

## Some birds and the postures in which they are found in period English heraldry

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(This table is associated with the November 2003 LoAR.)

The following table of bird postures is derived from the BIRD section of the *Dictionary of British Arms* (DBA), volume 2. This section of the DBA lists the vast majority of all English armory in our period that uses birds as primary charges.

The table is thus prescriptive, not proscriptive. Just because a bird is not found in a particular posture in this table does not mean that bird was never found in that posture in period - or even in England, as the bird may be found in a different posture when used as a secondary or tertiary charge. Despite this table's limitations, we hope that it will serve as a useful compilation to assist with the bird difference rulings in the cover letter of the January 2000 LoAR and the cover letter of the November 2003 LoAR. We expect that future research, and past research found in SCA references such as precedents and the *Pictorial Dictionary of Heraldry*, will augment the information in this table. We encourage the College to undertake further research concerning period bird types and postures, particularly in the heraldry of areas other than England.

### Note on Displayed:

Other than the roughly 20 pages of displayed eagles, there are only two examples of displayed birds in the BIRD section of DBA. One is a cock and the other a dove (albeit not "upon a billet chequy Or and gules"). This research thus supports the assertions in the Cover Letters to the January 2000 and November 2003 LoARs, which classify birds displayed (other than eagles) as "vanishingly rare" and a step from standard period style (a "weirdness").

### Notes on Content:

- Armory using "unidentified" birds has not been included.
- The categories of birds in the table reflect the categories provided by the DBA
- The postures below do not explicitly describe *reguardant* birds, or birds facing *to sinister*. They do not distinguish between *rising wings addorsed*, *rising wings displayed*, or *rising* without a specified wing posture. See the Cover Letter for the November 2003 LoAR for these decisions.
- Postures have been normalized per SCA blazon. For example, birds *statant* or *passant* are listed as *close* and birds *passant wings addorsed* are listed as *rising*. To address some specific unusual terms, the eagle *soaring* (per Parker's *A Glossary of Terms Used in Heraldry*) has been listed as *rising*. The cock *crowing* has (also per Parker) has been listed as *close*, since the fact that the cock's beak is open is not significant in SCA heraldry. Per the *Terminology* section of the DBA, birds blazoned as *combattant* are merely *respectant*: this term has no other posture implication for birds in the DBA.
- In some cases, we have not been able to clearly relate the blazon term used in the DBA to a standard SCA blazon term. One swan is blazoned as *pluming its feathers*: it is probably preening (with its beak touching its body or wing feathers) but otherwise we cannot identify its posture. One swan is blazoned as *threatening attack*, which we suspect (but cannot prove) to be a variant of *rousant/rising*. One coat is blazoned as *3 hawks striking 3 birds*, but we do not know if this posture is the same as the SCA *striking* posture.

### Notes on Format:

- Notations in [square brackets] are editorial comments.
- Postures in (parentheses) indicate that the bird is its default posture, which was not blazoned explicitly in the DBA. The posture in parentheses is the expected default posture. For example, none of the owls have explicitly blazoned postures, so we have listed their posture as "(close guardant)". When a bird is blazoned in its default posture, and that expected default posture is also blazoned explicitly in another blazon in the DBA, we have not included the expected default posture in parentheses.

<b>Bird</b>	<b>Postures</b>
Blackbird, European	[see Merle]
Bustard	Rising
Cock [including Dunghill Cock, Moorcock]	Close, Displayed [See Note on Displayed]
Coot	(Close)
Chough	[see Crow]
Corbie	[see Crow]
Cormorant	[see Duck]
Crane	[see Heron]
Crow [including Chough, Corbie, Raven]	(Close), Preying on [child], Rising
Dove	(Close), Displayed [See Note on Displayed], Rising, Volant
Duck [including Goose, Shoveler, Cormorant, Spoonbill]	(Close), Naiant [on water or ford in base]
Dunghill Cock	[see Cock]
Eagle	Close, Displayed [See Note on Displayed], Preying on [child, bird], Preying on wings elevated [salmon], Rising, Volant
Falcon [including Hawk]	Close, Preying on [bird], Rising, Striking [bird - See Notes on Content]
Finch	(Close)
Goose	[see Duck]
Gull	(Close)
Heron [including Crane, Stork]	Close, Volant
Lapwing	Close
Magpie	(Close)
Martlet [including Swallow]	(Close), Rising
Merle [a.k.a. European Blackbird]	(Close)
Moorcock	[see Cock]
Ostrich	(Close), Rising
Owl	(Close guardant)
Peacock	Close, Rising, In his pride
Pelican	(Close), [Close and] Vulning herself, In her piety, Rising and vulning herself
Pheasant	(Close), Rising [from ground]
Popinjay	(Close), Rising
Raven	[see Crow]
Shoveler	[see Duck]
Sparrow	(Close)
Spoonbill	[see Duck]
Stork	[see Heron]
Swallow	[see Martlet]
Swan	Close, Naiant wings displayed [on ford], Pluming its feathers [see Notes on Content], Rising, Threatening attack [See Notes on Content], Volant