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## WATCHING BIRDS: AN INTRODUCTION TO ORNITHOLOGY

ROGER F. PASQUIER. 1977.  
Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston. 301  
p. \$10.00.

Have you ever wondered what gives a feather its colour . . . what is the meaning of a bird's song? . . . how a bird navigates?

*Watching Birds* will give you the answers. This very readable book was written not simply to answer questions on birds but also to stimulate the bird watcher to ask and try to answer his own questions. Pasquier wrote *Watching Birds* for the bird watcher and the environmentalist as a guide to the main topics of ornithology, such as origin and evolution, flight, food and feeding habits, voice, breeding cycle, migration, winter habits, distribution. It also explains how and why birds are studied, the role that the amateur plays in bird study, how birds can be attracted and protected.

The book has an introduction by Roger Tory Peterson, 112 attractive black-and-white illustrations by Margaret La Farge, a suggested reading list of 101 books and an appendix listing ornithological and conservation organizations, their magazines and journals.

Pasquier gives many interesting pieces of information. We learn, for example, that birds use tools — the woodpecker Finch of the Galapagos uses a thorn to probe for insects on trees, while the Egyptian Vulture uses stones, throw with its bill, to

break open Ostrich eggs. Two unusual incubating techniques are treated. The hole-nesting hornbills of Africa and south Asia plaster mud over the entrance sealing in the female with her eggs; the male then feeds her through a hole in the mud. A second curious behaviour is that of the male megapodes of Australia, which spend the entire year tending a nest pile in which several females lay eggs. The male then buries them and adjusts the amount of sand, warm volcanic ash or rotting vegetation on the nest. Young megapodes hatch fully feathered and capable of flight. Of perennial interest is the question of bird navigation. How is one to explain for example, that a Manx Shearwater released at Boston, 3,050 miles from its home in Wales, was back at its burrow in 12½ days.

*Watching Birds* is a book for the beginning bird watcher, to be used as a companion to the field guides, a book that “. . . will show you ways to consider your own observations and will encourage you to investigate further the life of birds in the environment we all share.” — Reviewed by B. W. Johns, 51 Beurling Cresc., Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, S7H 4V6.

## RARE VASCULAR PLANTS OF SASKATCHEWAN

*The Rare Vascular Plants of Saskatchewan* has just been published by the National Museum of Natural Sciences as one of its “Syllogeus Series” on the rare plants