



DOUBLE

A fear of losing precious bird species inspired Colin Prior to pair images of eggs and habitats for the book *Fragile*

Countless hours spent in the farmland and woods near the housing estate where he was brought up engendered in Colin Prior a lifelong passion for nature. For him, the loss of bird and animal species from UK habitats feels personal.

The acclaimed photographer, whose name is synonymous with panoramic landscapes of his native Scotland and across the world, is publishing a series that's been a decade in the making. The resulting book, *Fragile*, pairs bird eggs and their habitats in diptychs designed to inspire awe – and raise uncomfortable questions about how much we value these precious things.

“During the course of my lifetime I have witnessed at first hand the demise of myriad bird species both in the countryside where I grew up and throughout the rest of Scotland,” writes Prior in the introduction to *Fragile*.

“I have always felt a deep spiritual connection to the natural world, one that was nurtured during my childhood.”

To photograph the eggs, Prior collaborated with Bob McGowan, senior curator in the department of natural sciences

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at National Museums Scotland. Together, they selected the eggs from the museums' many collections.

“This process might sound straightforward enough,” writes Prior, “but in the case of smaller birds there are typically 36 clutches in a drawer, each with perhaps between four and six eggs, making approximately 180 individual eggs, from which I had to select the egg or eggs that represented the finest characteristics of the species. It was a bit like being a child in a sweet shop.”

The landscapes were all Prior's own work – and involved finding a link between a dominant colour from each egg and the seasonal hues displayed in the corresponding habitat.

You can see the results on the following pages – and discover the story behind *Fragile* in the September edition of the email newsletter *RPS Journal Extra*.

Fragile: Birds, Eggs and Habitats by Colin Prior is published on 17 September by Merrell Publishers at £40. merrellpublishers.com and colinprior.co.uk

'Stroan Loch, New Galloway'



'European nightjar, *caprimulgus europaeus*,
5 June 1953, mean size 31.9 × 22.5mm'

'Muirburn, Glen Gairn, Invercauld estate'



'Red grouse, *lagopus lagopus*,
23 May 1930, mean size 45.8 × 32.1mm'



'Rook, *corvus frugilegus*,
27 March 1963, mean size 40 × 28.3mm'

'Belhelvie, Aberdeenshire'

