



Jr. Animal Scientist

MAY 4, 2020



Bird Brains!

Many kinds of bird brains!



Birds come in all shapes and sizes. There are long-legged ostriches, fancy-feathered peacocks, and even lightning-fast hummingbirds. No matter what a bird looks like, it uses its brain to control its behavior and learn about its environment. Bird brains are much smaller than human brains, but we also have a lot in common. Explore this magazine to learn more and start your own bird study!

WORD WATCH

Look for these terms in this issue of *Jr. Animal Scientist*:



Organ

Tissues in the body that have a specific job. Organs in your body include the brain, the stomach and the heart. Birds have these organs too.

Nervous System

A system of special cells that send signals to other parts of the body. It works like the body's electrical wiring.

Neuron

A nerve cell that sends electrical signals through the nervous system.

Poultry

Domesticated birds kept by humans for their eggs, meat or feathers.

Ornithology

The study of birds. This term comes from the Greek word "ornis," which means birds and "ology," which means "theory" or "science."

Avian

A word describing something related to birds, such as avian sciences.



Fun Facts About Bird Brains

1



Crows can learn to recognize human faces, and they can remember faces for years.

2

Songbirds can learn new songs all through their lives and researchers can even tell groups of birds apart from the songs they sing.

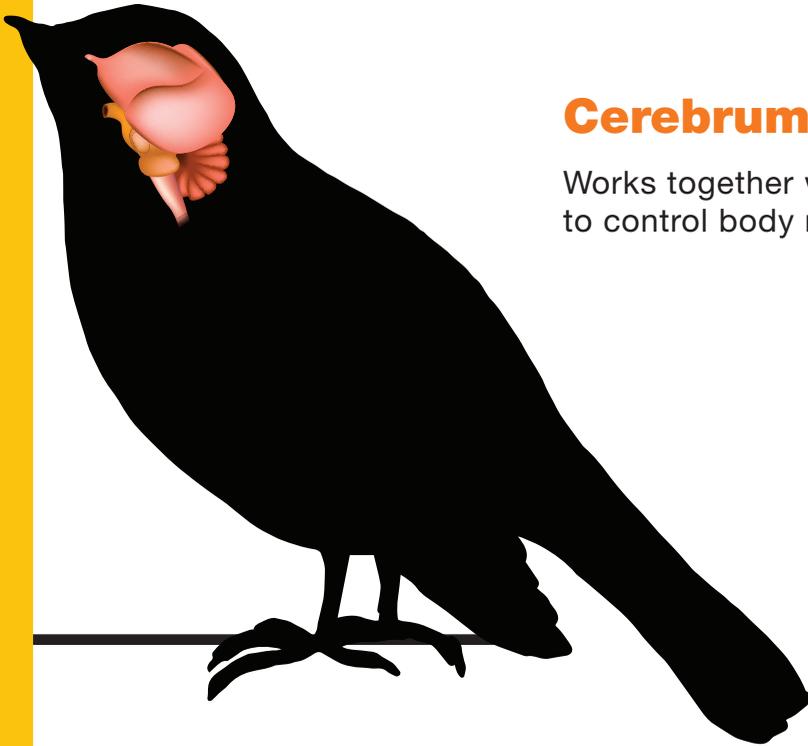


3

Many bird species have learned to use tools. For example, Egyptian vultures have been seen using rocks to break open ostrich eggs.

About Bird Brains

In birds and humans, the brain is an **organ** inside the skull. It is the main part of the central **nervous system**, which sends signals from the brain to control the body. The brain sends signals through special cells called neurons. **Neurons** also carry signals to the brain to communicate the senses of touch, taste, smell, hearing and sight.

