

authors include Serra do Cipó and other cerrado hotspots already mentioned in the first volume of the WCS collection, *WCS Birds of Brazil: The Pantanal and Cerrado of Central Brazil*.

Creating Brazilian field guides for smaller, distinct regions was a smart decision. Previous attempts to put all Brazilian birds in a single book, as in *A Field Guide to Birds of Brazil*, have resulted in a loss of detail in terms of visual and written information. Furthermore, with similar species in distant parts of the country, it is helpful that the new field guide reduces the geographic coverage, avoiding unnecessary confusion and making distribution maps more precise. Moreover, in a country almost as big as the United States, visiting birders usually prefer to focus on one or two regions during a trip. This is corroborated by a quick look at eBird, which shows that the Brazilian states with the largest number of checklists are São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Mato Grosso. All of these areas are well-covered by the two first books in the WCS collection.

In the section “Protecting Wild Brazil”, the authors summarize the different landscapes and the avifauna associated with forests, mangroves, *restingas*, high-elevation grasslands, ocean islands, and urban areas. Nevertheless, they miss wetlands, which represent an important area of concern in the region. Wetlands house one of the most endangered species of the biome, São-Paulo Marsh Antwren (*Formicivora paludicola*), which is not illustrated in the book. This is surprising given this field guide’s conservationist theme. However, this is a small detail that does not compromise this book’s overall importance and uniqueness.

The field guide’s introduction provides historical information about mythical Atlantic Forest birds, species rediscoveries, and conservation programs that have been helping birds such as the Vinaceous-breasted Parrot (*Amazona vinacea*) maintain their breeding success. The description of conservation programs is only one example of the clear desire of the authors to inspire conservation culture and practices in Brazil.

Birdwatching has increased tremendously in Brazil in recent years. In the last two Global Big Days, Brazil claimed third and fourth place in the number of lists posted on eBird, only behind the United States, Canada, and

Australia. Furthermore, with the advent of websites such as Wikiaves, where users can post their bird pictures, Brazilians are more engaged in birdwatching than ever. The WCS Atlantic Forest field guide meets the needs and expectations of the Brazilian and international public. This book will undoubtedly support quality ornithological fieldwork and help to increase birdwatching activities around the country. Greater interest in birds will help to maintain the natural areas suitable for their existence.

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Cat Wars: The Devastating Consequences of a Cuddly Killer

Peter P. Marra and Chris Santella, 2016. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ. 212 pages, 16 page color insert. ISBN 9780691167411. \$24.95 (Hardcover). Also available as an e-book.

To have maximum conservation impact, one needs to know where the real wildlife threats lurk. Ornithologists Peter Marra and his colleagues Scott Loss and Tom Will have led this field with several recent reports doing just that; tallying the causes of direct human-caused avian mortality (Loss et al. 2013, 2014, 2015). These include collisions with buildings, power lines, cars, and communications towers. However, the elephant in the room turns out to be our adorable and aloof

companion, the domestic cat. Outdoor cats are by far the greatest direct anthropogenic killer of wildlife—dispatching somewhere between 1.3 and 4 billion wild birds per year in the United States and Canada alone, and between 6 and 22 billion small mammals per year (Loss et al. 2013). Despite figures like these, feral cat numbers remain at high levels in the United States and, where data are available, the most palatable and commonly applauded efforts have been woefully ineffective at reducing their populations or their negative impacts on wildlife.

Peter Marra teamed up with journalist Chris Santella to write a popular book that brings our cuddly killer out of the hedgerow and into the spotlight. Stories include the oft-told tale about a lighthouse keeper's cat that decimated New Zealand's Stephens Island Wren (*Traversia lyalli*), and the lesser-known saga of a Texas birder who took a 0.22 caliber pot-shot at a cat that was raiding endangered Piping Plovers (*Charadrius melodus*) and other shorebirds, and ended up in jail looking at a possible 2 years' prison time and up to \$10,000 in fines. They bring up cases of feline diseases spread to humans—some deadly like rabies, and others insidious and behavior-altering, like toxoplasmosis, with an overall public and personal health toll in the billions of dollars annually. The authors give pages of stories to both those who favor cats and those who favor wildlife, but clearly this book is focused on exposing the deadly impact of cats on wildlife.

There is a long history of pointing a finger—or a gun—at cats, only to meet a staunch defense from cat lovers. Edward Howe Forbush, the first president of what would become the Association of Field Ornithologists, wrote a 112-page monograph in 1916 that spoke out against the devastation wrought by cats (Forbush 1916). Even then, Forbush was keenly aware that any mention of the destructive outdoor activities of cats would polarize people and precipitate cat wars. Decades later, Stanley Temple of Wisconsin would receive death threats after his co-authored publication, carefully quantifying the impacts of cats in Midwest farmland, was used to support an initiative to allow hunters to take feral cats. Marra's earlier scientific work exposing cats as premier killers was likewise met with disdain and denial.

