

The Blue Jay Bookshelf

ORIGINS OF AMERICAN CONSERVATION. Edited by Henry Clepper. 1966. The Ronald Press Company, New York. x + 193 pp. \$4.50.

This book presents a historical review of the Conservation Movement in the United States and as such, is both informative and useful. Chapters are included on a full array of conservation topics including wildlife, forestry, fisheries, soil, water, range, parks, and wilderness. Apart from being a strictly historical presentation, the book purports to relate history to the prediction of future trends in conservation. As Joseph L. Fisher states in the concluding chapter, "The ultimate reason for wanting to understand the origins of American conservation must be for the insights that can be gained regarding the future." This high purpose is seldom attained.

The history of conservation can be treated in two ways. The first is to outline the history of the destruction of the resource and follow this with a history of the legislative measures that brought about protection. The second approach is to attempt a history of the scientific advances that brought about present conservation concepts. Most authors have attempted to blend the two approaches to some extent. Admittedly, some aspects of conservation (e.g., parks and wilderness) do not have much of a scientific history, but only in the sections dealing with fisheries have the two approaches been blended successfully. In fact, the fisheries subsection, "Coastal and Marine Waters" by Clarence P. Idyll is by far the most exciting reading in the book. Here legislation and science are blended in an informative way and this chapter is the only one that completely fulfills the purpose of the book—to use history as a predictive basis for the future. None of the other authors has adequately explained how the past

struggles of the conservation movement can enable us to anticipate and solve the problems of the future, or even, for that matter, the problems of the present. In the concluding chapter, Joseph L. Fisher is greatly concerned with the problems of exploiting resources more efficiently but gives scant consideration to the idea of retaining a stimulating and worthwhile living space.

In addition to its basic failure, the book must be subjected to criticism on other grounds. In a book of such limited size it should have been the duty of the editor to minimize the amount of overlap in content between chapters. In fact considerable space is taken up with repetitive treatments of how the west was won and how the land was denuded. The chapters on Soil and Water overlap broadly, as do those on Parks and Wilderness and Scenic, Historic and Natural Sites.

The section on Wildlife Conservation is most inadequate. In particular, there is scant record of the development of the scientific conception of animal populations that have placed wildlife conservation in the realm of applied science.

The opening sentence of the book, "Within our fifty states are the richest treasures of diversified natural resources of any nation on earth," is the sort of statement that should have no place in what is otherwise a semi-scientific treatment.

The book is useful as a historical record of the Conservation Movement and may be of particular interest to people who lived through those periods when resource exploitation in the United States nearly achieved its narrow ends. As a basis for predicting future conservation problems and their solutions, the book may be of some value, but is not worth nearly as much as a series of recent textbooks in the various conservation disciplines.—*D. H. Sheppard, Regina.*

THE MAMMALS OF EASTERN CANADA. By Randolph L. Peterson. 1966. Oxford University Press. xxxii+465 pp. 8 color plates, 233 figs., 107 maps. \$15.95.

Dr. Randolph Peterson, Curator of the Department of Mammalogy at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, has tried to write a book "useful to a wide audience without sacrificing accuracy and readability on the one hand and scientific detail and substantiating evidence on the other." He has succeeded admirably in this aim.

Short introductory chapters serve to introduce the reader to the subject. The essay "Mammals and Man" points out the close relationships man has had with mammals from earliest times. Mammals have been an important source of food and clothing; they have served him as guardians, beasts of burden, pets, and symbols of worship. "The Class Mammalia" and "The Origin and Classification of Mammals" provide a concise introduction to mammalian taxonomy.

The main body of the text is devoted to accounts of the 122 species of mammals (102 native, 9 introduced, 10 domesticated, and 1 extinct) which are known to occur in eastern Canada—an area here defined as Ontario, Quebec, the maritime provinces, and the off-shore waters. Although many of the mammals of eastern Canada do not occur in Saskatchewan, and a number of our species do not occur in eastern Canada, this book includes 57 of the 76 native species recorded for Saskatchewan. In the presentation of each order of mammals there is a brief description followed, where necessary, by keys to the families, genera, and species. Each species account is divided into sections dealing with description, distribution and variation in eastern Canada, habitat, habits, and general remarks.

The information in each of the species accounts is accurate, concise, and informative. The description includes gross features and diagnostic characteristics, color, and measurements of body and skull. Excellent

line drawings of three views of the skull are included and add appreciably to the ease of identification. A glossary of the scientific terms used in the descriptions is included at the back of the book. The distribution of each species in eastern Canada is described briefly and shown graphically on a range map of the area, with a small insert map showing the range in North America. The section on habitat describes the normal environment of the species. In his discussions of general habits, Dr. Peterson has avoided the common tendency to present a miscellany of unrelated facts, and in a readable style has provided useful information on food habits, reproduction, and behavioral patterns. The economic status of the species, and areas where further study is needed are two examples of the topics discussed under remarks.