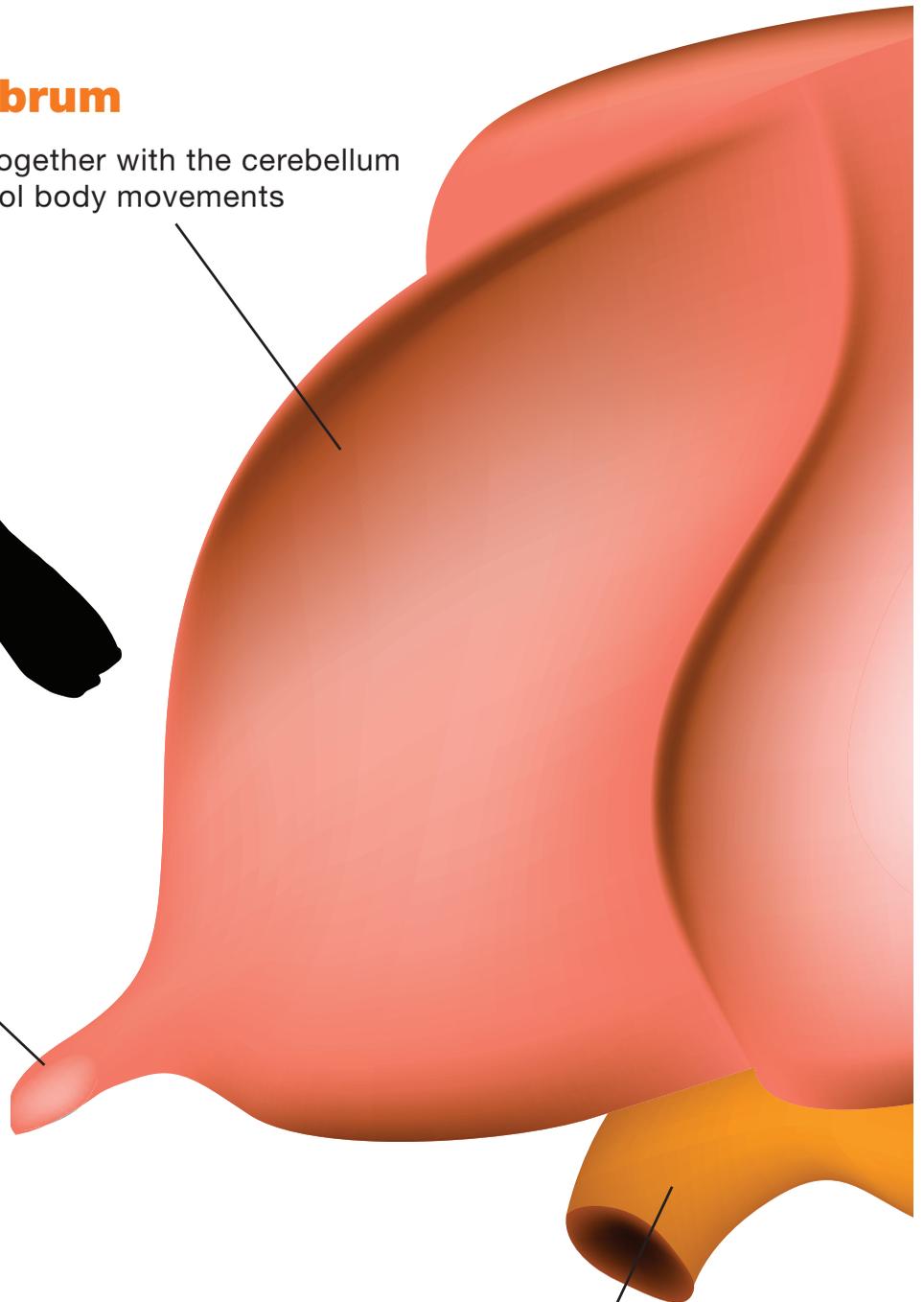


Cerebrum

Works together with the cerebellum to control body movements

Olfactory Bulb

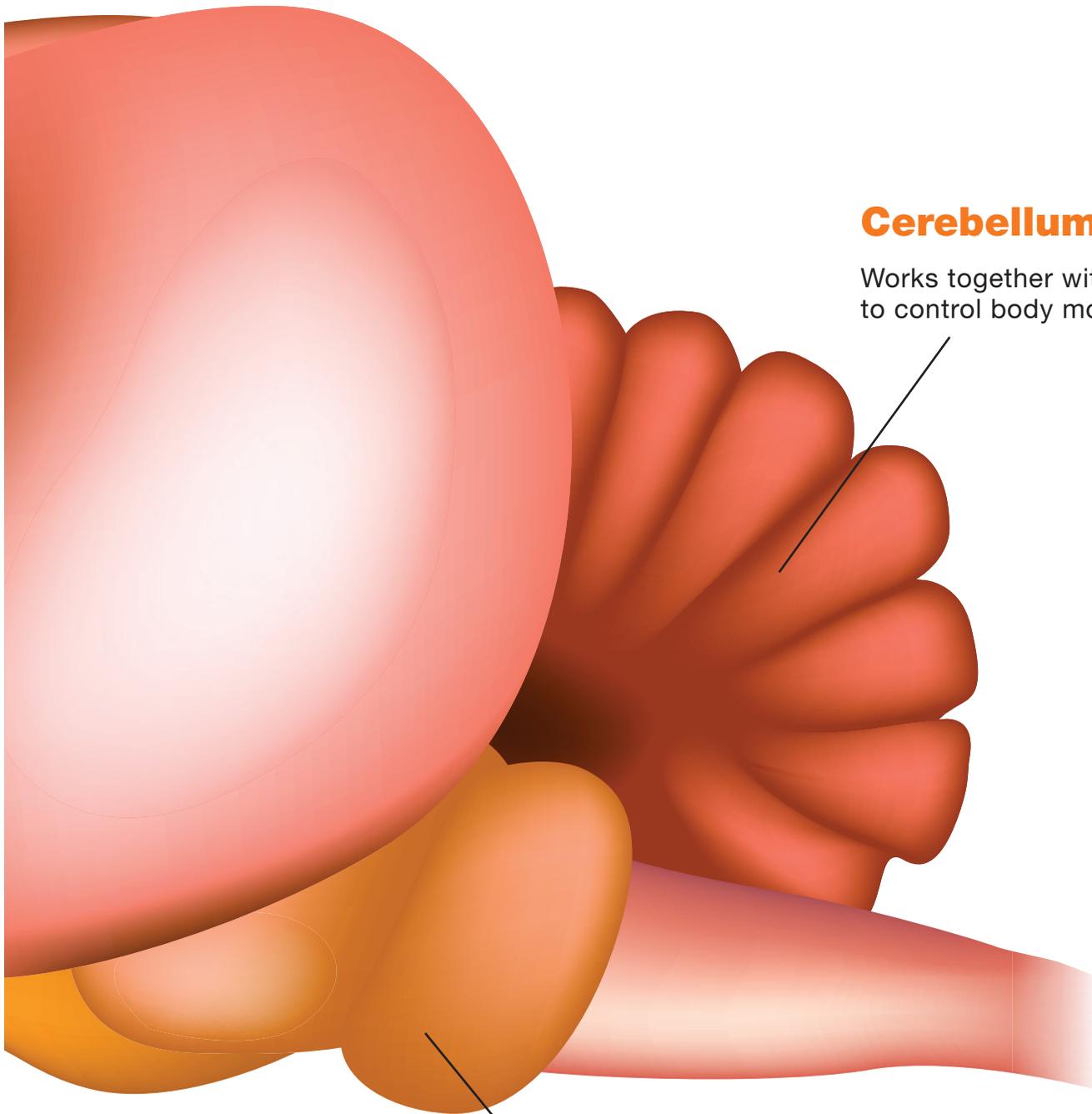
Controls sense of smell



Pituitary

Releases chemicals in the body to control growth and much more

Brain Structure of the Bird



Cerebellum

Works together with the cerebrum to control body movements

Optic Lobe

Processes what the bird sees

Photo: iStock / Sakurra



Why Study Birds?

Do you want to know more about birds?

There are several words for people who study birds as their job. The overall study of birds is called **ornithology**.

People who study domesticated birds, such as chickens, turkeys, and ducks, are called **poultry scientists**. Poultry scientists investigate how to keep these birds healthy, how to raise the birds, and even how to produce more eggs and meat from the birds. **Poultry scientists** are an important part of animal agriculture.

People who want a career studying poultry or wild birds often take college classes in **avian** sciences, where they can learn all about bird behavior, anatomy and more. Many colleges also offer courses specifically in poultry science. Students who want to learn more can then work in laboratories, agriculture facilities and even do field work out in the wild!

