

## Inspired by birds in three parts: art, science and nature conservation

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**Start date** 8th April 2017 **End date** 10:00am – 16:45pm

**Venue** Madingley Hall  
Madingley  
Cambridge

**Tutor** Peter Holden MBE **Course code** 1617NDX038

**Director of Programmes** Emma Jennings

**For further information on this course, please contact** Public Programme Coordinator, Clare Kerr  
[clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk) or 01223 746237

**To book** See: [www.ice.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk) or telephone 01223 746262

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### Tutor biography

#### **Peter Holden MBE**

Peter is an ornithologist, author and lecturer. He was member of the RSPB Headquarters staff for more than 40 years and remains contracted to the organisation as a freelance lecturer.

His RSPB career was devoted to public education – both developing the junior membership and wider public engagement activities including originating the annual Big Garden Birdwatch (the largest citizen science project in the world).

Peter has authored more than a dozen books, with total sales passing a million copies. Best selling titles have been two *RSPB Handbooks*: one on British Birds and the other on Garden Wildlife.

In addition to RSPB lecturing commitments each winter, Peter is frequently invited to join cruise ships – where he gives talks on all forms of wildlife which he illustrates with his own photos. He also has regular lecturing engagements with Madingley Hall and the Bedford Education Centre. Occasionally he lectures with his Artist son, Andy Holden, at venues that have included Tate Britain, Royal College of Art and the New York Biennale of Performance Arts.

During his RSPB years he was also a consultant to BBC's *Blue Peter* and frequently appeared in the garden! He also co-presented two series of live programmes, *Bird in the Nest*, with Bill Oddie that became a proto-type for Springwatch.

Peter was awarded an MBE for his services to nature conservation in the 2009 New Year's Honours List and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. He is currently Director of close2nature, a company specialising in developing public interest in nature.

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## Course programme

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09:30	Terrace bar open for pre-course tea/coffee
10:00 – 11:15	<b>Session 1 – Introduction and Birds and the Arts: part 1</b>
11:15	Coffee
11:45 – 13:00	<b>Session 2 Birds and the Arts: part 2</b>
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:15	<b>Session 3 – Birds and science: how ornithologists have revealed the world of birds</b>
15:15	Tea
15:30 – 16:45	<b>Session 4 – Birds and Nature Conservation: looking at some contemporary case studies</b>
16:45	Day-school ends

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## Course syllabus

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### Aims:

- To introduce students to the variety of ways birds have been represented in art from earliest times
- To look at the cultural links with the natural world from the past to present
- To encourage and help students to use the Arts to understand and appreciate the natural world.
- To understand the science of ornithology and the methods used today to reveal some natural phenomena unknown to previous generations
- To understand the major threats to bird populations and some conservation projects currently taking place

### Content:

Nature in general and birds in particular have stimulated art since the earliest times. However art can take many forms: from fluid shapes of primitive rock paintings and the earliest Egyptian hieroglyphs to the full might of a large orchestra playing a Beethoven Symphony. In this course we will:

- study early images and consider their meaning
- look at later images and reflect on the level of science at that time
- consider what stimulated the fine art of painters such as Audubon and Thorburn
- tell the story of the role played by the Madingley field station and its place in ornithological history
- To consider practical examples of bird conservation – including experiments at Madingley

### Presentation of the course:

The informal lectures will make use of the tutors' own photographs and images, and there will be plenty of time for discussion. We hope (weather permitting) to use Madingley grounds and gardens

### Outcomes:

**As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:**

- discover the impact of birds on the arts, sciences and nature conservation.
- understand how their images and sounds have influenced artists
- learn how the study of birds has been integrated into scientific developments
- The role played by the Madingley Research Station in the study of bird song
- discover the methods being used to conserve birds to ensure they survive in a modern World

### Student Coursework

Students should be prepared to bring at least one art object to the course and be prepared to talk about it to the group: this could be a poem, a photo of a painting, a photo, a recording or any other medium that the student finds personally satisfying. To fit with the theme of this course the 'object' should be linked to bird specifically or link to the natural world in some way.

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## Reading and resources list

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Listed below are a number of texts that might be of interest for future reference, but do not need to be bought (or consulted) for the course.

Author	Title	Publisher and date
Caroline Bugler	<i>The Bird in Art</i>	Merrell
Mark Cocker	<i>Birds and People</i>	Jonathan Cape 2013

**Note** Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

*Information correct as of:* 07 March 2017