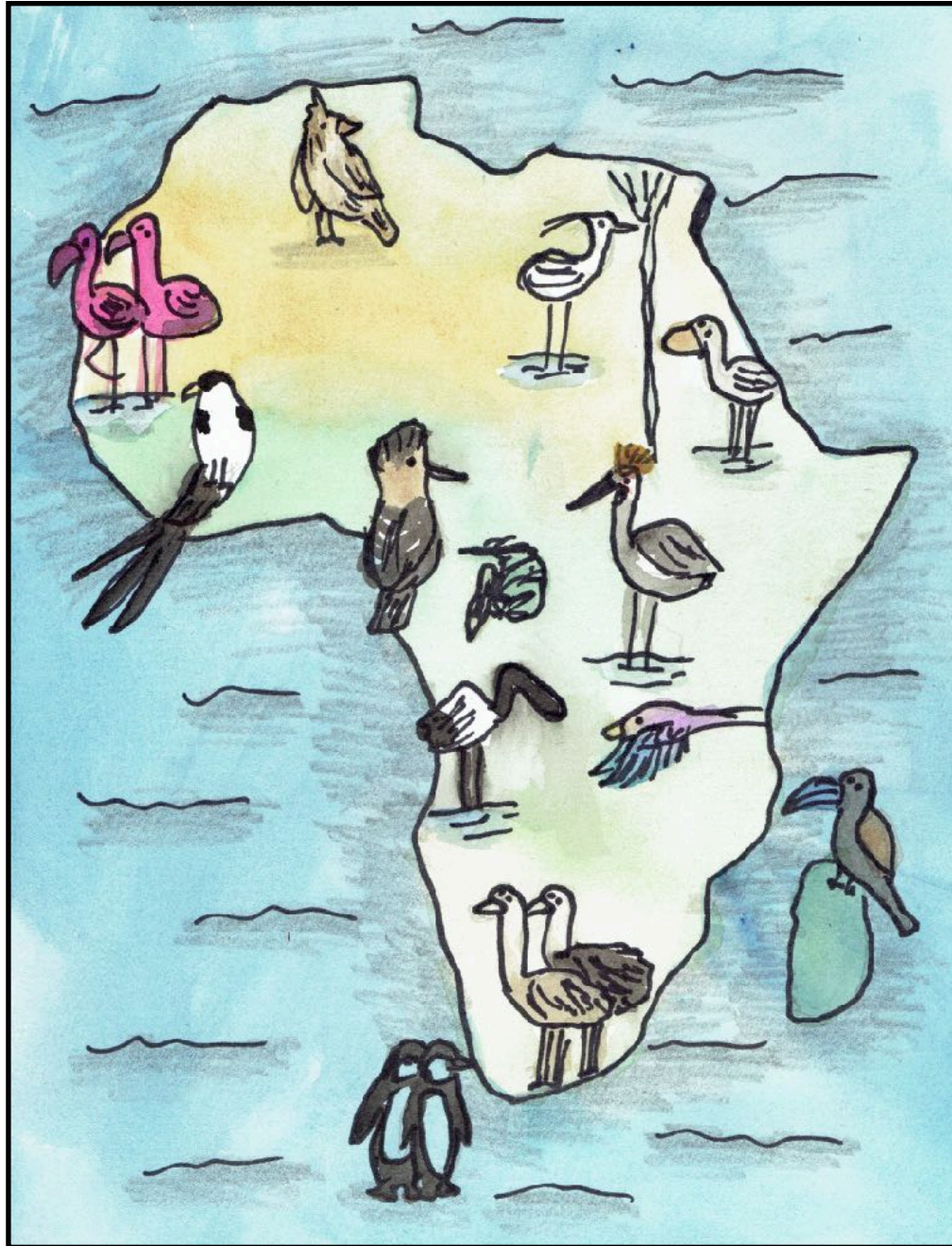


Birds of Africa for Kids



By Rachel Bubb

I enjoyed writing this book. It was great seeing all the wonderful birds that live in Africa. I recently put together a “Geography of Africa for Kids” book and this book would be great companion for it. Africa has many wonderful animals but most of them are animals that children are familiar with already so I hope this book can be a great introduction to the fascinating birds that call Africa their home.



