

Birds in Trouble

Lynn E. Barber

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For a keen birdwatcher like Lynn E. Barber, birds are a way into learning about current conservation challenges. Her *Birds in Trouble* profiles many of America's endangered birds and gives concrete advice on how to help both threatened and common species.

Many rare birds have a limited range, so loss of habitat through pollution and development can be devastating. Whether the wetlands the yellow rail depends on, the grasslands the sage grouse inhabits, the Arctic breeding grounds of the buff-breasted sandpiper, or the ocean health essential to petrels: a thriving environment is key to endangered birds' survival.

What can ordinary folk do? Barber has plenty of suggestions. Observing bird behavior and submitting sightings through Internet tracking systems is one strategy. Records of a rare bird might help get a location designated as an Important Bird Area. Meanwhile, donating to conservation organizations, volunteering, and writing to officials can make a difference. Even for common bird species, it's easy to help by providing fresh water, various nourishing foods, and a welcoming habitat right in your backyard.

The core of the book is a set of detailed species accounts. Barber describes each endangered bird and gives notes on its habitat, an account of its decline and current status, and information about special conservation efforts. She uses estimated population figures from the National Audubon Society's 2007 Watchlist, which categorizes birds as "red" or "yellow" based on their threatened status. Best of all, she makes these records personalized by recounting her interactions with birds from trumpeter swans to prairie chickens. As a birdwatcher who has been based in several states, she knows her subject deeply and advocates for endangered birds zealously.

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