

Drawn to Birds

A NATURALIST'S
SKETCHBOOK

Jenny defouw Gender

Drawn *to* Birds

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SKETCHBOOK

Jenny defouw Geuder

Adventure Publications
Cambridge, Minnesota

Hello!



Cover and book design by Jonathan Norberg

Edited by Brett Ortler

Proofread by Emily Beaumont

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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Drawn to Birds: A Naturalist's Sketchbook

Copyright © 2022 by Jenny deFouw Geuder

Published by Adventure Publications

An imprint of AdventureKEEN

310 Garfield Street South

Cambridge, Minnesota 55008


(800) 678-7006

www.adventurepublications.net

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Printed in China

ISBN 978-1-64755-225-1 (pbk.); ISBN 978-1-64755-226-8 (ebook)



*To my Mom: always my biggest fan and
who encouraged me most. Thanks for
instilling in me a love for art and nature.*

Explore This Book



How to Use This Book 6

A gentle introduction to the world of birds, from eggs and nests to feathers and fledglings

Birding by Season. 24

A brief look at the birding each season has to offer, and how you can help birds throughout the year



The Birds

Backyard Birds 30

From year-round residents like cardinals and woodpeckers to summertime visitors like orioles, grosbeaks, and tanagers, this is your introduction to backyard birds. Say hello!



Raptors 60

Majestic, impressive, and even a little intimidating—get to know the birds of prey.



Near the Shore 70

Ducks and loons are familiar favorites, but there's more to see—herons, kingfishers, and others—if you look closely!

Prairie and Woods 82

The fields and woods are alive with birds, including grouse, cranes, and pheasants, not to mention the always-impressive wild turkey.



How to be a Naturalist. 94

Observe, sketch, record; if you become a noticer, you're a naturalist!



Welcoming Birds to Your Yard 108

Simple steps to make your yard bird- and wildlife-friendly, plus garden plans to welcome birds and pollinators to your yard, garden, or balcony



Wildflowers & Insects 126

Get to know your other garden neighbors: butterflies, beetles, bees, dragonflies, and more.

Garden!

Doodle!

Notice details, color.

Take photos!

How to Use this Book

*Identify
species.*

*Take notes,
write observations.*

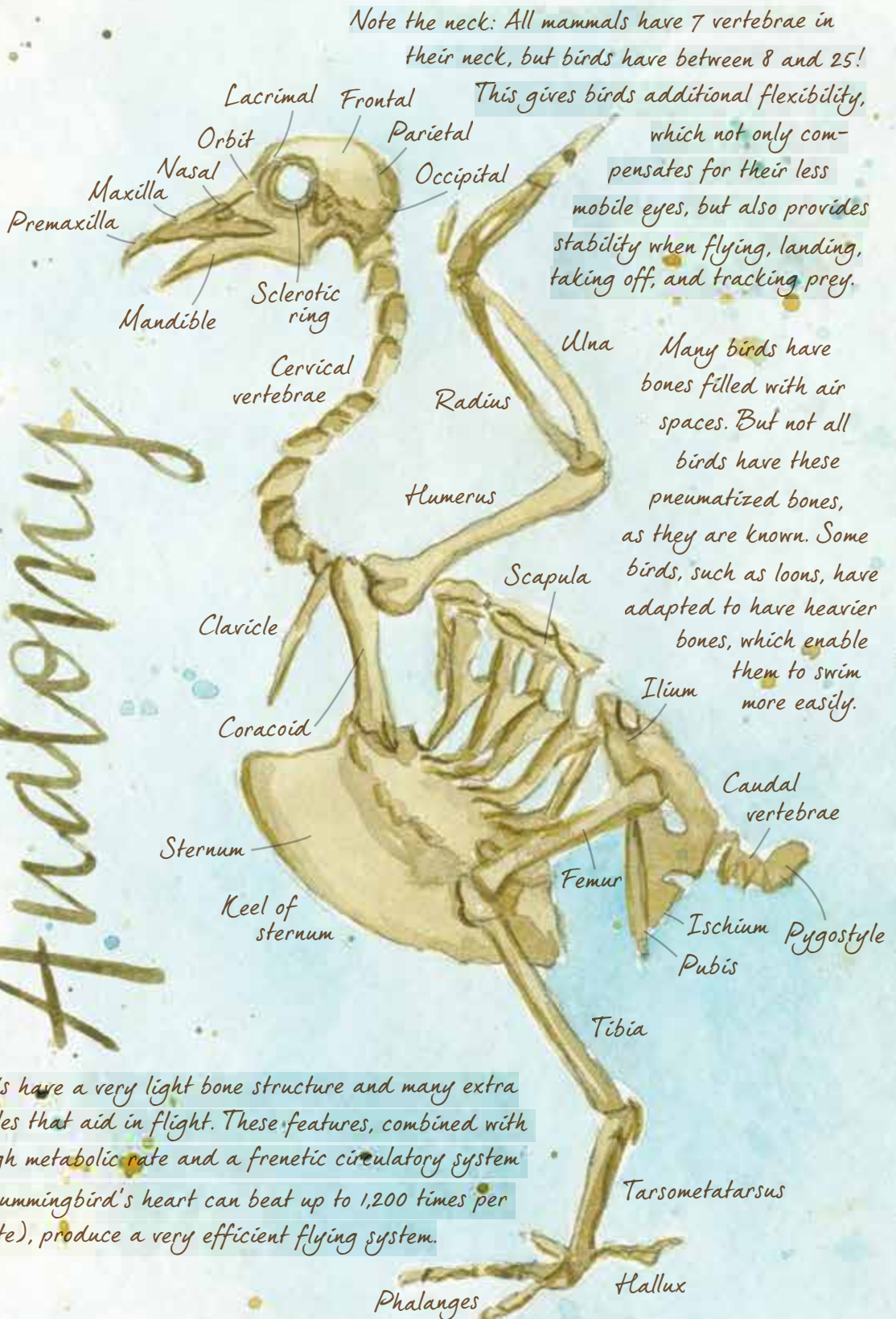
1. *Go outside! Look around you.
Listen. Breathe.*
2. *Be inspired! Find out more about a
bird you love, or one you know nothing
about. Have fun!*

