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American Birds

THE MAGAZINE OF RECORD AND DISCOVERY · FALL 1991 · \$4.00



SNOWY OWL, PAGE 382

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American Birds

The Magazine of Record and Discovery

FROM THE PRESIDENT

BRIGHT SUN AND CLEAR blue skies over our New England farm during Labor Day weekend gave special meaning to the musical show-tune, "Try to Remember the Month of September." Eastern Bluebirds joined us as we made end-of-summer repairs on the sheep pasture fence. Just 15 years ago, Eastern Bluebirds were threatened by the loss of their habitat—agricultural land. But people across the region helped reverse the trend by providing bluebird houses; today we have houses on many of our fenceposts and competition between bluebirds and Tree Swallows for preferred housing has become an annual spring event.

The same instincts that cause us to help bluebirds, also bring people to the National Audubon Society. They see their favorite songbirds and other species disappearing and want to do something about it. However, birds cannot be saved solely by installing bird feeders and houses. We

need legislation, protected areas, and a sustainable approach to development if birds and other wildlife (and indeed humans) are to survive.

In fact, what we really need is a new relationship with nature.

Audubon is endeavoring to define what this relationship with nature should be. Our roots in bird protection remain strong, but out of necessity, we have grown to encompass the forests, wetlands, tundra, and other areas where birds and wildlife live. Our scope must now include many aspects of human activities that have an impact on our environment such as energy production and solid waste management—issues that we ignore at our peril and the peril of birds and other wildlife.

Like it or not, human beings are defining nature. We are losing nature to the activities of humans, and if we are to save it, it must be through our own actions.

We have redesigned *American Birds* in order to reach more people with our conservation message. We have also hired Michael Robbins, an experienced editor and award-winning writ-

er, as editor of *Audubon* magazine. Between them, these publications can play a leadership role in creating a new dialogue about the environment.

Audubon's four high-priority campaigns to protect ancient forests, wetlands, the Platte River, and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge are making good headway. In the process we have forestalled threats to endangered birds and wildlife. Right now we are organizing a major effort to strengthen the Endangered Species Act, which is itself threatened as it comes up for reauthorization in Congress.

Times are changing. And Audubon has been changing with them. Your commitment is key. To save our birds we must save their habitat. Thanks for joining with us in these efforts.

Peter A.A. Berle





Carolina Parrot

What Bird Lovers Say...

"The Staff at GEORGETOWN GALLERIES is very friendly and courteous. They have assisted me in making intelligent choices without "selling" pressure of any kind."
*Dr. Gordon Luk
 Bloomfield Hills, MI.*

"I wanted to tell you how much I am enjoying my Audubon original. It is truly a lovely work of art and I am so thrilled to have it. I also want you to know that the framing is perfect, I couldn't have selected anything I would have liked more."
*Jean L. Morrison
 Miami, FL.*

"The Marsh Hawk arrived Friday, July 5, by Federal Express. In a word, Wow!!!!"
*John A. Palmer, Jr.
 Yucaipa, CA.*

Large Private Archive Hand-Colored Works of Wildlife Artist

The ultimate wild bird collectibles are historic lithographs of John James Audubon's "Birds of North America" now offered to readers of American Birds Magazine in an exclusive private sale.

Every true bird lover should seriously consider owning at least one original artifact created by the most famous wildlife artist who ever lived — before they are either no longer available or priced out of reach of the average collector.

John James Audubon roamed the American wilderness between 1820 and 1850 pursuing an impossible dream: to seek out and paint—in their natural habitat—every bird and every animal in North America.

It was an awesome undertaking that led Audubon to draw 500 birds (and 155 animals), not from museum models, but in the rivers, valleys, swamps, forests and mountains where they lived.

No high-powered optics helped him in his search. No camera captured his birds on film.

Yet he recorded colors so brilliant and movement so life-like it will take your breath away.

The rare, antique prints of Audubon's work that survive today—beautifully preserved and as vibrantly alive and colorful as the day they were hand-painted 150 years ago—are the ultimate wild bird collectibles.

And they're not only available, but surprisingly affordable, in this special offering from GEORGETOWN GALLERIES.

Legend In His Own Time

Audubon travelled from "The Mississippi Flyway" to The Great Lakes to the Oregon Territories and beyond—often alone and on foot—in pursuit of his magnificent obsession.

