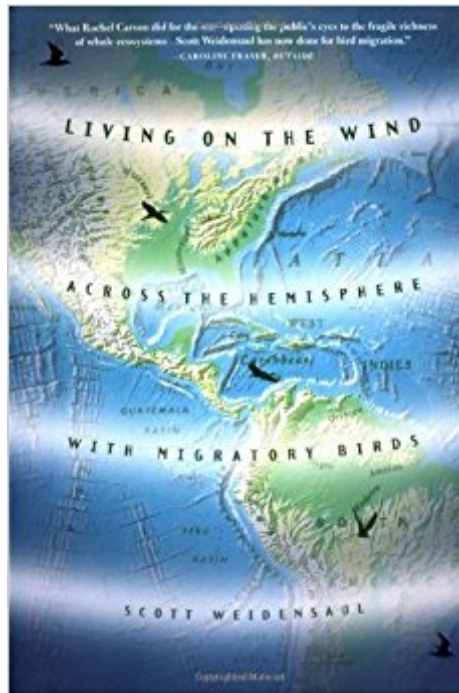




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Living On The Wind: Across The Hemisphere With Migratory Birds



Synopsis

Bird migration is the world's only true unifying natural phenomenon, stitching the continents together in a way that even the great weather systems fail to do. Scott Weidensaul follows awesome kettles of hawks over the Mexican coastal plains, bar-tailed godwits that hitchhike on gale winds 7,000 miles nonstop across the Pacific from Alaska to New Zealand, and myriad songbirds whose numbers have dwindled so dramatically in recent decades. Migration paths form an elaborate global web that shows serious signs of fraying, and Weidensaul delves into the tragedies of habitat degradation and deforestation with an urgency that brings to life the vast problems these miraculous migrants now face. *Living on the Wind* is a magisterial work of nature writing.

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Customer Reviews

Did you know that neither temperature nor hunger sparks bird migration? That many species migrate at night? That some birds migrate more than 5,000 miles in a single, uninterrupted flight? "We are such stodgy, rooted creatures," observes the author of this fascinating book. "To think of crossing thousands of miles under our own power is as incomprehensible as jumping the moon. Yet even the tiniest of birds perform such miracles." For anyone curious about the lives of migratory birds (and, incidentally, those of bird-obsessed humans), this book is a great nest of information. The author has traveled all over the world banding and observing birds and talking to the experts--amateur birders and ornithologists who have made many of the important discoveries about bird biology. From Alaska to Lake Erie to the limestone forests of Jamaica, Weidensaul

reaches not only for the scientific particulars but for the universal stories and humanizing, descriptive turns of phrase that keep this book from bogging down in statistics and jargon. By book's end the reader is unable to resist the heart of this compelling story, a plea for the conservation of habitat to keep these miraculous creatures on--or at least circling--the earth. --Maria Dolan --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"At whatever moment you read these words, day or night, there are birds aloft in the skies of the Western Hemisphere, migrating." Thus Weidensaul begins his compelling tale, adding shortly afterward what must be a widely shared thought: "That such delicate creatures undertake these epic journeys defies belief." With helpful supporting maps, he describes the migrating habits of many bird species and considers the intriguing question of how they do it. At the end, he focuses on a single bird--a redstart that he hears and sees singing while he sits alongside a stream in the mountains of northern Pennsylvania. "What I cannot see, no matter how closely I look, is what drives this small creature, barely heavier than air, to make the journeys that it must make... Its secrets are locked in that tiny packet of brain and muscle and instinct, a few feet away but separated from me by an immense, uncrossable distance. It knows, and I do not." --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I am an avid birder and this book helped me considerably in seeing the big picture with regards to bird migration. Migrating birds are so much more complex and fascinating than I had previously thought. Since I knew most of the birds mentioned in the book and had visited many of the key migratory locations, this book was especially valuable to me.

The book is an excellent testament to the rigors that birds go through in both their breeding and resting sites, and on migration. It's not a reference guide for each species' migration, but a fantastic description of migration in general (and for some species, in specific) and the way humans have attempted to gather information on how, why, when and where birds go, plus what they face once they get there. It's written in a very easy-going style, extremely comprehensible, and if you're a birder who wants to understand more than just checking birds off of a checklist, it's a fascinating read. It covers subject like: Banding, Radio-tagging, Where birds go when migrating, Habitat Destruction and Climate Change and their effects on migratory birds, plus breeding ground issues, and, (by extrapolation in some instances) what the average birdwatcher can do to help.

This is absolutely one of the best non-fiction books I have ever read. Not only backyard birding enthusiasts, but anyone who has ever had even a passing interest in birds will love this book. Scott writes about birds in an understanding yet scientific manner that lends itself to wonderful readability while providing vast amounts of information. Beginning in Alaska, moving down the hemisphere to the pampas of Argentina, and back again, he takes the reader on an amazing journey that literally follows the paths taken by millions of birds each year. He combines personal field experiences with well assembled accounts of scientific research and ornithological history to paint a vivid picture of the swirling patterns of avian movement across the globe. If you have ever looked twice at a bird passing overhead, I highly recommend picking up this valuable addition to any naturalist's library.

I found "Living on the Wind" extremely fascinating in places and a bit tiring in others. I guess I do not need to know all the incredible detail Scott goes into. I share his concern about the environment but have little power to change it, which he may do effectively -- I hope.

Scott Weidensaul is a very good writer and keeps you interested in his subject. He is widely traveled and very knowledgeable about his subject. Anyone who loves nature and birds will be happy to read this book and all of his books.

A rewarding book that highlights the increasing problems that face all migratory birds. An absolute eye opener in many areas of migration ecology that really requires the immediate attention of regulators if some species are to survive. It is the first time I have actually seen reference made to the economic power of birders being used as a tool to encourage protection of stopover sites that are of the greatest importance to migratory birds.

Anecdotal, but a great deal material that was not aware of. I recommend it.

This was a selection of the book club I belong to and although it is well written it suffers from being too long. Also, not being that familiar with the various birds discussed, I believe the book would be helped a great deal with color plates of the birds.

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