



The Carolina Parakeet: Glimpses of a Vanished Bird

Noel F. R. Snyder

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This book provides the first comprehensive account of the biology of one of North America's most enigmatic and colorful wildlife species, the Carolina Parakeet. The only parrot endemic to the United States, this species once ranged in large, noisy flocks from Florida to New York, and as far west as Colorado. But although it was still widespread and common during the time of John James Audubon (whose illustration of the species is perhaps his finest work), the parakeet was gone completely by the mid-twentieth century.

Through analyses of historical accounts and presentation of considerable new information gleaned from interviewing senior citizens with firsthand knowledge of the species, Noel Snyder develops an intriguing portrait of the parakeet that challenges long-held assumptions.

Although it has long been believed that the Carolina Parakeet was exterminated largely by shooting, Snyder argues that exotic diseases may have figured more heavily in its final disappearance. He also presents evidence that the parakeet lasted far longer into the twentieth century than generally believed, and that it may have been toxic and distasteful to predators by virtue of its frequent consumption of the cocklebur--a plant highly poisonous to many other vertebrates. Snyder proposes avenues of research that could help resolve some of the enduring mysteries about this fascinating bird, and he discusses the significance of its extinction for wildlife conservation in general.

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