He became a legend even in his own lifetime, celebrated in the royal courts of Europe as the scruffy American frontiersman who painted beautiful birds. He was so revered in America that his portrait hangs to this day beside our greatest statesmen in the White House in Washington, D.C.

He became a towering figure in American history. *The New Yorker Magazine* (February 25, 1991) called Audubon:

"The nearest thing American Art has had to a Founding Father."

Ambitious Publishing Venture

In his lifetime, it was Audubon's ambition to publish his works on a scale never before attempted.

Working with engravers William H. Lizars and Robert Havell in England, he produced 435 life-sized engravings of his birds. They became known as the spectacular "Double-Elephant Folio" of *The Birds of North America*. (They were called "Elephant Folios"

because of their 29" x 39" size—enormous by early 19th Century publishing standards.)

Lizars and Havell made mirror images of Audubon's original 435 drawings, which were then incised by hand onto metal sheets. Black and white prints were made on "Double-Elephant" folio sheets of the finest watermarked archival paper. Then color was added by hand under Audubon's watchful eye.



Tropic Bird (actual size: 6 1/2" x 10 1/4")

And What Birds Audubon Painted!

There were Flamingos and Herons, Eagles and Owls, Flycatchers, Warblers and Finches. He painted Woodpeckers and Doves, Falcons and Hawks, all in their natural environments.

His paintings of such spectacular birds as the Roseate

Spoonbill and the Carolina Parrot, among dozens of others, stand out to this day as the finest portraits of these exotic birds ever made.

Many of Audubon's birds are now, sad to say, extinct: The Passenger Pigeon, Great Auk, Key West Dove, and Bachman's Warbler, to name a few.

But he painted them all.

Only 61 sets of the elephant folios are known to exist today. Nearly all complete sets are in museums and historic collections. They are the most sought after—and valuable—representations of birds in the world.

How Valuable Are Audubon's Elephant Folios?

A complete set of the Double Elephant Folio sold for \$3.96 million in 1989! Individual images sell for \$2,500 to \$150,000 today. But for avid collectors, price seems to be no barrier; in fact, average elephant folio prices have increased ten times over just since the 1970's!

Audubon's Affordable Lithographs

But Audubon's publishing efforts didn't stop there. Beginning in 1840, he (and after his death in 1851, his sons) produced a popularized version of *The Birds of America* called "The Royal Octavo Edition"—adding 65 images to bring the total to 500 and reducing the size to a more manageable (and affordable, even back then) 6 1/2" x 10 1/4".

These, too, are original lithographs—each one painstakingly hand-colored down to the smallest detail.

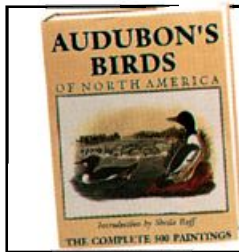
In many ways, they're even more appealing than the larger folios. Drawn to scale, their details are even more exacting.

And the good news is that the price spiral hasn't



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SPECIAL BOOK OFFER

GEORGETOWN GALLERIES has reserved a limited quantity of Audubon's "Birds of North America," published by The Wellfleet Press, (a division of Walden Books). This is a full-color, coffee table sized volume of all 500 of Audubon's birds, retail value \$35. All we ask is that you cover our postage and handling costs of \$12.50 and this beautiful book is yours to keep. Call 1-800-877-1726 to order yours today.



American Flamingo

What Collectors Say...

caught up with the smaller birds—yet.

The best news is, you can actually own original Audubons for as little as \$95!

World Supply Drying Up!

Even though several thousand of the Royal Octavo Edition were produced in the last century, it's estimated that more than 95% no longer exist: abuse, attrition, destruction, improper handling and the ravages of time all have taken their toll. Add to that the sets held by libraries, museums, universities, and historical societies, and the number remaining in private hands is down to a precious few.

Certain images—like the Wild Turkeys, the Bald Eagle, and the Louisiana Heron—are almost impossible to find.

Cherished Family Heirlooms

More importantly, when individuals acquire Audubon lithographs, they become cherished family heirlooms — rarely to be resold for a profit.

(Even though the scarcer they get, the more valuable they become.)

That's why no avid bird lover should ignore the opportunity to acquire one or more lithographs before the best examples are all gone.

Important Collection

GEORGETOWN GALLERIES, a large private archive near Washington, D.C., has combed the world in search of Audubon's original lithographs and engravings. Nearly all of the 500 birds in the Royal Octavo Edition are now available, along with an impressive selection of the fabulous "Double-Elephant" folio engravings.

