



BIRD WATCH

A SURVEY OF PLANET EARTH'S CHANGING ECOSYSTEMS

MARTIN WALTERS

CONSULTANTS:

BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL & JONATHAN ELPHICK

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	6	Oceanic Islands	108	Swallows and Martins, Larks, and Pipits	188	Finches	219
THE THREATS TO BIRDS	8	Conservation Focus: New Caledonia	114	Bulbuls, Bush-shrikes and Helmet-shrikes, Cuckooshrikes, Vangas, Shrikes, and Leafbirds	191	Waxbills, Munias, and Allies, and Weavers, Fodies and Allies	222
Bird Distribution	10	ENDANGERED BIRDS	115	Wrens, Nuthatches, Dippers, and Tits	193	Starlings, Orioles, Drongos, and Birds of Paradise	224
Threats to Wild Birds	12	The Bird Profiles	118	Thrushes, Mockingbirds, and Thrashers	195	Crows and Jays, and Wattled Crows	226
Threats to Habitats	16	Kiwis, Tinamous, and Cassowaries	120	Babblers and Parrotbills, and Rockfowl	197	CONSERVATION	228
The World Bird Database	20	Penguins	121	Old World Warblers, Cisticolas and Allies, and Gnatcatchers	199	Conservation Works	230
HABITATS OF THE WORLD	22	Grebes	122	Chats and Old World Flycatchers, Australian Wrens, Bristlebirds, and Wattle-eyes	202	Saving Seabirds	232
TROPICAL FOREST	26	Albatrosses	123	Monarchs, Thornbills and Gerygones, Fantails, Shrike-thrushes, and Australasian Robins	205	Invasive Species on Islands	234
Major Tropical Forests	28	Petrels and Shearwaters, Storm-petrels and Diving-petrels	125	White-eyes	207	Conserving Forest Birds	235
Habitat Focus: Lowland Atlantic Forest of Brazil	32	Pelicans, Gannets and Boobies, Cormorants, and Frigatebirds	127	Honeyeaters, Sunbirds, Flowerpeckers, and Pardalotes	209	What is BirdLife?	236
Tropical Forest Endemic Bird Areas	34	Herons and Egrets, Storkbills, Ibises and Spoonbills, Shoebill, and Flamingos	129	Buntings, American Sparrows, and Allies	211	Preventing Extinctions Program	239
Conservation Story: Philippine Eagle	36	Ducks, Geese, and Swans	131	Tanagers and Allies	213	Birdwatching Hotspots of the World	240
Threatened Birds of South and Central America	38	New World Vultures and Old World Vultures	133	New World Warblers	215	Glossary	244
TEMPERATE AND NORTHERN FOREST	42	Kites, Harriers, Honey-buzzards, and Falcons	134	New World Blackbirds and Vireos	217	Index	246
Major Temperate and Northern Forests	44	Hawks	136			Acknowledgments	256
Habitat Focus: West Himalayas Endemic Bird Areas	49	Eagles	137				
Conservation Story: Spotter Owl	50	Peafowl, Pheasants, and Tragopans	139				
DESERT	52	Partridges, Francolins, Quails, and Allies	141				
Major Deserts of the World	54	Guineafowl, Megapodes, Guans, and Curassows	143				
Conservation Story: Houbara Bustard	58	Cranes	145				
MOUNTAIN	60	Rails, Crakes, and Allies	146				
Mountain Ranges	62	Bustards, Buttonquails, Plains-wanderer, Kagu, Mesites, and Finfoots	148				
Habitat Focus: The East Usambara Mountains of Tanzania	64	Plovers, Sandpipers, Stilts, Oystercatchers, Coursers, and Pratincoles	150				
Conservations Story: California Condor	68	Gulls, Terns, and Auks	152				
GRASSLAND	72	Doves and Pigeons	154				
Grasslands Around the World	74	New World Amazons and Macaws	158				
Habitat Focus: Serengeti Plains/Masai Mara	78	New World Parrots, Parakeets, and Parrotlets	160				
MEDITERRANEAN SCRUB AND HEATHLAND	80	Old World Cockatoos, Lorikeets, and Parakeets	162				
Types of Scrub and Heathland	82	Old World Parrots	164				
Habitat Focus: Australian Mallee	86	Cuckoos and Turacos	166				
WETLAND AND COAST	88	Typical Owls	167				
Wetlands of the World	90	Barn Owls, Nightjars, Owlet-Nightjars	169				
Habitat Focus: Endangered Cranes	92	Swifts and Hummingbirds	171				
Conservation Focus: Kakadu National Park	96	Trogons, Kingfishers, Hornbills, Ground-rollers, and Motmots	174				
Conservation Focus: Rare Birds of the Andean Lakes	100	Woodpeckers, Toucans and Barbets, and Jacamars	176				
ISLAND	102	Broadbills, Scrub-birds, and Ovenbirds	178				
The Threats to Island Birds	104	Antbirds	180				
Conservation Focus: Success in the Seychelles	106	Antpittas, Pittas, Woodcreepers, New Zealand Wrens, and Asities	182				
		Tyrant-flycatchers	184				
		Manakins, Cotingas, and Tapaculos	186				



