

Sample Pages

For The Birds



**A Benefit Project
by Kas Stone**

Sample Pages



My "***For The Birds***" exhibition was on display from May 14 to June 9, 2019 at The Port Grocer in Port Medway, Nova Scotia, which serves up tasty maritime cuisine, colourful heritage architecture, and a gallery space for local artists.

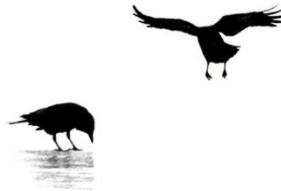
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For the Birds A Benefit Project

This project is *For The Birds*. I don't mean the photographs are garbage. At least I hope they aren't! What I mean is that I put this book and exhibition together to celebrate the birds who share my life here on the Nova Scotia coast ~ seasonal migrants and hardy residents alike.

These are not bird photographs in the classic sense, the kind you see in nature magazines and field guides. Rather, my birds are characters in larger stories about landscapes, life, and the joys and sorrows that are common to us all. That is, they are *anthropomorphic* birds. I like to think of them also as my feathered friends.

So, *For The Birds*, 50% of proceeds from the sale of these books and exhibition prints will be donated to Bird Studies Canada in support of their efforts to raise awareness about the plight of our bird populations and to help preserve them. Learn more at www.birdscanada.org.



Sample Pages

Some Sobering Statistics

- 40% of the world's bird populations are in decline. The extinction rate has accelerated in recent years, with 190 species lost since 1500 A.D., eight species since 2000, and one in eight species threatened globally with extinction today. Those most affected are forest birds, aerial insectivores, migratory shorebirds, and isolated, island-specific species.
- In Canada's Maritime Provinces, bird numbers have decreased overall by 13% since 1970, with one-third of bird species in rapid decline, including favourites like the Snowy Owl, Atlantic Puffin, Evening Grosbeak and Barn Swallow.
- Human activity is primarily responsible for these declines. Essential bird habitat has been lost due to logging, wetland and shoreline infill, grassland cultivation, urban sprawl, and human-induced climate change. Bird populations have been decimated by pollution from acid rain, oil spills, fertilizers, and pesticides. We have hunted birds for sport, food and fashion, and killed them accidentally with hydro wires, skyscrapers, wind turbines ~ and our pet cats!

The Bird Watcher

My cat Harris (named after painter Lawren Harris) spent his first few years as a stray, fending for himself and undoubtedly consuming many birds during his travels. Since adopting me in 2014, he has confined his birding activities to watching my feeders through the window, as he is now an indoor-only cat.

Cats have been identified as the number one cause of human-related bird mortality, killing *billions* worldwide every year. A 2013 Environment Canada study estimated that cats in this country alone kill between 100 million and 350 million birds annually. These grim statistics should speak for themselves. Sadly, many cat owners aren't hearing the message.



Sample Pages

... and a Few Good News Stories

- Bird-watching has grown in popularity since the mid 20th century in response to the growing environmental movement and the 1962 publication of Rachel Carson's landmark book, *Silent Spring*. It now drives a significant citizen science and ecotourism industry that raises public awareness about the value of bird conservation.
- Since the 1970s, many species of raptors and waterfowl have rebounded from critically endangered levels thanks to pesticide control (e.g. the banning of DDT), more stringent hunting and exotic pet regulations, and active conservation programs undertaken by organizations like Bird Life International, Bird Studies Canada, and the Nova Scotia Bird Society.
- Birds pollinate flowers, disperse seeds, control insect and rodent pests, clean up carcasses, and serve as valuable ecological indicators. So our conservation efforts will be rewarded with tangible benefits for the human species too.



The Hand of Man

Birds have suffered greatly at our hands over the centuries. Fortunately for this gull, this particular hand belongs to an ornithologist at the Thunder Cape Bird Observatory on Lake Superior's Sibley Peninsula. I spent a fascinating long weekend there in May 2009 photographing the observatory's bird-banding team during the annual spring migration.

Observatories like Thunder Cape make up the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network that provides crucial scientific data to support conservation projects. Bird Studies Canada also coordinates popular volunteer programs across the country, including Project FeederWatch, the Great Canadian Birdathon, and the Christmas Bird Count. Learn how you can help at www.birdscanada.org.

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Free Spirits

A pair of crows frolics in the dunes at my neighbourhood beach.

Sample Pages



Weather Vane Birds

These grackles collectively aligned themselves facing into the wind, reminding me of weather vanes. Did you know that the collective term for grackles is a “plague” or an “annoyance”? I’m sure the smaller birds around my feeders would agree.

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Fine Feathered Friends

My old dog Skye tolerated many photographic shenanigans during her long life.

Sample Pages

Photo by Rick Chuchra



About Kas

I am a full-time photographic artist and writer based in Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia, where my work is inspired by the wild coastal scenery and creatures right outside my door. My portfolio includes two wilderness guidebooks published by The Boston Mills Press, and feature articles in Canadian and U.K. magazines.

I took up photography originally to illustrate my writings about wilderness travel, but over the past decade it has evolved into more contemplative imagery that promotes environmental, outdoor lifestyle and broader human themes. I am a proud member of the League of Landscape Photographers and the Nature First Alliance, groups that advocate ethical photographic practices in the landscape. I also participate in Bird Studies Canada's FeederWatch survey project.

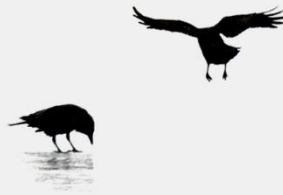
My images begin in the camera but often stray far from their original subject matter as I play with the camera's digital raw materials in the computer. My creative techniques and minimalist aesthetic often leave viewers wondering "Is this a photograph or a painting?" ~ a question that always delights me!

Please visit me at www.kasstone.ca.

Sample Pages

HOW TO BUY THIS BOOK: \$25.00 plus applicable taxes & shipping

Close this book preview to return to the ordering window on Kas' website



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