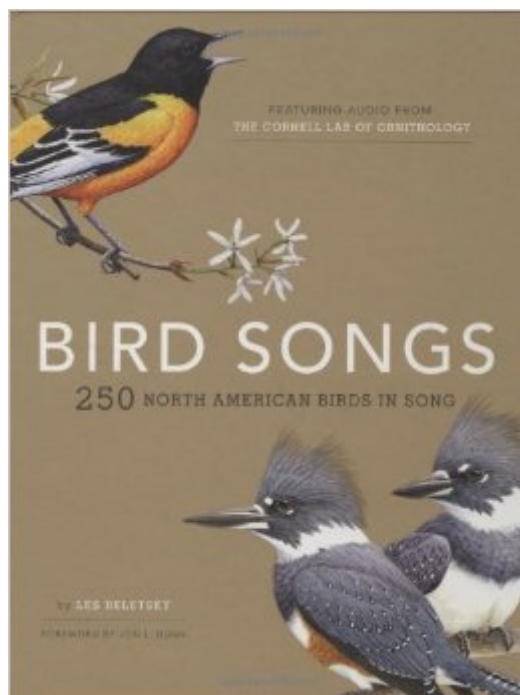


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Bird Songs: 250 North American Birds In Song



Synopsis

Drawing from the collection of the world-renowned Macaulay Library at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, *Bird Songs* presents the most notable North American birds—including the rediscovered Ivory-billed Woodpecker—in a stunning new format. Renowned bird biologist Les Beletsky provides a succinct description of each of the 250 birds profiled, with an emphasis on their distinctive songs. Lavish full-color illustrations accompany each account, while a sleek, built-in digital audio player holds 250 corresponding songs and calls. In his foreword, North American bird expert and distinguished natural historian Jon L. Dunn shares insights gained from a lifetime of passionate study. Complete with the most up-to-date and scientifically accurate information, *Bird Songs* is the first book to capture the enchantment of these beautiful birds in words, pictures, and song. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, located in Ithaca, New York, is a nonprofit institution focused on birds and whose mission is to interpret and conserve the earth's biological diversity through research. The Macaulay Library at the Cornell Lab is the major source of sound recordings of birds for research, education, conservation, the media, and commercial products.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Reviewing "Bird Songs" is a bit like reviewing a talking horse. It's so amazing to hear it talk, one overlooks what it is saying. The songs are wonderful; accessing them is a travesty. There are two components to this item, the book and the player. The player is a solid state device glued to the back cover of the book. The 250 bird songs in the player are known to the player only by a

reference number (1 to 250), which is shown in the player's LCD window. To hear a song, one touches the play button once to awaken the device, then, by depressing an up or down key, you scroll to the reference number of the desired song. Pressing Play then plays a recorded snippet of the selected bird's song. In short, to hear a song, one must first know its number, and then one must find it. And herein lies the first major flaw. It is a royal pain to find the reference number of a song. The book has a miserable index, organized alphabetically by common name, that only gives the page number of a bird. One must then go to the page to find the (different) reference number for the song. There is no simple way to relate page numbers to song numbers. And the index itself is difficult to use, as it is not only organized only by common name, but there is no grouping of similar species, so a Marsh Wren is under M and a Canyon Wren is under C. If you want to look up Loon, better look under C for Common Loon. All in tiny, light type. Arrrgh. Once one has the reference number, the second flaw becomes obvious. Player scrolling acts much like setting a digital clock, first scrolling slowly, then quickly. The numbers wrap around, so one can get to say, 249, from 1 by going backwards. Thus, theoretically, one should never have to scroll more than 125 numbers.

I am an avid Birder, have over 1000 books on birding in my collection and several tapes and other bird song recordings and recently (May 24, 2007) wrote a review on "The Singing Life of Birds" by Donald Kroodsma. That book is extremely complicated, but astute and definitely one for very experienced Birders with a lot of knowledge already learned from years of studying bird song. However, this new book is something entirely different. It is excellent for anyone who is interested, and just wants to start learning the basic songs of birds. From this book you can quite quickly, and with very little effort, get to identify any bird around your home, cottage, park or anywhere else you hear birds calling or singing. This book takes the concept that has been employed for years with children's book; namely pictures along with recordings to go along with them. When I first came across it, I thought it was just a kid's book for that reason. I opened it, played a few songs, and was immediately impressed. It covers the songs of 250 birds. Hence, just about all that a person, who wants to learn how to identify most of the birds they are, are ever going to find locally. This book is so well conceived and put together that kids as young as a few years, can use it as well as adults. In other words, this GEM of a book is for anyone with an interest in bird songs. To anyone who is new to birding, here is one thing you can count on when you are wondering which one of the multitude of bird books that are on the bookshelves, should you buy. If you see the name Jon Dunn associated with it, like this is, you can be sure you are making the right choice. I can tell you how good I think this book really is.

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