▷ Orange-bellied Parrot {*Neophema chrysogaster*} Breeds only in South West Tasmania, Australia. Endangered species

TROPICAL FOREST

TROPICAL FORESTS ARE FOUND MAINLY IN NORTHERN SOUTH AMERICA (CENTERED ON THE AMAZON BASIN), IN WEST AFRICA, AND IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. CENTRAL AMERICA ALSO HAS IMPORTANT TRACTS OF TROPICAL FOREST, AS DOES EASTERN AUSTRALIA. THERE ARE A FEW REMAINING POCKETS IN EASTERN INDIA.

Though the tropical rainforests are the most complex and diverse, there are many other types of tropical forest, all home to rare birds and a vast range of animals and plants. Among these are dry forests, seasonal forests, savanna forests, flooded forests, and high-altitude montane cloud-forests.

In addition to their value as reservoirs of biodiversity, tropical forests also play a major role in regulating climate and in stabilizing landscapes. They absorb rainfall and channel water into the ground, ultimately feeding streams and rivers, and simultaneously create fertile forest soils and protect these from erosion. Water evaporating from dense tracts of forest forms clouds and replenishes the water cycle, returning as rain both over the forest itself, and over nearby agricultural land. The forests also absorb carbon dioxide, a major greenhouse gas, and thus help to reduce the effects of human-induced global warming. Deforestation is a major driver of climate change for a number of reasons: huge quantities of greenhouse gases are released during the process of burning the forests, and when reduced in number and density, the forests are less able to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Tragically, more than half of all tropical rainforests have been destroyed, reducing their original coverage of some 14 percent of land down to a mere 6 percent. The last 50 years alone have seen a reduction in forest area of more than one-third. At current rates of attrition tropical rainforests could disappear almost completely within a hundred years.

◁ Bromeliads growing alongside a stream in Bocaina National Park, Atlantic Forest, Brazil. Members of the pineapple family, these plants have thick, waxy leaves that form a central bowl adapted to catching rainwater..

CALIFORNIA CONDOR

GYMNOGYPS CALIFORNIANUS

THIS MAGNIFICENT BIRD OF PREY HAS BECOME A SYMBOL OF CONSERVATION EFFORTS IN NORTH AMERICA. AT THE SAME TIME IT HAS HIGHLIGHTED THE EXPENSE AND DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED IN RETURNING AN ALMOST EXTINCT SPECIES TO ITS NATURAL HABITAT.



Like its cousin the Andean Condor, the California Condor is huge and impressive. Now listed as Critically Endangered, this massive raptor once haunted the canyons and valleys of western North America, from Baja California, Mexico in the south to British Columbia in the north. It declined steadily, reaching a low point of just 22 birds in 1981. By 1987, the last few wild birds had been captured to join a captive breeding program in a last-ditch attempt to rescue this magnificent bird from extinction. By

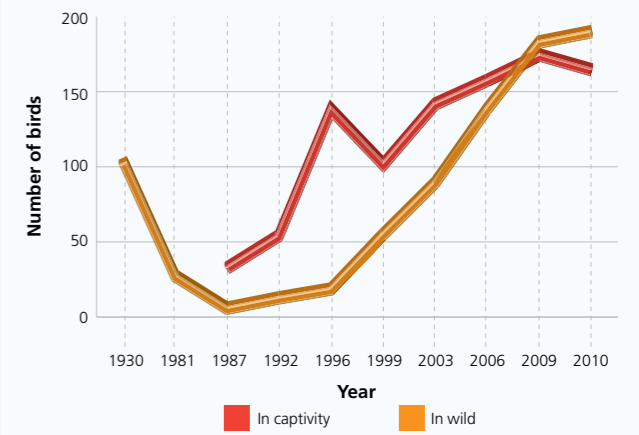


2003, 85 had been reintroduced to the wild, in California and Arizona, increasing to 130 by 2006. There are now wild birds in several sites, including the Grand Canyon and in Baja California. Condors live for 50 years or more (in captivity) and do not breed until at least 6 years old, so building up a population is a slow process. A single egg is laid and if it hatches successfully, the parent birds attend the young bird even after it has fledged. The preoccupied parents are unable to breed again for the rest of that year and the following year.

