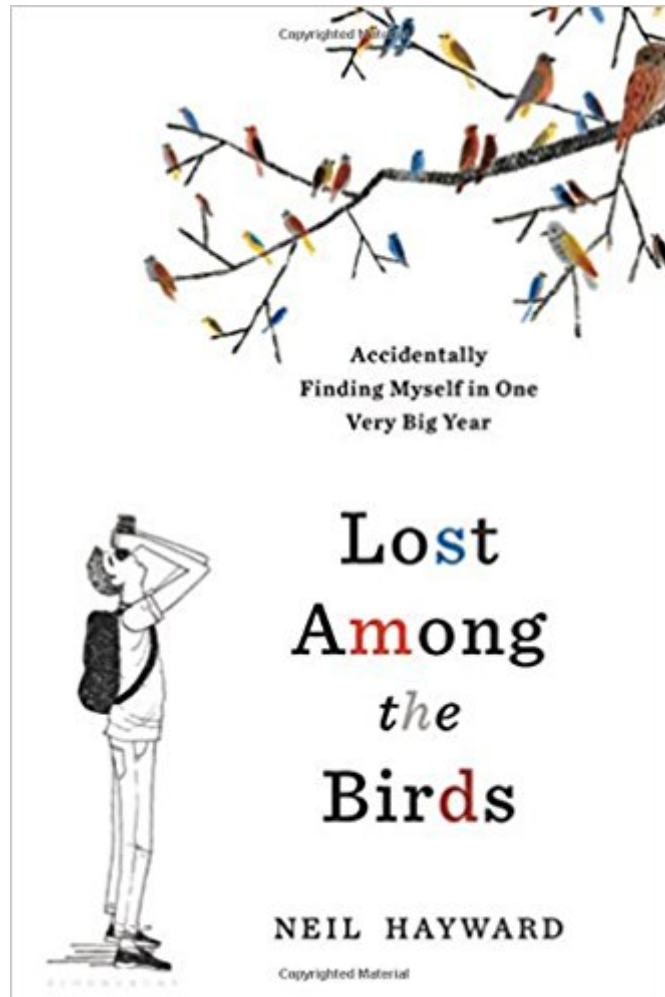


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# Lost Among The Birds: Accidentally Finding Myself In One Very Big Year



## Synopsis

Early in 2013 Neil Hayward was at a crossroads. He didn't want to open a bakery or whatever else executives do when they quit a lucrative but unfulfilling job. He didn't want to think about his failed relationship with "the one" or his potential for ruining a new relationship with "the next one." And he almost certainly didn't want to think about turning forty. And so instead he went birding. Birding was a lifelong passion. It was only among the birds that Neil found a calm that had eluded him in the confusing world of humans. But this time he also found competition. His growing list of species reluctantly catapulted him into a Big Year--a race to find the most birds in one year. His peregrinations across twenty-eight states and six provinces in search of exotic species took him to a hoarfrost-covered forest in Massachusetts to find a Fieldfare; to Lake Havasu, Arizona, to see a rare Nutting's Flycatcher; and to Vancouver for the Red-flanked Bluetail. Neil's Big Year was as unplanned as it was accidental: It was the perfect distraction to life. Neil shocked the birding world by finding 749 species of bird and breaking the long-standing Big Year record. He also surprised himself: During his time among the hummingbirds, tanagers, and boobies, he found a renewed sense of confidence and hope about the world and his place in it.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This charming book defies simple description. On one hand, it is a tale of adventure and discovery, spanning North America from balmy Key West, Florida to the frigid waters of the Bering Sea off of northwest Alaska. Hayward chases birds, common and rare, for the better part of a year up

mountains, across deserts, deep into spruce bogs, and even around sewage treatment ponds. On the other hand, it is a personal narrative of one man's mid-life crisis, and his wandering search for meaning and redemption. The pacing is quick, the characters are vivid, and the story is often laugh-out-loud funny. Interspersed among the action are the author's reflections on nature, life, and the complicated relationship that humans have both with the natural world and with each other. Birders will appreciate reading about familiar haunts and exotic locations, and the avifauna that frequents them. Everyone else will appreciate the artful writing, abundant humor, and thoughtful musings about nature and life.

This is a great book on many levels. The stories are engaging and interesting - I felt like I was there sharing in the thrill of new discoveries or the disappointment of those missed. It also is a very personal story and allows the reader to get to know the author on a deeper level and, perhaps, to relate to the author more. Overall, an interesting and entertaining book. My only complaint is that I would have liked more - more anecdotes about places visited and birds seen and more follow up - how did the author answer the many life questions that arose during this year...I highly recommend this book!

This is a beautifully written book that will appeal to many readers. Neil Hayward not only takes you through his travel adventures on a quest to see as many birds in North America in one year, but he also opens up about his personal struggles and the journey of healing. This is not only a book about birds. It is a travel book and a personal memoir. Neil Hayward melds these major topics seamlessly and in poetic fashion. If you are or are not a bird lover, you will delight in Neil's exploits as well as his colorful descriptions. "Lost Among the Birds" offers humorous views on life, culture, and human relationships. I would highly recommend this book! It is thoughtful and wonderfully written.

This book is about birds, sure, but it is even more about life and how finding happiness is never as straightforward as we think it should be. Neil's writing is as gorgeous as the birds he describes along the way, and it is difficult to put this book down for very long. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this story of a quite amazing (if a bit insane) accomplishment.

I loved this book. Reading the details of Neil's big year was fun, but I couldn't help wondering how much money he spent. Obviously, someone has to be pretty flush financially to pull this off. I was happy for him, such an amazing accomplishment.

One of the most daunting challenges a person who enjoys watching and traveling to see birds can undertake is an American Birding Association Area Big Year. It involves identifying as many bird species as one can in North America north of the Mexican border in a single calendar year. Based solely on the honor system, it tests a person's identification skills, planning skills, stamina, and resources. It also involves being on the road the majority of the year as one travels to all parts of North America. It is not something that is done casually. This book, on one level, is the story of Neil Hayward's record setting 2013 big year. That year he identified 749 species of birds in the ABA area breaking a long standing mark. Neil's record still stands. But there is a second level to this book that takes it beyond a "went there, saw that" book. It is the story of Neil's personal journey during those 12 months. He started the year as one person and ended the year as a changed person. Neil confronted who he was and what he wanted out of life. He shares with us this very personal journey of discovery that occurred while he traveled the continent. While he was "Lost Among the Birds" he found himself. This book is strongly recommended for both members of the birding community and the general population. Read it and you will be fascinated.

Interesting to follow Neil Hayward on his Big Year which didn't even start intentionally. The book is also about his depression and fear of commitment. Fortunately he works this out as well as having a big year. I found the book an enjoyable read.

A nice finding of himself helped by the Birds, sometimes a little disappointing in the descriptions of heart affairs, really adolescent problems in an aged man. Interesting the Big Year description with many anecdotes and informations

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