



THE WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL BIRDS

ONE OF THE reasons that so many people are drawn to birds is their essential beauty. Their subtle shapes and colors, the elegance of their feathered flight, the nuances of their bal-

ance, and the splendid combination of their natural markings make them among the most alive and aesthetically appealing creatures in the world. We are simultaneously intrigued by their vibrance and fascinated by their visual simplicity. The more ardently we observe them, the more mysterious they become.

But what would you say if someone asked you to name your ten most beautiful birds in the world? We posed this question to ten extremely accomplished and respected bird painters. Their choices were as varied as their styles, but there was one thing they all agreed on: With 9000 beautiful birds worldwide to choose from, narrowing the list down to ten was a daunting

Al Gilbert calls the Resplendent Quetzal "the quintessential trogon, an emerald, gold, and ruby jewel set by nature in her most magnificent backdrop, the cloud forest." Dale Zimmerman says it's "spectacular, with its brilliant green and bronzy green iridescence, bright red underparts, and white outer tail feathers." As Doug Pratt points out, "that's going as far as you need without getting fancy. The quetzal is a very elegant bird without being gaudy." Photograph/Michael Fogden.

task. Several of the artists made the point that we might have ended up with a vastly different list by asking ten different artists—or by asking the same artists on a different day. None of them ventured to give an objective definition of "beauty." Rather, each of their choices reflected very personal aesthetics.

In fact, there were several surprises which sometimes revealed more about the artists than the birds they chose. Some, including Al Gilbert and Guy Tudor, said they lived for the thrill of spotting extremely rare birds. "There should be a tantalizing rarity as nature generally conceals its most brilliant gems in impenetrable jungles or mountain forests," said Gilbert. Others, such as Cindy House and Diane Pierce, revealed their affection for birds a little closer to home. "The more familiar you are with a bird," said House, "the more beautiful it becomes, even if it's a common bird." Bearing this out, the Mourning Dove made Pierce's list, because it sits in a nest outside her kitchen window.

Some of the artists, including John

Ten outstanding artists talk about their ten favorite birds. Eleven birds were chosen by more than one artist:

American Swallow-tailed Kite (4)
Resplendent Quetzal (4)
Blue Bird of Paradise (3)
Wood Duck (3)
American Avocet (2)
Short-eared Owl (2)
Northern Pintail (2)
Common Loon (2)
Golden-breasted Starling (2)
Wilson's Phalarope (2)
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (2)

*by Ellen Alcorn and
Laura Schenone*



Lars Jonsson says he's painted the Arctic Tern endlessly. "Elegant would be the word for this bird," he says, "because of the way it flies, the proportions of its wings, its weightlessness through the air." He's also drawn to its colors, "the deep neutral gray of the body, its dark cap and very deep crimson beak." Photograph/Arthur Morris/VIREO.

O'Neill and Dale Zimmerman, favored brilliant-hued birds. Swedish painter Lars Jonsson, on the other hand, preferred the stark simplicity of black and white birds, including the European Avocet.

In the end, whether they chose birds halfway around the world or in their own backyards, Rainbow Lorikeets or stark Northern Ravens, these artists all wound up offering the same thing: a fresh way of looking at old friends.

Robert Bateman is a Toronto-based artist who says he's "in favor of birds of prey. I like things that are fierce-looking. Beautiful doesn't have to mean wimpy or sweet." His list confirms this predilection: Four out of the ten birds are predators, including the Secretary Bird, white Gyrfalcon, African Fish Eagle (which he says is "better than a Bald Eagle in every way"), and the American Swallow-tailed Kite.

Conversely, the Common Loon's lack of ferocity is precisely what draws Bateman to it. "The loon is almost like

a piece of abstract sculpture with no emotions." When asked to respond to this seeming contradiction, he says, "I think one can really enjoy something for one reason and something else for the exact opposite reason. Part of my philosophy is that variety."

Bateman:

"The Evening Grosbeak changes from dark to light, warm to cool, red to yellow, like a spectacular sunset."

Bateman's aesthetic sensibility runs toward the subtler colors in wildlife. "I just can't imagine choosing a macaw sitting in a hibiscus. It's too much." Instead, he's drawn to birds whose colors are a delicate modulation of shades. The Evening Grosbeak, for instance, "is a wonderful example, modulating in tone and color from a purpley rust to that clean canary yellow. It changes from dark to light,

warm to cool, red to yellow, like a spectacular sunset."

