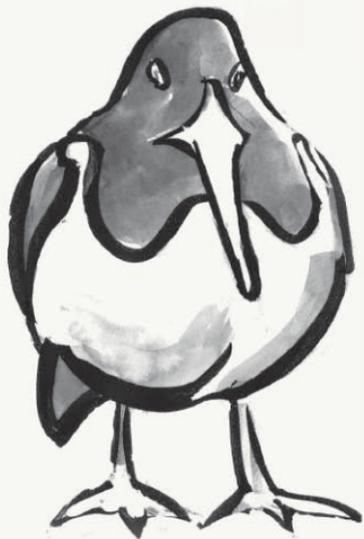


From the bestselling author of *How to be a bad birdwatcher*:

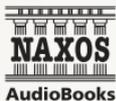
A bad birdwatcher's companion

SIMON BARNES



... or a personal
introduction
to Britain's
50 most
obvious birds



The logo for NAXOS AudioBooks, featuring the word "NAXOS" in a bold, serif font above the word "AudioBooks" in a smaller, sans-serif font. The logo is set against a background of a stylized classical building facade with columns.

contains 50
birdsongs

| | | |
|----|--------------------|------|
| 1 | Foreword | 2:52 |
| | Garden | |
| 2 | Robin | 5:53 |
| 3 | Blackbird | 4:56 |
| 4 | Wren | 4:43 |
| 5 | Chaffinch | 5:29 |
| 6 | Thrush | 6:21 |
| | City | |
| 7 | Sparrow | 6:36 |
| 8 | Pigeon | 7:06 |
| 9 | Starling | 5:05 |
| | Bird Feeder | |
| 10 | Blue Tit | 6:45 |
| 11 | Greenfinch | 3:56 |
| 12 | Nuthatch | 4:36 |
| | Sky | |
| 13 | Swallow | 5:34 |
| 14 | House Martin | 2:04 |
| 15 | Swift | 5:37 |
| 16 | Skylark | 6:26 |
| 17 | Kestrel | 5:43 |

Freshwater

| | | |
|----|--------------|------|
| 18 | Mallard | 6:15 |
| 19 | Tufted Duck | 4:19 |
| 20 | Canada Goose | 4:59 |
| 21 | Swan | 7:11 |

Woodland

| | | |
|----|-------------|------|
| 22 | Woodpecker | 5:44 |
| 23 | Jay | 5:26 |
| 24 | Sparrowhawk | 6:15 |
| 25 | Owl | 7:03 |

Countryside

| | | |
|----|----------|------|
| 26 | Crow | 9:10 |
| 27 | Pheasant | 6:04 |
| 28 | Magpie | 6:22 |
| 29 | Lapwing | 5:18 |
| 30 | Wagtail | 4:36 |

Seaside

| | | |
|----|---------------|------|
| 31 | Seagull | 8:30 |
| 32 | Cormorant | 4:36 |
| 33 | Oystercatcher | 4:20 |
| 34 | Tern | 5:28 |

Freshwater Again

| | | |
|----|------------|------|
| 35 | Heron | 6:03 |
| 36 | Moorhen | 4:53 |
| 37 | Grebe | 4:32 |
| 38 | Kingfisher | 5:15 |

More Countryside

| | | |
|----|----------------|------|
| 39 | Cuckoo | 4:42 |
| 40 | Dunnock | 4:40 |
| 41 | Goldfinch | 5:01 |
| 42 | Yellowhammer | 4:43 |
| 43 | Buzzard | 5:17 |
| 44 | Willow Warbler | 5:28 |

Pilgrimage Birds

| | | |
|----|------------------|------|
| 45 | Avocet | 5:53 |
| 46 | Osprey | 5:18 |
| 47 | Bewick's Swan | 5:37 |
| 48 | Marsh Harrier | 4:57 |
| 49 | Gannet | 4:44 |
| 50 | Red Kite | 5:30 |
| 51 | Bittern | 5:56 |
| 52 | Peregrine Falcon | 6:50 |

Total time: 4:47:10

A bad birdwatcher's companion

SIMON BARNES

A beautiful girl once said to me 'I love you, but I don't know your name.' It was a touching avowal. She was five at the time. And I must say, I know how she felt – about life, if not about me. Many a time, I have had a glimpse of a bird, flying past on whirring wings, seen another vast distances away, heard a fragment of a song from an impenetrable thicket: and I have thought, I love you, but I don't know your name.

