

## About the Author

John C. Robinson, author of *Birding For Everyone, Encouraging People of Color to Become Birdwatchers*, has worked as a wildlife biologist and professional ornithologist for nearly 30 years, including stints at two federal conservation agencies—the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service—and has led bird watching tours all over the world.

An environmental advocate, John's mission is to encourage all people, especially minorities, to learn about the natural world. Deeply concerned about the lack of participation by minorities in outdoor recreation activities, John works with non-profit organizations to increase minority interest in bird watching in hopes that involvement will give people a reason to protect the environment through nature conservation in the future.

Childhood exposure to classics like Jack London's *White Fang* and *Call of the Wild* sparked John's interest in nature at an early age. In 1982 he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology from Iowa State University and was chosen as an undergraduate teaching assistant for the ornithology lab course.

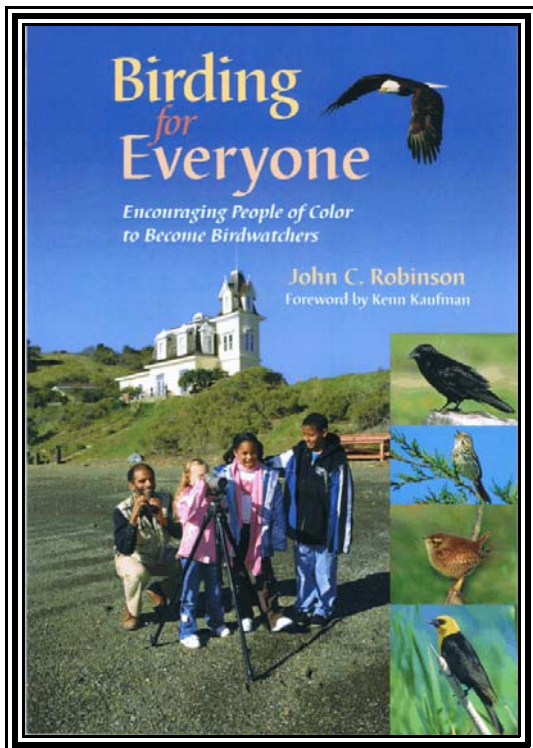
### Media Contact:

Marlene Stahl, On My Mountain  
707-688-2848, [info@onmymountain.com](mailto:info@onmymountain.com)

The author of numerous books, including *An Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Tennessee*, *Secret of the Snow Leopard* and *Common Birds of Mount Diablo*, John has been a member of the Audubon Society, American Ornithologists' Union, American Birding Association, Iowa Ornithologists' Union and Tennessee Ornithological Society. John has served on several wildlife organization boards, participated in environmental initiatives and worked at wildlife refuges across the country. The federal government has recognized him for superior service with several special achievement awards.

John currently serves as President of On My Mountain, Inc., a birding and natural history tour company, which published his consummate work, the comprehensive *North American Bird Reference Book* CD-ROM. This multimedia program has received international recognition and sold more than 100,000 copies. John single-handedly wrote all the species accounts and computer program code for the CD-ROM. On My Mountain, Inc. strives to introduce people to nature in order to promote awareness and appreciation of natural resources and the need for natural resource conservation.

Between 2003 and 2007, John led professional birding and natural history tours to exotic and picturesque locations in Tennessee, Southeast Arizona, the upper Texas Coast, Mexico and South Africa. In 2007, John joined the staff of The Scotts Company, where he currently conducts ornithological research related to the Scotts Wild Bird Food business. John spends most of his time studying birds and helping others learn more about birds and nature.



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707-688-2848, [info@onmymountain.com](mailto:info@onmymountain.com)

## About the Book

Award-winning ornithologist and wildlife biologist John C. Robinson has introduced thousands of people all over the world to the joys of bird watching for nearly thirty years. In his latest title, *Birding for Everyone, Encouraging People of Color to Become Birdwatchers*, he encourages the appreciation of nature through birding. John also explores the curious lack of a minority presence in the birding community and offers new solutions for changing the face of conservation through birding.

Though the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment reports that 82 million enthusiasts enjoy bird watching, a closer look at the demographics reveal a disturbing lack of diversity in terms of race. The phrase “I’ve never met a black birdwatcher before” has echoed throughout Robinson’s career since 1979, but his concern surrounds a larger trend— few minorities are connected to nature.

As the U.S. population continues to diversify, minority involvement in environmental issues will become ever more vital to long-term conservation efforts and the preservation of the earth’s natural resources. Rejecting the myth that minority groups have no interest in birds and the outdoors, John addresses multiple reasons for the relative absence of minorities among birders and calls for a renewed focus on support for outreach and recruitment programs in urban areas.

