

FIELD GUIDE TO *Birds*

OF THE WEST INDIES

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TO

Birds

OF THE
WEST INDIES

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HATJE
CANTZ

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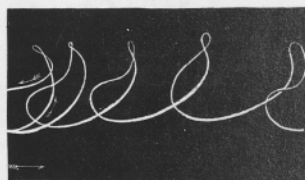
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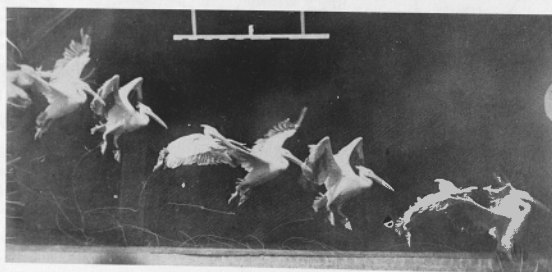
Daniel Baumann



1a.



1b.



1c.

- 1a. Mode d'emploi du fusil photographique [demonstration of the photographic gun]. Étienne-Jules Marey, "Le Fusil Photographique," *La Nature*, 1882
- 1b. Illustration, trajectory of the tip of a crow's wing. Étienne-Jules Marey, "Movement," *Heinemann's Scientific Handbooks*, 1895
- 1c. Étienne-Jules Marey, chronophotograph of a pelican, ca. 1880

Wonderful Machines

Nico Baumbach

001

On the question of the flight of birds, I was dreaming of a kind of photographic gun, to seize the bird in a pose or, even better, in a series of poses marking the successive phases of the movement of its wings.

—Étienne-Jules Marey, 1878¹

Marey, author of *La Machine Animale* (1873) and the inventor of chronophotography, perhaps the most important precursor to cinema, was obsessed with the possibility of capturing the movement of birds in flight somehow directly transcribed by the birds themselves. After experimenting with other forms of graphic transcription, Marey ultimately was led to look into the potential of photography. He developed a photographic gun derived from Jules Janssen's photographic revolver to capture the precise movements of birds in flight over time. In an 1882 letter to his mother, he wrote, "I have a photographic gun [fusil photographique] that has nothing murderous about it and that takes a picture of a flying bird or running animal in less than 1/300th of a second."² As Friedrich Kittler has argued, "The history of the movie camera thus coincides with the history of automatic weapons."³

The two earliest filmed images of movement shown in a public screening were made by Marey. The first showed the opening and closing of a hand, and the second, the flight of a pigeon.⁴ But Marey never had much interest in cinema because it only reproduced what was visible to the naked eye and did not penetrate appearances for the sake of greater scientific knowledge: "Cinema produces only what the eye can see in any case. It adds nothing to the power of our sight, nor does it remove its illusions, and the real character of a scientific method is to supplant the insufficiency of our senses and correct their errors. To get to this point chronophotography should renounce the representation of phenomena as they are seen by the eye."⁵

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The camera alone holds the key to this world, whose supreme beauty is that of nature and chance—in other words, everything that a certain tradition of aesthetics views as the opposite of art.

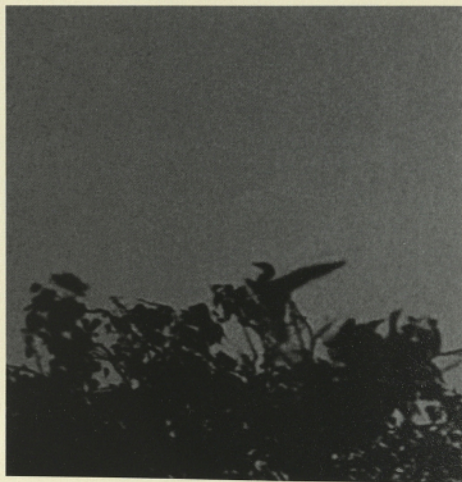
—André Bazin, 1947⁶



01:43:24 Greece, 1981



01:43:25 Greece, 1981



01:16:48 Udaipur, India. 1983



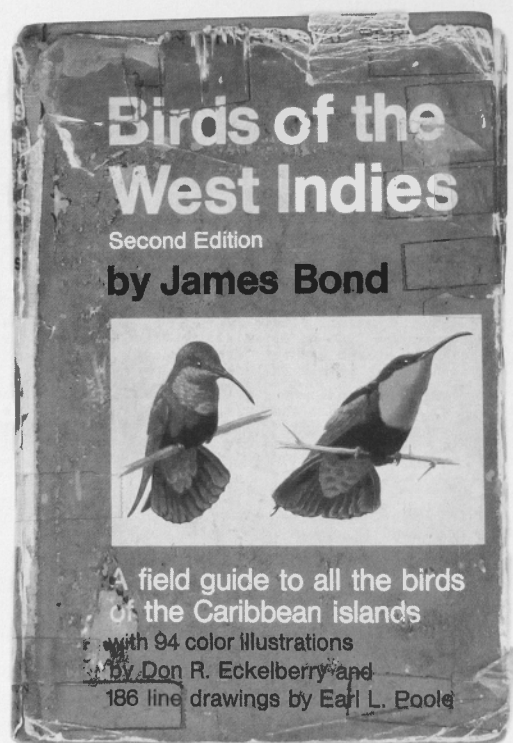
01:16:49 Udaipur, India. 1983



00:40:56 Venice, Italy. 1979



00:40:57 Venice, Italy. 1979



April 26, 1971

Dear Charlie:

The photograph of the Canary-winged Parakeet is very clear and I have no doubt that you are correct in your identification. The other bird is the streaked saltator, which we would expect to see at Anse Miton. The fore-parts of the bill is yellowish and there is a blackish malar stripe that is evident in one of your photographs. This is a large finch, known in Martinique as "Grive Gros-bec" (or "Large-billed Thrush"). There is a line cut of the head of this species in my 1961 book, and the bird is illustrated in color in the new edition.

Last Saturday I collected a nest with one addled egg of a House Finch near Stenton Avenue, Chestnut Hill. A week earlier it contained three eggs. The nest was about 7 feet above the ground in ivy on the side of a shed.

Mary and I would love to have a picnic lunch with you one day soon. How about early in May? We would bring our own sandwiches, etc.

Sincerely,

James Bond

