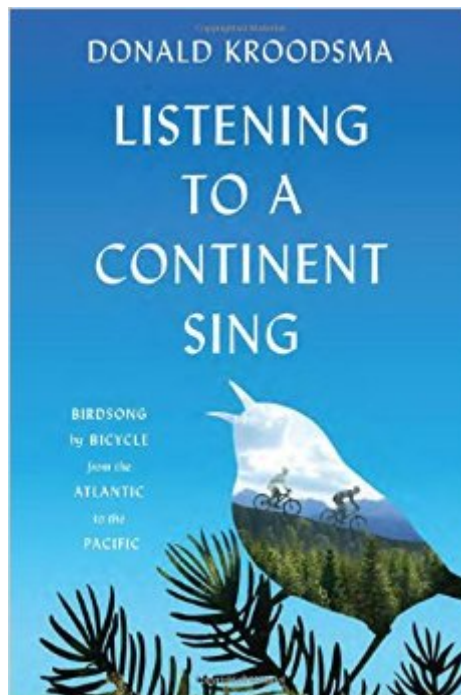


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# Listening To A Continent Sing: Birdsong By Bicycle From The Atlantic To The Pacific



## Synopsis

Join birdsong expert Donald Kroodsmas on a ten-week, ten-state bicycle journey as he travels with his son from the Atlantic to the Pacific, lingering and listening to our continent sing as no one has before. On remote country roads, over terrain vast and spectacular, from dawn to dusk and sometimes through the night, you will gain a deep appreciation for the natural symphony of birdsong many of us take for granted. Come along and marvel at how expressive these creatures are as Kroodsmas leads you west across nearly five thousand miles--at a leisurely pace that enables a deep listen. Listening to a Continent Sing is also a guided tour through the history of a young nation and the geology of an ancient landscape, and an invitation to set aside the bustle of everyday life to follow one's dreams. It is a celebration of flowers and trees, rocks and rivers, mountains and prairies, clouds and sky, headwinds and calm, and of local voices and the people you will meet along the way. It is also the story of a father and son deepening their bond as they travel the slow road together from coast to coast. Beautifully illustrated throughout with drawings of birds and scenes and featuring QR codes that link to audio birdsong, this poignant and insightful book takes you on a travel adventure unlike any other--accompanied on every leg of your journey by birdsong.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is a comprehensive book. Topics include history, geology, parent-child relationships, and yes...birdsong. Father and son bike across the United States, east to west. The rigors of the trip are enormous. The father is dedicated to studying, to becoming intimate with birdsong--how the patterns change throughout the day and why. Even the drawings of birds are extensive and detailed. It is

important to note that the author is a birder who recognizes birds primarily by their songs, rather by sight. He rarely takes out his binoculars. This is a book to travel with over a lifetime. As a beginning birder, I found the information overwhelming, like trying to bicycle across the country in a few days. But I know it is there, waiting to guide me as I learn more about birds. For an experienced birder, this book would be a joy.

Don Kroodsma is an authority on bird song, well known as the author of popular books on the subject such as *The Singing Life Of Birds: The Art And Science Of Listening To Birdsong* and *Birdsong by the Seasons: A Year of Listening to Birds*. This chronicle of Don and David Kroodsma's ten week bicycle journey coast-to-coast across the USA gives an expert's insight into the rich variety of bird song across the continent: it is a travelogue, a celebration of nature, and a wonderful appreciation of bird song. As a travel diary, it is an easy read, but for those eager to take it further, it serves as an introduction to learning bird song: the QR codes sprinkled throughout link to 381 recordings that really bring the trip to life and are a great way for the reader to gain familiarity with some of North America's finest songsters. A handful of recordings represent an audio archive documenting some of the colorful characters that the cyclists met en route and their relationship with birds: store owner Charles Haupt on his Purple Martins in Charles City, Virginia, bubbly Park Naturalist Terry Owens on the avian delights of Breaks Interstate Park, far western Virginia, or Rev. James R. Love on his local birds (maintaining that birds sing because they are happy) in Eastview, Kentucky. For a taste of what is in store in the book, listen to Elizabeth Arnold's 2005 NPR interview "Searching Out 'The Singing Life of Birds'", easily found on the NPR website - the author's same sense of wonder, curiosity and scientific rigor are qualities that infuse the current book. "Listening to a Continent Sing" will be enjoyed by anyone with an interest in the outdoors, by cyclists (David Kroodsma is himself an experienced cyclist and author of *The Bicycle Diaries*), and above all by birders. It could easily turn out to be one of the best popular bird books of the year. Chris Sharpe, 30 May 2016. ISBN-13: 9780691166810

A great book for birders, cyclists and other adventures, or really anyone who appreciates nature and a good story. The book itself is beautiful and the companion website alone is a great resource. As a bike-rider and traveler, I really enjoy the story of the bike tour. I know little about birds and their songs but thanks to Kroodsma, am quickly learning.

I love this book, for all the reasons that the "editorial reviews" up above say, but there's so much

more. I love the conversations with people along the way, especially across Appalachia where the dialects in human voices change as much as the dialects in bird voices, and I can listen in on everything, as if I were accompanying the author myself, by going to the website for the book. I especially enjoyed listening to Charles Haupt in Charles City, Virginia, tell about his purple martins, and hillbilly Mary Lou Napier telling about her birds around the campfire in Buckhorn State Park, Kentucky, or the Rev. James Love in Eastview, Kentucky, telling why his mockingbird sings all night long (they're "happy"). I love the dogs in Kentucky; the friendly people of Kansas. The geology of this US of A from the Atlantic to the Pacific is extraordinary. My favorite chapters are "Caterpillars Marching" (Basin and Range), "Into the Fire" (Yellowstone), "Ascending into Oregon," and "Geological Chaos" (I had no idea that most of Oregon was added to North America by scraping islands off the Pacific tectonic plate as it slid under North America). The book contains fine history lessons, too, beginning where the country was born at the end of the Revolution in Yorktown, Virginia, through Civil War battlefields, to the Oregon Trail, biking with Lewis & Clark, commiserating with Chief Joseph and the Nez Perz. And there's the father-son relationship throughout, often needing a little adjustment, as the father (author) loves to bike early in the morning, while the son (David) loves to sleep in and bike late in the day. And BIRDSONG! Wow, I have been a birder for decades, but now I listen to birds with an entirely new ear. I will never listen to the most common birds in the same way again. I'm hooked on listening to robins, red-eyed vireos, mockingbirds, well, for that matter, any bird that opens its bill to say something. And in the book there's listening to dogs, geysers, wind, rain, sleet, the simple sound of tires on pavement, the sound of labored breathing on an uphill. Our lives are an aural feast, if only we slow down to listen! Go to the website ([listeningtoacontinentsing.com](http://listeningtoacontinentsing.com)) and listen to your favorite birds, or your favorite location along the ten-state journey. I especially love listening to the "dawn chorus" section of the website, where I can hear birds awake in dawn singing as I sweep across the country. A very special book, one of a kind. Ten stars in my book!

Great book

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