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Contact: Rachel Bubb
c/o 6443 El Camino Dr.
Redding, CA 96001

www.storiesfromchinaforkids.blogspot.com

www.inknewspaper.net

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Part 1: Southern Africa

Chapter 1: My Cousin

“Great to see you again, cousin!” I said.

“Yes, it’s been a few years. Wow, you haven’t changed at all!” he said.



“Yeah, I know. Us hoopoes don’t change much over the years,” I said.

“What are we doing standing on this branch just talking. You’ve got to come and meet my family. We live in that tree over there,” he pointed out with the tip of his wing.

I had just arrived in South Africa to visit my cousin. He was going to show me around where he lived. I am an Eurasian hoopoe and he is an African hoopoe. I know, they sound the same! We are mostly the same but live in different places. African hoopoes live in the southern part of Africa and Eurasian hoopoes live in the middle part of Africa, Europe, parts of north Africa, and parts of Asia. Yes, we live just about

everywhere!

It took us about ten minutes to fly to the tree where his family lived. They live in a hole in a tree with a small hole as an entrance to their home. It was a nice and cosy home with lots of leaves on the

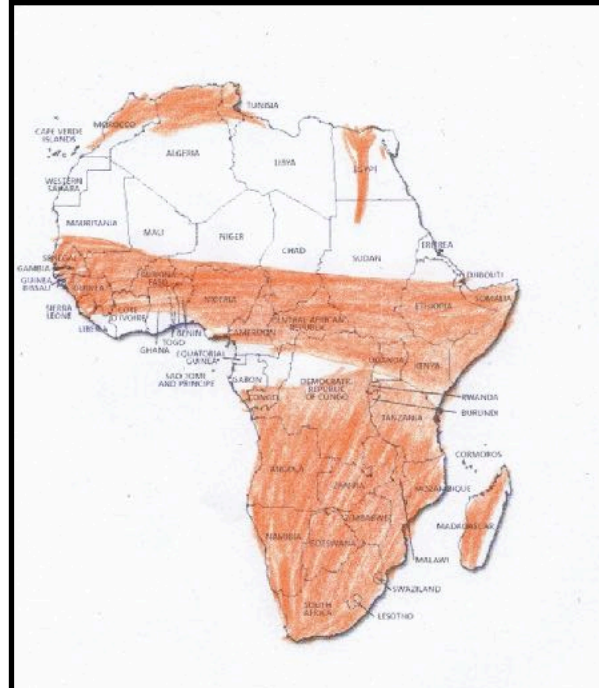
bottom, although it did smell a little. However, for me, it smelled like home because my nest back home smelled just as bad. Us hoopoes are known for our smelly nests because we're not always so good at keeping them clean. Some people might call them smelly and messy, but for me it means "home." I was tired out from such a long flight and went to sleep right away. When I woke up in the morning, my cousin and I went to get some food.

"There are usually some good bugs over there under those leaves," he pointed out. We flew together to the ground and used our beaks to move around the leaves and dried grass on the ground. Sure enough, there were some good little bugs which made a tasty breakfast.

"What's the plan for today?" I asked him.

"Well, first I'll show you around the area today and tomorrow. Then we'll start heading out to see some of the other birds that live in this part of Africa," he explained.

"Yes, of course! Sounds like a good plan," I said.



Chapter 2: The Bird That Can't Fly

“One of the birds that we have here in South Africa is a bird that can't fly and it's huge! It's so big they call them the 'camel bird,' sometimes,” my cousin told me.

“Wow, can you even call it a bird if it can't fly?” I asked him.

“Well, yes. If I tell you what bird it is you might be surprised because it's a bird that I'm sure you've seen before or at least heard of. They are all over Africa, especially in South Africa.”

“Ok, now you're teasing me. Just tell me what bird it is,” I said.

“No, I'll show you. We have to fly about thirty minutes and then you should see them,” he said.

