

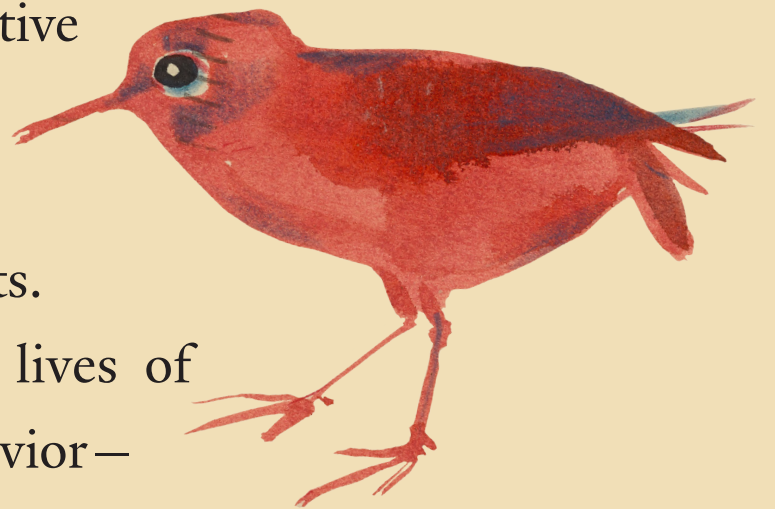


Bird-Watching

Part scientific endeavor, part leisurely pastime, the activity we call “bird watching” includes the careful work of devoted scholars and that of curious backyard observers. Seeing and identifying the birds around us gives many a sense of connection to our natural world, even as the very creatures we watch have long symbolized the untethered flight of the spirit. In games and children’s literature, personal notes and intimate correspondence, birds and their lives on the wing captivate the imagination.

Conjuring the observer in the field, the image of the bird watcher may seem far removed from libraries like the Beinecke. Although they may seem quite different at first glance, bird watching and archival research have a good deal in common. Like both ornithologist and amateur enthusiast, the archival scholar may be keenly focused on minute details, seeing and evaluating minor variation in seemingly similar things; she is patient—she sits quietly (sometimes for long stretches) waiting for something special to appear in a familiar place; she carefully records her findings in detailed—sometimes idiosyncratic—lists and descriptive narratives; she is, by turns, solitary in her contemplation and engaged in lively discourse with those who share her interests.

Bird Watching documents the real lives of birds— their forms, their songs, their behavior— in word and image; the exhibition honors, too, the birds of fantasy and wild imagination. Together these reflect an ongoing human fascination with the life of the skies.



Birds of America

John James Audubon, *The Birds of America: from Drawings made in the United States and their Territories*, NY: J.J. Audubon; Philadelphia: J.B. Chevalier, 1840-44.

The seven-volume quarto edition of John James Audubon's foundational work of American ornithology, *The Birds of America*, was published by Audubon himself in Philadelphia. The extraordinarily large double elephant folio edition is on view in the southwest corner of the Library.

Paper Birds

John Digby, undated collages. Donald Windham and Sandy Campbell Papers.

Collecting Feathers

Lenore Tawney, letter-collages to Monroe Wheeler (1976) and Georgia O'Keeffe (1967-73).

Game Birds

***Game of Falconry*, NY: McLoughlin Bros., c1870.**

***The Improved Game, Avilude, or, Game of Birds*, NY: McLoughlin Bros., c1891. Paul Mellon Collection.**

Birds of America(n) Literature

Game Birds II: Goose Games

***The Golden Egg Game*, Albany, NY: Lith. & published by R. H. Pease, [1850?].**

***The New Royal Game of Goose*, [London, ca. 1835].**

Art & Ornithology

John James Audubon, drawing of a Petrel with sample collection notes, June 20, 1826; and “Least Petrel” description for *Ornithological Biographies*, 1835. John James Audubon Collection.

Becoming a Bird Artist

Louis Agassiz Fuertes, *Scarlet Tanager and Cedar Wax Wing*, 1885-1900.

Robins

Simeon Pease Cheney, *Wood Notes Wild: Notations of Bird Music*, collected and arranged with appendix, notes, bibliography, and general index by John Vance Cheney, Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1892.

H. Boylston Dummer, *The Robin Book: Watching the Robins*, Rockport, MA, [circa 1925].

Frances Hodgson Burnett, *My Robin*, illustrated by Alfred Brennan, NY: Frederick A. Stokes Company, [c1912].

History of Birds

History of Birds, Northampton: J.H. Butler, 1838.

History of Birds, Ornamented with Engravings, Bennington: Darius Clark, 1825.

Natural History of Birds, with Beautiful Engravings, Worcester: J. Grout, Jr. n.d.

Little Willie's History of Birds, Boston: Degen, Estes, & Co, n.d.

Bird Citizens

J. Hammond Brown, "Useful Bird Citizens" No. 13-18, Baltimore: International Syndicate 1920.

A Bird for You

Postcards from Karl Priebe to Carl Van Vechten, discussing daily activities, bird watching, and news of friends and acquaintances including Billie Holliday, Dinah Washington, and Richard Wright (1952-53). Carl Van Vechten Papers.

Listening Together

William Heyen, "The Shy Bird," [Concord, N.H.: William B. Ewert], 1980.

Science & Observation

Notebooks kept by writer and naturalist Rachel Carson, author of *Silent Spring* (1962), recording observations about birds, sightings, and notes about the disastrous effects of DDT and other chemical pesticides on various bird species (1950s-60s). Rachel Carson Papers.

Bird, Watching

Beloved by children all over the world, Mo Willems's *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* (NY: Hyperion Books for Children, 2003; editions in Chinese, Arabic, Dutch, and Korean) reminds us that some birds are very interested in human activities. Look around; maybe a bird is watching you. Mo Willems Papers.

Feeding the Birds

Writers with their friends and families at the Piazza San Marco, Venice, 1920s-1940s.; H.D. Papers; Blanche Matthias Papers; Gerald and Sara Murphy Papers; Gertrude Stein and Alice Toklas Papers; Carl Van Vechten Papers; William Carlos Williams Papers; Donald Windham and Sandy M. Campbell Papers. *Due to the fragility of the originals, facsimiles have been substituted in some instances.*

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