Perhaps **Lars Jonsson's** sensibility can be best explained by the fact that his native country of Sweden is dark six months out of the year. At first glance, some of his favorites might be surprising, even downright strange. But as a whole, Jonsson's list conveys a distinctive aesthetic. Two of his favorite colors, black and white, aren't even colors at all—and that's precisely the appeal. "There's nothing there. You have to fill it all in yourself. It's like going into the night, or having a blank white piece of paper. Anything could happen, but you have to imagine it."

For Jonsson, mystery and simplicity are opposite sides of a coin, and he's equally attracted to each. His favorite bird is the European Avocet, he says, because "it's like a minimal piece of art. It's white with only a few black strokes of the brush. It represents elegance in its purest meaning." Similarly, he's attracted to the American Golden-Plover because "it's such

Jonsson:

"The European Avocet is like a minimal piece of art. It represents elegance in its purest meaning."

a beautiful combination of rather simple elements. The upper part is like a piece of Arctic ground with different stones, pebbles, and herbs. Beneath he is entirely black, which allows him to hide from predators. It's a perfect and imaginative combination." Conversely, it's not the Northern Raven's simplicity that appeals to Jonsson, but rather the fact that the bird "conveys something wild. The raven's neck takes all the light; it gives no light at all. It's as black as anything can be."

Perhaps Jonsson's most surprising entry is the Garden Warbler, a bird he admits "people don't care much about." But he's attracted to it by its "black eye which has so much spirit in it. The bird has genuine character." In the end, Jonsson says he doesn't ask himself whether one bird is more beautiful than another. "I'm attracted to certain birds because they move something inside of me."

Zimmerman:

"Some of the birds made me gasp, break out in goose pimples, and become light-headed when I first saw them."

For *Dale Zimmerman*, a New Mexico bird illustrator, color is crucial to his way of seeing. No dull red, blue, or green for Zimmerman, but rather "bright crimson," "opalescent blue," and "bronzy green iridescence." In describing his favorite birds,

ARTISTS' CHOICES

ROBERT BATEMAN

1. Secretary Bird
2. Sandhill Crane (juvenile)
3. Gyrfalcon (white morph)
4. African Fish Eagle
5. American Swallow-tailed Kite
6. Common Loon
7. Hooded Merganser
8. Black-billed Magpie
9. Evening Grosbeak
10. Tundra Swan

AL GILBERT

1. Resplendent Quetzal
2. Crested (Rheinard's) Argus
3. Prince Ruspoli's Turaco
4. Blue Bird of Paradise
5. King Bird of Paradise
6. Western Tragopan
7. Sclater's Monal
or the Chinese Monal
8. Horned Guan
9. African Pygmy Kingfisher
10. Lammergeier

CINDY HOUSE

1. American Avocet
2. Northern Pintail
3. Black-necked Stilt
4. Short-eared Owl
5. Black-legged Kittiwake
6. Golden-winged Warbler
7. Wilson's Phalarope (female)
8. Northern Cardinal (female)
9. Harlequin Duck
10. Northern Harrier

LARS JONSSON

1. European Avocet
2. Common Loon
3. American Golden-Plover
4. Arctic Tern
5. Northern Pintail
6. Golden Eagle
7. Northern Raven
8. Garden Warbler
9. Short-eared Owl
10. Wilson's Phalarope

JOHN P. O'NEILL

1. Versicolored Barbet
2. Blue Bird of Paradise
3. Blue-tailed Pitta
4. Blue Vanga
5. Plum-throated Cotinga
6. Orange-eared Tanager
7. Temminck's Tragopan
8. Golden-browed Chlorophonia
9. Sapphire Quail-Dove
10. Buff-bridled Inca-Finch

ROGER TORY PETERSON

1. Common Peafowl (Peacock)
2. Resplendent Quetzal
3. Golden Pheasant
4. Rainbow Lorikeet
5. Scarlet Macaw
6. any tanager
7. Greater Bird of Paradise
8. Superb Lyrebird
9. Roseate Spoonbill
10. Carmine Bee-eater

DIANE PIERCE

1. Snowy Egret
2. Elegant Trogon
3. American Avocet
4. American Swallow-tailed Kite
5. Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
6. Wood Duck
7. Mourning Dove
8. Western Tanager
9. Bar-headed Goose
10. Baikal Teal

