



## Creation - The Bird's Voice

Masterpiece of Design

Apart from the human voice, birds produce some of the purest and most beautiful sounds known to man. More recently, scientists have been astounded by all they have discovered about the singing abilities of songbirds.

### **Sophisticated Compositions**

A close study of birdsong reveals that birds are extremely skilful musicians. Even though most songs last less than twenty seconds, they often contain many phrases and large numbers of notes. A chaffinch can sing up to 45 notes per second with several hundred notes per song. For example a song of the wood pewee consists of four phrases and contains the musical qualities of melody, rhythm, repetition, variation and unity. Human composers must exercise great creativity and planning to produce such effects.

### **Two Voices**

Humans have one set of vibrating membranes in the larynx. Birds, however, have two sets which are positioned in such a way that each set of membranes can receive air from each of the bird's lungs independently. Each of these voice boxes also has its own independent nerve connections with the brain so that the bird can produce different sounds from each voice. Some birds can therefore sing two notes at the same time.

### **Repertoire & Pitch**

Songbirds remember many different songs which they regularly repeat. The European blackbird has a repertoire of some 22-48 songs whereas a nightingale may have up to 300! One of the most astounding musical abilities of birds is their control of their song's key.

Many birds have what is musically known as 'absolute pitch' - the ability to determine exactly what key they sing in without reference to other sounds. If you hear a bird singing a song in G major, you will find it singing the same song in G major on subsequent occasions.

### **Counter singing & Duets**

When two male birds are within hearing range in other territories, they will often take it in turns to sing to each other. Each bird will typically sing for several seconds and then stop to allow the neighbouring bird to reply. Often two courting birds will sing a duet where one begins and then the other sings the closing part.

In some instances two pairs of courting birds will sing what is called a matched duet in a group of four. The four birds will sing a song composed of four parts over a period of time, each one waiting to sing their own portion of the composition. This requires knowledge of the duet by all four birds. The songs are often very beautiful with great musical structure and involve split-second timing by all participants.

### **Explaining Birdsong**

Evolutionists say that the reason for the existence of bird song was that birds needed to make a noise to assert their territorial rights. However, this does not explain why male birds should enjoy singing with a neighbouring male. Nor can it explain why birdsong is so beautiful, when a simple noise would have done to advertise the presence of a male in a certain area.

Another problem for evolutionists is the dawn chorus. They reject the idea that this was planned for the pleasure of man and to bring glory to God. The evolutionists say that the reason for this crescendo of sound at dawn is that sound travels better and so singing is more effective at this time. Whilst there may be an element of truth in this, it cannot explain why an individual male bird should want to sing simultaneously with so many others, when it's very difficult at this time for an individual male bird to hear himself, let alone get his message across to other birds!

Evolution also cannot describe how the voice mechanism of birds came into being. In fact, this could not have evolved gradually, because many parts are needed to be in place all at once or the bird will not be able to sing. Birdsong is again another powerful evidence for design and a Creator who made the bird as it now is, complete and ready to sing.

### **Creation Speaks**

The Bible says that, "Since the creation of the world His (God's) invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead" (Romans 1:20). When we look at scenes such as the one on the front of this bulletin every one of us is faced with the fact of God's existence and an appreciation of his power and glory.

Many people look forward to the sunnier days of Spring and Summer. They will sit in their gardens and enjoy the beautiful sounds of songbirds. The Bible says, "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord" (Psalm 150:6). As birds sing they are declaring to men and women the fact that there is a glorious Creator who made all these things for their pleasure

and to bring glory to Himself. Yet so often they will ignore the One who designed and brought all these things into existence.

### **Knowing God Personally**

God does not only speak to us through His creation. He also speaks to us through His word - the Bible. The amazing thing the Bible tells us is that this great Creator God wants to have a personal relationship with men and women.

The beautiful blossoming of so many flowers and trees, which over the winter months had seemed dead, is a picture and reminder of the resurrection of Christ. The Bible tells us that Christ, "died and was buried, and rose again the third day" (1Cor. 15:3,4).

Christ died and rose again so that men and women who fail God, could be forgiven their sins and come to know this glorious God for themselves. Christ died on the cross bearing in His body the anger and justice of God - the punishment sinners deserve - so that they might be free from that punishment themselves. God raised Him from the dead, to show the acceptance of His work on their behalf. All who come to God and depend on Christ alone for the forgiveness of their sins, are brought to know God personally. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17:3). Do you know this glorious God?

\*Details and text concerning birdsong are taken from "Hallmarks of Design" by Dr Stuart Burgess (2002) and used with permission.