



The Courage of Birds: And the Often Surprising Ways They Survive Winter

Pete Dunne

David Allen Sibley, Illustrator

Chelsea Green Publishing (Oct 31, 2024)

Hardcover \$28.00 (192pp)

978-1-64502-257-2

The Courage of Birds is Pete Dunne's enthusiastic, informative book about avian survival strategies.

Loosely organized into three sections, the book summarizes Dunne's observations of avian behaviors across decades of bird watching in all seasons. The first section describes general winter activities for various birds across North America, including the "handful" of species that remain in colder northern regions year-round, like chickadees, crows, and owls, whose cold-weather adaptations include flocking for warmth; adjusting their activity levels to conserve energy; and roosting in tree cavities. The hardy Rock Ptarmigan tunnels into powder snow to roost after feeding to survive extreme Arctic conditions, while the Common Poorwill is the only bird known to hibernate.

Throughout, Dunne spotlights birds' intriguing behaviors. In "The Amazing Survival Strategy of the Spectacled Eider," he explains that the sturdy Arctic ducks survive Alaska's harsh winters by clustering in flocks of up to 10,000 for warmth in the frigid waters of the Bering Sea, their churning feet preventing ice from forming on the water's surface and enabling them to continue diving for mollusks. "Mixed-Species Flocks" notes that certain birds, including chickadees, nuthatches, kinglets, and wrens, forage for food in mixed flocks, behaviors that help them identify food sources and evade predators with efficiency. Tips for stocking backyard bird feeders, dressing for winter bird watching, and locating various types of birds in wintertime are also included, as is a compilation of ten birders' inventories from a "big day" in early February, including lists of wintering species observed in California, Alaska, Michigan, Colorado, and New Jersey.

Packed with interesting facts, *The Courage of Birds* is a conversational introduction to birds and birding in wintertime.

KRISTEN RABE (November / December 2024)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.