

Contents

1	Acquisition of knowledge	1
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Ancient thoughts	2
1.3	A chronicle of cognition	5
1.4	The rise of aerodynamics	9
1.5	Application of principles	15
1.6	Accumulation of knowledge in the twentieth century	18
1.7	Novel initiatives	24
1.8	Summary and conclusions	25
2	The flight apparatus	26
2.1	Introduction	26
2.2	Wing morphology	27
2.3	Dynamic wing properties	36
2.4	Scaling wings	39
2.5	Attempts to a functional interpretation of bird wings	41
2.6	Tail structure and function	42
2.7	The rest of the body in relation to flight	45
2.8	Summary and conclusions	46
3	Feathers for flight	48
3.1	Introduction	48
3.2	General description of contour feathers	48
3.3	Mechanical properties of feathers	52
3.4	Functional interpretation of flight-related microstructures	58
3.5	Tail feathers	64
3.6	Feather muscles and nerves	64
3.7	Summary and conclusions	67
4	Aerodynamics	68
4.1	Introduction	68
4.2	Rough estimates of forces and power	68
4.3	Visualization of the wake	74
4.4	The flow near a steadily gliding wing	78
4.5	Aerodynamics of flapping flight	90
4.6	Tail aerodynamics	91
4.7	Summary and conclusions	92

5	Evolution of bird flight	94
5.1	Introduction	94
5.2	Archaeopteryx	95
5.3	Landing after an arboreal or cursorial start?	98
5.4	The Jesus-Christ dinosaur hypothesis	102
5.5	How could <i>Archaeopteryx</i> run over water?	105
5.6	Other fossils with characteristics possibly related to the beginning of flight	117
5.7	Summary and conclusions	120
6	Bird flight modes	122
6.1	Introduction	122
6.2	The flight plan	123
6.3	Cruising flight characteristics	129
6.4	Hovering	140
6.5	Windhovering	143
6.6	Techniques to reduce the energetic demands of flapping flight	147
6.7	Gliding	152
6.8	Manoeuvring	156
6.9	Accurate measurements of speed	157
6.10	Summary and conclusions	158
7	The bird flight engine	161
7.1	Introduction	161
7.2	A glimpse under a starling's cowling	164
7.3	Muscle activity	166
7.4	Pectoralis force and work: using the deltopectoral crest as a strain gauge	171
7.5	The main upstroke muscle	176
7.6	Tail steering	177
7.7	Wing beat cycles and respiration	179
7.8	Summary and conclusions	180
8	Energy required for flight	182
8.1	Introduction	182
8.2	Mass loss estimates	183
8.3	Respirometric results from cunning experiments	192
8.4	Gas exchange measurements in wind tunnels	195
8.5	Measurements based on the turnover of stable isotopes	199
8.6	The cost of hovering	207
8.7	Summary and conclusions	210
9	Comparing the metabolic costs of flight	212
9.1	Introduction	212
9.2	How to make fair comparisons?	213

9.3	Flight costs related to body mass	214
9.4	Birds compared with other flyers	218
9.5	Metabolic rates as units of energy expenditure	221
9.6	Predictions from aerodynamic models	225
9.7	Hovering flight	228
9.8	Summary and conclusions	231
Appendix 1		233
Appendix 2		237
Appendix 3		241
References		244
Index		263