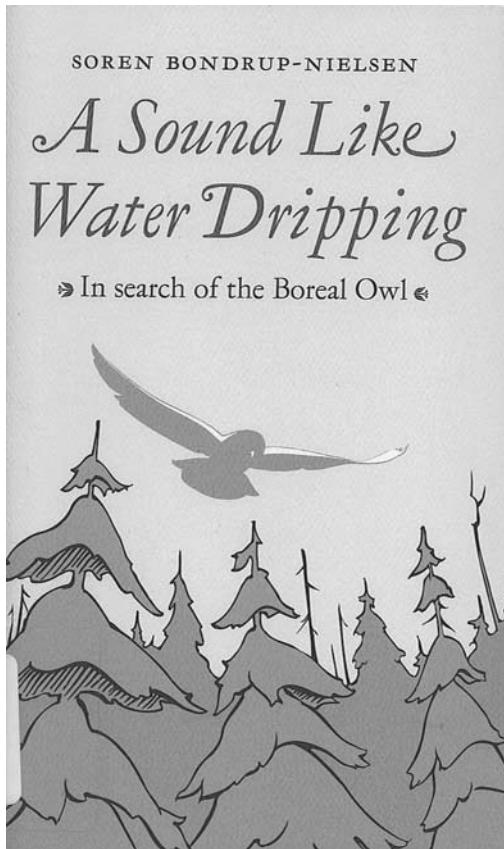


PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

A Sound Like Water Dripping: In Search of the Boreal Owl by Soren Bondrup-Nielsen. 2009. 235 pages. 22 x 13 cm. Sixteen black-and-white photographs and one sketch. Gaspereau Press, Printers and Publishers, 47 Church Avenue, Kentville, NS, Canada B4N 2M7. www.gaspereau.com. \$26.95 Can. (soft cover). *Reviewed by Chris Siddle.*

Soren Bondrup-Nielsen is a professor of biology at Acadia University. When he was a young graduate student in the early 1970s searching for a topic for a thesis, Soren decided to investigate the then poorly known Boreal Owl, against the advice of his faculty adviser. No nests had ever been found in Ontario, the bird's habitat was poorly known, vocalizations for the North American race of this owl, also widespread across northern Europe, and Asia, were little known. The bird inhabited the lonely, cold, and remote northern forests. Packing up his rudimentary camping gear, Soren headed north into the end of winter and by luck found himself room and board at the Spruce Falls Power and Paper Company's Camp 86, near Ontario's Kapiskasing River. What follows is an exciting and well told tale of scientific discovery, the locating of the first owl, the sorting out of the species' vocalizations, and the discovery that the Boreal Owl caches uneaten (rodent) prey and later "incubates" it to thaw it out.

Anyone interested in owls, ornithologists, boreal forest conservation, or the story of a young man beginning his journey into academia, will find this a fast and fascinating read. Clearly and simply written and handsomely printed, *A Sound Like Water Dripping...* is destined to become a classic book of Canadian wildlife adventure. Highly recommended.

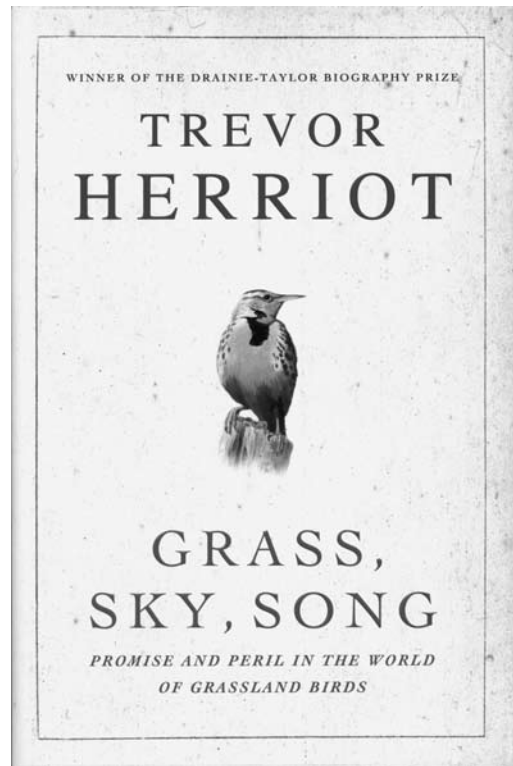


Grass, Sky, Song: Promise and Peril in the World of Grassland Birds by Trevor Herriot. 2009. 273 pages. 15 x 22 cm. Sketches by the author. Harper Collins, 2 Bloor St. East, 20th Floor, Toronto, Ont. M4W 1A8. \$32.95 Can. (hardcover). *Reviewed by Chris Siddle.*