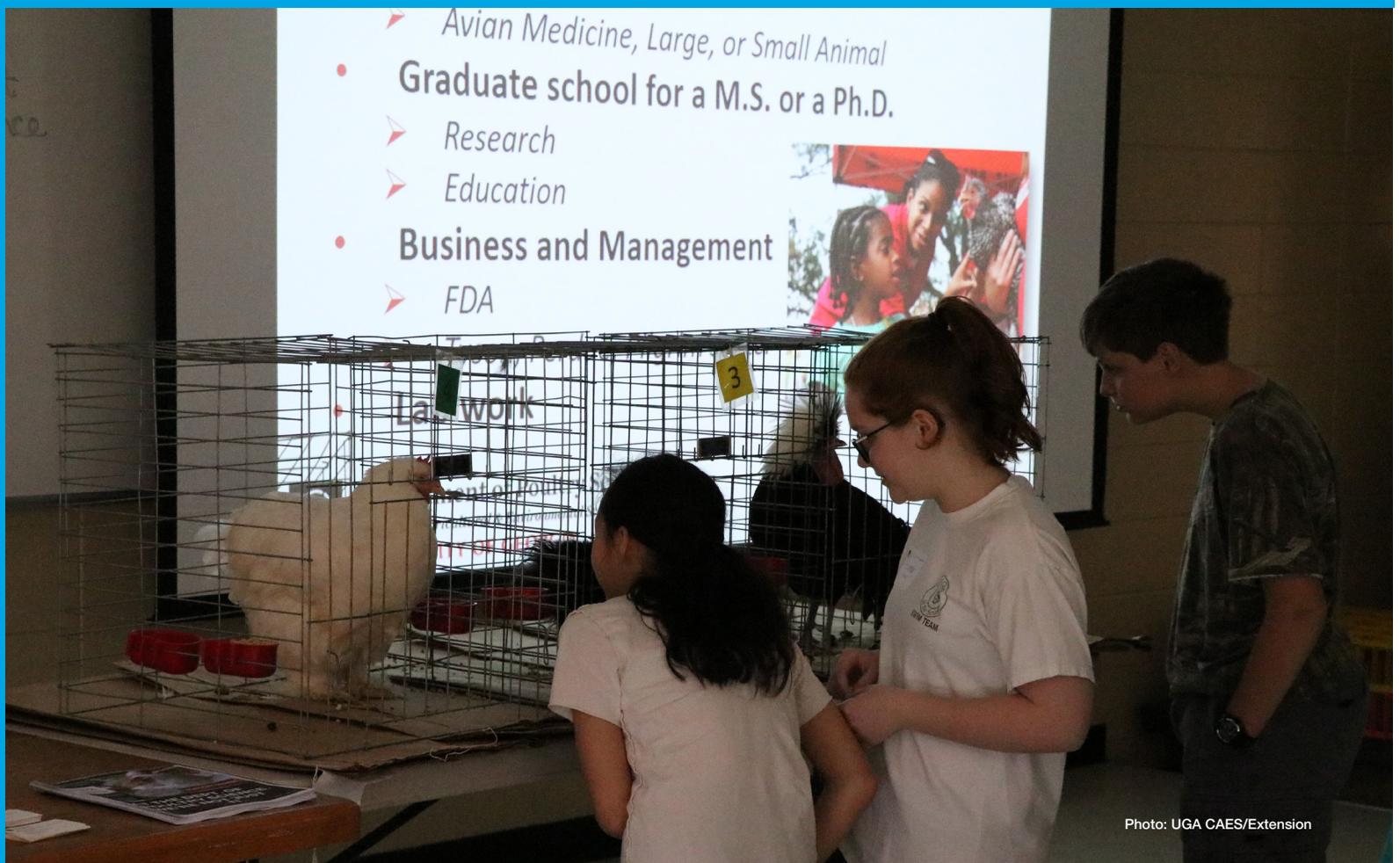


Photo: UGA CAES/Extension

Start a bird watching journal!

You can start studying birds from home!

The first step is to look for the birds that live in your neighborhood. If you live in a city, you might see pigeons. If you live near a beach, you might see seagulls. Use this page to start your own bird watching journal.



Field Notes

TODAY'S OBSERVATIONS

Date: _____

Time of Day: _____

What is the weather like?

Where did you see the bird?

What did the bird look like?

Draw a picture of the bird

What was the bird doing? (flying, sitting, eating)

What is interesting about this bird?

Did it make a bird call?

What type of bird do you think it is?

Sign up!



Photo: iStock / Nickbeer

Jr. Animal Scientist

Share Jr. Animal Scientist with your favorite educators!

Sign up your student's classroom or club at animalsmart.org/jras



AnimalSmart.org

Jr. Animal Scientist® is published by the American Society of Animal Science. All rights reserved.

CONTRIBUTORS: ASAS staff

DESIGN: Hayley Doren

CONTACT: jranimalscientist@asas.org

Mailing information for publisher use: