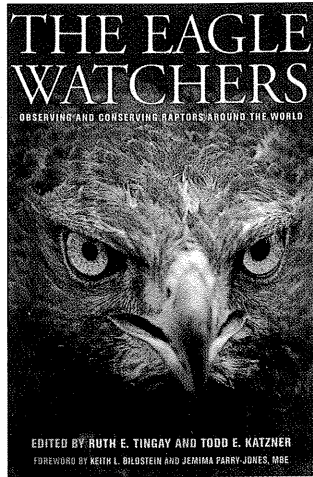


**A zeal for watching birds**

On the heels of her bestselling *The Good Good Pig*, Sy Montgomery turns her keen attention to birds. Hens, crows, parrots, rehabilitated hummingbirds, and an elusive cassowary in Australia are among her subjects. Each story supports her premise that watching birds “strengthens our souls.” Amen.



**Privileged views of eagles**

In short essays, 29 field biologists describe their efforts to study and protect eagle species around the world. They share harrowing experiences involving secret police, a tribal death march, and the Khmer Rouge. Best of all, they allow us to encounter young eagles, hidden nests, and master avian hunters.

“I heard the cry of a white-tailed deer fawn, which had earlier escaped my notice. The fawn’s mother ran toward her young but hesitated as soon as she saw the large eagle.”

— Janeene Touchton, from her essay about the Harpy Eagle in *The Eagle Watchers*

**An Ivory-bill hunter explores bird coloration**



Ornithologist Geoffrey Hill of Auburn University wrote for us in February 2007 about searching for Ivory-billed Woodpeckers along the Choctawhatchee River in Florida. In his new book, he describes what you need to know about the colors of birds. He spoke recently with Associate Editor Matt Mendenhall. Read the full interview on [BirdersWorld.com](http://BirdersWorld.com).

**So tell me, for someone who has never heard of Geoffrey Hill, why are you qualified to write this? What’s your background?**

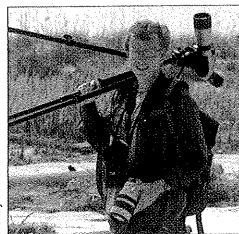
My whole professional life I’ve been focused on the colors of birds, and I’ve worked on a broad range of topics in bird coloration: mate choice and dominance, crypsis and how it affects survival, structural colors — the blues and greens — and lots of research on carotenoid colors and melanin pigmentation. I helped create the literature. I read the literature. I know what’s going on in this field as well as anyone. There are probably 20 individuals in the world for whom this is the main topic of study... and could have written this book.

**What will a birder learn from your book? How will it help us understand birds better?**

I think it will help on at least two levels. First, I hope it satisfies a level of curiosity. Lots of questions arise as you look at birds. What’s the difference between a morph and a color variant? I explain that in my book.

The second thing is that you could learn to interpret colors more cautiously. For instance, I talk a lot about variable carotenoid pigmentation because it’s subject to changing with levels of parasites and nutrition and access to pigments. So that means that if you’re basing an identification solely on a yellow or red color trait, which is likely to be a carotenoid color, you should think twice about that.

The question you should always ask is: Is it more likely that this bird had problems with its carotenoid expression, or is it more likely this bird flew from Japan to North America?... It may have flown from Japan, but before you jump to that conclusion, you should think, “Well, this could just be a color aberration caused by these things described in the book.”



**COLORFUL:** Geoffrey Hill understands the colors of birds as well as anyone.