

From Sea to Shining Sea, Coastal Birds Are Something Special!

Any place where land and sea meet offers a full menu for hungry wildlife. How is there enough food to go around? Coastal creatures are adapted to eating specific foods. One bird might eat worms but not fish, while another eats crabs but not worms. This means the food is shared among the birds and other wildlife at the seashore. Find out who's eating what at beaches around the country. How is each bird's beak adapted to finding and dining on its share of available food?

Seaside Diner
"Where seabirds seek seafood by the seashore"
Today's Specials - Guaranteed Fresh!

- Crunchy Sand Crabs
- Beach Hoppers Platter
- Worm of the Day
- Meaty Mussels (in the shell)
- Snail Snacks

Attention: Black Skimmers and Brown Pelicans ... All day - All-You-Can-Eat Fish

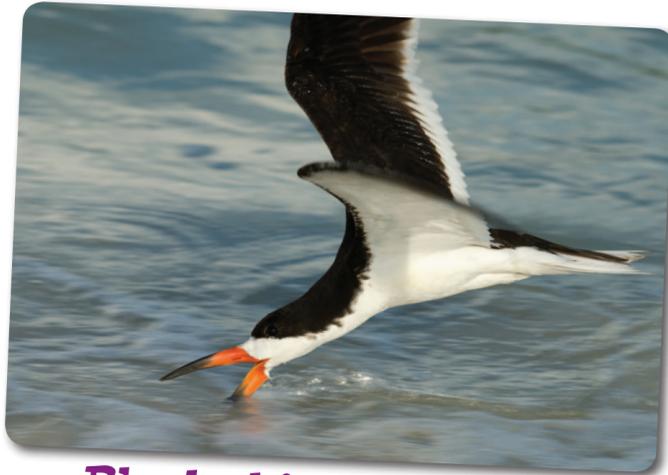


Black oystercatchers

are west coast birds that eat mussels and limpets. They search the rocky shores and tidepools of the Pacific from Alaska down to Mexico for their shelly supper. The strong red bill of the black oystercatcher is the perfect tool for prying its prey off rocks and opening up their shells.

Piping plovers

scout for bugs and worms on the surface of sand just at the waterline. Like other small plovers, they run, stop, look, peck, and repeat. Piping plovers live east of the Rocky Mountains, breeding in the northern Great Plains, around the Great Lakes, and along the northern Atlantic coast. They winter along the warmer Gulf and southern Atlantic coasts.



Black skimmers

fish by feel. The bird flies low over the ocean surface, its lower knife-like bill slicing through the water. When the black skimmer's lower bill touches a small fish, it snaps its mouth shut in an instant. Black skimmers catch their small swimming prey along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts from Massachusetts to Texas and the Pacific coast off southern California.



Brown pelicans

are dramatic hunters. They scan for fish while flying over the open water near North America's seashores. When swimming prey is spotted below, brown pelicans plunge head-first into the sea. They trap fish—sometimes fairly big ones—in the pouch of their huge bill, swallowing the fish after draining out the water.



Snowy plovers

are small shorebirds that search for tiny insects, worms, and small crustaceans such as beach hoppers. What they eat depends on where they are. Most live west of the Rocky Mountains, along the Pacific Coast from Washington State to Baja California in Mexico, around Utah's Great Salt Lake, as well as some sandy inland places. Snowy plovers use their sharp eyes to spot prey on the surface of the sand, then nab it with a quick peck of a small beak. Some plovers stamp their feet on the sand to drive out prey.

Who Fits the Bill?

You're sure to spot birds of many sorts when visiting beaches and bays. Each of the six coastal birds featured on this poster has its own way of catching its specific prey with its particular beak. Can you match the prey with the beak that catches it?

Look closely at the six beaks on the bird pictures below. Then look over the prey foods to the left. Which bird eats what? Use the information and pictures on this poster to find out.

Match the prey to the bird that eats it. Draw a line from each food to the beak of the bird that eats that food. One line has been done for you.

The Perfect Prey

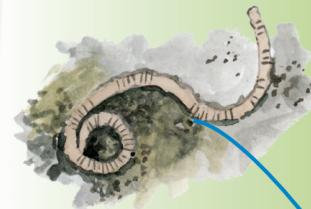
Which Bird Eats What?



Black oystercatcher



Red knot



Brown pelican



Piping plover



Black skimmer



Snowy plover

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