*Whatever you do,
it doesn't have to
be "perfect."*



*Don't compare your art,
photos, doodles, or garden
to anyone else's.*




Anatomy




feet



Woodpeckers—two toes facing forward, two backward (zygodactyl feet). This allows them to climb up, down, and sideways on trees.



Water birds—long toes that spread their weight out. This helps them walk along soft ground so they don't sink in.



Perching birds—three toes in the front, one in the back, ideal for gripping branches.

Raptors have talons—strong claws to capture, kill, and carry their prey. Owls have two toes forward and two pointed back, but they can also move an outer toe backward to walk and grip better.

Feathers

**Feathers not to scale!*

There are seven types of feathers.

Feathers do so much! They...

- blanket
- cushion
- provide shade
- protect skin
- distract attackers
- camouflage
- attract attention
- help birds float
- help birds glide
- provide lift

3) Wing feathers

-asymmetrical, with a shorter, less-flexible leading edge

Goldfinch

Red-tailed Hawk

2) Plume feathers-

fuzzy; closest to body to trap heat

5) Filoplume feathers-whisker-like; help sense position

1) Bristle feathers-usually on head, protect eyes/face

Parts of the Wing



Coverts - These contour feathers cover the bases of the flight feathers.



Long, broad wings for strong soaring, flight-eagles, hawks.



Long, pointed wings for bursts of speed (e.g., for catching insects)-swallows, hummingbirds.



Short, rounded wings for fast take-off & flight or flying short distances-pheasant, grouse.



6) Semiplume feathers-fluffy; they help with insulation.



7) Contour feathers-overlapping; they cover the body and streamline it.

Bird beaks are often well adapted for specific food sources.

