

tertiary deposits were the most ancient relics of this class known to the geologist, until the discovery of a few bones of *Waders* in Tilgate Forest (*Foss. Til. For.* pl. 8.); and which are still the earliest evidence hitherto obtained of the existence of Birds, with the exception of the foot-prints on the *New Red* sandstone of North America.

The rarity of the remains of Birds may probably in some measure be attributable, as Mr. Lyell has suggested, to the peculiar organization of these animals; for their power of flight necessarily renders them less liable to be engulfed and imbedded in the deltas of rivers, or in the bed of the ocean, than quadrupeds; and the lightness of their structure, occasioned by their tubular bones, and feathery dermal integument, generally prevents the sinking of the bodies of such as die on, or fall into, the water, until their carcasses are devoured, or decomposed.

In illustration of this subject, I purpose, in the *first* place, to explain such peculiarities in the osteology of the animals of this class, as may assist the collector in the identification of their fossil remains; *secondly*, to take a cursory survey of the geological distribution of fossil BIRDS, and examine a few of the most interesting examples; and *lastly*, consider the striking phenomena presented by the foot-prints of supposed Birds on the strata of those ancient deposits, which are comprised in the *Trias*, or *New Red* formation.