# Maelstrom

## Avian Anatomy

Avian anatomy has several key points of interest. There is a much greater divergence in form than humans, wemics and mokosh. This is most prevalent in the skeletal structure, especially of the skull. All avians are primarily vegetarian, but many enjoy meat and fish and the wide range of beak structures suggests that the diet of some avians may once have been based on carrion or fish.

Eye positioning seems to vary between placement towards the sides of the head and placement in a more predatory frontal position. Anatomists who have access to a lens will note that the retina of the avians eye has a dual fovea, which seems to allow for all round vision as well as excellent capabilities for looking at the finer details of objects. Behind the eyes, the avians ears seem to have a slightly more limited capacity than equivalent mammals, but again the variance within the species is significant. Inside the inner ear there is the gyrus, a complex structure of bone and skin that appears to give avians an innate, although in practice not entirely accurate, intuition regarding direction and navigation.

There are several unique features of the avian torso. Most avians have only vestigial flight muscles and the lightness of the typical avian skeleton makes it difficult for them to develop body strength to the same level that mokosh or even humans often display. The stomach and intestines of an avian seem almost exclusively vegetarian in structure and whilst some avians seem to have more of a carnivorous adaptation, this is rare. A close examination of the stomach lining, pancreas and bile duct shows several differences in the type and consistency of digestive fluids that are excreted. It is hypothesised that this is linked to the avian intolerance for dairy products.

Neither male or female avian torsos contain mammary glands, although female avian breasts show the same variation and size as other creatures. The female abdomen also contains the ovaries and oviduct. Several small calcareous and mucus glands line the oviduct. Habitual users of Rantsin show degeneration of the calcareous glands.

Avian plumage also varies wildly between different groups, but there are several common features. Each individual feather on an avian generally lasts about 4 weeks before being replaced and most feathers can be categorised as either display or insulation feathers. Both types grow from identical follicles, which are considerably more complex than mammalian hair follicles. The glands that produce the rigid portion of the feathers are of similar structure to the calcareous glands of the oviduct, and they are prone to similar atrophy amongst Rantsin users.