

Rare Bird: Pursuing the Mystery of the Marbled Murrelet (Hardback)



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Reviews

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(Shayne O'Conner)

RARE BIRD: PURSUING THE MYSTERY OF THE MARBLED MURRELET (HARDBACK)

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Rodale Books, United States, 2005. Hardback. Book Condition: New. 229 x 140 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. Part naturalist detective story, part environmental inquiry, this vibrant narrative celebrates the fascinating world of an endangered seabird that depends on the contested old-growth forests of the Pacific Northwest for its survival. This chunky little seabird stole my heart. So confesses Maria Mudd Ruth, a veteran nature writer perfectly happy to be a generalist before getting swept up in the strange story of the marbled murrelet. This curiosity of nature, who flies like a little brown bullet at up to 100 miles an hour and lives most of its life offshore, is seen around land only during breeding season, when the female lays a single egg high on a mossy tree limb in the ancient coastal forest. Ruth traces reports of the bird back to Captain Cook's ill-fated voyage of discovery on the Pacific Ocean in 1778, and explores the mind-set of 19th- and 20th-century naturalists who--despite their best efforts--failed to piece together clues about the whereabouts of the bird's nest. She takes the reader along on adventurous outings to coastal meadows before dawn, and onto the ocean at midnight to learn firsthand how scientists observe nature. She interviews all the major players in the drama: timber company executives and fishing fleet operators whose businesses are threatened by conservation measures, as well as the so-called cowboy scientists who are devoted to saving the marbled murrelet from extinction. And, ultimately, Ruth conveys her curiosity and passion for this rare bird onto the page for readers to savor.



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