This book seems no less polarizing. A quick look at reviews on Amazon.com show that 97% of the reviewers either love or hate the book, with only three percent anywhere in between (and over 260 total reviews). After my reading of *Cat Wars* and its online reviews, the topic is clearly controversial, but I am not so sure about the book itself. However, the book does contain excellent investigative reporting that shares a less familiar side of the story, and implicates cats as a problem. We are so well acquainted with cats that we sympathize with their predicament, but we also need to be aware of the suffering of innocent wildlife at the paws of cats. For example, cats don't always kill cleanly—huge numbers of maimed and half-dead animals are regularly admitted to local wildlife hospitals after cat encounters (McRuer et al. 2017). Those who claim to be concerned about the needless suffering of animals need to recognize this too and be thoughtful about the suffering of other species as well.

In light of this vitriolic schism that seems so characteristic of society today, it took courage, good scholarship, and clearly a passion for wildlife for Marra and Santella to draft this thorough review of the cat problem. There is no question that the issue is disturbing—both from the point of view of the birds, small mammals, and nests marauded by cats, and from the point of view of cats who find themselves hungry and left outdoors through no fault of their own. The authors show compassion for all of the victims, but are clearly arguing that people are responsible for finding a solution to this mess we have created. Many alternative solutions are considered—from cat adoption programs, to trap-neuter-return programs, to giant indoor-outdoor cat enclosures for formerly feral felines. However, they run the numbers, critique the effectiveness of each, and present reasonable evidence that these simply cannot work everywhere or for all outdoor cats. With currently available tools, the wildlife killing cannot be stopped without euthanizing some cats too and this is the rod attracting so much lightning, but there is also some hope that new tools could be developed.

This book is full of great cat-and-bird stories and cameo mentions of many ornithologists who have strayed into this catfight. The authors do a great job of gathering evidence and presenting it thoroughly and

authoritatively, yet the book is entertaining and easy to read. They provide excellent leads to other books, movies, and scientific literature, especially if this is your first entry into the topic. It is a fine read along the lines of William Stolzenburg's "Rat Island", which is decidedly more clear about killing rats in the name of conservation (Stolzenburg 2011), but was somehow not as controversial.

For those of us who are locally involved in bird conservation, this book is a must read. Feral cats are a pervasive problem in America and we all need to work at our village level to find appropriate solutions. Step one is realizing that there is a problem, and this book will arm you with the latest data and some of the classic tales that will be critical for reaching out to neighbors and community leaders. We must all work to increase awareness of the many dangers to cats and to wildlife if cats are abandoned or allowed to roam outdoors, and we all need to come together as a community to implement better solutions to this problem.

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Birds: Myth, Lore, and Legend

Rachel Warren Chadd and Marianne Taylor, 2016. Bloomsbury Publishing, New York, NY. 304 pages, numerous color photographs and images. ISBN 9781472922861. \$40 (Hardcover).

People have been intrigued by birds for ages. Why and how have birds managed to captivate people across the globe and through time? Chadd and Taylor are as much enthusiastic naturalists that appreciate birds for their diversity in morphology, habits, sounds, and behavior, as they are interested in mythology and world cultures. They are quick to point out that one trait of birds, perhaps even more remarkable to our ancestors than their diversity of form and ecology, may explain our deep-seated intrigue—birds fly! In *Birds: myth, lore and legend*, Chadd and Taylor attempt to connect the dots between the cultural significance of birds and the morphology, ecology, or natural history that has motivated it. In accomplishing this goal for the dozens of families they highlight, or for the species within those families with the best tales to be told, they inform bird lovers of the cultural significance of their favorite creatures.

Most people are familiar with the tale of the ugly duckling, the European lore that storks bring babies, and the anthropomorphic notions that owls are wise and eagles are noble, whereas doves are symbols of peace and ravens are harbingers of death. Less well known, to me, was the shared belief by the Ancient Greeks and Polynesian islanders that their local kingfishers calmed rough seas. This belief was potentially inspired by observations of kingfishers at sea only during calm waters because they cannot swim. This book compiles spotlights on the beliefs and stories associated with dozens of bird families. The spotlights are organized into four broader sections: "Birds and us," "Sacred to the gods," "Myths of many nations," and "For good and ill." I began this book by delving deeper into those aforementioned familiarities, learning that the stork's well-known persona arose mainly as a result of their natural history, i.e., White Storks (*Ciconia ciconia*) have a penchant for nesting on house rooftops and males and females share parenting duties from incubation through fledging nine