Over one hundred line drawings of the species are included which, unfortunately, do not achieve the same high standard of quality as the text; many are mediocre. A notable exception is the beautiful series of illustrations of the hares and rabbits which not only accurately portray the various species but capture the vitality and personality of the mammals. Eight pages of color illustrations are included. While they have undoubtedly added considerably to the cost of producing the book, they do not make an appreciable contribution to its value.

Dr. Peterson points out that our "native mammals are an integral part of the renewable natural resources" and their conservation "calls for some understanding and appreciation of the interrelations of the multitude of facets of the total environment." Anyone reading this book should gain this understanding and appreciation from the detailed accounts of life histories, behavior, and activities of the mammals in their natural environment.

Every person seriously interested in the study of mammals should own a copy of this book. Others will find it a useful reference to seek in a library.—*W. H. Beck*, Regina.

EVOLUTION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION IN CALIFORNIA

Since it is difficult to remain unbiased about problems which touch us closely in some way, it is often of value to look at or listen to the problems of others. It was with this idea in mind that I purchased **THE DESTRUCTION OF CALIFORNIA**, by Raymond F. Dasmann. (1965. The Macmillan Company, New York; Collier-Macmillan Canada Ltd., Toronto. \$5.95 in U.S.A.)

Raymond F. Dasmann of Eureka, California, is worried about California's rapid increase in population, much of it by immigration. He says, "no one seriously wants to turn back the clock . . . but one can request . . . that we stop for a moment and take stock . . . and make sure that the world we are building in the West will be one worth living in." The book begins with a description of California as it used to be. The threat to California comes "from all who do not know what California was, cannot see what it is, cannot dream of what it could be" . . . and from "those to whom money is the single standard against which all else must be measured."

The second chapter traces the history of man in California. The Indians were "a highly diversified array of people speaking many languages . . . it is estimated that one-tenth of the total Indian population of the United States, before white settlement, some 130,000 people lived in California." The Spanish visited California in 1543, but it was not till 1769 (less than 200 years ago) that a colonizing expedition was sent and "California, for better or worse, was to be added to the civilized world. For eighty years there was leisurely living in California and then gold was discovered and the modern destruction of California began."

In the third chapter Dasmann traces the history of wildlife conservation in California. He wishes he could awaken in others a desire for

wildlife conservation such as was awakened in him by the books of Ernest Thompson Seton and Jack London.

When California was first settled, wildlife was a compelling factor of the environment. The early scene painted by the Spanish and later by the first American visitors is of incredible abundance of wildlife. "The Central Valley sheltered herds of tule elk, pronghorn antelope, and black-tailed deer. One man claims to have seen 40 grizzlies in sight at once in Mattole country. John Muir was impressed with the abundance of the bighorn sheep in the lava-bed country north of Shasta, and of the many herds that occurred along the Sierra Nevada to its southern limits. . . . All the early visitors wrote of the coyote. . . . Dominating the avian world was the giant condor . . . perhaps the most fascinating sight was the great mass of waterfowl, shore birds, and marsh birds that filled those marshes dominated by the tall bulrush, the tule, in the Central Valley. Here were birds in the tens of millions that darkened the sky when migration sent them winging northward."

"The thriving animal life attracted the fur trappers . . . the great slaughter that was overtaking the edible forms of game, and the poisoning campaign that was to decimate the carnivores. It is inevitable that wildlife had to go from much of California. Grizzly bears cannot be raised in sheep pastures, nor are wolves welcome in the suburbs. Great herds of elk and antelope do not fit well into orchard or wheat field. But the manner and the thoroughness with which California's wildlife was destroyed are a blot on the record of the Americans."

"Starting with the mining camps of the Gold Rush, where the demand for meat was insatiable, market hunting became an important part of the Californian scene . . . through-

out California, in the sixty years from 1850 to 1910, a massive faunal change, matched only by the post-glacial extinctions, took place. Some species disappeared forever. . . . It was against this dismal background of mass slaughter and game scarcity that the game-conservation movement had its beginnings. . . . It was not until 1907 that the legislature passed a bill requiring the purchase of a licence by anyone who wished to hunt. . . . The first game wardens encountered people who felt that the state had no real authority to regulate the killing of game. Hunting was regarded as a natural right."

The California Department of Fish and Game since 1907 has been supported entirely by revenue obtained from licences and fees paid by those using the fish-and-game resource. Because the money comes from the sportsmen, they feel a proprietary interest in the state department and they have been alert and active in protecting their interests. The department in turn has in some ways behaved as though it existed to serve the licensed hunters and fishermen primarily. This has led to an interest in game animals only, rather than wildlife in general. "Deer and ducks, quail and pheasants became important, and most research and management money went toward the enhancement of their numbers. Bighorn and wolverine, ruffed grouse and orioles were considered much less important. Anything rare, remote, or unable to respond quickly to management has been to some degree neglected. The sportsmen are not to be blamed for protecting their own interests. Indifference or inactivity on the part of the general public who should have been interested, but were not, is the cause."

