



MISSION

BY ILEANA BOARD

MIGRATION

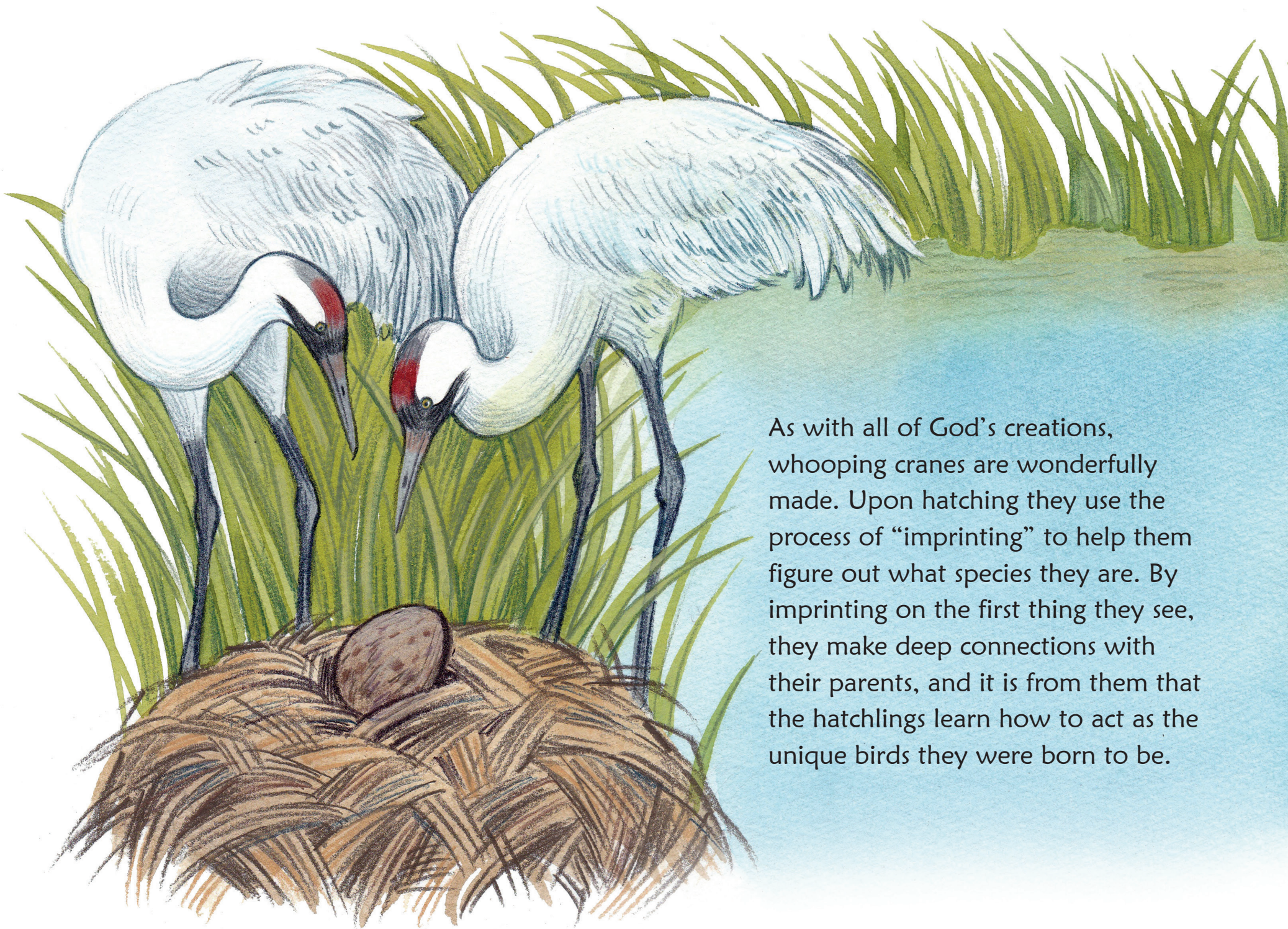


THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL LIBRARY

“Whoop! Whoop! Whoop!” The misty stillness of the spring morning is broken by the call. The sun has just barely begun to peek over the horizon, but already the marshes are coming to life, the tall reeds swaying sporadically in spite of the stillness. The reeds are hiding a secret—a unique inhabitant that has not been seen here in over 100 years.

Suddenly, with a *whoosh* followed by the frenzied beating of large wings, a bird takes flight. With a wingspan of 2.28 meters (7.5 feet), its massive body is silhouetted against the orange sky of a new day, an imposing beacon in the Florida landscape.

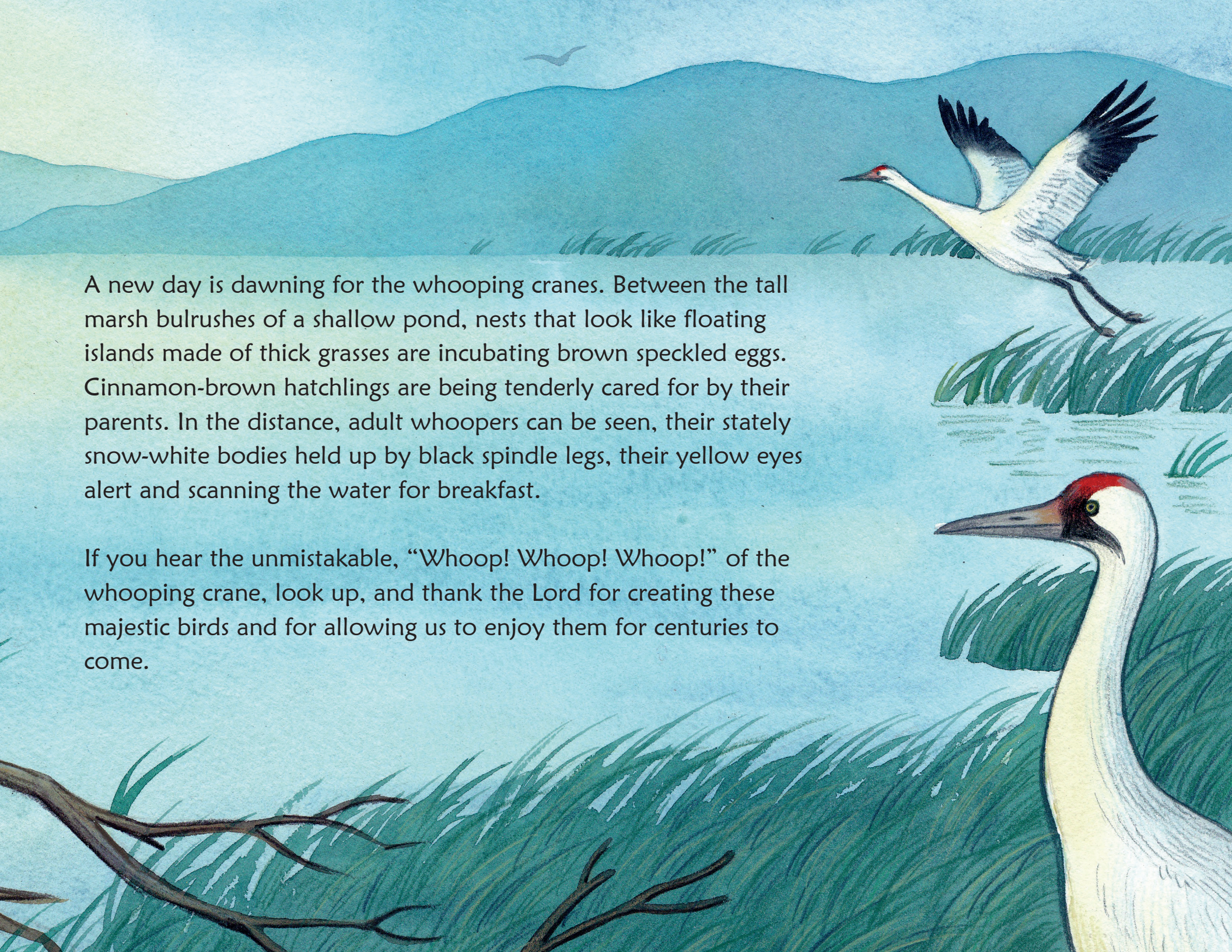
After a few lazy glides over the marsh, it lands. Illuminated in the morning light, its stark white body, offset by a black mustache and a radiant crimson crown, is fully on display. It stands nearly 1.52 meters (5 feet) tall, a living relic of ancient days when prehistoric birds ruled the air. And like those relics, it almost disappeared into fable. This is the remarkable story of the whooping cranes, the birds that refused to go extinct.



As with all of God's creations, whooping cranes are wonderfully made. Upon hatching they use the process of "imprinting" to help them figure out what species they are. By imprinting on the first thing they see, they make deep connections with their parents, and it is from them that the hatchlings learn how to act as the unique birds they were born to be.



In 2001, the birds took flight, and the first ultralight-led whooping crane migration began. The journey took months. The cranes followed their natural instincts, only traveling during the day and in nice weather, and taking time here and there to explore their surroundings. When the birds finally touched down in Florida's Gulf Coast, Operation Migration biologists kept careful track of the birds over the winter. Unfortunately, one bird was killed by a bobcat, but the rest seemed to be thriving in their new wintering grounds. As warmer breezes and thawing ice heralded the coming of spring, the Operation Migration crew patiently waited and watched the skies, looking for the return of the six remaining whooping cranes. Eight days after their departure from Florida, the cohort arrived at the exact location from where they had begun in the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge in Wisconsin.


