

THE FIRST BOOK OF BIRDS

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The First Book of Birds by Olive Thorne Miller

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OLIVE THORNE MILLER

**THE FIRST
BOOK OF BIRDS**



CEDAR-BIRD

Mrs. H. T. (H. T. Miller)

THE FIRST BOOK OF BIRDS

BY OLIVE THORNE MILLER

WITH EIGHT COLORED AND TWELVE
PLAIN PLATES AND TWENTY
FIGURES IN THE
TEXT



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PREFACE

THIS book is intended to interest young people in the ways and habits of birds, and to stimulate them to further study. It has grown out of my experience in talking to schools. From the youngest kindergarten scholar to boys and girls of sixteen and eighteen, I have never failed to find young people intensely interested so long as I would tell them about how the birds live.

Some of the results of these talks that have come to my knowledge have been astonishing and far-reaching, such as that of one boy of seven or eight, who persuaded the village boys around his summer home to give up taking eggs and killing birds, and watch them instead, and who was dubbed "Professor" by his eager followers. The effect has always been to make children love and respect the living bird.

It has therefore seemed to me that what is needed at first is not the science of ornithology,

— however diluted, — but some account of the life and habits, to arouse sympathy and interest in the living bird, neither as a target nor as a producer of eggs, but as a fellow-creature whose acquaintance it would be pleasant to make.

With this purpose in view I have expanded my "Children's Talks" into this little book, to be used as an introduction to one of the most fascinating and delightful of studies.

I hope it is unnecessary to say that I have been careful to have the latest and the best authorities for the statements made, and I take pleasure in presenting a list of them: —

On Structure: Dr. Elliott Coues, of Washington, D. C.; Professor Headley, of Haileybury College, England; Mr. Lucas, Curator of Comparative Anatomy, of the National Museum.

On Moulting: Mr. Witmer Stone, of Philadelphia Academy of Sciences.

On Color: Professor Newton, of Cambridge University, England.

On Food: Professor Beal, of Biological Survey, United States Department of Agriculture; Mr. Forbush, of Massachusetts State Board of Agriculture; Mr. Forbes, Director Illinois State

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Laboratory of Natural History; Dr. C. Hart Merriam, Chief of Biological Survey, United States Department of Agriculture.

On Migration: Mr. William Brewster, President American Ornithologists Union; Mr. Frank M. Chapman, of American Museum of Natural History, of New York.

On Sleep: Rev. Leander Keyser; Mr. J. Newton Basket.

On Language: Mr. John Burroughs; Professor Hameric, of Peabody Conservatory of Music of Baltimore; Mr. Leverett M. Loomis, of California Academy of Sciences.

OLIVE THORNE MILLER.