Raptor; notch helps tear into meat (eagle)



Aerial fishing
(kingfisher)



Nectar, tube-shape beak
(hummingbird)



Crossbill



"Strainer" (duck)



Surface skimmer
(Black Skimmer)



Chisel-beak for woodpecker
(Downy Woodpecker)



Filter feeding
(Flamingo)



Insects
(Black Phoebe)



Beneficial
Beaks

Grain/Seeds
(Rose-breasted Grosbeak)

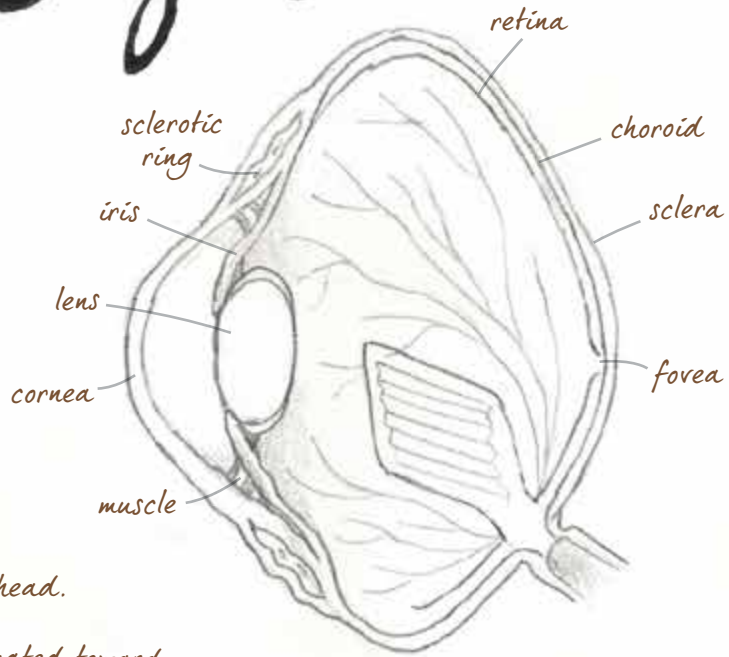


Raptors have amazing eyesight—they can see their prey from over a mile away.

Eyes

Birds all have three eyelids—an upper one, a lower one, and a nictitating membrane that helps clean and protect the eye.