I think many people feel like that about much of the natural world. We see a lot of big green things and we think – ah yes – trees. Those brightly coloured things on the ground and on the branches are flowers. Those shimmering little fluttery things – flitting from flower to flower – are butterflies. And those lovely things that fly and sing are birds.

And most people have some kind of

attraction to such things: a vague, unfocused but genuine love: a love that does not categorise, a love that doesn't know intimacy: the love that does not know its name. It is a love that is pleasant and sincere: but not entirely fulfilling. It is like the relationship you have with a gorgeous person on the up escalator when you are on the down: perfect, heart-stopping, perhaps never to be forgotten: but a love that is doomed to die of ignorance.

Love does not need a name. At least, not to begin with. But a name is essential for intimacy. And with intimacy comes a deeper, and more complex kind of love: a love that can be flawed and difficult and sometimes maddening, but which enriches your life, and without which your life is incomplete.

With a name, you begin to understand: you begin to have a relationship. And when

I first began to tell one kind of bird from another, to know their names, I found a greater meaning, not just in the birds, but in the natural world: in all the processes of life.

But how to get going? When you first seek a deeper relationship with birds, it is like walking into find the chorus line of some fabulous, exotic musical, every creature apparently equally lovely, equally loveable, equally eager to be loved: but where to start? Which one to talk to? And how should I begin?

That is why I wrote **A Bad Birdwatcher's Companion**: as a starting-point. So that a beginning birdwatcher might be able to move on from the I-love-you-but-I-don't-know-your-name stage. If you learn the first few names, then many more will follow. Once you have got the hang of the most obvious birds, you will find your knowledge expanding: and with it, your senses and your intuitive grasp of the entire natural world and its processes. The more you look, the more you see, the more you know, the more you love.

I am deeply pleased that this book is now available to be heard as well as read. You can try as hard as ever you might, but you still can't write down birdsong. Mee-oo.

Pink, pink. Tu-yu-yu. Pe-pe-pe-pe-pe-pe. Si-si-si.Chirp. These are transcriptions from an old birdbook, and they represent (didn't you guess?) buzzard, blackbird, redshank, meadow pipit, blue tit and (tell me you got the last one right) house sparrow.

If you know the call well, then you know exactly what the writer meant. But that's no help. So I am delighted that along with the words, the listener will also be able to hear the birds themselves: and, I very much hope, be able to tune into the birds in the garden and greet them by name.

For most people, birdsong is a lovely mush, the elevator-music of outdoors, something that people are vaguely aware of without really listening to it. It is a bit like Sir Thomas Beecham's famous remark: 'The English may not like music, but they absolutely love the noise it makes.'

A liking for the music, rather than the mere noise it makes, begins with a learning of the instruments of the orchestra. If you can begin to learn the names of the instruments of the great avian orchestra, then you begin to find the first stirrings of the deeper kind of love: the love for the music rather than the noise. It is not too much to say that one of the great joys of my

life has been my learning of birdsong.

It began for me in the Luangwa valley in Africa, when I met a world-master of birdsong, Baron Robert Stjernstedt, and he taught me about the black-collared barbet's duet and the bird that sings 'three cheers for the BBC' and the bird that makes a call 'like a lost soul falling down the bottomless pit'.

And it carried on when I was researching a book about the RSPB's great Minsmere bird reserve in Suffolk, where I learnt that avocets say kluut, and bitterns go boom and that nightingales explode with a twit twit twit jug jug jug. And as I learnt the names and the instruments and the voices, my love – well, no, it didn't get greater, because how can any love be greater than love at first sight, that gorgeous unstoppable upwelling of feeling,

the instinctive love of the gloriously nameless?

But with the names and the knowing, love becomes not greater but deeper. Knowledge does not spoil a love: knowledge enriches: above all, deepens. This book, and recordings will, I hope, offer the beginnings of knowledge.

It my belief that everybody's life will be enriched by a slightly deeper relationship with the natural world: and the easiest and the best way to cultivate this is by looking at birds and listening to birds with just a little bit more knowledge: because with knowledge, the love becomes that little bit deeper, that little bit more charged with meaning.

