



# On Watching Birds

*Lawrence Kilham*

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## **On Watching Birds** Lawrence Kilham

Lawrence Kilham begins this remarkable book with a simple premise: surely there are many people who aren't scientists who nevertheless take great satisfaction from observing nature and the creatures that inhabit it. Eschewing species lists and the charts-and-graphs approach of professional ornithologists and competitive birders, Kilham's *On Watching Birds* elegantly balances the aesthetic and humanistic with the scientific. The author offers a philosophy of embracing nature through discovery rather than a methodology for categorizing it.

"Watch everything," Kilham advises the novice, for one may be surprised by what one sees, even when observing the most common of birds. His observations become part beautifully told story and part life-lesson, as the habits and rituals of cranes, crows, owls—even otters—reveal a rich counterlife of often unnoticed behavioral variation and personality in living nature. "Behavior watching," Kilham concludes, "not only strengthens my bonds with the beauty of nature, but also my empathy with living things."

First published in 1988, this autobiographical account of a renowned naturalist's love affair with birds has already become a classic. Illustrated with Joan Waltermire's delicately rendered line drawings, *On Watching Birds* is now once again available to readers who wish to discover the simple pleasures of connecting with the natural world.

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