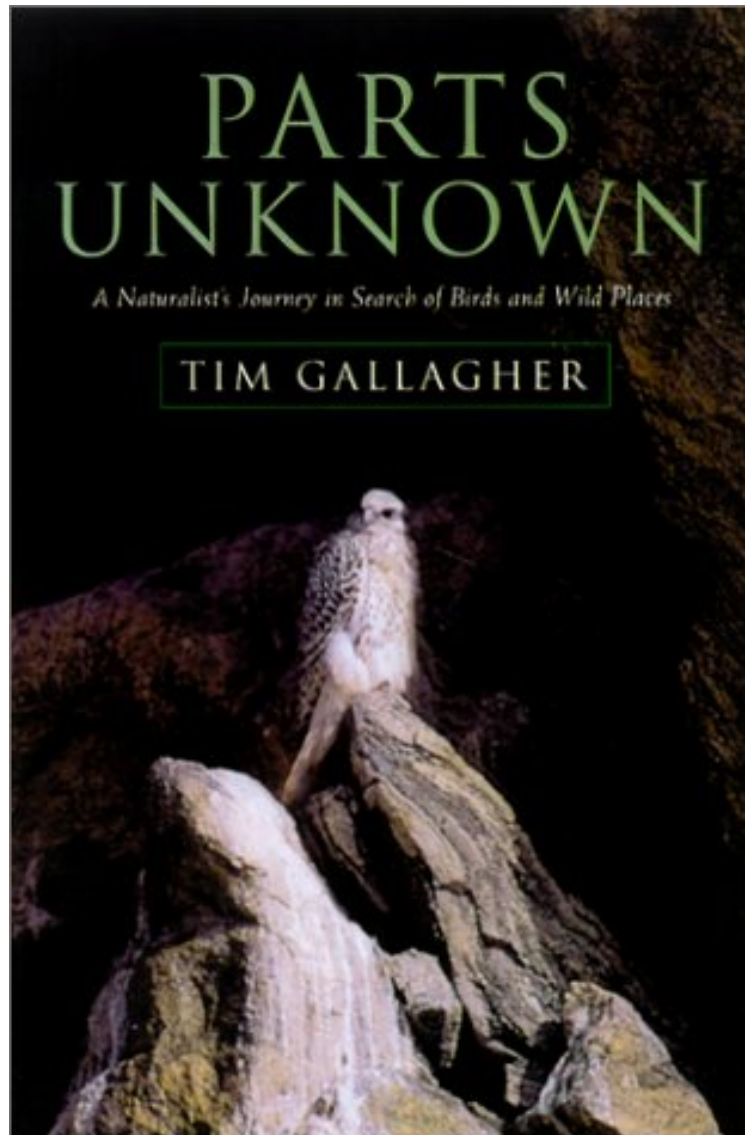


(Free) Parts Unknown: A Naturalist's Journey in Search of Birds and Wild Places

Parts Unknown: A Naturalist's Journey in Search of Birds and Wild Places

Tim Gallagher

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Tim Gallagher : Parts Unknown: A Naturalist's Journey in Search of Birds and Wild Places before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Parts Unknown: A Naturalist's Journey in Search of Birds and Wild Places:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A Neat Book for Raptorphiles By Stan Moore Although non-raptor species are mentioned in this book, as an unabashed admirer of birds of prey, I was attracted to Tim Gallagher's new

book. I first saw the book in a local book store, and the photo of the white gyrfalcon on the cover caught my attention even before I saw the title or contents. Many of us admire the spectacular beauty of large falcons, such as gyrfalcons and peregrines, but we know that we will never have opportunity to visit the northern breeding grounds in places like Greenland and Iceland. Tim takes us there and lets us feel what it is like to set foot in such faraway places and his photographs also help us visualize the stark environment some of these magnificent predators survive in. Other spectacular raptors are mentioned, too. The ferruginous hawk is the largest non-eagle in North America, and one of the species experts is Dr. Joe Schmutz of the University of Saskatchewan. I loved Tim Gallagher's discussion of some of the factors affecting ferruginous hawk population dynamics, and how Dr. Schmutz analyzed the ecological factors involved. I loved reading about Pete Bloom's feelings after trapping the last wild California Condor, and about Dave Garcelon's joy in seeing adult bald eagles in places where he had released juveniles into the wild. I enjoyed hearing about trapping and banding of migrant peregrine falcons at Padre Island, Texas. Tim Gallagher has been privileged to visit wild places most of us will never travel to. And he has been able to visit top raptor researchers carry out their work. Usually the only access we have to this sort of information is limited to scientific texts, which are interesting, but not as colorful as the stories in this book. I found this book an easy read, but captivating and enjoyable at the same time. I think raptorphiles, falconers, and bird lovers in general will enjoy hearing Tim Gallagher's stories in this collection.