Bird eyes are a lot like human eyes, but with some distinct adaptations. Most birds can't move their eyes much, if at all. They turn their heads to move their eyes. This is because a bird's eyes are quite large compared to the size of its head.



Raptors have their eyes situated toward the front: they don't have very good peripheral vision (another reason many raptors are injured on roadways).

An owl can turn its head about 200 degrees but can't move its eyes at all! Smaller birds have eyes situated on the sides of the head; this provides good peripheral vision, enabling them to see much of their surroundings.



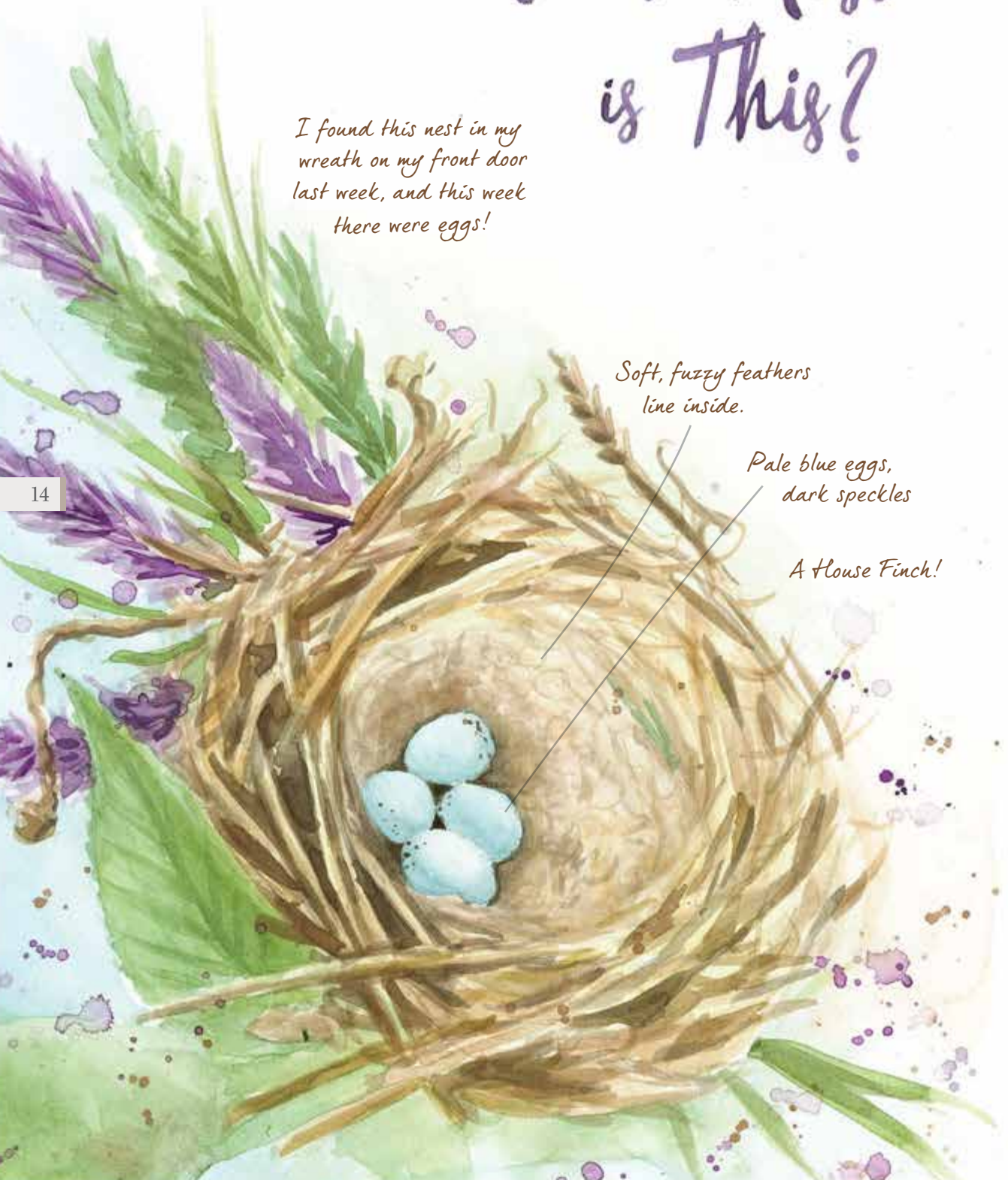
Whose Nest is This?

