future.

The early chapters are the practical ones. The later chapters contain surveys of the literature on capturing wild birds and their place in diet, the history and process of domestication, and the role of birds in religion, ritual, sport, and pleasure. One chapter is concerned with the role of bird remains in reconstructing past environments: the ways in which birds have been affected by human predation and environmental and climate change. The non-specialist reader who is more interested in birds and people in the past than in the minutiae of analysis may prefer to read the later chapters first. Conscious of the fact that the general reader will be interested in the history of the interactions between people and birds, I have included a very brief summary of the role of birds in early human history in Chapter 10. Otherwise, topics rather than geography and time have dictated the organisation of chapters.

The names of the birds provided the first challenge. In the end, I settled on using the vernacular English name and on using the lower case rather than the upper case in bird names, to conform to common and archaeological usage rather than to scientific ornithological usage. Where a species is found on both sides of the Atlantic, I have used the American or English vernacular name as appropriate. A list of the

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English and scientific names used in the text is given in Appendix 1. So far as the domestic chicken is concerned, although it is historically correct to refer to it as 'domestic fowl' in scientific writing, I have used 'chicken', as in colloquial English usage.

Measurements quoted are metric, but imperial measurements are quoted and the conversion to metric added when research by scholars from the United States is discussed. I have used BC and AD (rather than BCE) and BP (Before Present) according to which is relevant for the area and date in question. Radiocarbon dates, if calibrated, follow the calibration of the original authors.

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