

KUNG PAO POWER | FIGHTING ALIENS | TOURING HIGH-TECH HELL | THE BEE TEAM

Audubon

May-June 2008

SINK *or* SWIM
ANOTHER ASSAULT
on the ARCTIC
AND HOW YOU CAN
HELP STOP IT

{ AND KEEP THIS POLAR BEAR AFLOAT }



66 Habitat/Polar Distress

With its time running out, the Bush administration seems determined to drill for oil and gas wherever possible. The latest target: the Chukchi Sea, off northern Alaska. Could drilling in this fragile environment be enough to push polar bears, walrus, and other wildlife over the edge?

By Daniel Glick

76 Pollinators/Plan Bee

Our food system, based largely on the pollinating power of honeybees, is under siege. Now, as the crisis deepens and scientists seek answers, native bees are buzzing into the breach. First, though, they need a little help from us.

By Ted O'Callahan/Photography by Dan Winters

84 Photo Essay/The Spectacle of Wings

A photographer combines the knowledge of a scientist, the eye of an artist, and the passion of an activist to present wading birds in a beautiful and compelling new way.

By Rosalie Winard/Text by Terry Tempest Williams

90 Technology/Trashed

As our computers, printers, cell phones, and televisions are made obsolete by their faster and more powerful descendants, they're tossed, dumped, and discarded, usually without regard for the poisons they contain.

A writer goes to the ends of the earth to trace the dark side of the world's love affair with technology.

By Ellen Ruppel Shell/Photography by Peter Essick

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND



The Nature of Anne

No one needs an excuse to visit Prince Edward Island, but many people are particularly excited about planning a trip this year due to the centenary of the beloved book "Anne of Green Gables." Any naturalists swept up in the excitement by family or friends will be glad they came along for the ride. There is abundant nature to explore while joining in the Island's revels.



Rosalie Winard

After pursuing a career as a photojournalist, 12 years ago Rosalie Winard ("The Spectacle of Wings") returned with camera in hand to her first love: birdlife. "The tenacity of birds, in spite of unremitting environmental insults, is staggering and inspiring," she says—a sentiment reflected by her new book, *Wild Birds of the American Wetlands*. Winard's avian images will also be on display at the Utah Museum of Natural History in Salt Lake City starting in November.

mile-long Homestead Trail, leading from the Cavendish Campground, traversing forests and fields along New London Bay. Seek out endangered piping plovers, which nest on the park's numerous beaches. Or explore further afield by bicycle or foot on portions of the 220-mile-long Confederation Trail. Wherever you experience the "Gentle Island's" history and culture, nature is always nearby.

Contact Tourism PEI for free maps, travel guides, and checklist.



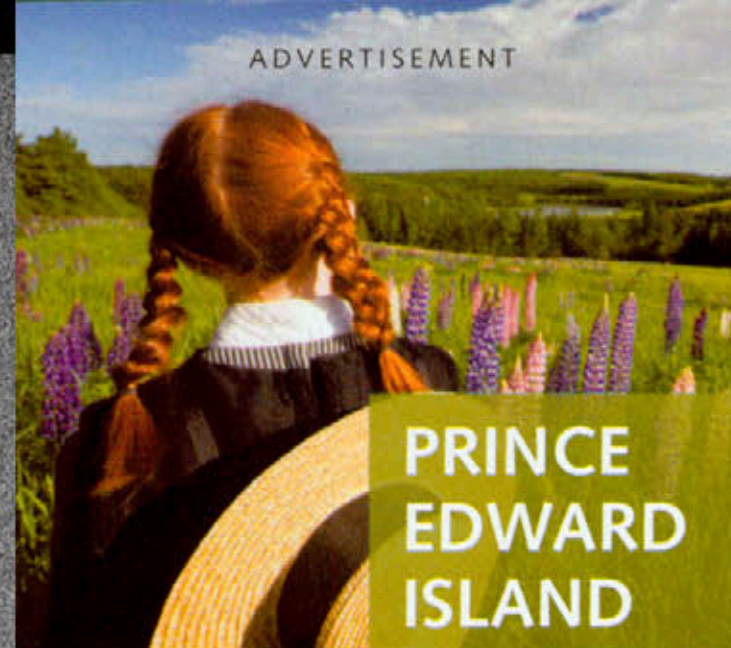
The Gentle Island

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On the cover: As oil and gas interests set their sights on the offshore Arctic, will wildlife, including this polar bear, have anywhere to go? Photo by Steven Kaslowski/Left Eye Pro. **This page:** A snowy egret. Photo by Rosalie Winard.