In *Birding for Everyone*, John C. Robinson also shares his personal life experiences as a natural history tour guide, reveals how he fell in love with birds and the college course that changed everything. He explains how role models, mentors and involved adults can help open new worlds, such as bird watching, to young people, especially those for whom nature may not be instinctively considered.

Readers will develop a basic knowledge of birds (including their distinctive songs), learn to identify birds using John’s inside secret tips, discover birding festivals and tours, find online bird watching resources, read interviews with minority birders and about how to connect with mentors and other birders around the world.

*Birding for Everyone* is a fun and engaging read that encourages birders and the birding industry to unite in supporting global efforts to ensure that our natural resources remain available for generations to come. This book can help readers of all ages learn to appreciate the need for conservation while celebrating bird watching and our natural, diverse world.

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

MEDIA CONTACT: Marlene Stahl  
On My Mountain, Inc.  
(O): 707.688.2848 / (F): 707-402-6319  
info@onmymountain.com

### **African American Ornithologist John C. Robinson Authors New Book, *Birding for Everyone: Encouraging People of Color to Become Birdwatchers* Encourages Minority Participation in Nature and Resolves to Change Face of Conservation**

FAIRFIELD, CA (July 2008)—John C. Robinson, award-winning ornithologist and wildlife biologist explores the curious lack of a minority presence in the birding community in his new book, *Birding for Everyone, Encouraging People of Color to Become Birdwatchers* (Wings-on-Disk, 2008) and offers new solutions for changing the face of conservation through birding.

Though the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment reports that 82 million enthusiasts enjoy bird watching, a closer look at the demographics reveal a disturbing lack of diversity in terms of race. The phrase “I’ve never met a black birdwatcher before” has echoed throughout Robinson’s career since 1979, but his concern surrounds a larger trend—few minorities are connected to nature.

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An environmental advocate, John's mission is to encourage all people, especially minorities, to learn about the natural world. Deeply concerned about the population's lack of concern for wildlife, John works with non-profit organizations to increase minority interest in bird watching in hopes that involvement will give people a reason to protect the environment through nature conservation in the future.

The author of numerous books, including *An Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Tennessee*, *Secret of the Snow Leopard* and *Common Birds of Mount Diablo*, John has been a member of the Audubon Society, American Ornithologists' Union and American Birding Association. John has served on several wildlife organization boards, participated in environmental initiatives and worked at wildlife refuges across the country. The federal government has recognized him for superior service with several special achievement awards.

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A native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, John earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology from Iowa State University in 1982. Between 2003 and 2007, he led professional birding and natural history tours to exotic and picturesque locations in Tennessee, Southeast Arizona, the upper Texas Coast, Mexico and South Africa. In 2007, John joined the staff of The Scotts Company, where he currently conducts ornithological research related to the Scotts Wild Bird Food business.

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# Interview Topics for John C. Robinson

## Trends in Nature Tourism

Ornithologist John C. Robinson has led bird watching tours in South Africa, Costa Rica, Mexico, Canada and nearly every state in America. Discover the hottest nature tourism spots and the best nature vacation places for finding rare birds and other interesting wildlife. John talks about how to prepare for a nature tour and shares his top ten places to go birding in the United States.

## Bird Watching 101

Wondering the difference between a birder and a birdwatcher? Veteran ornithologist John Robinson explains these terms and offers his top ten tips for identifying birds. Learn a basic knowledge of birds and their distinctive songs as well as the fundamentals of bird watching. Be aware of the right equipment to use such as binoculars, spotting scopes, clothing and identification books and guides. Find out how to attract birds to your own backyard, and know which bird feeders and birdhouses are right for your neck of the woods. John also talks about his birding software, North American Bird Reference Book CD-ROM, an internationally acclaimed multimedia program for identifying and learning more about our fine, feathered friends.

## Minorities in Nature

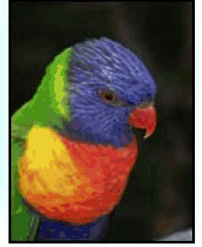
African American ornithologist John Robinson explores the curious lack of a minority presence in the birding community and offers new solutions for changing the face of conservation. As the U.S. population continues to diversify, minority involvement in environmental issues will become ever more vital to long-term conservation efforts and the preservation of the earth's natural resources. John discusses why there are so few minorities in nature, why we should be concerned and what we can do to change this alarming trend.

## Birds from A-Z

Are birds modern-day dinosaurs? How are birds adapted to flight, and why are some birds flightless? Ornithologist John Robinson comments on everything related to birds including defining traits, migration, population declines, specific species, forest fragmentation and loss of habitat in the tropics. Learn which organizations support birding such as American Birding Association, American Ornithologists' Union, National Audubon Society and Sierra Club.

## Top Birding Events

Birding is one of the fastest growing outdoor recreation activities in the U.S.! Learn all about the year's best birding events from The National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count to International Migratory Bird Day. Join ornithologist John Robinson as he takes you through an exciting schedule of birding festivals all over the world.