Notes by Simon Barnes

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Birds in Classical Music

Farnaby, Giles (c1563–1640) English; WOODY-COCK, keyboard

Kerll, Johann Caspar (1627–1693), German; a CUCKOO CAPRICCIO for keyboard, 1686

Pasquini, Bernardo (1673–1710), Italian; CUCKOO TOCCATA, keyboard

Vivaldi, Antonio (1678–1741); THE FOUR SEASONS, for string ensemble; bird songs, 1725, FLUTE CONCERTO in D Op. 10 No. 3 'Il Gardellino' (The Goldfinch)

Rameau, Jean-Philippe (1683–1764), French; LE RAPPEL DES OISEAUX (the call of the birds); LA POULE (hen), keyboard

Handel, George Frideric (1685–1759) German/English; THE CUCKOO AND THE NIGHTINGALE, organ concerto, 1739

Couperin, Francois (1688–1733), French; LES FAUVETES (warblers) PLAINTIVES, LE ROSSIGNOL EN AMOUR (the nightingale in love), LE ROSSIGNOL VAINQUEUR (the victorious nightingale), keyboard

Daquin, Louis-Claude (1694–1772), French; LE COUCOU, keyboard

Mozart, Leopold (1719–1787), German; SLEIGHRIDE, bird calls, 1756

Haydn, Franz Josef (1732–1809); THE CREATION, bird sounds, 1798, STRING QUARTET in C Op. 33 No. 3 'The Bird', STRING QUARTET in D Op. 64 No. 5 'The Lark'

Beethoven, van Ludwig (1770–1827), German; SYMPHONY NO. 6, 2nd movement; cuckoos, nightingales, and quail, by a brook, 1808

Rossini, Gioachino (1792–1868), Italian; THE THIEVING MAGPIE Overture

Liszt, Franz (1811–1886), Hungarian; SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI PREACHING TO THE BIRDS, organ/piano, 1863

Saint-Saëns, Camille (1835–1921), French; CARNIVAL OF THE ANIMALS, 1886, Cuckoo, Swan and others

Dvorák, Antonin (1841–1904), Czech; AMERICAN QUARTET, third movement inspired by the song of the Scarlet Tanager (composed while Dvorák was visiting the Czech community of Spillville, Iowa, in 1893); THE WILD DOVE, symphonic poem

Grieg, Edvard (1843–1907), Norwegian; LITTLE BIRD from Lyric Pieces Op. 43 No. 4; MORGENSTIMMUNG, Peer Gynt Suite No. 1, bird call in fourth bar, 1875

Mahler, Gustav (1860–1911) Austrian; SYMPHONY NO 1, 1888, and others; cuckoos and nightingales

Delius, Frederick (1862–1934), English; ON HEARING THE FIRST CUCKOO IN SPRING, for small orchestra, 1912

Sibelius, Jean (1865–1957), Finnish; THE SWAN OF TUONELA, 1893

Ravel, Maurice (1875–1937), French; OISEAUX TRISTES, one of five pieces in the cycle 'Miroirs', 1905, for piano

Respighi, Ottorino (1879–1936), Italian; THE BIRDS, 1927, orchestral; THE PINES OF ROME, 1924, first use of an actual bird recording

Prokofiev, Sergei (1881–1953), Russian; PETER AND THE WOLF, 1936

Stravinsky, Igor (1882–1971), Russian; THE FIREBIRD, orchestral, 1919

Villa-Lobos, Heitor (1887–1959), Brazilian; BACHIANAS BRASILEIRAS NO. 4, with the call of the Araponga, or, the Bearded Bellbird, 1930

Vaughan Williams, Ralph (1872–1958), English; THE LARK ASCENDING, orchestral, 1921
Messiaen, Olivier (1908–1992), French; CATALOGUE D'OISSEAUX (1956–8), piano, lengthy work using bird song themes; also chamber and orchestral works (1940s–1980s)

Daetwyler, Jean (1907–1994), Swiss; DIALOGUE AVEC LA NATURE, alphorn concerto, bird portrayed by piccolo

Blank, Allan (born 1925), American; THIRTEEN WAYS OF LOOKING AT A BLACKBIRD, chamber piece (based on the poem by Wallace Stevens), 1965 (Other composers have also been inspired to write music based on this poem.)

