



Vultures



Vultures are often overlooked, underappreciated, and unloved, despite the vital role they play in healthy ecosystems. Worldwide, vultures are more likely to be threatened or endangered than any other group of raptor, but in the United States Turkey and Black Vultures may be increasing in number. Based on Katie Fallon's book, this presentation will discuss the life and times of the noble Turkey Vulture, including its feeding, nesting, and roosting habits, migratory behaviors, special adaptations, and common misconceptions.

Katie Fallon is the author of *Vulture: The Private Life of an Unloved Bird* (2017) and, previously, *Cerulean Blues: A Personal Search for a Vanishing Songbird* (2011), which was a finalist for the Reed Award for Outstanding Writing on the Southern Environment. She is also the author of two books for children, *Look, See the Bird!* (2017) and *Look, See the Farm!* (forthcoming 2018). She lives in West Virginia and is co-founder of the Avian Conservation Center of Appalachia, a nonprofit organization dedicated to conserving the region's wild birds through research, education, and rehabilitation. She currently serves as the President of the Mountaineer Chapter of the National Audubon Society. Her first word was "bird."

Vultures are migratory birds and individuals don't ever permanently reside in a single area for very long. Many people think that exterminating vultures is a permanent solution for ridding an area of vultures, but since they are migratory the birds who have been scared off will merely move along their migratory route while new vultures will arrive. Vultures frequent our region in part because of the highways and cliffs that make for great soaring. They are opportunistic animals and are often drawn to an area with an abundance of food including roadkill and trash made available by open dumpsters, trash and burn piles.

If you wish to discourage the presence of vultures make sure no food or trash is available outdoors; this includes closing dumpsters, trash cans, removing outdoor dumping piles, not leaving food outdoors for dogs and cats, and removal of roadkill.

Fun facts about vultures

- ✎ Vultures are monogamous and pairs are believed to mate for life, migrating together year round.
- ✎ Vultures are scavengers and eat what is already dead. They rarely hunt and kill live prey.
- ✎ Different species of vultures will roost together in the same tree at night.
- ✎ Worldwide 22 species of vultures exist, 16 of them are threatened or endangered.
- ✎ Vultures play an important role in public health as they work to decontaminate the environment by removing dead animals and waste.
- ✎ A group of vultures is called a committee, while together in flight they are called a kettle.