The general public has also proved, at times, to have misconceptions about game management. The deer herds protected by hunting laws and an absence of natural predators began to multiply in an excellent habitat created by fire and logging which were destructive of other resources. Biologists sought to regulate

the size of the deer herds by relating the number of deer shot in an area to the annual rate of production in that area. To achieve this balance it was essential to establish some "antlerless" deer hunting but many game wardens and Fish and Game people and public were violently opposed to this. The controversy still rages.

Bitter controversies have also raged over the management of pheasants, ducks, trout and salmon. There has been such persistent interference on the part of legislature that the Fish and Game department has not been free to use the best knowledge available. Mr. Dasmann urges that public and legislature give more support to the biologists, managers and wardens of wildlife departments. The greatest variety of wild animals should be brought back to every area of the state where such restoration is still possible. The aim should not be for maximum bags of a few kinds of game but the restoration of wildlife variety, including predators, to enrich the lives of each person in the state. Such a policy of wildlife conservation would soon have the support of most of the public, for the life of people can be enriched by the presence of wild creatures in man's environment.

In chapters 4-11 Dasmann describes other aspects of the destruction of California, including the air pollution problem, the very critical water problem and the spectacular fight to save some of the tall timber. The chapter with most interest to us in southern Saskatchewan is chapter 4 in which he describes "the prairies that vanished"; a sad tale which we should all read.

The story sounds so familiar that it is easy to forget that we are reading "The Destruction of California" and not about the destruction of our own province. However, Saskatchewan is younger and pressures on our natural resources have not yet been completely destructive; so we may if we are sincerely interested still save something of Saskatchewan as it was for the future. How can we achieve this objective?—*George F. Ledingham, Regina.*

THE WORLD OF THE BOBCAT. By Joe Van Wormer. 1964. J. P. Lippincott, Philadelphia & New York. 125 pp. Illustrated. \$6.00.

This book is the fourth of the series describing animals in North America. The photographs in black and white are excellent and so numerous that they cover most aspects of the bobcat. The writer has described the life of the animal in an easily readable form, but he is careful to give credit for observations to the first person who made them. The life of the bobcat is described in spring, summer, fall and winter, and many interesting anecdotes are recalled illustrating its manner of life and character, as well as the legends associated with it. The information upon its predation of domestic animals is enlightening, as are the descriptions and photographs of wild animals which make up the majority of its food. The kind of photographs and style of writing make this a suitable present for young people and an excellent addition to any natural historian's library.—*Thomas White*, 1-2105 Cornwall St., Regina.

THE BLUE JAY BOOKSHOP

offers some suggestions of books that would make excellent gifts. Saskatchewan residents add 4 per cent tax.

BIRDS OF THE NORTHERN FOREST. Paintings by J. F. Lansdowne, Text by John A. Livingston. 1966. Published in Canada by McClelland and Stewart. \$20.00.

PRAIRIE WILDFLOWERS by Lloyd T. Carmichael, hard covers, \$3. Next spring start to identify positively those native wildflowers that you have always wondered about. Carmichael's book is just what you want for easy identification; the arrangement of description and photographs of plants (in black and white) on opposite pages make it ideal. (Ages 11 up.)

ON AGGRESSION by Konrad Lorenz, hard covers, \$6.50. "No one concerned with animals whether in the home, on the farm, or in the wild . . . and above all no one concerned with the overriding dilemmas, posed by population growth and by war can afford to neglect Konrad Lorenz's book . . . packed with entrancing detail, profound wisdom and deft humour. The book is a masterpiece." W. H. Thorpe, "The Manchester Guardian Weekly".

DRIFTWOOD VALLEY by Theodora C. Stanwell-Fletcher. Hard, \$7.25. An account of the life of the authoress and her husband in north-central B.C. during 1937-41. There is an appendix of plants and animals observed; descriptions of plants, birds and insects are accurate and readable. The book is a delight. (Ages 11 up.)

BIRDS IN THEIR HOMES by Addison Webb and S. M. Kimball. Hard, \$4.00. Here is the way to interest your younger children in the lives of our common birds. It contains a balanced combination of description and drawings, and would be suitable for children from Grade III upwards, or for reading to younger children. An ideal gift for a younger child interested in birds.

THE "BEAUTIFUL CANADA" CALENDAR 1967. \$1.00. The same reliable collection of colourful Canadian scenes which has characterized this line for years. New — different — beautiful — Canadian!

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 1966

In your report, list the numbers of each species seen on the **ONE BEST DAY** between December 21 and January 2 (inclusive). In addition, list other species (number of individuals and date seen) between December 21 and January 2.

Send reports as soon as possible to
MRS. MARY HOUSTON
863 University Drive, Saskatoon.