



# The Big Book of Birds

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Reviewer:

[Diana Barnes](#) [3]

~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

This large format book is an excellent introduction to birds and their lives, stunningly illustrated by the author. Starting with a double spread that turns sideways, we have the bird family tree, showing seven various types of birds, e.g. seabirds, birds of prey, flightless birds and so on. Turning the book back the normal way, we learn how to be a sensible bird spotter, then sideways again for a look at feathers and flying. This is really interesting: feathers are for recognizing each other, for warmth and for showing off, as well as for flying, and the numbers are huge: 25,000 for a swan, 1,000 for a little hummingbird. The rest of the book is the conventional way up as we learn about migration, and then details of various familiar birds, with fascinating facts included e.g. a flamingo may perform a dance routine to impress a female with the help of up to 50 friends, and, if it gets too hot, it wees on its legs to cool down. A few poo details seem to help to keep children involved, but the facts are varied and definitely informative.

Each double-page spread has little blocks of text scattered about, mostly just one or two sentences, and lots of glorious illustration- it's difficult to single any out, but the puffin page is fun, and the cranes are particularly good, flying, nesting, and courting. After the spreads on individual birds, we look at different shapes of beak and what they are used for, bird calls and songs, and how we can help look after birds. There is also a particular egg to look out for on 15 pages, and, if this proves too difficult, small versions of the correct pages with the egg ringed are given at the end, together with a glossary, called Bird Words, and a good index. This is a lovely book to browse through, or to find particular information, and will be a useful addition to a school library, or for a budding ornithologist.

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