

Bird Sense: What It's Like to Be a Bird by Tim Birkhead  
with illustrations by Katrina van Grouw.  
Bloomsbury, 2012.

Most people, I would aver, at one point or another in their lives, wonder what it would be like to be able to fly like a bird, though flying is but one of the aspects that make birds such objects of fascination.

In *Bird Sense*, the eminent scientist and lifelong bird watcher, Professor Tim Birkhead readers are taken inside the avian mind and the avian body. Divided into seven chapters – Seeing, Hearing, Touch, Taste, Smell, Magnetic Sense, Emotions – *Bird Sense* is a tour of the bird world, exemplified by a variety of birds from all parts of the globe. Each chapter is full of data and analysis, both contemporary and historic, expressing human beings' long fascination with birds.

Readers may well have a favourite chapter, depending on their specific interest, but for me it was the birds themselves and the way they exemplified a particular sense that was the chief source of satisfaction as a reader: from the hearing of corncrakes to the sight of cocks of the rock; from the sensitivity of alloprening zebra finches to the kiwi's sense of smell; from the homing instincts of Manx Shearwaters to the emotional responses of puffins.

*Bird Sense* is a delightful, engaging and informative book, with added value being provided by the beautiful illustrations of Katrina van Grouw.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh