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Save the Birds



From each book
sold a contribution will
be made to the International
Council for Bird Preservation's
'Save the Birds' account,
to finance international
projects for the conservation
of threatened habitats
and species.

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For the world of tomorrow

The question of which came first, the chicken or the egg, has now been answered by the study of evolution. The egg came first, for birds are the descendants of egg-laying scaly reptiles.



The question of which will succumb first, the bird or its egg, remains open. Will the Oystercatcher die from the effects of oil pollution before or after its eggs have been finally sterilized by poisonous chemicals tipped into the oceans?

In the course of their evolution, birds have developed strategies to protect their eggs from predators and extremes of weather. They have no strategy that can protect them against DDT.



'If you can't beat them, join them' is an old maxim which applies to birds just as it does to man himself. For those birds flexible enough, survival may depend on an ability to adapt to man and his ways.



The Collared Dove takes shelter under our eaves and feeds in our gardens. Its advantage over many other birds is its willingness to adapt to our artificial landscapes and our concrete jungles.

Is it possible that man is now becoming a causative factor in the evolutionary process – forcing more adaptable species to change, just as the great Ice Ages did thousands of years ago?



Can there ever be beauty in death? The sad beauty of this wild goose belies its terrible fate – its body twisted into the pose of the 'dying swan' by the effects of lead poisoning.



In the face of such an image it is vital that we should not simply accept these things as inevitable but that we should mobilize our energies in defence of the living.

If we can manage to shorten the 'Red Lists' of species in danger, then there will be hope for the future – for us, as well as for the wild creatures with which we share this planet.







Birds have been the focus of my life ever since I was a boy of eleven. I can remember the day in early April, even the hour, when I became hooked. On a Saturday morning during one of my youthful explorations, I spotted a bundle of brown feathers clinging to a tree. It was a Flicker, tired from migration. The bird was sleeping with its bill tucked under the loose feathers of its back, but I thought it was dead. I poked it with my finger; instantly this inert thing jerked its head around, looked at me wildly, then took off in a flash of gold. It was like resurrection. What had seemed dead was very much alive. Ever since then, birds have seemed to me the most vivid expression of life. I, for one, would find the world quite desolate if there were no birds.

If we are to save the birds, we have to make as many people as possible aware of the threats to their survival. I can think of no better way of doing that than through the publication of *Save the Birds*. I have contributed my own time and effort to this book because I feel it is one of the most valuable conservation projects of our time, and I am grateful to the members of the Audubon Alliance for sponsoring the American edition. We *must* save the birds, and in saving them, we will save the earth.

Roger Tory Peterson

The Audubon Alliance

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Massachusetts Audubon Society
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The project team

With the publication of this book, the International Council for Bird Preservation is launching a major worldwide campaign:



SAVE THE BIRDS was conceived by PRO NATUR GmbH, Geleitsstrasse 14, Frankfurt/Main, West Germany, and was implemented in close association with the International Council for Bird Preservation, 32 Cambridge Road, Giron, Cambridge CB3 0PJ, England.

From every book sold, a contribution will be made to ICBP's SAVE THE BIRDS account, to finance international projects for the conservation of threatened habitats and the preservation of endangered species.

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For the World of Tomorrow

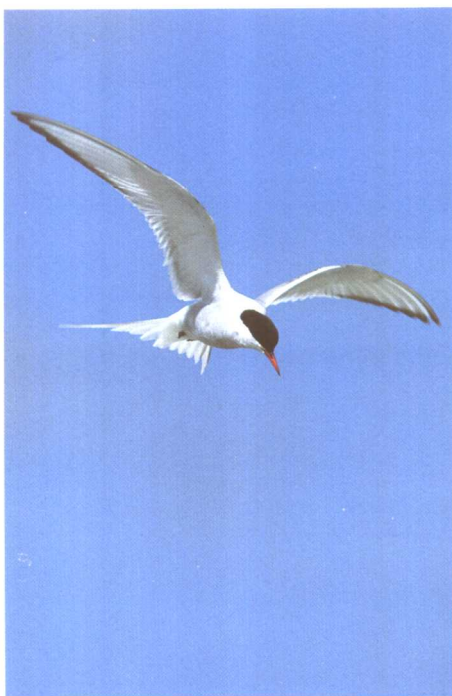
RUDOLF L. SCHREIBER

A world book about bird conservation should, by rights, begin with a world record. Miniature wonders like the feather of a sparrow no longer amaze us, satiated as we are with sensational news of every kind.

The world record for long-distance bird migration is held by the Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*). This slender white bird, with its black cap and deeply forked tail, spends the greater part of its year on the wing, commuting between the Arctic and Antarctic regions in an annual round trip of almost 40,000 kilometres. It symbolizes perfectly the global scale of the conservation idea – and at the same time puts human endeavour into perspective. Every year we burn up vast quantities of fossil fuel – organic reserves that took millions of years to accumulate – simply to carry ourselves through the air in rigid aluminium containers. Admittedly, the dream of emulating the birds inspired us to invent marvels of technology, yet compared with the free flight of a bird our best efforts remain mere mechanical contraptions.

Birds fly naturally, and the air they need beneath their wings, and whose oxygen

fuels these highly efficient flying machines, is the very air that we exploit and pollute with hardly a second thought. We burn huge quantities of kerosene and petrol to get from one side of the world to the other: but what are the consequences?



The estimated number of automobiles in the world today is about 500 million. If we assume that one-tenth of these are in use at any given time, then every second some 50 million engines are polluting the air with their exhaust fumes. Even this may not seem too frightening to some people, but it must be remembered that the biosphere – the thin, life-sustaining layer surrounding our planet – is of finite thickness. It is, quite literally, an 'enclosed space'. To continue pouring poisonous gases into the atmosphere at this rate is the global equivalent of driving a car into a garage, then finding that the door has slammed shut and locked – and that the vehicle's engine cannot be switched off.

The Arctic Tern is one of the world's most graceful and distinctive migrants – a bird whose range encompasses every major ocean and continent.

Roads link our towns and cities and give us our freedom of movement, but their disruptive impact on the landscape has long been overlooked.



Breakfast in Paris; lunch in New York: *Concorde* makes it all possible. But the milk in the French coffee contains caesium from Chernobyl, and the

fruit of the lunchtime fruit salad is contaminated with pesticides. There is no escape from these realities – not even at twice the speed of sound.