But in many cases, only one lithograph of any particular bird is available. So if you're interested, you would be wise to call today.

Special Offer

In order for you to make an informed decision about original Audubon lithographs you may want to

acquire, we will send you a full-color, coffee table sized book, Audubon's "Birds of North America."

This volume, published in 1990 by The Wellfleet Press (a division of Walden Books), illustrates all 500 original drawings as they appear in the Royal Octavo Edition. It's a \$35 retail value, but all we ask is that you cover nominal postage and handling charges (\$12.50) and your book will be rushed to you by Federal Express within 72 hours of your order.

Along with your book, we'll send you a gift certificate worth \$50 towards your first purchase, so you really can't lose on this offer.

And the book is yours to keep no matter what.

There's lots to learn about Audubon, and our staff of expert consultants is on hand from 9:30 am to 5:30 pm, Monday through Friday (Eastern Time) to help you. Please use our toll-free number (1-800-877-1726) to order your book and receive more information.



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Please call GEORGETOWN GALLERIES today to be sure of the best selection—and to order your copy of Audubon's "The Birds of North America."

All sales are guaranteed (see box above). Gallery open by appointment only.

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"I cannot remember ever coming across a collectible so universally appealing, so rare, and at a price that is affordable by virtually everyone."

Dr. Gary North
Fort Worth, Texas
(Financial Publisher)

"No matter how many great artists have come along to challenge Audubon, no one has knocked him off his perch as the greatest wildlife artist of all time."

Lee Euler
Baltimore, Maryland
(Publishing Executive)

"Nowhere have I ever seen such an opportunity to own something so old, so beautiful, and at such a low price."

Steve Johnson
Atlanta, Georgia
(Investment Advisor)

"There is a substantial long-term investment potential in original, authorized Audubon lithographs — that is, if you would ever want to sell."

Larry Abraham
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American Birds

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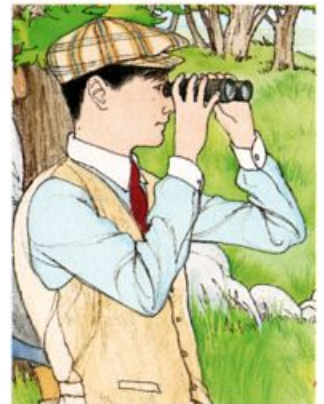
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Front cover: Snowy Owl (*Nyctea scandiaca*) in flight. This ephemeral predator of the frozen north is the stuff of legend, and the object of desire of many birders. Photograph/Alan & Sandy Carey

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FROM THE EDITOR

THIS AUTUMN WHILE I WAS WATCHING some migrant Blackpoll Warblers out on the barrier beach, I couldn't stop thinking about the fact that if they were cars they would be given a fuel efficiency rating of 720,000 miles per gallon of gas. They feed like crazy, nearly doubling their usual weight with stores of solid body fat before setting off southward. They burn all that fat off in a few short days powering their long distance nonstop flight. Pretty miraculous isn't it?

Here at Audubon we're excited about our new initiative called *Save Our Songbirds*. We refuse to accept that neotropical migrants, like Blackpolls, Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, or Western Kingbirds, are utterly doomed because of too much habitat loss, real estate development, agriculture, logging, or ranching. We know the dire statistical projections that estimate an end to what we know as "migration" by the year 2010. We're not interested in watching slim ghosts of the exciting migration "waves" we see biannually. We are switching into high gear to meet the challenge of saving our songbirds from the widespread declines they are experiencing.

Save Our Songbirds offers a more palatable and healthy vision of the future; a view of forest protection and management, of committed field birders monitoring avian popu-

lations and identifying special areas where they breed and or assemble. Further, it is an opportunity for us to protect these habitats under siege. This program empowers birders—you and me—to advocate the need for bolstering state and federal policies so that we can protect our birds before they teeter on the brink of extinction. We can put teeth into those policies. We can implement an international conservation program so that we can preserve one of our most valuable international resources—our migratory birds.



Do you want to join the *Save Our Songbirds* program and have a direct impact on policies that adversely affect migrants? Do you want to support a program that insures great birding during future migrations?

Write and ask me about it. Stay tuned!