Rautavaara, Einojuhani (born 1928), Finnish; CANTUS ARCTICUS, Concerto for Birds and Orchestra, 1972, taped arctic birds

Vasks, Peteris (born 1946), Latvian; LANDSCAPE WITH BIRDS, Flute solo, 1980; STRING QUARTET NO. 2, second movement 'Birds', 1984

Viitanen, Harri (born 1954), Finnish; IMAGES D'OISEAU POUR ORGUE, organ, 1992; THE BLACKBIRD FOR SOLO OBOE, 1999/2001

John Luther Adams (born 1954), American (Alaska); SONGBIRDSONGS, piccolos and percussion, 1974–80; and 2 others

Sorensen, Bent (born 1958), Danish; BIRDS AND BELLS, Trombone Concerto

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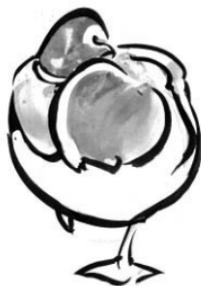
Wren



LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP ROW: Robin, Blackbird, Chaffinch.
MIDDLE ROW: Thrush, Sparrow, Bluetit. BOTTOM ROW: Greenfinch, Nuthatch, Swallow.



Owl



LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP ROW: Swift, Skylark, Kestrel.

MIDDLE ROW: Mallard, Tufted Duck, Canada Goose. BOTTOM ROW: Woodpecker, Jay, Sparrowhawk.



Grebe



LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP ROW: Pheasant, Magpie, Lapwing.
MIDDLE ROW: Wagtail, Cormorant, Oystercatcher. BOTTOM ROW: Tern, Kingfisher, Cuckoo.



Marsh Harrier



LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP ROW: Dunnock, Goldfinch, Yellowhammer.
MIDDLE ROW: Buzzard, Avocet, Bewick's Swan. BOTTOM ROW: Gannet, Bittern, Falcon.

**The music on this recording is taken from
the NAXOS and MARCO POLO catalogues**

| | |
|---|----------|
| HAYDN QUARTET NO 32 IN C MAJOR OP 33 NO 3 Kodály Quartet | 8.550789 |
| VIVALDI THE FOUR SEASONS Capella Istropolitana / Stephen Gunzenhauser | 8.550056 |
| GRIEG PIANO MUSIC VOLUME 8 LYRIC PIECES Einar Steen-Nøkleberg | 8.553394 |
| VAUGHAN WILLIAMS THE LARK ASCENDING David Greed, violin / English Northern Philharmonia / David Lloyd-Jones | 8.553955 |
| PROKOFIEV PETER AND THE WOLF The Duck Czechoslovak Radio Symphony Orchestra / Ondrej Lenárd | 8.550335 |
| SAINT-SAENS CARNIVAL OF THE ANIMALS The Swan Czechoslovak Radio Symphony Orchestra / Ondrej Lenárd | 8.550335 |
| ROSSINI OVERTURES The Thieving Magpie Zagreb Festival Orchestra / Michael Halász | 8.550236 |
| COATES SLEEPY LAGOON Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra / Andrew Penny | 8.223521 |
| VIVALDI FLUTE CONCERTO IN F MAJOR OP 10 NO 5 Béla Drahos / Nicolaus Esterházy Sinfonia | 8.553101 |

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|---|----------|
| SAINT-SAENS CARNIVAL OF THE ANIMALS The Cuckoo Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra / Ondrej Lenárd | 8.554463 |
| SAINT-SAENS CARNIVAL OF THE ANIMALS The Birds Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra / Ondrej Lenárd | 8.554463 |
| LISZT WORKS FOR ORGAN Légende: Saint François d'Assise: la predication aux oiseaux Andreas Rothkopf | 8.554544 |



A bad birdwatcher's companion

SIMON BARNES

Simon Barnes is one of Britain's leading bird writers and humorists. His weekly column in *The Times*, his essays for the RSPB magazine and his two books on bad bird-watching have made him one of the characters of the bird world. Here he reads his own illuminating introductions to the 50 main birds of Britain, supported by the distinguishing bird song of each species. He not only gives helpful identifying features, but enriches them with whimsical observations on their characters and tendencies. It is a delightful text, superbly presented by the author himself.



Simon Barnes, the award-winning chief sportswriter for *The Times* and frequently controversial columnist for the RSPB's *Birds* magazine, is the author of more than a dozen books, including four on wildlife and three novels. His bestselling *How to be a bad birdwatcher* was published by Short Books in 2004. He lives in Suffolk with his family and has seen a barn owl, kingfisher and marsh harrier in his garden.

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