DOUG PRATT

1. Resplendent Quetzal
2. Wood Duck
3. American Swallow-tailed Kite
4. Purple Gallinule
5. White (Fairy) Tern
6. Iiwi
7. Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
8. Purple-throated Carib
9. Red-legged Honeycreeper
10. Swallow-tailed Gull

GUY TUDOR

(who prefers not to rank his favorite birds)

- Agami Heron
- Crescent-faced Antpitta
- Gambel's Quail
- Golden-breasted Starling
- Mountain Toucan
- Purple-crowned Fairy
- Red-breasted Goose
- Schalow's Turaco
- Turquoise-browed Motmot

DALE ZIMMERMAN

1. Golden-breasted Starling
2. Blue Bird of Paradise
3. Malachite Sunbird
4. Garnet Pitta
5. Common Poorwill
6. Resplendent Quetzal
7. Wood Duck
8. Turquoise-browed Motmot
9. American Swallow-tailed Kite
10. Bohemian Waxwing



The Scarlet Macaw is an elusive bird, which is partly why Roger Tory Peterson finds it so enticing. "When I've seen them," he says, "they've always been flying over the forest. I've never seen them at a close range." Photograph/Michael Fogden.



John O'Neill loves the colorful Golden-browed Chlorophonia. "It has this incredible brilliant emerald-green and sky-blue spot on top of the head, and a wide golden-yellow eyebrow. Where you see them, it's often very misty. They're like little jewels in the fog." Photograph/Michael Fogden.



"The Peacock has form, beauty, size, and glitz," says Roger Tory Peterson. His favorite memory of Peacocks was of spotting them on a Rajah's estate in India, because "to look at them in their real environment was a lot more fun." Photograph/Steve Bentsen.

Zimmerman virtually paints them for the listener. "The Golden-breasted Starling," he says, "is absolutely gorgeous with its satiny iridescent greens, intense metallic purples and bronze, and unique rich golden-yellow underparts. It has creamy white eyes, accented by velvety black lores, which somehow make the bird seem even more alive." In fact, there are seven almost blindingly-colorful birds on his list.

Even so, he says, "colorful birds are not necessarily the most beautiful." Plumage pattern, feather texture, carriage, and demeanor all figure into what Zimmerman calls the "overall beauty equation." The true test of a beautiful bird, he says, is whether or not "it rouses notable emotion. Some of these birds made me gasp, break out into goose pimples, and become light-headed when I first saw them."

Pierce:

"We have a Mourning Dove nesting outside our window. Its lovely dark eye with blue rings stares at us through a canopy of leaves."

The hardest thing about writing up a list of favorite birds for painter *Diane Pierce* was having to leave out "a lot of old friends." She tends to favor birds not out of a particular aesthetic, but out of personal experiences. She first became acquainted with an Elegant Trogon in the Chiricahua Mountains. "He didn't like long lenses pointing at him, but he didn't seem to mind me sketching him, which was quite a compliment," she remembers. "He would fly to catch insects and come back to perch. I felt so strongly about him I was ready to move out there so I could live by him. I've been dreaming of painting the trogon ever since."

She has a Mourning Dove nesting



Dale Zimmerman says the Golden-breasted Starling was the first bird to come to his mind because of its "satiny iridescent greens, intense metallic purples and bronze, rich golden-yellow underparts, and a long expressive tail enhancing the slender build." He's also drawn to it because "it's a restless wild bird linked in my mind to acacia trees, bustards, elephants, rhinos, and kudus." Guy Tudor says he's attracted to the bird with its "rich ultramarine top, and intense golden-yellow below. It's a pretty snappy bird." Photograph/Rod Williams.



Guy Tudor is attracted to black-and-white patterned birds "with a splash of a third color. I couldn't leave the Red-breasted Goose off a list of beautiful birds," he says. "It's very dramatic, with a band of white and maroon chestnut. It's an incredible-looking bird." Photograph/© Leonard Lee Rue II.