*I found this nest in my
wreath on my front door
last week, and this week
there were eggs!*

*Soft, fuzzy feathers
line inside.*

*Pale blue eggs,
dark speckles*

A House Finch!





Cliff Swallow nests—mud!

Nest Notes



*Baltimore Oriole!
Socklike or "pendant" Nest*

Be a detective. If active—leave a nest a lot of space—binoculars are handy. Write a description of the birds and their activities; take notes!

Location and time are key. Migratory birds have separate territories versus "resident" birds. A nest found earlier in the spring is probably that of a resident bird rather than a migratory one. Keep track of where you have found it. Is it on the ground? On your house?

Composition and shape?

Mud, feathers, sticks, pine needles, grasses, mosses, or something else?

Is it a cup, a dome, hanging, etc.?

Eggs—size, shape, and color.

Markings and color can vary a lot, so don't base your investigation on this alone.

Remember to leave a nest where you find it, even if you think it is not being used. Bird nests, even inactive ones, are often protected under federal law.



Cup Nest



Platform Nest

Cavity Nest



For fun, nest-related community science, visit nestwatch.org

Eggs



Goldfinch



Wren



Song Sparrow



*Eastern
Bluebird*



House Sparrow



Oriole



*Scarlet
Tanager*



Brown Thrasher



Cardinal



Gray Catbird



Mockingbird



*Red-winged
Blackbird*



Meadowlark



European Starling



Flicker



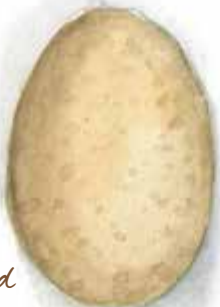
American Robin



Killdeer



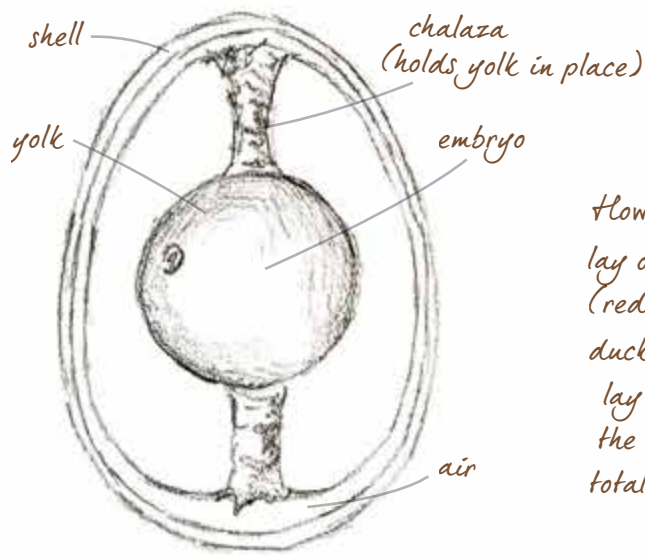
American Crow



*Ring-necked
Pheasant*



Mallard



How many eggs: Depends! Some birds only lay one egg (condor), while others lay three (red-tailed hawk) or up to a lot more (wood duck can lay up to 17)! Most small songbirds lay about one egg a day until they reach the number they want. A clutch of eggs is the total number of eggs laid in one nest.

Egg shape: Recent research suggests that egg shape has to do with how good a flier a bird is: better fliers tend to have more asymmetrical eggs, maybe relating to fitting the babies in shapes better suited for sleeker, more aerodynamic bodies.



Baby owl-owlet

Hatchlings & Nestlings

A very recently hatched baby bird with only sparse down and eyes still closed.

A young bird several days old, covered with fuzzy and fluffy down. They still cannot care for themselves.

If you see a baby bird out of its nest—leave it. Protect the area, keep pets inside, and let the parents care for it.

Baby Sandhill Crane-colt

Hatchling Robins-chicks

"Chicks" is the most common name for baby birds, and it can refer to any young bird.

Altricial vs. precocial birds; the birds on the opposite page are altricial. They need lots of care when little. They are featherless and helpless when hatched. Precocial birds (ducks, geese, turkeys, etc.) are basically mini-adults and can get going on their own much sooner. They are born with eyes open and covered with their first down, and they leave the nest within a day or so.



Wild Turkey
poults

A fledgling (juvenile) has its first coat of feathers and can move around on its own. Fledglings will start adventuring out on their own at this stage, but they still need their parents for food and safety. Often their colors are noticeably different than adults.

20



Goldfinch

Fledglings

These young birds do not usually return home to their nests at night—it is pretty messy there and they are too big! They usually group together in trees for safety. If you see one—don't move it; just make sure it is safe (no cats around, etc.). They are still being cared for!



Ready to leave home?

Wood Ducks—these birds nest in tree cavities or boxes, anywhere from 2-60 feet high! A day after hatching they leave the nest by jumping out to follow their mother.