Trevor Herriot is a highly respected Canadian writer of nonfiction. This, his third book, describes Herriot's passion for grassland birds and the causes of their sharp population declines since the mid 1980s. Between each chapter is a short species account of a prairie species focusing particularly on the challenges facing the bird's continued survival. Covered are Sharp-tailed Grouse, Greater Sage Grouse, Ferruginous Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, Piping Plover, Upland Sandpiper, Burrowing

Owl, Horned Lark, Loggerhead Shrike, Sprague's Pipit, Lark Bunting, Grasshopper Sparrow, Baird's Sparrow, Chestnut-collared Longspur, McCown's Longspur, Bobolink, and Western Meadowlark.

Even with such a long list of threatened or endangered species, Herriot doesn't despair. He understands that a sense of hopelessness only stands in the way of the truth, that all of us must realize that we each have a duty to conserve the creatures with whom we share the prairie grass and sky. Highly recommended.



Handbook of the Mammals of the World. 1. Carnivores. Chief editors, Don E. Wilson and Russell Mittermeir. 2009. 728 pages. 31 x 24 cm. 36 colour plates by Toni Llobet. 561 colour photographs. 258 distribution maps. 4000+ bibliographical references. Lynx Publications, Barcelona, Spain. Approximately \$200 Can. (hardcover). *Reviewed by Chris Siddle.*

Following the huge success of *Handbook of the Birds of the World* (14 of 16 volumes published as of January 2010), Lynx Publications is publishing for the first time a multi-volume work which will illustrate and describe every one of the world's 5,411 mammal species. If Volume 1. Carnivores, is anything to go on, Lynx and the mammalogists of the planet who have co-operated to produce this monumental book have made a very good start indeed. This volume deals with 245 species in 13 orders of flesh-eaters: African Palm Civet (1 species); cats (37); linsangs (2); civets, genets, and oysts (34); hyenas (4); mongooses (34); Madagascar carnivores (8); dogs (35); bears (8); red panda (1); raccoons (12); skunks (12); and weasels and relatives (57). Each order is introduced with a brief "summary box" showing the world distribution of the order and the size range of the largest and smallest species compared to an adult human being, as well as giving the number of genera, species and taxa, and which are critically endangered, endangered, and extinct since 1600.

The summary box is followed by an introductory treatment of the order, several thousand words long and in some cases almost book length, profusely illustrated with remarkable colour photographs and lengthy and informative captions. Species accounts follow, each about 1,500 words long, covering systematics, morphological aspects, habitat, general habits, communication, food and feeding, breeding, movements, home range, and status and conservation, concluding with a general bibliography.

The series will be completed in eight volumes. Check the Handbook's website, lynxeds.com for further details. Highly recommended.

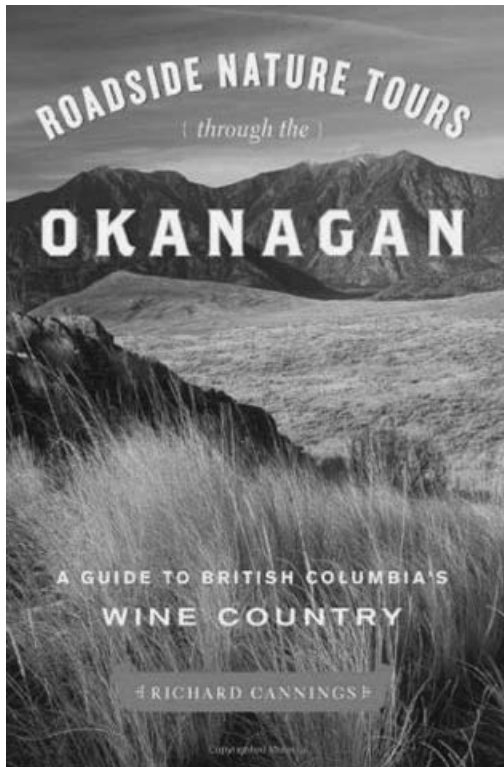


Roadside Nature Tours through the Okanagan: A Guide to British Columbia's Wine Country by Richard Cannings. 2009. 172 pages plus index. 15 x 22.5 cm. 20 black-and-white photos. 42 colour photos. Four regional maps. Greystone Books, 2323 Quebec St., Suite 201, Vancouver, B.C. V5T 4S7. www.greystonebooks.com \$24.95 Can. (softcover) *Reviewed by Chris Siddle.*

