

# The Genius of Birds

By Jennifer Ackerman

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## The Genius of Birds By Jennifer Ackerman

Birds are astonishingly intelligent creatures. According to revolutionary new research, some birds rival primates and even humans in their remarkable forms of intelligence.

In *The Genius of Birds*, acclaimed author Jennifer Ackerman explores the newly discovered brilliance of birds. As she travels around the world to the most cutting-edge frontiers of research—the distant laboratories of Barbados and New Caledonia, the great tit communities of the United Kingdom and the bowerbird habitats of Australia, the ravaged mid-Atlantic coast after Hurricane Sandy and the warming mountains of central Virginia and the western states—Ackerman not only tells the story of the recently uncovered genius of birds but also delves deeply into the latest findings about the bird brain itself that are shifting our view of what it means to be intelligent.

Consider, as Ackerman does, the Clark's nutcracker, a bird that can hide as many as 30,000 seeds over dozens of square miles and remember several months later where it put them, or the mockingbirds and thrashers, species that can store 200 to 2,000 different songs in a brain a thousand times smaller than ours.

But beyond highlighting how birds use their unique genius in technical ways, Ackerman points out the impressive social smarts of birds. They deceive and manipulate. They eavesdrop. They give gifts. They kiss to console one another. They blackmail their parents. They alert one another to danger. They summon witnesses to the death of a peer. They may even grieve.

This elegant scientific investigation and travelogue weaves personal anecdotes with fascinating science. Ackerman delivers an extraordinary story that will both give readers a new appreciation for the exceptional talents of birds and let them discover what birds can reveal about our changing world. Richly informative and beautifully written, *The Genius of Birds* celebrates the triumphs of these surprising and fiercely intelligent creatures.

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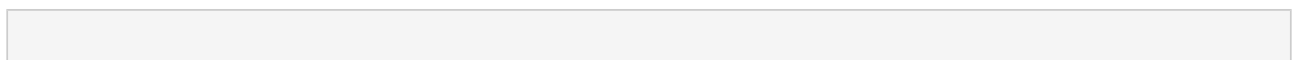
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## Editorial Review

### Review

“[A] gloriously provocative and highly entertaining book. Jennifer Ackerman provides a masterly survey of research in the last two decades that has produced a revolution in our understanding of bird cognition. *The Genius of Birds* [is] important not only for what it says about birds, but also about the human ingenuity entailed in unraveling the mysteries of the avian brain. It is at once a book of knowledge but also a work of wonder and an affirmation of the astonishing complexity of our world.” —*Wall Street Journal*

“Lovely, celebratory. For all the belittling of ‘bird brains,’ [Ackerman] shows them to be uniquely impressive machines...” —*New York Times Book Review*

“Richly researched... *The Genius of Birds* provides engrossing evidence that will have readers looking at birds in a completely new way.” —*The Daily Progress*

“A lyrical testimony to the wonders of avian intelligence.” —*Scientific American*

“Ackerman is a pro at parsing scientific concepts in an accessible style, and her lyrical writing underscores her appreciation for the beauty and adaptability of birds.” —*BookPage*

“Ackerman writes with a light but assured touch, her prose rich in fact but economical in delivering it. Fans of birds in all their diversity will want to read this one.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

“Ackerman offers plenty of interesting tidbits and backs them up with the relevant history or science, using footnotes to avoid cluttering the text with anything that might slow a reader down. This is one of those terrific books that makes a scientific topic fun without dumbing it down.” —*Washington Independent Review of Books*

“I love birds; always have. The only thing better than love is love plus deep appreciation. *The Genius of Birds* is a journey of deep appreciation for the beautiful geniuses all around us, in our gardens, sharing our air, and sharing more of our minds than we might have expected.”

—Carl Safina, author of *Beyond Words: What Animals Think and Feel*

“Delightful, revolutionary, and illuminated by the clean, curious gaze of an intelligent seeker, *The Genius of Birds* is fueled by awe and always, its close cousin, deep respect for the condition of life. It’s a book that demands a moral consideration of the world.”

—Rick Bass, author of *The Ninemile Wolves* and *For A Little While: New and Selected Stories*

### About the Author

JENNIFER ACKERMAN has been writing about science, nature, and human biology for almost three decades. Her most recent books include *Sex Sleep Eat Drink Dream: A Day in the Life of Your Body*; *Ah-Choo: The Uncommon Life of Your Common Cold*; *Chance in the House of Fate: A Natural History of Heredity*; and *Notes from the Shore*. A contributor to *Scientific American*, *National Geographic*, *The New York Times*, and many other publications, Ackerman is the recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Literature Fellowship in Nonfiction, a Bunting Fellowship, and a grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Bruce Crawford:**

Book is to be different for each grade. Book for children until finally adult are different content. To be sure that book is very important for people. The book The Genius of Birds ended up being making you to know about other knowledge and of course you can take more information. It is quite advantages for you. The publication The Genius of Birds is not only giving you considerably more new information but also being your friend when you truly feel bored. You can spend your personal spend time to read your reserve. Try to make relationship using the book The Genius of Birds. You never sense lose out for everything in the event you read some books.

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#### **Bessie Scudder:**

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