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Contributors



Peter Essick

While tracking electronic waste, Peter Essick ("Trashed") discovered that where computers are used and where they're thrown away can be continents apart. "I saw a laptop from a school in Illinois at a market in Pakistan, and inkjet printers in Ghana," he says. Recycling electronics "will save a lot of resources and also protect workers in developing countries from toxic exposures." A regular contributor to *National Geographic*, his work also appeared in *An Inconvenient Truth*.



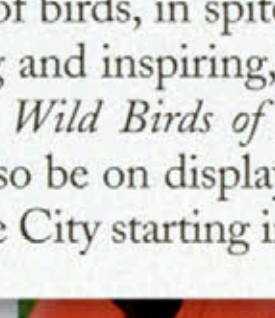
Ted Levin

"Rattlesnakes are a vestige of wild Vermont, subtle and dangerous," says Ted Levin ("Ambush")—though not so dangerous that he won't take his 12-year-old son with him on hikes. "Rattlesnakes are also wonderfully predictable," he adds. "What they need is a new PR team." Levin, a frequent *Audubon* contributor, also writes for *OnEarth* and *Sports Illustrated*. He won the 2004 Burroughs Medal for his fourth book, *Liquid Land: A Journey Through the Florida Everglades*.



Mike Reagan

Since childhood Mike Reagan ("Polar Distress") has daydreamed about the exotic surfaces of maps and charts. "My first concern is watercolor maps are geographically accurate," he says. "Just as much to me that they capture the mystical place names like Timbuktu or the Hindu Kush." Reagan can be seen in numerous other publications, including *National Geographic*, *Smithsonian*, and *The New Yorker*.



Kurt Repanshek

Kurt Repanshek ("Desert Gem"), the West's remote landscapes by ideas. "Although much of southern Utah is high desert, the Wash Sand Dunes still seemed like an anomaly in the desert. They serve as gigantic planters for thirsty cottonwoods and junipers. "Humans have been congregating in the dunes and on the sandstone cliffs for millennia." Besides *Audubon*, his work has appeared in *Smithsonian* and *National Geographic Traveler*.



Rosalie Winard

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Dan Winters

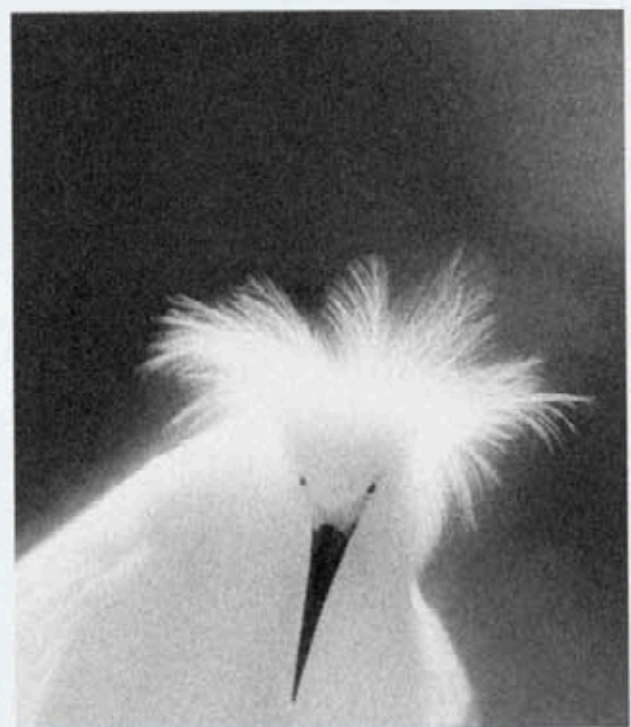
Dan Winters ("Plan Bee") leads a charmed life—where bees are concerned. As a teen he tended dozens of hives and was once enlisted to remove a swarm from the tailpipe of a car. "I can talk to any entomologist all day long about bees," he says. Known for his scientific photography as well as his celebrity portraiture, Winters contributes regularly to multiple magazines, including *The New Yorker* and *Esquire*. He is a recipient of the Alfred Eisenstadt Award for Magazine Photography.

{The Spectacle of Wings} In the newly released book *Wild Birds of the American Wetlands*,

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROSALIE WINARD captures the ethereal beauty of wading birds with the flair of a painter and the passion of an activist. TEXT BY TERRY TEMPEST WILLIAMS

Photo Essay





With a camera in hand and a heart as wide as the country she is seeking, Rosalie Winard has migrated in and out of America's wetlands in search of her beloved long-legged birds. By now, after almost a decade of focusing on avian primitives—pelicans, herons, egrets, avocets, stilts, storks, ibises, and cranes—she is perhaps more bird than human.