*Birding For Everyone, Encouraging People of Color to Become Birdwatchers* by John C. Robinson (Wings-on-Disk, 2008), paperback, \$18.95 (U.S.) ISBN 978-0-9679-338-3-2. To order: visit [www.onmymountain.com/products.html](http://www.onmymountain.com/products.html)

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“At the Tupac Amaru Shakur Peace Garden in Atlanta, the activity that consistently creates the most excitement is bird watching. It is an exciting and wonderful way to introduce everyone to an appreciation of the beauty and balance of the natural world. *Birding for Everyone* is an extremely important and timely book.”

**Afeni Shakur**, Mother of Tupac Shakur  
and President of the Tupac  
Amaru Shakur Foundation

“People are spending less time outdoors, enjoying nature less and not learning enough natural history lore. John C. Robinson has the cure! His book examines why so few people of color go bird watching and what we can do about it. I recommend this book to all nature enthusiasts – it is a great tool for recruiting new nature lovers.”

**Greg Butcher**, Director of Bird  
Conservation, National Audubon Society

## Endorsements

“Like a trusted compass, this book provides clear directions for a whole new generation of nature lovers and birdwatchers!”

Dr. Gary T. Green,  
Assistant Professor,  
University of Georgia  
(Athens)

“While most of us have just talked about the lack of minority participation in birding, John is doing something about it. *Birding for Everyone* is an extremely important book because it is appearing at a critical time when there is increased focus on enhancing access to the outdoors for all people. I heartily recommend this book to everyone involved with nature study, conservation, outdoor recreation and environmental education.”

**Kenn Kaufman**, renowned  
ornithologist and author of  
*The Kaufman Field Guide Series*

“*Birding for Everyone* addresses the hugely important topic of stereotypes and the issue of the lack of minorities in bird watching. Robinson presents an optimistic view for the future in *Birding for Everyone*. Because of the magnitude of this issue, Robinson’s work is worthy of examination.”

**National Wildlife Refuge  
Association (The Birding  
Community E-Bulletin)**

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# Birds and Beyond Facts

- ✓ According to the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment, there are more than 82 million U.S. birders.
- ✓ More than 9,000 species of birds inhabit the planet Earth. However, no one person has ever seen every single species known to exist—YET!
- ✓ African Americans are under-represented in local and national birding clubs and environmental organizations. A survey conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found that 24 percent of Caucasians compared to six percent of African Americans have participated in bird-watching activities.
- ✓ The younger a bird watcher learns a bird song or call, the more successful he or she will be in identifying birds solely by their song or call notes.
- ✓ In 1999, data collected by the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment revealed that birding was the 7th most popular outdoor recreation activity and the fastest growing of such activities.
- ✓ Bird watching can relieve stress and thereby improve health.
- ✓ Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) are conducted in the United States and Canada over a three-week period during the latter half of December and the beginning of January. The counts have been conducted annually since 1900, when they were established as an alternative to the custom of some sportsmen in the late 1800s of shooting as many birds of any species as they could in one day during the Christmas season. The CBC has become the oldest continuous wildlife survey in North America.
- ✓ Bird watching includes not only identifying birds but also monitoring their behavior.
- ✓ Bird watching can be practiced for recreational purposes to enjoy nature and to understand the need for natural resource conservation.
- ✓ A 2003 survey of over 80,000 participants conducted by the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment found that Caucasians make up 43 percent of birdwatchers, while only 28 percent of bird watchers are African Americans. This same survey defined a bird watcher as someone who participates in bird watching regardless of his or her level of dedication.
- ✓ Birders are more focused on finding and studying birds than on general observation. Dedicated birders tend to invest more in high-quality optical equipment and many birders travel.
- ✓ Birdwatchers often confine their bird watching activity to local nature reserves, their own gardens, or places visited on holiday, and mostly invest less in optical equipment.
- ✓ Birding is more popular in Great Britain than it is in the United States. Roger Tory Peterson played a central role in the emergence and defining of modern birding, both in the United States and Great Britain. Former U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt, however, considered himself a birdwatcher and a conservationist.
- ✓ Twitching, a common birding term, is a British word, meaning “the observation of a previously located rare bird.” In North America, this is often called chasing.
- ✓ Birds represent the only taxonomic class of vertebrates in which there are no species that give birth to live young (they all lay eggs). Also birds have no teeth, a feature which results in a lighter-weight jaw and is arguably an adaptation for flight. In response to the lack of teeth, birds have a gizzard, which is used to grind up the food a bird eats.
- ✓ The Arctic Tern has the longest-distance migration of any bird, and sees more daylight than any other, moving from its Arctic breeding grounds to the Antarctic non-breeding areas – a distance of over 22,000 km (14,000 miles).

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