Nearly half the artists named the American Swallow-tailed Kite as one of the most beautiful birds for its grace in motion. Diane Pierce calls the bird "the quintessence of airborne beauty and of freedom. It seems part of the sky." Robert Bateman says that seeing the kite flying overhead "was a very memorable moment in my ornithological experience." He says they remind him of old war planes, the way they "almost cover the sky wing tip to wing tip." Dale Zimmerman considers the bird "the epitome of grace and ethereal beauty. No matter what other birds are in view, when an American Swallow-tailed Kite wheels overhead, it commands attention until it sails on by, always leaving me wanting more." Doug Pratt says that "a swallow-tailed kite would be beautiful in a black-and-white photo, whereas a quetzal probably wouldn't." Like the others, Pratt cites the bird's grace, calling it "a wonderful acrobat. Wherever you see it, it's a joy." Photograph/Brian K. Wheeler/VIREO





Robert Bateman is attracted to all predatory birds, but especially the Secretary Bird, which he says is "the most flamboyant and elegant of all the birds of prey." He can't believe his eyes when he sees a Secretary Bird aloft. "They take your breath away because of the huge tail with the striking white and black pattern." They remind him of "American Plains Indians doing a war dance, with their feathers flopping around to create a kinetic structure." Photograph/Dale and Marian Zimmerman.



"Part of the Short-eared Owl's beauty," says Lars Jonsson, "is the way it perfectly matches the ground cover. I am intrigued by patterns of brown and gray that disappear into the background." He prefers subtle earth colors to the brighter shades of tropical birds. "It's comparable to the way that sad songs are probably more beautiful than any others," he explains. "In Sweden, our folk music has a lot of dark twilight in it." Cindy House is also drawn to the owl for its rich brown and tawny colors. "Once I went out for a walk," she says, "and a group of Short-eared Owls flew up from the field at once. They were 16 silhouettes against the turquoise sky just before sunset." Photograph/Tim Daniel.

outside her kitchen window, which precluded her from leaving it off the list. "We look out and see this lovely dark eye with blue rings staring at us through a canopy of leaves," she says. And she fell in love with the Western Tanager the first time she saw one in Cave Creek Canyon. "He flew in and sat fluffed in the sunshine. The light on his head was so red I don't think you could paint it. For this reason, out of all the tanagers, he struck me as the most beautiful."

For painter *Cindy House*, familiarity breeds fondness. "The more familiar you are with a bird," she says, "the more beautiful it becomes. Even if it's a common bird—in fact, especially if it's a common bird—because you're looking at it in a totally new way."

Not surprisingly, House's favorite birds are limited to North American species. "I couldn't put birds I've never seen on the list," she says. Also, tropical settings are unfamiliar, and in some ways, unappealing to her. "When you go into a rainforest, you're overwhelmed by a wall of green. I prefer to put a bird into a habitat that has more texture to it." For that reason, she says, "I more readily would paint a Black-necked Stilt than I would a Resplendent Quetzal."

House:

"The more familiar you are with a bird, the more beautiful it becomes."

She prefers the Northeastern landscape in the fall and winter because "you can see the limbs of the trees, the dead stumps in the marsh. When the green comes, it's a cloak that hides the texture. Cattails cover the water. Grass covers the rocks."

A bird's habitat is an intrinsic part of its appeal to House. In describing the Harlequin Duck, she says, "There's a place in Rhode Island that has a large flock of harlequins in the

Gilbert:

"Nature generally conceals its most brilliant gems in impenetrable jungles or mountain forests."

winter. They are beautiful in the blue-green water and waves. They swim around the rocks, and when the foam comes in they're almost camouflaged. Part of the beauty of the bird is the experience of seeing it in the ocean." Sometimes, says House, you can't separate the beauty of a bird from its environment.

A bird's habitat is equally important to painter *Al Gilbert*, though his preferences couldn't be more different: "There should be a tantalizing rarity as nature generally conceals its most brilliant gems in impenetrable jungles or mountain forests." Gilbert is an adventurer who thrives on the thrill of seeing exotic birds. He's traveled far and wide to see some of the birds on his list, such as the Lammergeier. "The bird is known in the Bible as the bone breaker, because of its habit of carrying bones, dropping them to break, and then eating the marrow. I had to go to Hell's Gate in Kenya to see that."

Others of his favorite birds he's never even seen, and may never see, such as the Crested Argus. His list also includes Prince Ruspoli's Turaco, a rare African bird, though "even more tantalizing would be the apparently new species, glimpsed but as yet undescribed by Andrew and John Williams in Uganda's impenetrable forest." There are beautiful birds he didn't include, he says, such as the Scarlet Tanager, "because it's so easily seen it doesn't generate much enthusiasm." Even so, Gilbert knows his limits: He didn't include the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, "but I would have in a second if I thought there was any chance at all of seeing it."

