

Bird Photos

The Reading / Listening - Bird Photos -

It seems we share photos online of everything these days, from what we eat for breakfast to the new shoes we have bought. Researchers have recently published a study about what kinds of bird photos we like on the social media site Instagram. This is a photo and video-sharing social networking service on which uploaded images are viewable for just 24 hours. The researchers are from the University of Konstanz in Germany. They looked into the question: "What makes a great bird photo?" They tried to find the most 'Instagrammable' bird. They discovered that the frogmouth is our favourite. This is a nocturnal bird that is found from India, across Southeast Asia to Australia.

The researchers analysed nearly 30,000 bird photos from nine popular bird photography Instagram accounts. They created a special computer algorithm to find which photos attracted the most "likes" on the photo-sharing platform. Ornithologist Tim Snyder suggested the frogmouth was the most liked bird because of its large eyes and wide beak. He said that while most birds' eyes are positioned on the sides of their head, the frogmouth's eyes are more in the centre of its face, which makes the bird appear more "humanlike". Wildlife photographer Graeme Purdy told the BBC: "Anything cute and cuddly evokes something in human nature - and particularly anything with big eyes."

Comprehension questions

1. What two things does the article say we share photos of online?
2. What have researchers recently published?
3. For how long do Instagram photos stay online?
4. In which country is the university that did this research?
5. When is the frogmouth most active?
6. How many photos of birds did the researchers look at?
7. What did the researchers use to analyse the bird photos?
8. What part of the frogmouth did an ornithologist say was wide?
9. Where on the frogmouth's face are its eyes?
10. What did a photographer say evokes something in human nature?

Multiple choice quiz

1) What two things does the article say we share photos of online?

- a) puppies and kittens
- b) breakfast and new shoes

- c) selfies and cars
- d) sunrises and sunsets

2) What have researchers recently published?

- a) a magazine
- b) a book
- c) a newspaper
- d) a study

3) For how long do Instagram photos stay online?

- a) 24 hours
- b) 12 hours
- c) 2 hours
- d) 48 hours

4) In which country is the university that did this research?

- a) Italy
- b) France
- c) Germany
- d) Spain

5) When is the frogmouth most active?

- a) at the weekend
- b) at night
- c) on Mondays
- d) in the afternoon

6) How many photos of birds did the researchers look at?

- a) just over 30,000
- b) exactly 30,000
- c) nearly 30,000
- d) around 30,000

7) What did the researchers use to analyse the bird photos?

- a) an opinion poll
- b) a microscope
- c) a camera
- d) a computer algorithm

8) What part of the frogmouth did an ornithologist say was wide?

- a) its beak
- b) its wingspan
- c) its feet
- d) its smile

9) Where on the frogmouth's face are its eyes?

- a) in the centre
- b) at the bottom
- c) on the left
- d) at the top

10) What did a photographer say evokes something in human nature?

- a) a scary bird
- b) anything cute and cuddly
- c) anything full of colour
- d) sounds

Discussion - Bird Photos

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

1. What did you think when you read the headline?
2. What images are in your mind when you hear the word 'bird'?
3. What do you think of birds?
4. What are your favourite birds?
5. Do you like taking photos of birds?
6. What do you think of social media?
7. What kinds of photos do you post on social media?
8. What do you think of Instagram?
9. What do you think of the frogmouth?
10. What do you think of the national bird of your country?