



John James Audubon

Picture Study

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Louisiana Heron
John James Audubon, 1834



Virginian Deer

John James Audubon, 1845-1848



PLATE CXXXVI

N° 28

Carolina Parrot

John James Audubon, 1827-1838



Carolina Parakeet

IMMATURE CAROLINENSIS LINN.
Melospiza carolinensis
 Aud. Soc. - Gauthier - Vancouver

ILLUSTRATED BY JAMES AUDUBON

ENGRAVED BY THOMAS PLATE

American Bison or Buffalo

John James Audubon, 1845-1848



BISON BISON LUTHERUS
 SPECIES ABOVE IN PROFILE
 1855

PLATE LVI

PLATE LVI

Passenger Pigeon
John James Audubon, 1824



PASSENGER PIGEON (*Columba Migratoria*)

Upper bird, female; lower, male

Reproduced from the John J. Audubon Plate

Trumpeter Swan
John James Audubon, 1838

PLATE XXXIII



Swan

185

John James Audubon

ARTIST BIO NOTES

These notes are provided to aid the teacher's own background research on the artist and his or her works. This is not meant to be presented to students as a list of facts and dates. When you first introduce the artist, tell students where the artist fits into the timeline of history, and where the artist lived and worked. Add a few more details with each new picture, but the information you share should be short and simple unless your students ask questions or wish to know more. Keep the main focus of your Picture Study time on observation and narration of the details of the picture.

Note: if a footnote appears with a fact that is not a direct quote, the fact comes from ONE source only.

LIFE AND CHARACTER

- ◆ b. 1785; d.1851
- ◆ Born in Santo Domingo under name of Jean Rabin Fougère to French parents, his father a French captain (his mom was not his father's wife; Mrs. Audubon adopted John, along with an out-of-wedlock sister, when her husband returned to France with the two kids). Jean-Jacques Fougère Audubon was his baptismal name.
- ◆ Napoleonic wars in Europe. Captain Audubon sent 18 year old Jean to a property he owned in Philadelphia.
- ◆ Married Lucy Bakewell in 1808 and had two sons and two daughters. The girls died in infancy.
- ◆ 1831, Audubon met Rev. John Bachman, his collaborator on *Quadrupeds*. Established friendship between families. Audubon's sons married Bachman's daughters.
- ◆ 1842, settled on a New York City estate he called "Minniesland" after his wife.
- ◆ Audubon started losing sight and mind in 1846, had stroke in 1847. Next year Bachman and Audubon's sons finished *Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America*. Audubon died at his home.

- ◆ Reported to be handsome and vain; had lots of energy and a colorful tongue; known for embellishing the truth.

TRAINING AND CAREER

- ◆ Interest in birds, nature, and drawing early on; first person to band birds; discovered 25 new species of birds.
- ◆ Kept up with studying and drawing birds when he moved to Philadelphia.
- ◆ Bounced around states with unsuccessful jobs, sketching birds in the meantime.
- ◆ Hit in panic of 1819, went into bankruptcy. Began portrait painting, teaching drawing, working as a taxidermist, and taking up other small jobs to support his family.
- ◆ Received some lessons from Thomas Sully in painting.
- ◆ Met Alexander Wilson, the first American ornithologist. Wilson showed Audubon his paintings for a ornithology he was seeking to publish. Audubon felt his own works were better and sought to create an ornithology that surpassed Wilson's.
- ◆ 1824, considers publishing life-sized drawings of birds of America. Traveled to different states with an assistant to paint and collect specimens while his wife supported the family at home. Struggled for support in U.S., so he went to Europe in 1826. Gained financial support for massive endeavor by selling subscriptions.
- ◆ Collaborated with engraver Robert Havell, Jr. on double elephant sized folio (around 25 x 20 in) to be life-sized.
- ◆ Collected more specimens and painted, trips back to America and back again to England.
- ◆ Published *Birds of America and Ornithological Biography* in 1831.
- ◆ 1842, began *The Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America*. Audubon's observations supplemented by collaborator John Bachman with scientific text.
- ◆ His son, also artistic, contributed to *Birds of America* and to *Quadrupeds* (half!).

ART STYLE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- ◆ Famous not just as an artist but as a naturalist/scientist as well.
- ◆ Though Alexander Wilson was the first American ornithologist, Audubon is praised as the more talented artist to capture the beauty of American birds.
- ◆ “Striking composition”* and “strong feeling of action”.¹
- ◆ Interesting method: killed birds for models, then propped them into positions and painted.
- ◆ Passionate, inquisitive artist/scientist: explored nature with vigor, collected hundreds of specimens. 435 paintings in his *Birds of America*.
- ◆ Had help with backgrounds on his massive plates.
- ◆ Praised for completing the tremendous task of his *Birds of America* – the size, the documentation, the contribution to science, the beauty of the paintings.

ARTIST BIO LINKS FOR FURTHER STUDY

<http://www.audubon.org/john-james-audubon> (informative, medium length)

<http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/naturalists/audubon01.htm> (informative, medium length)

<http://www.strangescience.net/audubon.htm> (interesting detail, longer)

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/episodes/john-james-audubon/drawn-from-nature/106/>
(colorful detail, longer)

<http://www.anb.org.ezproxy.phc.edu/articles/17/17-00030.html?a=1&g=m&n=John%20James%20Audubon&ia=-at&ib=-bib&d=10&ss=0&q=1> (detailed, requires log in)

PICTURE SOURCE LINKS

http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/database/images/audubon_gallery_1.jpg

https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/84228/Common_or_Virginian_Deer

[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b9/Carolina_Parrot_\(Audubon\).jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b9/Carolina_Parrot_(Audubon).jpg)

¹ <http://science.howstuffworks.com/environmental/conservation/naturalists/john-james-audobon-info.htm>

http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/84204/American_Bison_or_Buffalo

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Merston's_The_Passenger_Pigeon_\(Audubon_plate,_crop\).jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Merston's_The_Passenger_Pigeon_(Audubon_plate,_crop).jpg)

<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/68/John-James-Audubon-001.jpg>