Guy Tudor, too, finds the thrill of spotting a rare bird irresistible. "Many birds have been photographed by now, and for me, this lessens the appeal," he says. "It's sort of like infatuation. The less something is known, the more beautiful it seems. I like mysteries." Some of his choices would prove daunting to even the most intrepid bird photographer, including Schalow's Turaco, the Crescent-faced Antpitta—"everybody's favorite, because you can't see it"—the Purple-crowned Fairy hummingbird, and the Agami Heron, a bird Tudor says has a "lot of cache" by virtue of its dark beauty and extreme rarity.

Tudor:

"It's sort of like infatuation. The less something is known, the more beautiful it seems. I like mysteries."

Tudor is not particularly impressed by a bird's form. Rather, he says, "birds are pretty much the same. They've all got heads and beaks. All their feathers go the same way." For him, the color and pattern of a bird are much more important considerations. He divides his favorite birds into three separate categories, and in no particular order. The first is birds with black and white feathers, "with a splash of a third color," particularly red, such as the Red-breasted Goose. Second, he's attracted to birds with very intricately patterned black and white and/or earth colors, such as Gambel's Quail. "A birdwatcher may not think much of the bird, but as a painter you appreciate the colors—the chestnut, and the rich, creamy belly." His third category includes birds with "intense, saturated colors, like the sort you'd find in Elizabethan clothing." The key here is simple patterns of no more than three colors.

Tudor's overriding criterion is that a bird offer fleeting visions of great



Doug Pratt says Fairy Terns “don’t know how cute they are.” The pure white bird has a ring around the eye “which makes the eye look twice as big as it is. The bird has a baby-faced look, and is quite endearing.” He is also drawn to the tern because “it is an extremely delicate and graceful bird on the wing. When you get near a tree that has a nest of chicks, it comes and hovers around you in a way that is angel-like.” Photograph/Sidney Bahrt.

beauty. “I like trotting down a path in the rainforest when suddenly a rare bird comes out and then quickly disappears,” he says. “That’s my idea of birdwatching.”

O’Neill:

“Golden-browed Chlorophonias are like little jewels in the fog.”

John O’Neill is a well-known biologist and painter who’s been studying birds for over three decades, but he’s never lost the pure thrill of spotting a brilliant bird popping out of some underbrush. Like Tudor, he lives for the fleeting vision of a rare exotic bird. “In a museum, you’re free to look at birds from every angle,” he says. “But in the wild, you take what you can get.” He’d prefer to take vi-

brant-hued birds, such as the Plum-throated Cotinga, with its “solid electric turquoise, plum purple throat, and yellow eye, just like a Christmas tree ornament.”

O’Neill is particularly drawn to birds that draw sharp contrast to their habitats, such as the Versicolored Barbet, a bright-colored bird that often fishes food out of dead leaves. “Often times you’ll see bits and pieces of it through dull, brownish, dead leaves, and then this red, yellow, blue, and green bird will just pop out into the open.” And Golden-browed Chlorophonias “have this brilliant emerald-green and sky-blue spot on the top of the head, and golden yellow eyebrows. They’re like little jewels in the fog.”

H. Douglas Pratt, who describes his interest in bird illustration as “a hobby that got out of hand,” is one artist who “gets a little tired” of bright tropical birds. That’s especially true of birds of paradise, “who have too many

Pratt:

“A bird can be beautiful without being colorful.”

plumes. But I wouldn’t say they have no taste, because that would blaming the victim.”

Pratt does include a couple of “nods to the tropical gaudy thing,” if somewhat begrudgingly, such as the Purple-throated Carib. “To some extent I put that on the list to represent all hummingbirds. I thought, even for a hummingbird it has some interesting colors.”

But mostly, Pratt looks for understated elegance, grace, and form. “A bird can be beautiful without being colorful,” he says. “A swallow-tailed kite is a wonderful acrobat. It would be beautiful in a black-and-white photo, whereas a quetzal probably

Peterson:

"What I look for is the basic stance or gestalt of a species."

wouldn't be." Similarly, says Pratt, what the Fairy Tern doesn't have in color it makes up for in grace. "This bird is pure white," he says, "except for a ring of black feathers around the eye which gives it a baby-faced look and makes it quite endearing. When you get near a tree that has a nest of chicks, they come and hover around you in an angel-like way. What they're actually trying to do is intimidate you, but they don't know how cute they are."

