

A celebration of birds

This is the time of year when birdsong is the sweetest way to wake up – if you don't mind beginning to stir at 4:30 a.m.

For those who require more sleep than that, but who admire birds nonetheless, Seattle-based Mountaineers Books has just published two new volumes that focus on our feathered friends.

Skipstone Press, a Mountaineers imprint, is responsible for "Birds of the West," an artist's guide created by Molly Hashimoto, along lines similar to her inspiring "Colors of the West" book that came out in 2017.

Both of these books by Hashimoto aim to share principles and techniques with beginning and intermediate artists, helping them connect with nature through making art.

But where "Colors of the West" offered a broad exploration of how to capture nature's palette of colors when engaged in plein air painting, "Birds of the West" zeroes in on the opportunities for drawing (or painting or etching) the many different types of bird-life that can be found across a variety of Western landscapes.

Hashimoto sets a conversational tone in the early pages, talking about her first experiences with birds, and reflecting on how others –

THIS WEEK'S BOOKS

"Birds of the West"
By Molly Hashimoto
Skipstone Press – 176 pp –
\$22.95

"Bringing Back the Birds"
By Owen Deutsch
Braided River – 208 pp – \$35



scientists and artists – came to be fascinated not only with birds, but with their adaptations to particular habitats.

She points out that humans have been making bird art since people first began marking up cave walls – and that the artistic impulse, from that time to this, helps to clarify our appreciation for and understanding of birds.

This handsomely designed book includes

more than 120 color reproductions of Hashimoto's bird art, from familiar backyard birds, to birds of the tundra and desert.

While she confesses that

she experiences "frustration that any one medium cannot express the beauty, or energy, or essence of a species," she has learned, conversely, that different media choices seem to highlight different features and qualities of both a species and its habitat.

For example – Hashimoto renders an Anna's hummingbird pair in a block print on one page; on the opposing page, she creates the same scene in watercolor. The contrast is illuminating, and the takeaway is that artists can experiment with an array of media to achieve different effects.

Another Mountaineers Books imprint, Braided River, has come out with a coffee table book titled "Bringing Back the Birds."

A project of the American Bird Conservancy, this book features terrific photography by Owen Deutsch. Traveling throughout North and South America, he captures the heart-shaped pose of an American flamingo pair, the dynamism of a Black Skimmer breeding colony, the luminous turquoise eye



of a Double-crested Cormorant and much more.

Written contributions by Margaret Atwood, Jonathan Franzen and a half-dozen respected ornithologists demonstrate how climate change, development and other human activity are impacting vital bird habitat and migration patterns.

This book's combina-

tion of enchanting imagery and passionate arguments for conservation should spur activism for avians.

The Bookmonger is Barbara Lloyd McMichael, who writes this weekly column focusing on the books, authors and publishers of the Pacific Northwest. Contact her at bkmonger@nwlink.com

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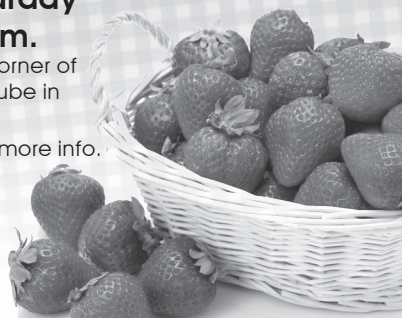
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