

# WEIRD AND WONDERFUL

## The Mallee Fowl

The Australian Mallee Fowl has been nicknamed "the thermometer bird". There is a good reason for this. Most birds sit on their eggs to keep them warm until they hatch, but the Mallee Fowl does things differently.

The male bird builds an "incubator" for the eggs. He begins by digging a hole 1m (3ft) deep and 5m (16ft) wide. He then collects lots of decaying leaves and twigs and makes a huge mound in the hole. When it has been wetted by rain, the bird covers this with a layer of sand, making a pile about 1½ m (4½ ft) high. The material may weigh over 300 tonnes! Like a gardener's compost heap, the pile heats up, but the Mallee Fowl then has to get the temperature just right before the female can lay her eggs—it has to be within 1° of 34°C. (92°F). To do this it uses its beak like a thermometer. When the temperature is just right the female begins to lay her eggs in the centre of the pile. She lays an egg each day for about a month. Each time, the male covers them over and keeps checking the temperature with his beak. If it became too hot or too cold the chicks would never hatch. If it gets too hot, he scratches some sand off, and if it gets too cold he piles more on. When the chicks hatch, they turn on their backs and dig themselves out through about ¾m (2 ft) of leaves and sand. They can fly at once and feed themselves. In fact, they never even know their parents.



Photo: Planet Medien AG

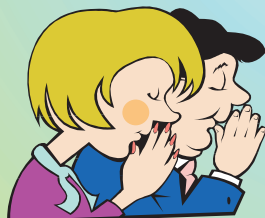
The Mallee Fowl could never have evolved. The baby birds never see a nest being built, so how could they gradually learn to build that huge "incubator"? How could they learn that the temperature needed to be kept constant and how did they get that special "thermometer" in their beak? And how do the baby birds know they have to dig their way out of the pile when they hatch? Evolution can't answer these questions. The amazing Mallee Fowl must have been created in the beginning by God.

## GOD HAS SPOKEN!



Think of a world without language—not being able to talk or listen to other people, or able to read or write. How thankful we should be that God has given us language! But it's even more wonderful that God has spoken to us! First of all, he has spoken through His creation. "The heavens tell the glory of God. And the skies announce what his hands have made. Day after day they tell the story" (Psalm 19: 1-2). Then He has spoken to us through the Bible, which tells us about creation, the history of the world, and how God has been at work in His world. The Bible is our Maker's handbook: "All Scripture is given by God and is useful for teaching and for showing people what is wrong in their lives. It is useful for correcting faults and teaching us how to live correctly" (1 Timothy 3: 16). The Bible can teach us a lot about our world, about God, and about ourselves.

The Bible also tells us about the most wonderful way God has spoken to us. "God has spoken to us through his Son" (Hebrews 1: 2). God came to earth in the Person of Jesus Christ to show us that He is not only a powerful Creator, but that He loves each of us. Jesus died on the cross for our sins, then rose again, so that we could be forgiven and live forever with Him. God wants us to know and love Him. We begin by asking Him to forgive us and to send His Holy Spirit to help us live the way He wants us to. God has spoken to you, now He wants you to talk to Him!



### PUZZLE ANSWERS

- DIFFERENCES:**
1. Sun's rays missing.
  2. Cow's nose colour changed.
  3. Cow's colour patches changed.
  4. Barn roof colour changed.
  5. Cockerel's colour changed.
  6. Cockerel's beak closed.
  7. Floor colour changed.
  8. Weather-vane missing.
  9. Barn windows changed.
  10. Grass a lighter green.
- Odd one out:**
1. Octopus (not a bird).
  2. Kangaroo (a marsupial).
  3. Shark (not a mammal).
  4. Spider (not an insect).
  5. Hamster (not a farm animal).
  6. Dolphin (not a fish).
- Bible verse: Isaiah 40 verse 10**

Bible references from the International Children's Bible, New Century Version (Anglicised Edition). © copyright 1991 by Word (UK) Ltd. Milton Keynes, England. Used by permission.

This issue includes photos and graphics from clipart.com and Corel Photo-CD

Our World is published quarterly by the Creation Resources Trust. Editing, design and layout by Geoff Chapman. Unless otherwise stated, articles are written by the editor. For subscription details and information about other resources, please contact CRT at P O Box 3237, Yeovil, BA22 7WD, UK. Phone/fax: 01935 850569. E-mail: Geoff@c-r-t.fsnet.co.uk Web site: www.c-r-t.co.uk © 2003 CRT

Printed by CPO Design & Print, Worthing



## WHY APES DON'T TALK



People who believe that apes are our close relatives have tried to teach them to speak. They haven't succeeded, because apes were not designed to talk like us.

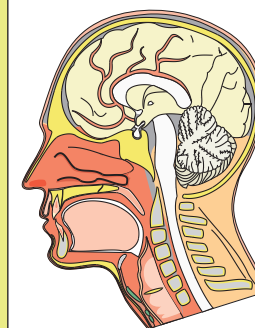
## NO WALKING CHIMPS



Lovable and clever, but chimps could never speak a real language

Some scientists who believe we evolved from ape-like ancestors have tried very hard to teach apes to speak to "prove" they are not very different from us. Some chimps have been taught a kind of sign language. One, named Washoe, could recognise about 160 "words". Another chimp, called Kanzi, was trained to use simple symbols which meant things like "banana", "grapes", "juice" and "yes". Kanzi also used four different sounds to mean different things. All very clever, but it took years to teach them these tricks, and other chimps would not have understood this "language", neither could Washoe or Kanzi teach it to other chimps.

This sign language is very different from the languages humans use. Apes could never speak like us, because they don't have the muscles in their mouth and throat to make words.



Special muscles in our throat and mouth help us to form words. The "speech centre" in our brain controls these muscles, and also enables us to learn language.

## BUDGIES ARE BEST!



Budgerigars are the world's best talking animals. One budgie named Victor had a vocabulary of about 800 words! Find out more on the internet website: www.talkingbudgie.com

## Bird-brains beat chimps!

Birds aren't supposed to be closely related to us, and their brains are very much smaller. But Irene Pepperberg at the University of Arizona trained an African gray parrot named Alex, which, 'speaks English and means what he says'. He can also count up to six, and recognize and name about 100 different objects, as well as their colour, texture and shape.



WHY WON'T YOU TALK TO ME?

If parrots are much cleverer than apes, why do we hear more about experiments to teach apes to speak than about talking birds? It must be because evolutionists believe we are closely related to apes but not to parrots! To admit that birds, with their tiny brains, can do what apes can't do spoils their evolution theory.



### In this issue:

- Where did languages come from?
- How we use language
- Nature Notes
- Puzzle Corner
- Weird and Wonderful: The Mallee Fowl
- God has Spoken!

VISIT OUR WEBSITE:  
www.c-r-t.co.uk

