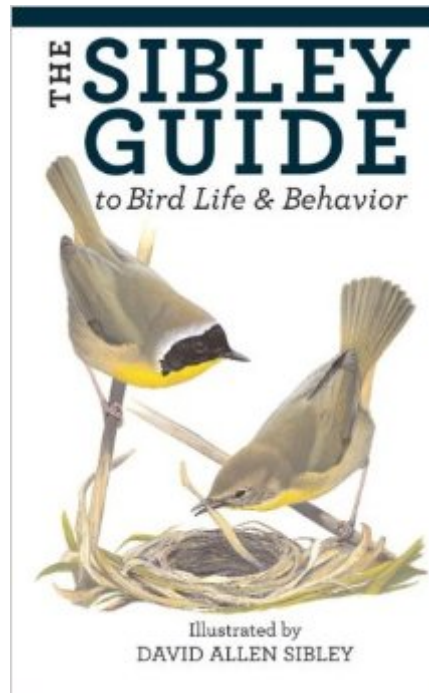


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The Sibley Guide To Bird Life And Behavior



Synopsis

Once in a great while, a natural history book changes the way people look at the world. In 1838, John James Audubon's *Birds of America* was one... In 1934, Roger Tory Peterson produced *Field Guide to the Birds*... Now comes *The Sibley Guide to Birds*. Thus did *The New York Times*, in 1999, greet David Allen Sibley's monumental book, which has quickly been established nationwide as the peerless, standard bird identification guide. *The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior* is the new landmark book from David Allen Sibley. Designed to enhance the birding experience and to enrich the popular study of North American birds, the book combines more than 795 of his full-color illustrations with authoritative text by 48 expert birders and biologists. In this new guide Sibley takes us beyond identification, to show us how birds live and what they do. Introductory essays outline the principles of avian evolution, life cycle, body structure, flight dynamics, and more. The 80 family-by-family chapters describe the amazing range of behavior dictated by birds' biology and environment. Among the subjects covered and illustrated are:--molts and plumages--habitats--food and foraging--vocalizations and displays--courtship and breeding--rearing of young--migration and movements--scientific groupings--introduced species--accidental species--anatomy--flight patterns--nests and eggs--conservation--global distribution

Accessibly written, superbly designed and organized, and brilliantly illustrated, *The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior* is an indispensable source of information on the avian life around us.

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Customer Reviews

If you are like me, you love *The Sibley Guide to Birds* and treasure it as a guide to identifying birds. If you are also like me, you often observe bird behavior that fascinates or surprises you. Little birds survive outdoors in very cold winter weather. Some ocean flyers are able to glide for vast distances without moving their wings. Why do birds lay external eggs rather than carry internal ones like mammals? How devoted are birds in pairs to one another? What habitats are most likely to shelter each bird type? What is the migration range and timing of that bird you're watching? What must we do to conserve a particular species? *The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior* is designed to be a companion to *The Sibley Guide to Birds*, and extend your understanding of bird behaviors and the reasons behind them beyond the mere identification of species. With the two books, you have the birthday cake and the icing, too! I was especially pleased to see that the writing was simple, straight-forward, and interesting. An 11-page glossary helps with the relatively few technical terms, many of which are carefully illustrated somewhere in the book. From pages 15 through 120, the book focuses on general essays about all North American birds on subjects like feathers, flight characteristics, feet, bills, digestion, bones, organs, metabolism, respiration, cooling, heating, intelligence, origins as a reptile, and evolution into their current forms. From pages 121 to near the end, the subject matter switches to one of 80 North American (U.S. and Canada) based families. The average length of a section is about six pages. So it's a reference guide rather than a definitive resource. If you love cardinals, for example, you will probably prefer a more specialized book in that direction.

I bought *THE SIBLEY GUIDE TO BIRD LIFE AND BEHAVIOR* for myself for Christmas. I wanted Sibley's Guide because I am an avid birdwatcher, interested in books, articles, films, etc. about birds. I had read glowing reviews about this book (here and elsewhere) and thought it must be the best bird book ever. Also, several reviewers noted that like JJ Audubon, Mr. Sibley was a gifted artist who depicted birds rather beautifully. Sibley's Guide is a beautiful book bird watchers will want to add to their collection (hardcover, please). Those who already know the difference between Bewick's Wren and a Carolina Wren may appreciate Sibley's Guide more than those who can't tell a White Throated Sparrow from a pigeon. However, sooner or later every bird enthusiast needs to understand the ecology of birds, and this is the strength of the Sibley Guide. I've been a bird lover since I was a child, and lucky enough to have parents and grandparents who were bird fanciers (my dad was an ecologist, my grandmother raised tamed birds). As a result, I know a great deal about birds and their environments. Sibley's book appeals to me because its central message is that all living things are connected and that the environment matters. One should never take the continuing

presence of birds in the back yard as a given as their habitats are threatened. The Sibley Guide is not as well suited for fieldwork as the Smithsonian's Handbook, BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA (regional versions), or THE AUDUBON BACK YARD BIRDWATCHER. For example, on p. 440, the Sibley guide has an illustration titled "Troglodytid diversity" which shows the very small Winter Wren and the very large Cactus Wren.

It is difficult to imagine a more helpful guide to understanding birds than "The Sibley Guide to Bird Behavior". Illustrated by David Allen Sibley, with contributing text by a host of bird authorities, this work is the ultimate companion to Sibley's field guides. Anyone can gain a greater appreciation for our feathered friends by picking up this book. Crammed with useful information, the guide opens with an understanding of how birds fly, their anatomy, and intellectual capabilities. There are chapters on origins, classification methods, bird behavior, migration, communication, and breeding. Also included are overviews of habitat distinctions, populations, and conservation. This general format is carried over into the largest section of the book - a comprehensive look at all the families of North American avians. For instance, each family of birds (e.g. - Hummingbirds, Vireos) will have chapters within the text providing specific analysis of: *Taxonomy* Adaptations to Lifestyle* Habitats* Food and Foraging* Breeding* Vocalizations* Migration* Conservation* Accidental Species This clear breakdown by sections makes it a simple task to compare the migration strategies of Vireos to that of Hummingbirds, for instance. Given that all these sections exist uniformly for each family, anyone seeking to know more about a particular family of birds can easily find what they are looking for. Even complete families of birds that are merely accidental are listed here (e.g. - Accentors.) "The Sibley Guide to Bird Behavior" benefits not only from its methodical layout, but also a profusion of David Sibley's artwork. And while some have dubbed his illustrations merely functional, I find them to be very good.

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