Roadside Nature Tours through the Okanagan is another information packed, admirably clearly written book by B.C.'s leading naturalist writer, Dick Cannings. If you want to know about Okanagan geology, forestry, zoology, anthropology, and even history, this is the primer for you. The sixty-two photos depict typical Okanagan things: bluebunch wheatgrass, prickly pear cacti, a glacial erratic, a Chukar, Okanagan Indian pictographs, McIntyre Bluff, a Great Basin Spadefoot Toad, Arrowleaf Balsamroot blossoms, a Coyote pup, etc. The selection reflects the kind of intelligence we have come to expect from this writer. These are the images

that define the Okanagan and make it the special place it is. The bulk of the text is comprised of ten highway and/or secondary road routes which take the traveler through most of the really accessible natural areas of the valley. The tours are divided into southern, central and northern Okanagan routes. Ordinary vehicles are quite suitable for travel on all routes. Cannings' relaxed but informative style is that of an entertaining teacher who pauses a while to tell you about an interesting tree like the Ponderosa Pine or the nesting habits of a pair of Western Bluebirds and who is responsible for placing the nest boxes the bluebirds are using on the fence posts.

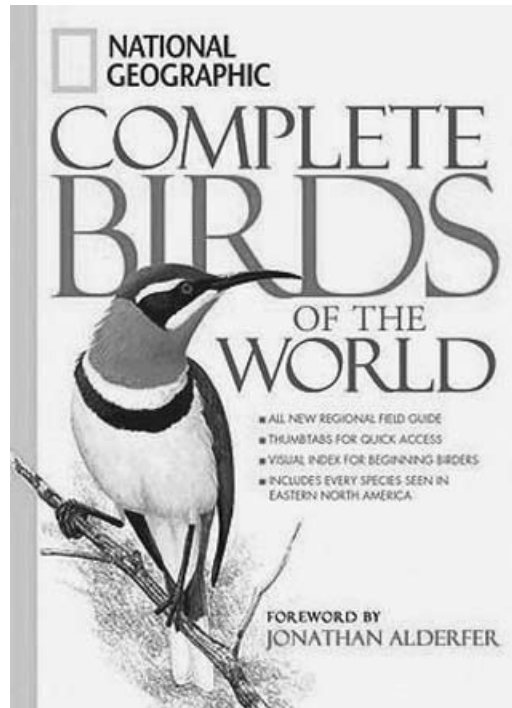
If you can't go on a tour with Dick as your guide, this book is the next best thing, and that is high praise. Highly recommended.



National Geographic Complete Birds of the World. Edited by Tim Harris. 2009. 384 pages. 18 x 26 cm. 900+ colour photos, maps, and works of art. 4 page list of additional reading. 2 page glossary of ornithological terms. Index. National Geographic Society, 1145 17th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036-4688. \$40.00 Can. (hardcover). *Reviewed by Chris Siddle.*

With the history-making ongoing publication of the 16 volumes of *The Handbook of Birds of the World* wherein all the bird species of the world will be illustrated and described in detail, National Geographic is being disingenuous with its title *Complete Birds of the World*? I hardly think so.

This volume is an introduction to the families of world birds, 193 families to be exact, each receiving a one to four page treatment (about 350-1,600 words) which includes brief summaries about structure, plumage, behaviour, voice, habitat, movements, diet, breeding and taxonomy. A map shows the range of each family world-wide, but doesn't differentiate



between breeding and wintering ranges except in a few cases. One to six species for each family are shown, usually in colour photos, though occasionally a painted image is used. A few of these images first appeared in National Geographic's *Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, though many appear to be prepared especially for the Complete Birds. The family accounts were written by various ornithologists or birders including Peter Clement (author of *Finches and Sparrows: An Identification Guide*, Princeton, 1993), Alvaro Jaramillo (author of *New World Blackbirds, The Icterids*, Princeton, 1999), Kimball Garrett, and others. As a quick up-to-date reference to the bird families of the world, this book is recommended, especially as a companion volume to Christopher Perrins (editor) more detailed and much larger Firefly *Encyclopedia of Birds* (Firefly 2003).