An illustration of a whooping crane in flight over a marsh. The crane is shown in profile, flying from right to left, with its wings spread wide, revealing black feathers on the underside. Its body is white, and it has a distinctive red patch on its forehead. The background features rolling blue hills under a light blue sky. In the foreground, there are green marsh grasses and a few bare, brown branches. Another crane is visible in the distance, flying higher in the sky.

A new day is dawning for the whooping cranes. Between the tall marsh bulrushes of a shallow pond, nests that look like floating islands made of thick grasses are incubating brown speckled eggs. Cinnamon-brown hatchlings are being tenderly cared for by their parents. In the distance, adult whoopers can be seen, their stately snow-white bodies held up by black spindle legs, their yellow eyes alert and scanning the water for breakfast.

If you hear the unmistakable, “Whoop! Whoop! Whoop!” of the whooping crane, look up, and thank the Lord for creating these majestic birds and for allowing us to enjoy them for centuries to come.



MISSION MIGRATION

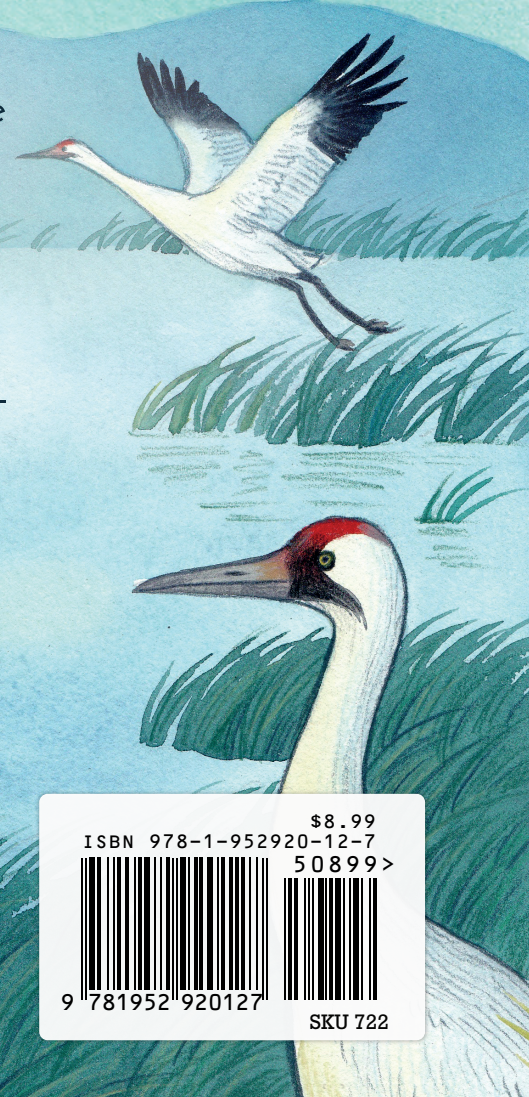


Today, the distinctive call of the whooping crane can be heard across many marshes in the United States, but this was not always the case. These majestic birds were a hair's breadth from extinction until a dedicated group of conservationists, scientists, and daredevil pilots decided to give them a fighting chance at survival. Join the mission as we learn about these delightful cranes and the innovative, groundbreaking, and comical lengths rescuers went to to ensure these amazing specimens of God's handiwork would be around for future generations to enjoy.

■ ORIGINAL PUBLICATION



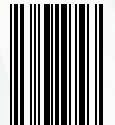
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THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL

SONGBIRDS STUDY

Written by
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AMERICAN GOLDFINCH



SCIENTIFIC NAME

Spinus tristis



DIET

Mostly seeds;
also buds, bark,
tree sap



HABITAT

Thistle plants,
weedy areas, edges
of woods, suburban
areas with feeders



MIGRATION

North America;
migrates from
Canada to US and
from US to Mexico

AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES are the vegetarians of the bird world, eating only an occasional insect. Their beaks are made to crack seeds, and their nimble feet are able to grasp grasses, seeds, and small buds. When invading cowbirds lay their eggs in goldfinch nests, their young may hatch but rarely survive on the regurgitated all-seed diet of these birds.




Look at the picture of the male in winter, which appears nearly identical to the female. When they molt (lose old feathers) in the spring, vibrant yellow feathers, a stark black cap, and black and white feathers replace the brown. No matter the season, the American goldfinch can be identified by its pointed tail with a notch in the middle, as well as its wing bars (the white streaks that go across a bunch of wing feathers).



