



The dodo and the moa have already disappeared from our world. Could the sparrow or robin be next? Bird populations are declining all over the world – but where have they gone?

Beautifully written and illustrated, The Call of the Birds explores how human activity and climate change are affecting birds, and explains how we can protect future species from disaster.

S raphine Menu & Fleur Oury

The Call of the Birds

The Call of the Birds

How We Can Help Birds Everywhere



post wave



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S raphine Menu & Fleur Oury

For Nic and Bruce, who made it possible for me to write this book surrounded by the birds of New Zealand.

S raphine Menu

For the kingfisher, the robin and for all those that go ‘cheep-cheep’.

Fleur Oury

Published in the UK in 2024 by Post Wave Children’s Books, an imprint of Post Wave Publishing UK Ltd, Runway East, 24–28 Bloomsbury Way, London, WC1A 2SN www.postwavepublishing.com

First edition 2021
Published with permission of Albin Michel Jeunesse
Original title: *O  Sont Pass s Les Oiseaux?*
Written by S raphine Menu and illustrated by Fleur Oury
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www.albin-michel.fr

English translation   Michele Hutchison 2024

A catalogue record of this book is available from the British Library.

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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN 978-1-83627-003-4

Printed in China



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A close-up photograph of a toucan's head, showing its large, multi-colored beak (yellow, orange, and red) and a distinctive red eye with a green pupil. The bird's body is dark brown with some lighter patches on its chest. The background is a textured, mottled green and blue.

FASCINATING BIRDS



Birds have always captivated men and women alike. Their **plumage**, their song and their flight patterns have intrigued scientists as well as artists, farmers and romantics. Mysterious and free, birds were also the inspiration for humankind's craziest project: learning to fly ourselves.

Ever fascinating, birds feature in fairy tales, legends and folklore. Humans even invented a mythological bird – the phoenix – which is the colour of fire, can burst in to flames and then rise again from its own ashes. We also tell children that storks deliver babies!

To this day, bird references form a part of our everyday lives. The owl is a symbol of wisdom, a swallow signifies the arrival of summer and a raven is a bearer of bad news. Someone who is cheerful is said to be 'as happy as a lark', while a person who can't stop talking is 'as talkative as a magpie'.

But birds are more than just the symbolic traits attributed to them. Magpies, for example, are not only ‘talkative’, they are also incredibly sensitive. When one of them dies, they hold a kind of funeral ceremony.



Albatrosses are also sentimental: they remain faithful to the same partner all their lives. Carried by their immense wings, these seabirds fly tens of thousands of kilometres across the oceans, but always return to spend the mating season with their partner.

And what about starlings, who ‘dance’ in the sky? Every evening, as they search for a place to roost, thousands of individuals come together to perform a synchronised dance, possibly to deter any **predators** in the area. These huge swarms of starlings – known as ‘murmurations’ – offer a breathtaking spectacle to those lucky enough to come across them.



Albatrosses and starlings are not the only birds who regularly leave one part of the world for another. Half of the world's feathered population do this. Birds often fly to warmer climes for the winter and return to their original habitats in the spring to breed. This is called migration.

There are many different types of migration: a nightingale travels in stages, with many breaks, while a swallow can travel almost 1,000 kilometres without stopping.



Young wild geese rely on their parents to show them the way, while a cuckoo makes its way alone once it has left the nest.

For **migratory birds**, life in the sky is made up of cycles, of departures and returns, and journeys that end and then begin again. But in recent years, fewer and fewer birds have been returning to the Northern Hemisphere in the spring. The countryside is growing quiet, the forests are deserted and the cities seem populated by just a few different species. So, where have all the birds gone?