



The Birding Life: A Passion for Birds at Home and Afield

Larry Sheehan, Carol Sheehan, Kathryn Ge Precourt

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Birds are both marvels of nature and artistic muses. The mere chance of sighting a prized species has long motivated human observers to brave early mornings, long days, and severe conditions. Birds have also inspired artists to honor them in imagery throughout the ages. In the form of bird-themed art and décor, the beauty of winged creatures informs the “nests” and working spaces of the birders, artists, collectors, and conservationists featured in the more than twenty delightfully written stories in *The Birding Life*. Through evocative writing and two hundred gorgeous color photographs, the authors of *The Sporting Life* and *Living with Dogs* capture the beauty, intrigue, and fun of birding—at home, in the country, in the city, and out in the field—with a special focus on the nostalgic memorabilia that signals devotion to birds of all kinds.

In Part I: Birders in Birdland, you will meet Alexander Wilson, John James Audubon, and Roger Tory Peterson, the iconic figures responsible for first documenting America’s native birds for the public, and Kenn Kaufman and David Allen Sibley, authors of today’s most well-known American birding guides. You will visit Buck Hollow Ranch in Concan, Texas, where more than two hundred species of birds, including endangered species unique to the Hill Country, pass through in prime season. From there you will travel to New York City to meet thirteen-year-old Alexander Gottdiener, a licensed falconer who enjoys birdwatching in Central Park and in more exotic climes.

Part II: Bird Houses welcomes you into the homes and studios of bird enthusiasts, artists, and collectors. In Houston, Texas, artists Lisa Ludwig and Joseph Havel’s home, which includes an aviary for injured birds and a studio where Lisa creates bronze bird-nest sculptures, serves as a tranquil retreat from the bustling city. Kristof Zyskowski, manager of the vertebrate collections at Yale’s Peabody Museum of Natural History, gives you a behind-the-scenes peek at the museum’s meticulously curated collection, which includes specimens from about 70 percent of the world’s bird species.

In Part III: At Home with Birds, you will meet homeowners who have decorated their personal nests to reflect their love of avian life. In antiques dealers Paul and Sharon Mrozinski’s home, Victorian collections of specimen eggs and nests punctuate an eclectic mix of antique furniture and art. The Brooklyn loft shared by young sisters Hollister and Porter Hovey is a hipster ode to nature, featuring taxidermy and an assortment of curios, fabrics, and furniture that reflects their collective adoration of flora and fauna.

Field trips throughout the book give readers a taste of the authentic experience of birders in bird-rich locations in Maine, Texas, North Dakota—and New York City’s greatest sanctuary, Central Park.

Sidebars throughout the book cover how to start a birding hobby, what to pack in your birding bag, what to pack in your birding bag, what garden plantings best attract birds to the home, and what bird enthusiasts are wearing and collecting. An extensive resource section offers countless options for further exploration.

A gorgeous volume and endless source of inspiration for lovers of birding and of bird-themed design alike, *The Birding Life* shows myriad ways to reflect your passion in your home.

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