Not yet



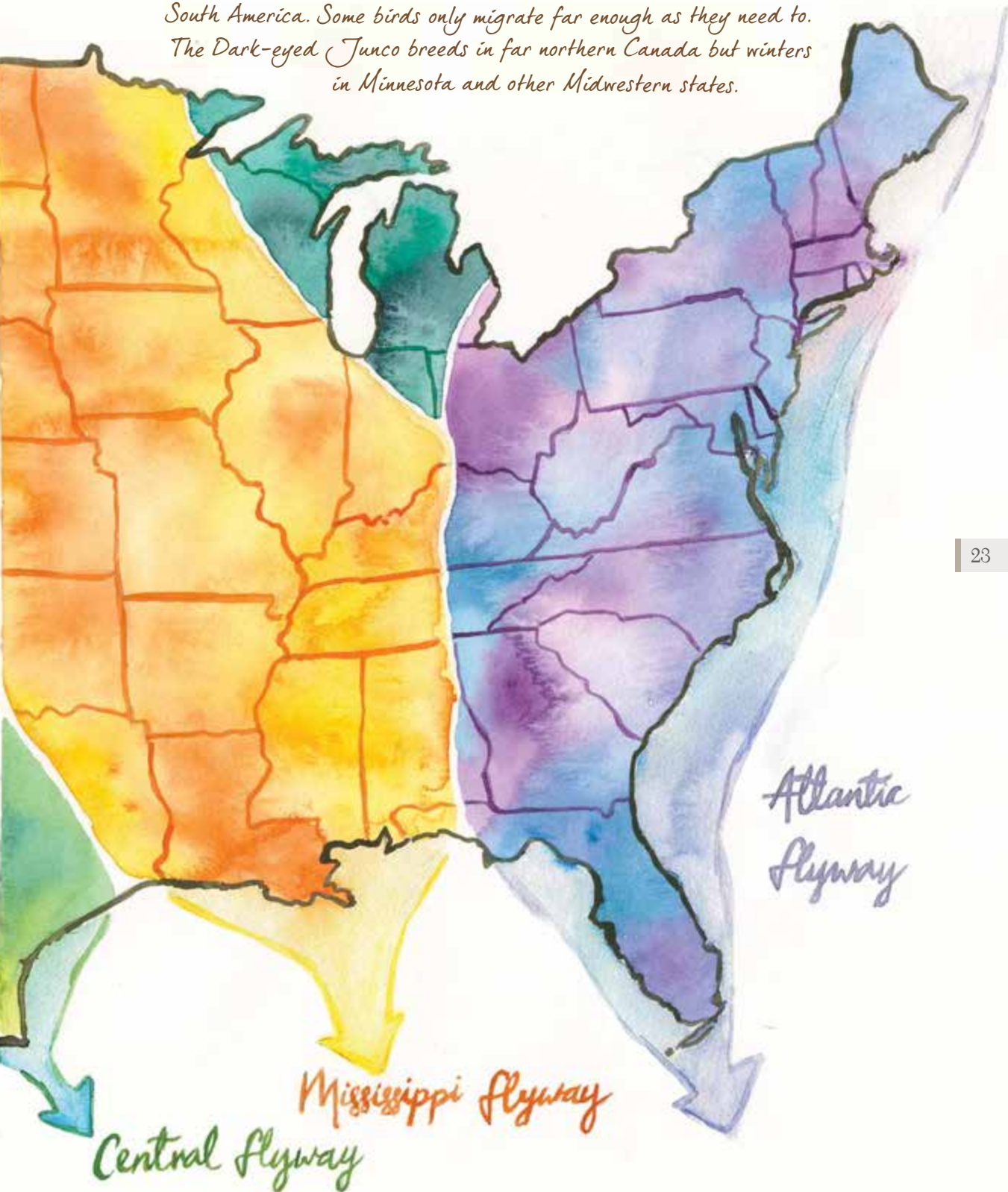
*Pacific
Flyway*

Migration Routes

Birds follow migratory routes, called flyways, between northern breeding grounds and wintering areas farther south.



Flyways are a little like highways in the sky, and their endpoints range greatly, from the Gulf of Mexico and the southern United States to Mexico and into South America. Some birds only migrate far enough as they need to. The Dark-eyed Junco breeds in far northern Canada but winters in Minnesota and other Midwestern states.





Birding by Season





Enjoy as the birds return!

Spring

Check your birdhouses, and make sure they are clean and ready to go.

Use cling decals or scare tape on your windows to try to help birds avoid collisions.

Have food and water available.



Summer

*Keep feeders clean and full.
Work on identifying birds and go
on a nest hunt (but keep your distance).*