— S. R. Drennan

ANSWERS TO THAT'S BIRD & CAR ENTERTAINMENT, VOLUME 45, NO. 2, SUMMER 1991 AMERICAN BIRDS

1. Thunderbird
2. Sunbeam
3. Tercel (or Tiercel)
4. Swallow Sports, Standard Swallow, Standard Spécial
5. Hawk (Flight, Power, Sky, Golden, Silver)
6. Comet
7. Aston Martin
8. Phoenix
9. Road Runner
10. Swift (Swift Manufacturing Company)
11. Eagle (or Eagle Premier)
12. Skylark
13. Falcon (or Ford Falcon)
14. Eagle
15. Hummingbird
16. Monarch
17. Lark
18. Firebird
19. Coronet
20. "Cigogne volante" or flying stork








A dark green luxury sedan is parked in a forest. The car is shown from a side profile, facing left. The background is filled with large, mature trees with thick trunks and dense green foliage. The lighting is soft and natural, suggesting a quiet, secluded environment. The car's design is sleek and elegant, with a prominent front headlight and a multi-spoke alloy wheel.

Sure is quiet in here.

And roomy. And comfortable. And if that isn't impressive enough, consider the new, bigger engine,

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anti-lock brakes and driver's side airbag. Now doesn't that sound nice? The Accord EX.       

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

American Birds

THE FUTURE OF BIRDING IN AMERICA

A Special Survey of Change

- WILL MINIATURE COMPUTERS find a place in the field?
- WHAT SOFTWARE PROGRAMS facilitate field note and list maintenance?
- WILL VIDEO CAMERAS replace still photography?
- IS THERE A SOLUTION to Lyme Disease: the curse of birders?
- WILL FURTHER WETLAND and rainforest destruction significantly alter the patterns of American birding?
- WHAT ARE THE NEXT HOT SPOTS for adventuresome birders? Madagascar? Antarctica? Eastern Europe?

* * *

As the century draws to a close, the birding world is at a critical point.

Although more popular than ever before, birding hasn't changed much since the introduction of the modern field guide.

Now technology is knocking at the door. New opportunities to expand our enjoyment and knowledge abound. And environmental crises, as never before, demand our attention.

THE FUTURE OF BIRDING IN AMERICA.
A SPECIAL SURVEY OF CHANGE
IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF

American Birds



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HOW TO READ THE REGIONAL REPORTS

Birds have no respect for range maps. Bird distribution in North America is constantly changing, as birds expand their ranges into new areas, disappear from former strongholds, or alter their patterns of migration.

Our knowledge of bird distribution is also changing constantly, as discoveries continue to come in. Keeping up with all these developments is a challenge for ornithologists, conservationists, and birders.

The Regional Reports, published four times a year, contain a wealth of information about our dynamic birdlife. To those seeing the reports for the first time, they might appear difficult or technical, but they are not; anyone with any birding experience will find the reports easy to understand. If you have hesitated to dip into this section of the magazine, we invite you to read the report from your area of the continent; we predict that the information there will alternately surprise you and confirm your ideas about birdlife in your region. To help you get started, here are answers to some questions that may occur to first-time readers.

What kind of information is included, and do the Regional Editors just report everything that's reported to them?

Regional Editors do not report every sighting of every bird. Such a list would be huge, unwieldy, and not very useful. Instead, they solicit reports from as many observers as possible, screen the records for accuracy, choose those that are most significant, look for trends and patterns of occurrence, connect scat-

tered bits of information, and ultimately come up with a concise, readable summary of the real bird news—the important avian events and trends of the season throughout their region.

Why are there so many abbreviations in the text?

We abbreviate some frequently-used words and phrases to save space. Most of these are easy to understand and remember. (See the list of abbreviations at the end of this section.) In addition to these standard abbreviations, some Regional Editors use shortened versions of the names of some birding hot spots; they list these local abbreviations in a separate paragraph, just after their introductory comments and just before their main species accounts.

What do the initials in parentheses mean?

Most records published in each report will be followed by initials, to indicate the source: the person(s) who found or reported the bird(s) mentioned. The initials may be followed by et al. (short for et alia, meaning “and others”), or preceded by fide (literally, “by the faith of”—meaning that this is a second-hand report, and the person initialed is the one who passed it along to the Regional Editor). A dagger (†) before the initials means that this person turned in written details on the sighting.

There are good reasons for giving credit to the observers involved. Readers may be reassured about the accuracy of surprising sightings if they know who the observers were; researchers who want to know more about a certain record may be able to contact the observers directly.

Who are the people who send in their sightings?