Captive rearing involves feeding the growing birds without letting them see their human foster parents. The use of a glove in the rough form of an adult condor's head is one trick used in this process. A better arrangement is to let adult captive condors raise the chicks, thus avoiding any damaging imprinting to humans. When the birds are ready to be released, this must be done with great care, using specially constructed release pens in which the birds can be kept and provided with food for months, with previously released individuals able to make occasional visits before the captives are finally given their freedom. Major food sources for California Condors are dead whales and sea-lions washed up on the coast though, like vultures, they are attracted to any carrion, including dead livestock or dead mammals such as deer. They usually detect their quarry by following other scavengers such as Turkey Vultures.

▽ *This group of adults and juvenile California Condors in Zion National Park, Utah, has been bred in captivity and released wearing radio transmitters, so that scientists can track and protect them.*

Fall and rise of California Condor population



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Released individuals carry global positioning system (GPS) devices that transmit data to research computers 12 times each day. This has yielded much valuable information about their movements and also allows rapid recovery of dead or sickly individuals. Poisoning by lead ingested with meat from the carcasses of shot deer and other mammals seems to be a continuing problem for the condors. In October 2007, California passed a bill prohibiting the use of lead bullets so it is hoped that this threat will gradually diminish.

The number of California Condors living wild has now reached about 130. They have been reintroduced to the Big Sur region of central California and also to the coastal mountains of southern California, to the Grand Canyon of Arizona as well as northern Baja California.

△ *This California Condor chick in San Diego Wild Animal Park is being persuaded to feed using a glove puppet in the guise of one of its parents that is attempting to deliver vital food into its immature mouth.*



BIRD WATCH

A SURVEY OF PLANET EARTH'S CHANGING ECOSYSTEMS

MARTIN WALTERS

CONSULTANT: JONATHAN ELPHICK

From the tufted puffin in the Pacific Northwest to the hook-billed hermit in the Brazilian rainforest, birds suffer from the effects of climate change in every corner of the globe. Scientists have found declines of up to 90 percent in some troubled bird populations and unprecedented reproductive failure in others. The most recent studies suggest dire prospects: 1,227 avian species are threatened with extinction and an additional 838 near-threatened species are urgent priorities for conservation action.

As much an indispensable guide as a timely call to action, *Bird Watch* is an illustrated tour of these endangered birds and their habitats. Encyclopedic in scope, this book features all 1,227 species on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, thoroughly detailing the environmental pressures and conservation prescriptions that hold their futures in the balance. After introducing readers to the main threats to birds and regions at high risk, *Bird Watch* presents a visually stunning and scientifically accurate flight over

the major bird habitats, including tropical forests; temperate and northern forests; deserts; mountains; grasslands; and Mediterranean, marine, freshwater, and oceanic islands. The volume concludes with an overview of bird species by region—categorized by family within each region—and a guide to the world's best birding sites. Produced in cooperation with BirdLife International, *Bird Watch* is a celebration of the beauty and diversity of birds and their habitats—and a warning of the dangers they face around the world.

Martin Walters is a writer, editor, and naturalist based in Cambridge, England. He studied Zoology at the University of Oxford and spent several years as Biological Sciences Editor at Cambridge University Press, where he was responsible for developing the botany, ecology, and natural history lists.

Jonathan Elphick is a natural history author and consultant. He has written and edited many books, including *The Birdwatcher's Handbook: A Guide to the Birds of Britain and Ireland*, *Birds: The Arts of Ornithology*, and *Natural History Museum Atlas of Bird Migration*.

8 ½ × 11

ISBN-13: 978-0-226-87226-1

Cloth \$45.00

Publication Date: March 2011

For a review copy or other publicity inquiries, please contact:

Lindsay Dawson
Senior Promotions Manager,
Reference and Regional Books
The University of Chicago Press
1427 E. 60th Street
Chicago, IL 60637
P 773 702 0890
F 773 702 9756
ldawson@press.uchicago.edu

To place orders in the United States or Canada, please contact your local University of Chicago Press sales representative or contact the University of Chicago Press by phone at 1-800-621-2736 or by fax at 1-800-621-8476.

www.press.uchicago.edu