



Very Helpful Vultures



It's a common sight to see turkey vultures flying in circles in the skies of North and South America. These birds can soar for hours without flapping their wings. They ride warm currents of air up, up, and away, as high as 20,000 feet above the earth! (That's almost as high as Mount McKinley, the highest mountain peak in North America at 20,310 feet.)

Turkey vultures also fly far. They can travel up to 200 miles in one day without stopping for food. With their great sense of smell, turkey vultures can sniff out their next meal from a mile away.

Vultures are scavengers—animals that eat what's left of dead critters. Before Adam and Eve sinned against God, animals didn't die, and they didn't eat other animals. But in our sin-cursed world, scavengers help out by serving as nature's clean-up crew.

Although they are the only scavenger birds that don't kill their prey, turkey vultures can still defend themselves. They can bite hard with their curved beak or use a yuckier strategy. When a predator attacks, vultures can vomit on demand. By emptying their bellies first, they can make a faster getaway.

People and many animals have a voice box, which contains vocal cords that make sound. Since turkey vultures don't have a voice box, they can only hiss and grunt. They communicate with each other by using body language, like raising their feathers, moving their eyes, and tapping their feet.



I'm Peter Schriemer!
As a wildlife educator
and TV host, I get excited
about tracking down
God's creatures! Join my
adventures on my Answers
TV show *Hike & Seek*.



W CROSS Y D

Can you solve this crossword about vultures with the clues below? Read the article to find the answers.

Across

1. Animals didn't eat other animals until after Adam and Eve did this.
2. This is the name for an animal that eats the remains of dead animals.
4. Turkey vultures are the only scavenger birds that don't kill their what?
6. This is a shape that turkey vultures sometimes make when soaring through the sky.
7. Turkey vultures can do this to make a faster getaway.

Down

1. Turkey vultures can do this for hours without flapping their wings.
2. Turkey vultures use this sense to find their next meal.
3. This contains vocal cords that create sound—turkey vultures don't have one.
5. Turkey vultures use this body part to bite.

ANSWERS	
ACROSS	DOWN
1. SIN	1. SOAR
2. SCAVENGER	2. SMELL
3. VOICE BOX	4. PREY
4. PREY	5. BEAK
6. CIRCLE	7. VOMIT

Fun Facts

- » Turkey vultures get their name because they look a lot like turkeys.
- » Turkey vultures have bald heads to help keep bits of meat from getting stuck in their feathers when they're eating.
- » Turkey vultures prefer fresh meat that is less than 12–24 hours old.
- » Turkey vultures are sometimes incorrectly called buzzards. A buzzard is a type of hawk.