All observers are invited to send in notes to their Regional Editors: details on rare sightings, species that were scarcer or more numerous than usual during the season, unusual con-

centrations on migration, and so on. Reading the reports for your region for a few seasons is the best way to find out what kinds of information are desired. Although the Regional Editors cannot cite every record that they receive, every contributor helps them to produce a more thorough and accurate summary.

Why are some bird names in heavier or blacker type?

We use boldface type to draw attention to outstanding records of rare birds. General categories of birds that the Regional Editors would place in boldface would include: any species that has been recorded fewer than 10 times previously in a given state or province; any new breeding record for a state or province; or any bird totally outside established patterns of seasonal occurrence. (For the most part, records are not boldfaced unless they are backed up with solid details or photographs.) Birders who like to know about rare birds (and most of us do) can get a complete rundown of the season's outstanding rarities by scanning all the Regional Reports for those boldfaced birds.

What are the boxes marked “S.A.”?

“S.A.” stands for “Special Attention” (and, by coincidence, is pronounced “essay”). The purpose of the boxed essays is to draw attention to particularly noteworthy phenomena or trends.

Likely topics for essays include new population trends or new patterns of bird distribution, unusual invasions or migration events, field research projects that have yielded new data, specific conservation problems that have an impact on birdlife, or detailed discussion of some outstanding (or perplexing) rare bird record. Experienced readers of *American Birds* make it a point to flip through all the Regional Reports and read all the S.A.s, even in regions where they do not read the rest of the text.

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American Birds

*is the perfect Christmas gift for your fellow birder.
Please use the cards in this issue to order a subscription for yourself,
a family member or a friend—
and make Christmas last the whole year!*

Okay you birders, over the last few months we've had some fun on this page, but now it's time to get to work. This quiz is about tools, instruments, machines and birds. (Hey, where do you think you're going? Sit down.) We want you to answer the following questions. Answer them right (15 right) and you get a prize. Answer them wrong and you go to your room. Ready? Begin.

1. Tip your hat to this machine that's used to clean liquid spills like oil.

2. Before the recession, you could see these big thing-a-majigs at work all over America's cities. Skyscrapers can't go up without them; the Egyptians used a simpler version to build the pyramids.



3. This is the name of a hummingbird, the muse of epic poetry, and an old-fashioned musical instrument.

4. Like the bird that took its name, this magnificent machine of war attacks swiftly.

5. Tell us a bird-name bar used as a lever.

6. To separate seeds from husks, you'd use one of these.

7. After a heavy snowfall, you might hire one of these local entrepreneurs to help you clear the path.

8. Astronomically, they come in big and little sizes and pioneers used them to take water from wells.

9. A very useful tool and another name for a crazy Floridian.

10. A many-toothed, sharp-bladed, manual tool and at the same time the vernacular for heron.

THAT'S BIRD & TOOL ENTERTAINMENT

11. Remove these bars and the Pennsylvania, Reading and Chattanooga go nowhere.

12. To cut a plant, you need this tool. (Clue: Go for the obvious)

13. This tool, with a single-edged blade set at an angle on a long, curved handle, is used to cut long grass or grain by hand. The Angel of Death also packs one, but forget the bill.

14. A falconry term and a carpenter's tool, there's nothing fancy about it.

15. It took a lot of imagination (written with dripping sarcasm) to name a combat aircraft after this pointy-winged predator. The plane and the bird are among the most agile flyers.

16. Keats and Shelley surely used one of these instruments to write their odes. Scrooge, on the other hand, used one to keep his ledgers.

17. Generically, this family of valves regulates the flow of liquid or gas.

18. A heavy cylinder of metal or stone that is used to crush or flatten stuff; also a skate, and with a "rock'n," someone who makes loud music. Enough clues?



19. These structures are used to support a building above the ground. They also elevate clowns.

20. Masons use this tool to pile high their mortar, while "carnies" do it from town to town.

Write your answers on a piece of paper and mail before December 16, 1991 to: American Birds Quiz, 950 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10022.

The entrants with the most correct answers will win goodies. Check the next issue of *American Birds* for another quiz, and the answers to this one.

Until January, may the driving force of birding be with you...



Try your hand at submitting a twenty-question bird quiz. If we publish your submission, you'll win a prize!

Answers to last issue's quiz can be found on page 353.

Bausch & Lomb Team Wins Again!
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Bausch & Lomb clarity separates the Wandering from the Gray-tailed.

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