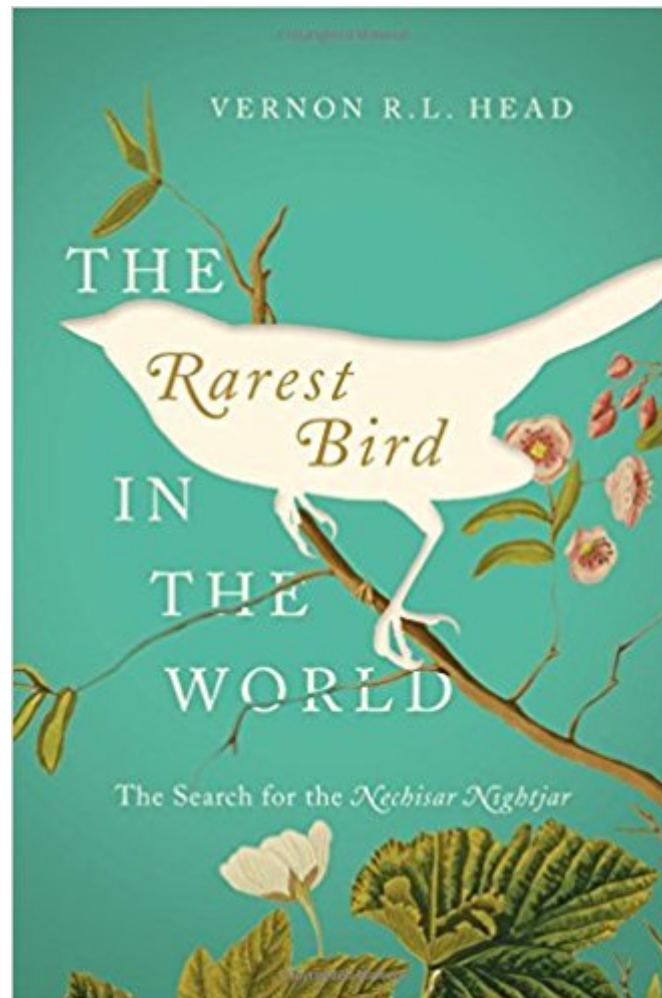




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The Rarest Bird In The World: The Search For The Nechisar Nightjar



Synopsis

Part detective story, part love affair, and pure adventure storytelling at its best, a celebration of the thrill of exploration and the lure of wild places during the search for the elusive Nechisar Nightjar. In 1990, a group of Cambridge scientists arrived at the Plains of Nechisar in Ethiopia. On that expedition, they collected more than two dozen specimens, saw more than three hundred species of birds, and a plethora of rare butterflies, dragonflies, reptiles, mammals, and plants. As they were gathering up their findings, a wing of an unidentified bird was packed into a brown paper bag. It was to become the most famous wing in the world. This wing would set the world of science aflutter. Experts were mystified. The wing was entirely unique. It was like nothing they had ever seen before. Could a new species be named based on just one wing? After much discussion, a new species was announced: Nechisar Nightjar, or *Camprimulgus Solala*, which means "only wing." And so birdwatchers like Vernon began to dream. Twenty-two years later, he joins an expedition of four to find this rarest bird in the world. In this gem of nature writing, Vernon captivates and enchants as he recounts the searches by spotlight through the Ethiopian plains, and allows the reader to mediate on nature, exploration, our need for wild places, and the human compulsion to name things. *Rarest Bird* is a celebration of a certain way of seeing the world, and will bring out the explorer in everyone who reads it.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“Head writes evocatively, making it easy for the reader to virtually smell the dust and hear

the sounds. Head writes of his passion for birding and his love of pristine environments. Read and enjoy. — African Birdlife — “Mr. Head’s gently rocking prose is dense with surprising metaphor and exquisitely descriptive phrases, the kind that make a reader double back to savor them twice. Within a few lines, you know you’re in for a Nabokovian ride. The seekers find their nightjar. More study is needed. But it hardly matters; the search and Vernon Head’s telling are more than satisfying enough. — Wall Street Journal — “Head recounts his journey with reverence and exuberance. His enthusiasm for his subject is contagious. Head memorably demonstrates that bird-watching is more than just a hobby, offering an almost magical way to allow flesh-and-blood fantasies to take flight. — Booklist — “Head is a keen observer. He makes clear the excitement of the chase and the motivations that drive birdwatchers to add names to their life lists, and his love for and appreciation of the natural world are unmistakable. — Kirkus Reviews — “The skills involved in spotting rare species approaches magic, even as it references science. This combination of reverence and scientific history is attractive as both a work of literature and an illumination. The Rarest Bird in the World is an alluring view into birdwatching and multiple rarities. — Shelf Awareness (starred) — “A pean to the pristine. Think Rider Haggard or Indiana Jones with birds. Accomplished, vivid, lyrical prose that is full of wonderment. — The Sunday Times (South Africa) — “Head’s language is laudatory, his tone elegiac. His search for an elusive bird opens up his past and reveals a contagious curiosity and passion about nature. — Publishers Weekly — “A lyrically written adventure story. An adrenaline rush. — The Financial Mail (South Africa) — “Recommended for those interested in natural history, exploration, and Africa. — Library Journal

Vernon R.L. Head was born in Cape Town, South Africa. He is an award winning architecture and the Chairman of BirdLife South Africa, one of Africa’s biggest and most influential conservation organizations. When not working on environmental matters, he is either designing special buildings or traveling the world looking for the rare birds. This is his first book.

The bk was a gift for my birder wife. She rated it 2, "really purple prose" - but she wants to give it a 5 as well because the prose reminded her of our trips to Africa. She got out a few bird guides and spent some happy hours remembering the birds we saw!

I purchased this book because of a review in the "Wall Street Journal." I love reading a book that I

can't put down. The beauty of the writing grabbed my attention at the beginning, but it didn't demand my attention throughout. Perhaps, it became too ethereal for me. To be fair, I have to confess that I am not a "birder."

If you like multiple metaphors, hyperbole, and lack of action on every page, this book's for you. I struggled to turn each page because the reading was painful, and I could not get past page 80.

An excellent read for any birder or reader interested in the natural world. Beautiful, poetic prose invites re-reading and writing out quotes to savor.

Loved this true saga where I became a participant --

I love reading of pros writing about their expertise. I would have enjoyed more in depth information on the bird, habits that make it unique, nest construction, who keeps the eggs warm, how do they protect the fledgling. Still, an admirable study. Larry Benz

Thanks

I will begrudgingly give this a 2 only because the last two chapters actually are worth reading. The remainder of the chapters go off on meandering tangents that have little, if anything at all, to do with the subject matter. The author seems rather proud of his ability to use excessive & completely unnecessary adjectives & adverbs in every sentence to the point that all meaning is lost. And sometimes they (sentences) are just ridiculous: "We were on a cattle path now, a path of many cows". His chapter names seldom have anything to do with the chapter contents. Basically, this is a 10 page article crammed into a 244 page book.

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