



The Reluctant Twitcher: A Quite Truthful Account of My Big Birding Year

Richard Pope

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Richard Pope, author of *Me n Len: Life in the Haliburton Bush, 1900-1940* and the voyageur epic *Superior Illusions*, is a recently retired professor of Russian literature and culture at York University and a long-standing member of the Ontario Ornithological Club and the Ontario Field Ornithologists. He and his wife, Felicity, live in Cobourg, Ontario.

The human side of birding comes to the fore in *The Reluctant Twitcher*, a serious yet humorous account of birds and birding and the art of chasing rarities. Richard Pope, a lifelong birder, had successfully avoided this latter pursuit for many years but capitulated in 2007 when he embarked on his "Big Year," the object being to record at least three hundred birds in Ontario within that calendar period.

Almost instantly, a relatively normal birdwatcher morphed into a "twitcher," albeit reluctantly, pursuing rare species of birds from Rainy River to the Ottawa and well beyond his wildest expectations. Though it was a challenge that was not without trials and disappointments, Pope describes all his adventures with self-deprecating humour. Not just another book on birding, Pope's unique approach is supported by an array of exceptional colour photographs.

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