



Landfill

Notes on Gull Watching and Trash Picking
in the Anthropocene

Tim Dee

Natural History / Nature & Ecology / Birds
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“Landfill is an important and entirely brilliant book. Dee has written an absolute triumph.”

—HELEN MACDONALD, author of *H is for Hawk*

Landfill is the nature book for our times, groundbreaking and genre-bending. Without nostalgia or eulogy, it poetically kicks beneath the littered surface of our life with gulls to discover some harder truths.

Over the short span of a century, urbanization and consumerism have brought the gull ashore. Now found far beyond our coasts, these brazen birds live their wild lives among us scavenging in towns and cities, and in our wake following trawlers, barges and garbage trucks. In many ways they live as we do, scurrying around our built-up world and grabbing a bite wherever they can. Yet this disturbs us. We’ve started fearing gulls for getting good at being among us. We see them as scavengers, not entrepreneurs; as ocean-going aliens, not refugees. But their story is our story.

Landfill takes an original and compelling look at our compulsion to control the natural world—from learning about it to naming and cataloguing it, from colonizing it to planting it—and then, eventually, filling it with our trash and junk. And while most other birds have gone in the opposite direction, hiding away from us, some vanishing forever, gulls remain as a persistent and at times, troublesome, reminder of our entanglement with the natural world.

“The seabird’s relationship with our urban worlds is examined in these wonderful reflections from a rubbish tip.”—*Guardian*

“The always brilliant nature writer Tim Dee pens a majestic character portrait of the not-so-humble gull, a creature that is at once a graceful, soaring emblem of land-ho and a piratical scavenger ready to snatch sandwiches out of kiddies’ hands.”—*Irish Independent*

Named a “Best Book of 2018” by the *Guardian* and the *Irish Independent*



Claire Spottiswoode

Tim Dee has worked for decades as a BBC radio producer, in addition to being a regular contributor to the book section of the *Guardian*. A naturalist whose first job was in bird conservation, he is the author of the acclaimed *Four Fields* and *The Running Sky*, and co-editor of *The Poetry of Birds*. A birder since the age of three, he lives with his wife in Bristol on the southwest coast of Great Britain, notable for its gull population.

Greg Poole’s (1960-2018) illustrations revel in nature and the natural world, and have appeared in numerous books, publications and galleries. A longtime member of the British Society of Wildlife Artists, he was also actively involved in the Artists for Nature Foundation.