If there was a conference of wings in the wetlands of Great Salt Lake, Rosalie was there. When the sandhill cranes touched down on the Platte River once again in the spring in Nebraska, Rosalie was lying on her back in the prairie, looking upward at nine million years of perfection. And when the wetlands of the Bolsa Chica were rejoined with the Pacific Ocean in a free-flow exchange, Rosalie was present to both document and celebrate the occasion with local activists, who never stopped believing in the power of restoration.

Through the act of witnessing these fragile, enduring

birds of America's wetlands, she refuses to let their noble and imperiled lives remain hidden. Each image is a reckoning with the Other. Only an artist who recognizes the redemption of the wild as it crosses and clashes with culture could create such an evocative and disturbing tension: absence and presence, at once.

These are shadowed days for North American wetlands and the myriads of shorebirds that inhabit them. Rich waters are being dredged, drained, filled, and developed at record rates. Millions of acres of wetlands have been lost.

What if we quieted ourselves long enough to listen to the collective wingbeats of avocets and stilts flying across Great Salt Lake?

What if we were able to locate a stillness so sweet and sublime we could hear the prehistoric cries of sandhill cranes rolling across the prairies like thunder?

What if we agreed for one short moment to suspend

Employing her background in natural history and documentary filmmaking, Rosalie Winard chronicles not only the transcendental likenesses of her subjects but also her own consciousness. The supple smudge of a great blue heron (previous pages) is her forlorn memorial to a young bird floundering in Utah's Farmington Bay. There she also encountered a lithe American avocet and its flawless reflection (opposite top). "Wow, that's it," she remembers thinking when she first saw the proof. "It's just glowing. You actually feel like you're in the water." Rarely does she realize so quickly a photograph's idyllic qualities. Only years after capturing the image of two sandhill cranes silhouetted against a wispy cloud in Nebraska's Platte River Valley (above) did she discern its charm. The "bad-hair day" of a "non-conformist" snowy egret (opposite bottom), on the other hand, was an instant favorite.



all manner of mechanical noises: cars, planes, trains, ships, motors of any kind; factories, whistles, horns, bells; even radios, iPods, televisions, and cell phones? And we simply made a vow that for one moment on the planet we would try to quiet ourselves long enough to partake of the natural rhythms of the earth and listen?

What would we hear?

Avian exuberance. The spectacle of wings. The whistling of wings cooling the planet. Our own primal longing lodged deep in our DNA released, revived, restored—we are part of the great breathing heart of beauty.

We remember what we have forgotten. All life is intertwined.

It is in our shimmering wetlands that sparkle and sing that our avian primitives make their stand. Who cannot hear their brackish calls or croaks or murky voices seeping out of the swamps and marshes and

not be moved by a presence so much older than ours? Their lineage is linked to dinosaurs. Do they see us as a passing evolutionary disturbance, an aggressive fad, or partners in a dynamic world? There are those who say birds have no thought, only instinct. But if instinct is the cornerstone of survival, then we have much to learn from their primal stance in contemporary times and what it means to adapt graciously in a changing world.

When I asked Rosalie what she has learned in a decade of working with these avian primitives, her response was immediate: “The resiliency of nature. That against all odds, these long-legged birds survive.”

This is Rosalie Winard’s greatest gift to us as a fine art photographer, an avian artist. She has created a portfolio of hope. She has taken her artistry and put it in the service of her heart. ■

Winard uses infrared film, which produces an effect reminiscent of a charcoal drawing—grainy textures and finely contrasted tones of gray, black, and white. But this film also requires special care because she can load it only in the darkness of a protective bag. That’s no mean feat while balancing in a canoe. Paired with this distinctive tool, her discerning eye engenders portraits that can seem at once playful and earnest. Shown here: Sandhill cranes (opposite top) suspended in midair over the Platte, as if they’re floating to the ground with parachutes; a singleton sandhill (opposite bottom) feeding ever so elegantly with crossed legs; and a roseate spoonbill (above) soaring over Louisiana’s Lake Martin.

Excerpted from *Wild Birds of the American Wetlands*, published in March by Welcome Books. Photographs copyright © 2008 by Rosalie Winard; essay copyright © 2008 by Terry Tempest Williams. All rights reserved.