

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910778207203321
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Titolo	The inner bird [[electronic resource] ] : anatomy and evolution // Gary W. Kaiser
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Vancouver, : UBC Press, c2007
ISBN	1-282-59343-9 9786612593437 0-7748-5568-1
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (401 p.)
Disciplina	571.3/18
Soggetti	Birds - Anatomy Birds - Evolution Birds - Flight Birds
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front Matter -- Contents -- Figures and Tables -- Acknowledgments -- Introduction -- What Is a Bird ? -- The Bird beneath the Feathers -- A Bird Is an Animal with Hollow Bones -- A Bird Is Like a Dinosaur -- A Bird Is Not So Like a Dinosaur -- What Kind of Bird Is It? -- The Kinds of Birds -- That Bird Is Different from the Other One -- How Does a Bird Fly? -- Feathers and Feather ed Dinosaurs -- Birds with a Modern Shape -- Birds on Land -- Birds at Sea -- Conclusion -- Birds in Relation to Other Vertebrate Animals -- Geological Time Scale -- Glossary of Ornithological Terms -- Literature Cited -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	Birds are among the most successful vertebrates on Earth. An important part of our natural environment and deeply embedded in our culture, birds are studied by more professional ornithologists and enjoyed by more amateur enthusiasts than ever before. However, both amateurs and professionals typically focus on birds' behaviour and appearance and only superficially understand the characteristics that make birds so unique. The Inner Bird introduces readers to the avian skeleton, then moves beyond anatomy to discuss the relationships between birds and dinosaurs and other early ancestors. Gary Kaiser

examines the challenges scientists face in understanding avian evolution - even recent advances in biomolecular genetics have failed to provide a clear evolutionary story. Using examples from recently discovered fossils of birds and near-birds, Kaiser describes an avian history based on the gradual abandonment of dinosaur-like characteristics, and the related acquisition of avian characteristics such as sophisticated flight techniques and the production of large eggs. Such developments have enabled modern birds to invade the oceans and to exploit habitats that excluded dinosaurs for millions of years. While ornithology is a complex discipline that draws on many fields, it is nevertheless burdened with obsolete assumptions and archaic terminology. The Inner Bird offers modern interpretations for some of those ideas and links them to more current research. It should help anyone interested in birds to bridge the gap between long-dead fossils and the challenges faced by living species.

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