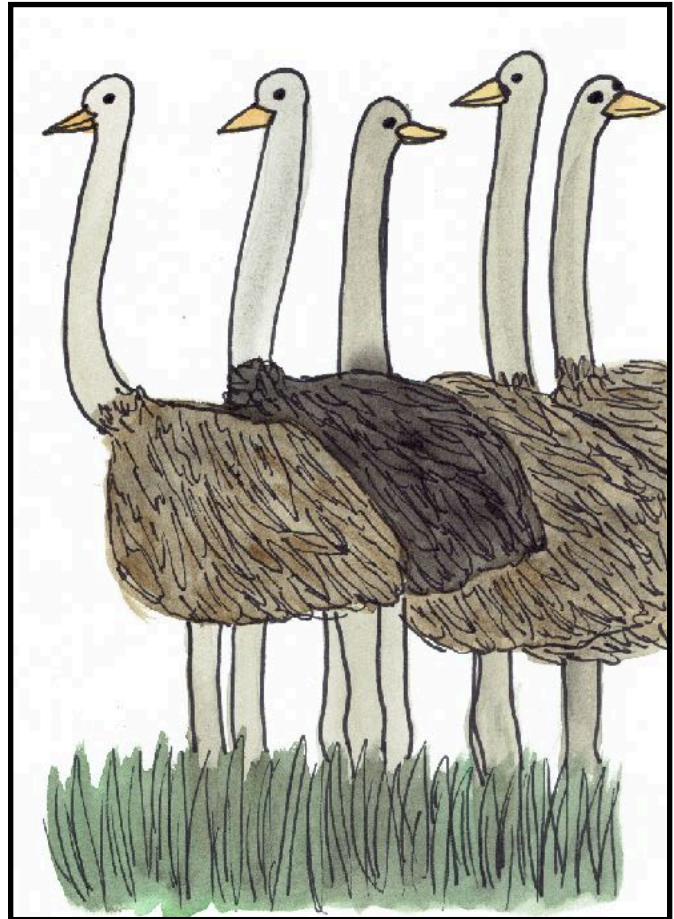
“Them?” I asked.

“Yes, them. They always travel together. Sometimes they are in groups of ten but sometimes they are in much larger groups, even up to one hundred (or so I've heard),” he said.

After about twenty minutes I started to see them from the sky because they are so big: ostriches! Yes, my cousin was right, I knew this bird because (like he said) they are all over Africa.

“Do you want to get closer?” he asked me as we flew over them.

“Sure, as long as we are far enough away. I don't want to get stepped on by them. They probably wouldn't even notice such small birds like us,” I said.



Thankfully, there were a few short trees in the flat area close to where the ostriches were so we didn't have to be on the ground. I felt much safer in the tree!

"These birds aren't only big but their eggs are also huge," my cousin told me.

"I imagine!" I said.

"They are the birds that lay the largest egg of any bird in the world," he said.

"But they don't fly?" I said, astonished. I really couldn't imagine a bird that couldn't fly.

"Yep. They can't fly but they can sure run and I've seen them run once or twice. When they all run together it's quite funny to watch. They'll stick out their wings to help them balance while they run but they can run surprisingly fast," he said.

"As fast as a cheetah?" I asked.

"No. No animal is that fast, besides a cheetah of course."

"They must have to eat and drink a lot since they're so big," I said.

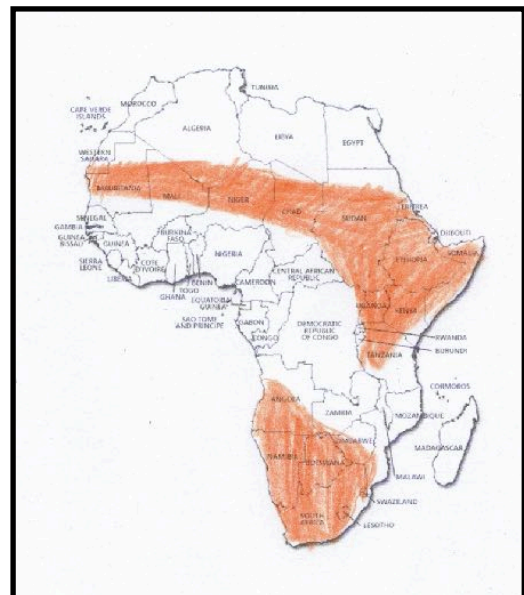
"Not really. They live in places that don't have a lot of water. Come to think of it, I've never seen any of them drink water before. They must get most of their water from what they eat, which is mostly plants but sometimes bugs or small animals."

