

The large ground finch

The large ground finch evolved a large broad beak which it uses to feed on hard seeds and nuts. Woody nuts are its main food source. It forages either on the ground or in trees and bushes for its food. The islands where the large ground finch lives is abundant in plants that produce hard seeds and nuts.



The small ground finch

The small ground finch evolved a small broad beak which it uses to feed on soft seeds and nuts, although it is also known to eat flowers, buds, young leaves, and the occasional insect. Unlike the large ground finch its beak would not be strong enough to crack and eat hard nuts and seeds. It forages either on the ground or in low vegetation. The islands where the large ground finch lives is abundant in plants that produce soft seeds and nuts.



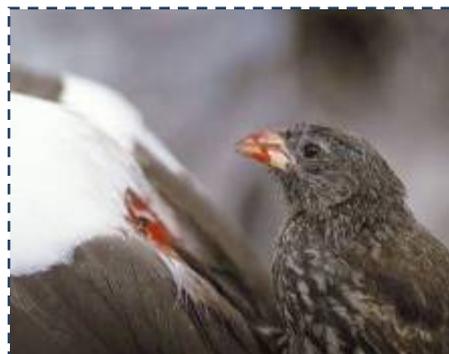
The sharp-beaked finch

The sharp-beaked ground finch has evolved a beak which is small and sharp. This beak allows this finch to feed off the blood of other 'larger' birds such as masked boobies, red footed boobies and blue footed boobies. The sharp beaked finch will also jump on the back of other finches and suck their blood. This is unique amongst birds and the sharp-beaked ground finch is famed for these extraordinary feeding habits, so much so that it has also earned it the sinister pseudonym of the 'vampire finch'!



Questions

- 1) How do scientists think the original seed eating finches arrived in the Galapagos Islands?
- 2) Why did the finches have to evolve their beaks in order to survive?
- 3) Darwin used the term 'Natural Selection' to help him explain his theory of evolution. What did Darwin mean by the term Natural Selection?
- 4) Look at the three pictures of Galapagos finches below. One is of a large ground finch, another of the small ground finch and another of a sharp-beaked finch. Identify these finches, cut them out and paste them into your books and explain how you were able to identify them.



5) Other species of birds have also had to evolve over time in order to survive and carry on their species. Part of this evolutionary process has involved their beaks. Birds have to have beaks that are specially adapted to suit the food supplies found within their habitats. Birds have evolved beaks to help them eat meat, nuts, seeds, fish, berries and insects.

The birds below have all evolved beaks to help them survive in different habitats and take advantage of the different foods available in those habitats.

Research each of these birds, identify the habitats in which they are found and identify what they eat. Explain how their beaks have evolved into the perfect tool to help them with their diets.