Roger Tory Peterson has perhaps had more influence on the way we see birds than any other person alive. Peterson has spent his life carefully painting thousands of birds. "Each bird is different," he once said, "and what I look for is the basic stance or gestalt of a species. For this it is necessary to go out and look at a lot of birds."

His list, which includes the Peacock, Resplendent Quetzal, and the Greater Bird of Paradise, reveals a love for colorful exotic birds. But for a man who has painted as many different kinds of birds as he has, it's important to keep an open mind about what's beautiful. "There are so many different kinds of beauty," he says. "Birds can be beautiful in a colorful way, but beauty can also be in a muted form."

Peterson is careful to paint his subjects down to the most minute detail, and prefers to work from sketches rather than photographs. "Sketches are more suggestive of what the eventual picture might be," he has said. "With a sketch, you can get rid of the clutter of a photograph; the sketch really shows more of the essence of the subject." Peterson's genius lies in his understanding of the birds he paints: "Birds are what they are," he says. "A chickadee is not a little human dressed in fur. Too often, we tend to think of them in human terms." ■

The artists who contributed to this article are among the most accomplished and prolific bird painters in the world. Their renderings have appeared in books, museums, and galleries. Listed below is a sampling of some of their best work.

Robert Bateman's work has been shown in several major North American galleries, including the Smithsonian Institution. He is the author of *The Art of Robert Bateman*, *The World of Robert Bateman*; and *Robert Bateman: An Artist in Nature*. He currently lives in Toronto, Ontario.

Al Gilbert's most recent books include *The Reader's Digest Book of North American Birds* and the *Audubon Master Guide to Birding*. He also illustrated *Curassows and Related Birds* and *Eagles, Hawks, and Falcons of the World*. He is currently planning two books on the trogons and toucans of the world.

Cindy House has had dozens of exhibitions. Permanent collections of her work can be found at The Audubon Society of Rhode Island, The Massachusetts Audubon Society, and The Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in Wisconsin. She is currently working on *A Field Guide to Warblers* in the Peterson Field Guide Series.

Lars Jonsson is the author and illustrator of *Birds in Nature*, a five-volume work on the birds of Europe. Now considered a definitive work, it has been published in seven different languages. He is currently working on a condensed version, due out in 1992. Others of his books include *Bird Island*, *Pictures from a Shoal of Sand*, and *Lars Jonsson: Bird Reflections*. He lives on the island of Götland in Sweden.

John P. O'Neill is a biologist and artist who has been painting tropical birds for thirty years. His work has been shown in museums around the world. He is the author of *Publications: Painting Birds*. In addition, he has published over 45 scientific papers, and is currently working on a book about the birds of Peru. He lives in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Roger Tory Peterson came out with the first *A Field Guide to the Birds* in 1934. Since then, dozens of artists have contributed their work to The Peterson Field Guide Series, which now includes books on various plants and wildlife. In addition to the bird guides, Peterson has made several films, including *Watching Birds*. He has received virtually every major award in the fields of ornithology and natural history, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Diane Pierce is a wildlife painter who has recently concentrated solely on birds. Her work includes a 29-piece, privately-commissioned work on the birds of Florida, as well as 34 full-color plates, which she painted for National Geographic's *Birds of North America* field guide.

H. Douglas Pratt is a lecturer and ornithological consultant, as well as a leading bird artist. His paintings have been shown in museums nationwide. He is the author and illustrator of *A Field Guide to the Birds of Hawaii and the Tropical Pacific*. His current projects include *Enjoying Birds in Hawaii*, a tape collection of Hawaiian bird songs, and a monograph on Hawaiian honeycreepers for Oxford University Press.

Guy Tudor is a bird painter who has a passion for Neotropical birds. His books include *A Guide to the Birds of Colombia* and *A Guide to the Birds of Venezuela*. His work has also appeared in numerous publications, including *Life* magazine and the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. He is currently working on a 4-volume opus with ornithologist Robert Ridgely entitled *The Birds of South America*. In 1990, he was awarded a MacArthur "genius" grant.

Dale Zimmerman has illustrated numerous books, including *The Birds of New Guinea* and *Avifauna of the Kakanega Forest of Western Kenya*. Currently, he's writing and illustrating *The Birds of Kenya*. He lives in New Mexico with his wife and collaborator, Marian Zimmerman.