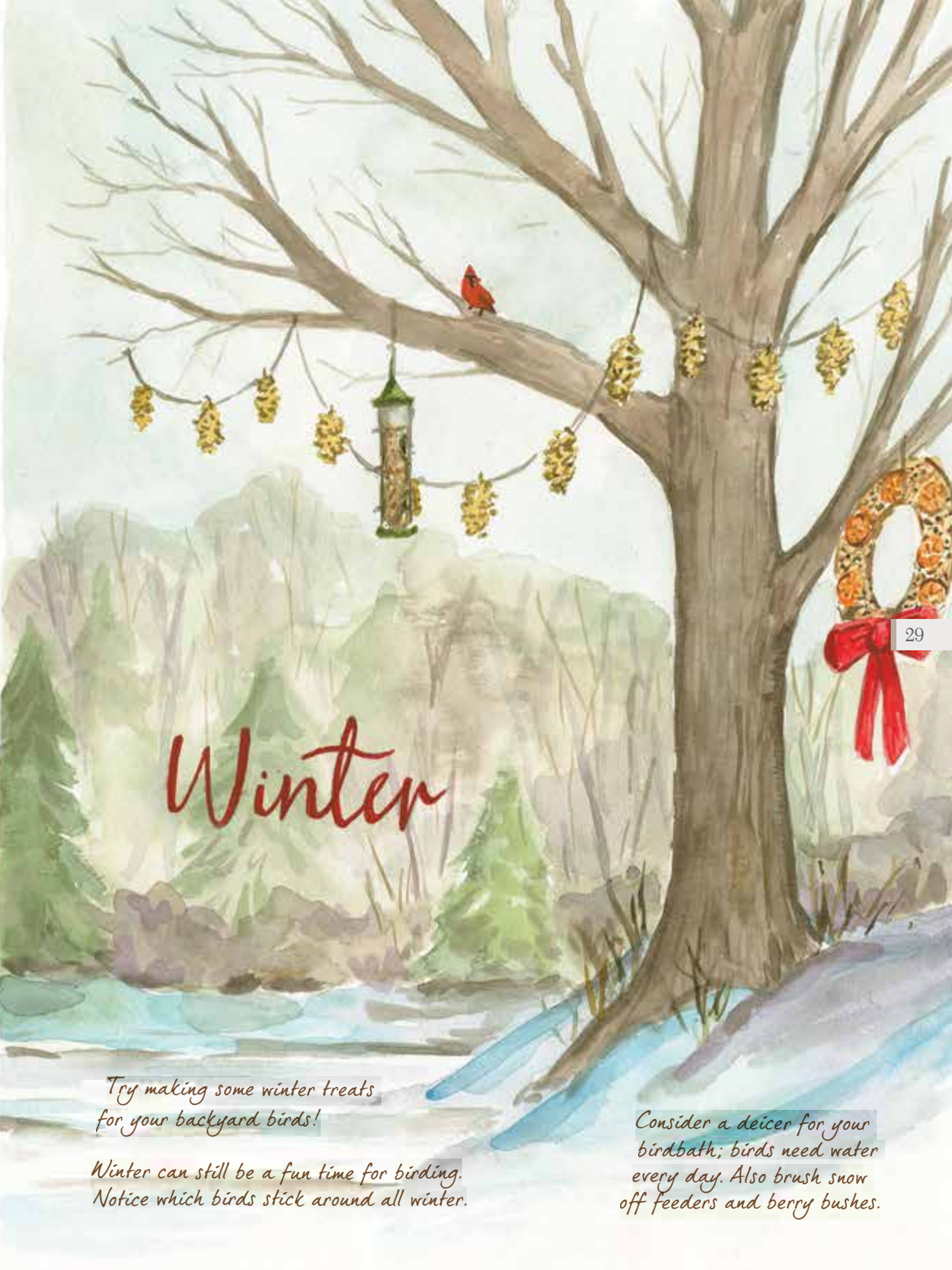


Fall

Watch the migration begin! Keep track of arrivals, patterns, and behavior in a journal.

Pay attention to winter visitors like juncos, as they arrive. And note the changing colors of the goldfinches.

Keep feeders up and full, as birds need fat resources for energy as they pass through.



Winter

Try making some winter treats for your backyard birds!

Winter can still be a fun time for birding. Notice which birds stick around all winter.

Consider a deicer for your birdbath; birds need water every day. Also brush snow off feeders and berry bushes.



Backyard Birds



*Offer a few different types
of feeders and food to attract
a variety of birds.*

*Cover-birds like trees/bushes
near a feeder for safety.*

Tips:

*Water-keep clean and available-
many birds are attracted by the sound
of water (bubblers, mist, fountain).
Water heaters help keep water
available during cold weather.*



Dogwood

*Nest—"sock like"
hanging nest*



*3"-4" deep,
woven slender
plant fibers*

Baltimore Oriole

Icterus galbula



They love oranges!



Calls: Chatter or two notes, repeated

Eastern Bluebird

*A backyard favorite!
They love open
meadows near trees.*

*If you put up a house,
you may get a pair to
stay near you.*

*Great for your garden—
they eat a ton of insects
and pests. Plus, they are
cheerful and charming.*

Sialia sialis

Male

Trillium

*Not typically a feeder bird,
unless you offer mealworms*

Female

Blue Jay

Cyanocitta cristata

Often a bully at
a bird feeder.
Beautiful, though!

Noisy, bold, and aggressive—
loud, gull-like scream.

Blue Jays' colors are not
pigment based. Instead, they
get their color from the way
their internal structure
reflects blue light.

