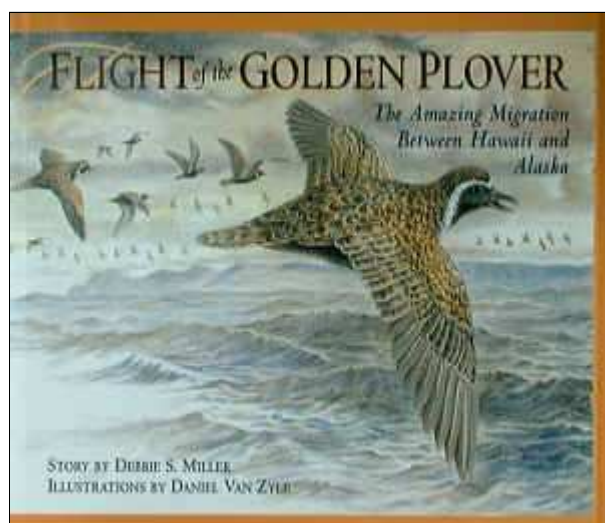


Debbie S. Miller

Alaska Author of Nature Books



Illustrated by Daniel Van Zyle

Alaska Northwest Books, 1996

ISBN: 0-88240-474-1

Ages 7 and up

(out of print)

AWARDS AND REVIEWS:



1997 Outstanding Science Trade Book for Children (starred book), National Science Teachers Association and the Children's Book Council

"Outstanding from a Learning Perspective"

- Parents Council Selection

"Flight of the Golden Plover is spectacularly illustrated with Daniel Van Zyle's artwork. Young bird enthusiasts will find this a compelling review of the incredible migration of the golden plover between Hawaii and Alaska. This is the first children's book to examine the plover's annual transoceanic migration."

- Children's Bookwatch

"Hawaiian resident Dan Van Zyle and Fairbanks author Debbie Miller have collaborated on a high-interest children's book about the golden plover explaining, in depth, its extraordinary migration patterns. With minute detail and near-reverence, Miller and Van Zyle offer readers a first-of-its-kind look at the behavior and incredible adaptations this unique bird makes in its annual Pacific Rim journey...Authentic and brilliantly drawn illustrations, authoritative text and an amazing subject combine to make an awesome presentation. Applause, applause!"

- Alaska Parenting

"This is a beautiful book in every possible way, with an incredible story to tell of bird migration. Miller's clear, sometimes poetic descriptions of golden plovers are enhanced by Van Zyle's full-page paintings...This book would be a worthwhile addition to any

library, institutional or personal."

- Manitoba Library Association

CREATING THE BOOK:

When I first saw a golden plover, some 25 years ago, I was hiking across the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. I was struck by its regal beauty, its distinctive whistles, and its ability to successfully lure me away from its nest by performing its "broken wing dance." When I learned that a species of this striking bird made a 3,000-mile nonstop migration between Hawaii and Alaska, I was stunned. I wanted to learn more about this incredible shorebird.

To study the Pacific golden plover, I traveled to Nome, Alaska, where I accompanied biologists Wally and Patricia Johnson who were researching golden plovers on their nesting grounds. I helped the biologists carefully locate the well-camouflaged nests on the tundra. I listened to their breeding calls, watched mating behavior, saw their brown-speckled eggs, studied the "broken wing dance," and watched foxes on the prowl. I also traveled to Hawaii, where I often saw golden plovers on their wintering grounds. I observed them snatching insects from lawns, golf courses and open fields, and I watched them form communal roosts at night, on rock-lined shores near the edge of the moonlit surf.

After I wrote the story, I felt very lucky to be introduced to wildlife artist Daniel Van Zyle, Jon Van Zyle's identical twin brother. Jon and Daniel Van Zyle are both outstanding wildlife artists. As a Hawaiian resident, Dan knew the golden plover well, as they were in his backyard during much of the year. He also had a love and respect for this long-distance flier. We were lucky to find a publisher (Alaska Northwest Books) that allowed us to collaborate on this book.

FUN FACTS FOR KIDS:

Did you know that...

*A plover chick weighs about as much as five nickels?

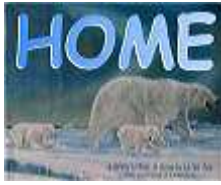
*Golden plovers travel approximately 3,000 miles on their nonstop migration over the Pacific Ocean, between Alaska and Hawaii. They make the flight in about two days, averaging 60 miles per hour!

*One male golden plover has been studied for 18 years. This particular bird has returned to the same nesting area near Nome, year after year. This means he has flown 18 round trips to Hawaii, covering well over 100,000 miles in his life!

*When the three-month old golden plovers make their first migration to Hawaii they do so with no adult leaders! These birds have inherited the amazing instinct to find their wintering grounds, across thousands of miles of ocean.

Debbie S. Miller

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Fairbanks, Alaska