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. good collection of essays on birds, chiefly birds of prey
By Tim F. Martin
This book is a collection of essays written by Tim Gallagher, currently editor-in-chief of *Living Bird* magazine, published by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, as well as an avid nature photographer (several of his nice color photographs grace the book), birder, and wildlife aficionado. The articles were written from between the late 1970s into the year 2000, and apparently most if not all have been published before elsewhere (not saying I have read any of them mind you, but it is possible others who would be interested in this book have). The articles center around birds, though occasionally other animals are briefly discussed, and range from focusing on issues of research to conservation to some other topics such as law enforcement and research integrity. Many of the articles focus on birds of prey, particularly Peregrine Falcons and the epic fight to save them from near extinction due to DDT (a passion of his), but also Gyrfalcons, Prairie Falcons, Bald Eagles, the Ferruginous Hawk, and California Condors (also the subject of an intensive effort to save them from extinction, one that involved using the closely related Andean Condors among other things and seems to have paid off handsomely, with California Condors now back in the wild not only in California but in Arizona as well). Other birds are covered as well, sometimes in relation to being food to birds of prey, such as Dovekies, ptarmigans, and Red-necked Grebes. Though most of the essays dealt with bird-watching and research in the United States, he described those researching Gyrfalcons in Iceland (which often involved rappelling down sheer cliffs and wading through glacial streams that had claimed lives in the past) and both Gyrfalcons and Peregrine Falcons in Greenland (working in some very rugged arctic conditions) as well as the Ferruginous Hawk in Alberta. If I had any real complaint about the book was that some of the essays were entirely too short, almost seeming to me that just as they were really getting interesting they were at an end. Some essays were only five pages or so, though most were longer. I did enjoy the book though, as he is a both a knowledgeable and personable writer and while passionate about conservation was not preachy about it. He did seem to have a wide-ranging interest in other animals, noting in some of his essays a little bit about some of the other animals that share the habitats with birds, such as ground squirrels, beavers, and whales, among others. I did learn a great many interesting things for which I am grateful. Gallagher relates how well-regarded the Gyrfalcon or falki is in Iceland, that even schoolchildren can identify them and that farmers who have them nesting on their lands are quite protective of them. Once exported to Europe as a prime bird for the sport of falconry, the favored prey of falconers in the Middle Ages using these birds was the Grey Heron (similar in appearance to the Great Blue Heron of North America), hunts involving them often involving miles of pursuit but generally ending in the heron's capture and then release with a copper band noting the name of the falcon's owner and the year captured. He writes quite a bit about the Dovekie, a starling-sized sea bird of arctic waters that looks in some ways penguin-like (though can fly). Studied intensively by researchers from the Peregrine Fund (important as a food source for birds of prey in the area and as a barometer of overall environment health in Greenland's waters), they are becoming known as amazingly long-lived birds, tremendously loyal to particular nesting sites (though preferring nesting on cliffs that have had recent rockslides as opposed to ones thickly covered in lichen), and the guano that they excrete on land important in a food chain that provides nitrogen for plants that musk oxen and arctic hares feed on. In one of his chapters on reestablishing the Peregrine Falcon in eastern North America we learn that the famous urban releases of the falcon was do in part because young falcons that have been bred in captivity and released into the wild were too often falling prey to Golden Eagles and Great Horned Owls, birds that would not be present in an urban setting (though plenty of other birds such as feral pigeons and starlings, which could serve as prey items, were). In a chapter on Peregrine Falcon research he discusses findings unearthed by those studying migrating birds at Padre Island, Texas; in a break from their usual hunting habits, plummeting a high speed from a lofty altitude at prey, Peregrines would perch on any available spot on the island, even on crates and pieces of driftwood, where they would wait for other migrants (songbirds, shorebirds, waterfowl, and even other, smaller birds of prey) and take off from ground level and intercept them. My favorite chapter was the one on researching the night-time calls of flying,