MALE IN WINTER



MALE AND FEMALE GOLDFINCH

A detailed illustration of a Bohemian Waxwing bird perched on a dark brown branch. The bird has a greyish-brown body, a black mask around its eyes, and a crest of reddish-brown feathers. Its wings show a mix of grey, white, and yellow. The branch it sits on has several bright red berries hanging from it. The background is a textured, light brown paper with faint line drawings of feathers and branches. The title 'BOHEMIAN WAXWING' is written in a large, dark blue, serif font in the upper right corner, with a small decorative branch icon above it.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING



SCIENTIFIC NAME

*Bombycilla
garrulus*



DIET

Insects in summer;
fruit and berries
in fall and winter



HABITAT

Evergreen
forests, usually
near water



MIGRATION

Summer in Alaska and
western Canada; migrates
into northwestern US
in winter; Eurasia

THE FIRST PART OF THIS BIRD'S NAME refers to its social, free-spirited, nomad-like behavior. In the fall and winter, they fly around in flocks in search of fruit trees and berry bushes. They can be heard by their high-pitched trill and may show up unpredictably in an orchard or garden to feed. In the summer, they feed on insects, watching from a high limb, then fly out and catch them midair.



Waxwing refers to the waxy red tips on its wings. The older the bird, the larger the red tips. Notice the prominent crest on its head, as well as the peachy blush color surrounding its black mask. Also striking are the yellow tips on its wings and tail. Point out the two white "rectangles" on each wing, as well as the rust-colored feathers under the tail.



FIRE-TAILED MYZORNIS



SCIENTIFIC NAME

*Myzornis
pyrrhura*



DIET

Insects, spiders,
fruit, nectar,
tree sap



HABITAT

Bamboo,
rhododendron
forest



MIGRATION

Parts of Bhutan, China,
India, Myanmar, and
Nepal; does not migrate

EITHER ALONE OR IN GROUPS UP TO 30, this little bird forages in shrubs and bushes for food or sometimes in trees, gleaning insects from moss and bark. It can also be found hovering in front of flowers for nectar or drinking the sap from tree trunks. Male and female look very similar, but the male's head is a more vibrant green.



Look at the unique scallop design on the forehead. The black around its eyes makes it look fierce, with its pointed black beak. Notice how the "fire" in its tail feathers helps it to camouflage as it drinks nectar from the red flower. Point out any black and white that you see.

GOLDEN-FRONTED LEAFBIRD



SCIENTIFIC NAME

*Chloropsis
aurifrons*



DIET

Mainly insects;
also berries,
fruit, nectar



HABITAT

Forest,
scrub



MIGRATION

Southern Asia (including
India and Thailand);
does not migrate

THESE BRIGHTLY COLORED BIRDS shed their colorful feathers if stressed. It is probably a way to confuse snakes and other predators. Caged birds may do the same. They love to drink the nectar of large flowers. Certain plant species depend on them for pollination.



Male and female look very similar, the difference being the face and throat of the female is a slightly duller black. The juveniles have solid green heads. Look at the vivid blue beneath the beak and the golden orange above it. The green makes them hard to spot amidst leafy green trees, but they can be heard with their loud song and call.



MALE GOLDEN-FRONTED LEAFBIRD



FEMALE AND MALE



**SCIENTIFIC
NAME**

Euplectes franciscanus



HABITAT

Marsh and pond
edges, overgrown
fields and thickets



DIET

Mainly grass
seeds; some insects



MIGRATION

Africa, near the
equator; does not
migrate

NORTHERN RED BISHOP

THE FLASHY FEATHERS OF THIS MALE last only through the breeding season. He flies over his territory with his body feathers puffed out. A female picks her mate based on the color and volume of his plumage, as well as the location of his territory—if it has plenty of food. After mating, the male builds a spherical nest with a hole in the side for his mate. She then lines it with soft, fine material for nesting. In the winter, he molts (sheds many feathers) and looks nearly identical to the female until springtime when the cycle repeats.

**MALE NORTHERN
RED BISHOP**



No wonder this male gets all puffed up in such brilliant plumage! Note the contrast of his black hood and apron compared to the orange or red feathery cloak he seems to flaunt. Which parts of him are similar to the female? There is a chance you could spot one in California, Texas, or Puerto Rico, where they have escaped from cages and begun to breed.

**FEMALE NORTHERN
RED BISHOP**



THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL SONGBIRDS STUDY



 ORIGINAL PUBLICATION

WHETHER IT'S A WHISTLE, a chirp, a trill, or a "wichety-wichety," songbirds around the world sure know how to make a joyful noise! With this field guide as your companion, you will learn about the habitats and behaviors of 20 different songbirds, each of them so different and yet so beautiful. The more you discover about these fascinating creatures, the more you will want to grab a pair of binoculars and meet the songbirds in your own backyard!



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