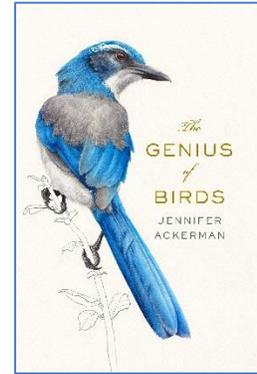


BIRD NOTES by Rick Pyeritz

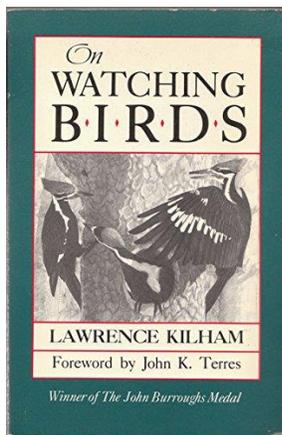
He who studies birds without books sails on unchartered seas, but he who studies birds without watching birds does not go to sea at all.

The Genius of Birds by Jennifer Ackerman, 1996

Recent research in bird behavior has scientists trying to better define what it means to be intelligent and to give new meaning for the term “bird-brain.” Results reveal that the cognitive skills of birds appear to be closer to those of primates than to those of their reptilian relatives. Some birds can count, do simple math problems, make tools, solve problems at the same rate as a 5 year old, remember the past, plan for the future, and pass along cultural traditions. Some birds appear to be smarter than others---the ostrich and emu less smart than the super-intelligent African Grey Parrot and the New Caledonian Crow.



On Watching Birds by Lawrence Kilham, 1988



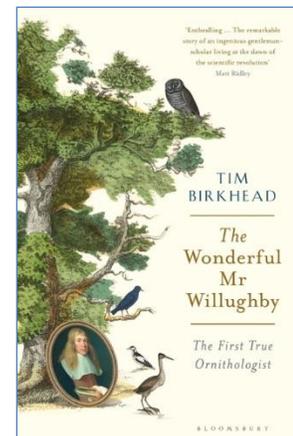
In this captivating book, the author discusses the enjoyment one can expect by observing bird behavior.

“What I seek in this book...is not to hand beginners cut flowers, but to give them tips on growing their own; not to provide accounts applicable to only a few birds, but to give pointers on how to go about observing almost any bird anywhere. Behavior watching is cumulative. Once you get the hang of it, the more you see and reflect, the more you are apt to observe.”

“It is better to learn ten birds on one’s own, then several hundred following a leader.”

The Wonderful Mr. Willughby by Tim Birkhead, 2018

The author of this book has spent years researching the life of Francis Willughby and has come to the conclusion that Willughby is the First True Ornithologist. Francis lived during the fortunate time of the beginning of the scientific revolution when so much unknown was waiting to be discovered. Impeding the progress of research was that scientists did not speak the same language. The same bird may have a variety of names depending on where you were on the European continent. This book describes the discoveries, joys and difficulties that Willughby and his friend and tutor, John Ray, had to endure to set

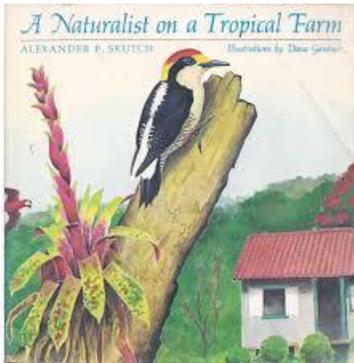


the standards necessary for the study of birds. His early death in 1672 at age 36 cut short an amazingly productive life.

“He digested the whole history of nature with the spirit and judgement that it always appeared new; with the care and diligence that was always constant to himself, and with the integrity that he has ever been esteemed a faithful interpreter of nature.”

Memorial to Francis Willughby in Middleton Church

A Naturalist on a Tropical Farm by Alexander F. Skutch, 1980.



Alexander Skutch received his degree in botany from Johns Hopkins University. He was then hired by the United Fruit Company and sent to Central America to study banana diseases. While there, he developed a passion for birds of the tropics, leading him to purchasing a farm in Costa Rica and settling there in 1941.

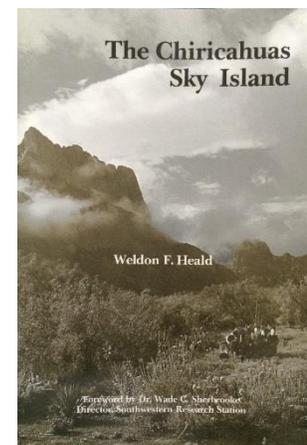
“I wished to study living things, especially birds, to reside among them, and to live in harmony with them.”

Skutch managed to save a large tract of virgin rainforest where he spent his days observing the natural world around him. He remained in Costa Rica until his death in 2004, eight days shy of his 100th birthday. Author of 40 books and over 200 articles, he was co-author of the first comprehensive field guide to Costa Rican birds. He is considered to be one of the world’s great ornithologists.

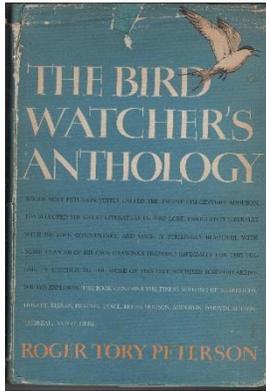
“The naturalist often exerts himself as strenuously for the immaterial rewards of experience and knowledge as the farmer does for the material rewards of food and money.”

Sky Island by Weldon F. Heald, 1967

A sky island is defined as an isolated mountain range rising above the surrounding grasslands, similar to an island surrounded by the sea. The Chiricahua Mountains are a significant sky island and harbor diverse wildlife and unique plant species. These mountains are one of the many sky islands which make up the land mass of Southeastern Arizona. William Heald and his wife lived in the middle of the Chiricahua, once home to Geronimo, for many years before selling their Painted Canyon Ranch to the American Museum of Natural History for its Southwestern Research Station. This is a book about the history and natural history of a unique area of this country and one of my favorite places on this earth.



The Bird Watcher's Anthology edited by Roger Tory Peterson, 1957



For this anthology, Peterson has selected 85 essays which he has arranged in seven sections:

The Spark
The Lure of the List
Migration
Glamour Birds
Birds in Far Places
There is Often Adventure
The Full-fledged Watcher

The sections are placed in this order to reflect “the classic progress of the bird watcher from the first spark of interest, through discovery, to the thoughtful observation of the mature student.”

The authors vary from early writers such as Gilbert White, Alexander Wilson and John James Audubon to more contemporary authors like Julian Huxley, George Miksch Sutton and William Beebe. This is a wonderful collection of writings by people who have devoted a great portion of their lives to the study of birds.

For comments/suggestions and/or sharing your favorite books about birds, please email me at eapyeritz@gmail.com