Daisy Fleabane

Cardinal

Cardinalis cardinalis

Popular lore has it that
if you see a Cardinal,
a loved one who passed
away is visiting you.

Male

Female

Cardinals are monogamous
and raise their young together.

Spring Beauty

One of the first
wildflowers in spring

Cedar Waxwings are named for the waxy red tips on their secondary wing feathers, but the purpose of the waxy secretions is unknown.



Wing



Tail

Sleek, social birds that feed on fruit year-round.

Bombycilla cedrorum



Cedar Waxwing

Hepatica

One of the first spring flowers



An artistic illustration featuring two chickadees perched on a brown, textured branch. The chickadee on the left is shown in profile, facing right, with its black cap, white face, and black collar clearly visible. The chickadee on the right is also in profile, facing left, showing similar plumage with a slightly more yellowish-tan underbelly. Above the birds, several blue bellflowers with green stems and leaves are scattered across the upper portion of the frame. The background is a soft, pale yellow-green. Handwritten-style text is integrated into the scene: 'Bellflower—Campanula' near the top flowers, 'Chickadee' in large letters to the right of the birds, 'Poecile atricapillus' written diagonally near the right bird, 'Really intelligent!' near the bottom left, and a paragraph about chickadee memory at the bottom. A small page number '37' is in a box on the right.

Bellflower—Campanula

A birder's favorite! These cheerful, brave, and social birds are known for their plucky disposition and distinctive "chickadee-dee-dee" call.

Chickadee

37

Poecile atricapillus

Really intelligent!

Chickadees in the fall can expand their hippocampus by 30%; this is helpful for them when remembering their food caches. In the spring, it shrinks again.



Extremely intelligent birds—
known for problem-solving
and communication. They
make and use tools.

They can identify faces
and teach other crows
what they have learned.
They also play games!

American Crow

A group of crows is
called a murder.

"Caw!"

Corvus brachyrhynchos

Black-eyed Susan



Birding Etiquette & Safety

- Respect the birds and their space—don't chase them or invade their territory.
- Try not to disturb them—stay on the path, keep quiet.
- Don't litter!
- Be aware of other people around you—keep quiet, don't distract or scare birds away. Be polite!
- Bring a friend, or at least tell someone where you will be.
- Avoid conflict.
- Be aware of other wildlife (ticks, bears, etc.) and be prepared
- Have your phone charged and with you, and bring a compass.
- Watch out for weather! Be prepared.



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Recommended Reading

Birds and Bird-watching

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About the Artist

Jenny deFouw Geuder is an artist and educator from Michigan. She received her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Art Education (and minored in English). She has taught art at the middle-school level for 16 years and has continued her own artistic interests on the side, both in commissioned work and personal topics. She primarily works in watercolor, but she also enjoys oils, ceramics, and graphite. She lives in the country with her husband, two small boys, a dog, five cats, a hedgehog, chickens, and occasionally two ponies. She spends most of her summers at a rustic log cabin on a lake in northern Michigan where she hikes and fishes and, in general, enjoys the natural beauty of the area.



See nature with the eyes of a naturalist. Feel nature with the heart of an artist.

If you enjoy birding, gardening, or the great outdoors, *Drawn to Birds* is for you. Naturalist and watercolorist Jenny deFouw Geuder combines her vast knowledge of nature with her artistic expertise to create a book like no other. This collection begins with an introduction to bird anatomy. From there, more than 60 different bird species are showcased in watercolor, paired with a beautiful wildflower. Jenny further offers advice on how to become a naturalist, and she provides step-by-step guides for drawing, painting, and inking your own pictures.

Inside you'll find

- More than 100 captivating watercolors
- Jenny's naturalist insights and tips on how to attract birds
- Extra pages for journaling and sketching
- BONUS: Section dedicated to insects and wildflowers

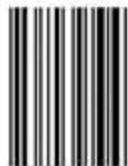


"Being a naturalist is about more than simply stopping to smell the flowers. It's about observation and making a record. Pause and notice the shapes, colors, and patterns around you."

— Jenny deFouw Geuder

NATURE / BIRDS

ISBN 978-1-64755-225-1



9 781647 552251

PUBLICATIONS
Adventure
an imprint of AdventureKEEN