migrating songbirds, the results of one tireless, self-financed researcher by the name of Bill Evans, who lacked even a master's degree. He set up recording stations using hi-fi VCRs at eventually seven different areas of New York State out of his own pocket, working odd jobs to support himself, and recorded nine hours of audio a night, analyzing the tapes himself and recording and verifying the sound of migrating birds such as warblers and thrushes using later visual observations. Putting together a data-base of such calls, the songs shorter and quite different from songs heard on the ground during mating, and publishing his findings, he pioneered a new field of studying migrating birds, a vast improvement over prior efforts which could count birds migrating at night but not identify species. Gallagher writes that more and more of these stations are being set up but are now using sophisticated audio equipment and pattern recognition software, the information being made available online and an invaluable tool to researchers and conservationists.⁴ of 4 people found the following review helpful. A fantastic voyage
By Carol Melville
Who knew that birdwatching could be so exciting? Tim Gallagher goes on lengthy voyages through stormy, iceberg-infested waters in northern Greenland. He crawls around on thousand-foot cliffs in Iceland while huge gyrfalcons dive at his head. In his essays, he captures all the flavor and feel of each place's history (both natural and human) and culture. And the writing is so vivid, I felt like I was right there with him. I would recommend this book to anyone who likes to read about the outdoors and nature and also to share vicariously in an adventure.

Adventure-birding in the far corners of the world.

From Library Journal
Author of Wild Bird Photography and editor of The Living Bird, the excellent quarterly of Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology, Gallagher has a special affinity for the Arctic and hawks. This volume is concerned with exotic locales such as India, Iceland, Greenland, northern Manitoba, and Alberta, and the birds of those regions. However, Gallagher also writes of the wildness found in our own backyards New Jersey, coastal Texas, and Southern California and of tracking the sounds birds make when they fly overhead at night, which is the manner in which most migrate. This evocative book is presented in three parts: "Parts Unknown" (exotic places), "Rare Raptors" (condors, falcons, eagles, and hawks), and "Birding and Ornithology" (a potpourri the Everglades, birding marathons, wildlife law enforcement, Santa Catalina Island, etc.). Delightful, informed reading with excellent photographs; highly recommended for all wildlife collections. Henry T. Armistead, Free Lib. of Philadelphia Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.
From Booklist
The blank "parts unknown" areas in a display of antique maps intrigued Gallagher as a boy. A growing interest in falconry led to travels farther and farther afield as the teenager grew more adept in the study of birds of prey in the wild. Observing nests required rock-climbing skills, and finding eagles and hawks meant trips into increasingly remote areas. By honing his writing talents and working with bird researchers in the field, Gallagher was able to turn his avocation into a life work. This collection of essays spans the period from 1978 to the present and focuses on subjects as disparate as the plight of the California condor, the World Series of Birding, and photographing sandpipers behind grain elevators. Gallagher has a conversational writing style that lends immediacy to the narrative. The text is complemented by an insert of the author's color photographs of many of the species he mentions. Overall, this is a nice addition for large natural history collections. Nancy Bent
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From the Back Cover
When Tim Gallagher was a child, he went to a museum exhibit of early maps. These tattered, ornately drawn charts often had one thing in common - a vast, black area to the north labeled Parts Unknown. Tim was fascinated with the idea of places completely unknown to mapmakers, and he made it his goal to visit and photograph these "unexplored" regions (and its avian inhabitants) for himself. Parts Unknown is the result of that quest. Here is a remarkable new collection of essays on Tim's lifelong fascination with birds, and how it has evolved into a daring brand of "adventure birding." Join Tim as he dangles on ropes at Gyrfalcon nest cliffs in northern Greenland and Iceland, traps migrating Arctic Peregrine Falcons on barrier islands in the Gulf of Mexico, journeys in an open boat for hundreds of miles up the west coast of Greenland to survey bird colonies, and learn about the continuing efforts to save the endangered California Condor. With a stunning full-color insert of Tim's finest photographs, Parts Unknown is an extraordinary look into an unexplored world. (6 1/4 x 9 1/4, 244 pages, color photos)