"Interesting," I said. "Why are some black of them and others more brown?"

"The brown ones are the females while the black ones are the males," he answered. "I think the black is to be more showy. You know us birds, usually the males have the more bright colors to show off. Just like us hoopoes- the colors in the females aren't as strong as they are in the males."

"What's our next bird?" I asked.

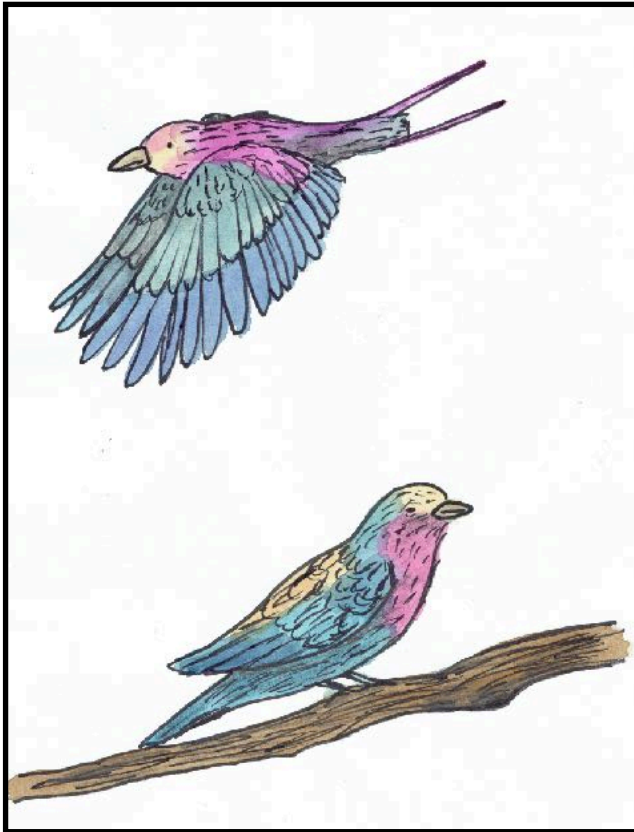
"It's not too far," he said.



Chapter 3: Colorful Birds

After this my cousin said he had a beautifully colored bird that he wanted to show me. “This bird is like a flying rainbow,” he described it to me.

“We can’t get that close to this bird, especially its nest. It’s very, very protective of its nest. One time I flew somewhat close to a tree and the mommy started going after me. I didn’t see the nest there but later on I did and figured that’s why the mommy bird was mad at me. She was just protecting her nest,” my cousin said.



“Wow. That’s something,” I commented.

“Ok, we’re close to where I remember seeing the nest. If I remember right, there were a few of these birds in the area. They are called the lilac-breasted roller. When they fly their wings are beautiful,” he said.

I kept my eyes out while we perched on a rather large tree branch close by. “I think I might see one- from far away it looks

mostly blue. Do you see it?” I asked my cousin.

“Yeah, that’s it. There might be more. Just keep your eyes out. I don’t know if we can talk with them. I’ve never talked with them before; after the incident with the bird nest and the angry mommy bird I’ve avoided them,” my cousin said.

“The birds look beautiful,” I said. “Do they sing well?”

“I haven’t really heard them sing much before. However, one time a friend of mine heard a rather loud sound. He looked around

and noticed it was coming from this bird. My friend then noticed that just after this the bird attacked a small lizard to eat it,” he said.

“Wow, that’s something. Maybe it’s a warning to other small animals that a bird’s coming to catch them,” I said. So they eat lizards. Do you know what else they eat?”

“My guess is that they probably eat insects, snails, lizards, and small bugs as well.”

“The two birds you’ve shown me so far aren’t the best birds to talk with. Are there more friendly birds around that we can talk with?” I asked my cousin.

“Of course. I know just the bird.”

