

The Blue Jay Bookshelf

HOURS AND THE BIRDS: A SASKATCHEWAN RECORD. By R. D. Symons. 1967. University of Toronto Press, Toronto. 224 pp. Illus. by the author with black - and - white sketches and 17 paintings reproduced in colour. \$12.50. Available from the Blue Jay Bookshop, Box 1121, Regina, Sask.

Look for beauty and you will find it.

Robert Symons followed this directive. In *Hours and the Birds*, he shares the rewards of his seeking. Author, artist, ornithologist and rancher, few are the corners of this province of his adopted country that he has not penetrated, sketching, observing, and recording nature.

Half a century's harvest is contained in the book about those who neither sow nor reap, who share our Father's world. Intuitive brush and type illumine pages with incidents in a career of enviable variety and accomplishment.

Love for and intimate acquaintance with his subjects so intensifies impact that the reader meets the living bird in its accustomed place rather than as a mounted specimen. A human document, vital, enriching, stimulating.

To a sensitive naturalist the universe offers its wealth. He may gather the fruit of seed sown at its genesis. No season is dull, all weathers are one.

The author rejoices amid great congregations of birds. Family flocks hold his interest. Not least entrancing is the individual who, like Kipling's cat, "walks by its wild, lone self." Thousands of migrant wildfowl have thrilled him. He has camped beside the curlew on the wide open ranchland. He knows the plover of the Arctic tundra. His eye is intrigued, too, with the dull wee sparrow in the grass.

Definite beliefs are plain in the text: tree and flower protection, opposition to predator killing campaigns, preservation of parks against commercial exploitation and conviction that

future of our wildlife depends on increasing militancy on its behalf. Esthetic principles have a practical value and deserve more recognition in our materialistic civilization.

Hours and the Birds presents wild friends we may meet at work or play. Who know them not will realize how much of companionship, beauty and even grief—for nature lovers are often made to mourn—they have missed. The understanding reader lays down the lovely volume, his awareness heightened and pride increased in our heritage, the outdoor aviary that is Saskatchewan.—*Elizabeth Cruickshank, Regina*. Reprinted from *The Leader-Post*, January 27, 1968.

A TIME FOR FUN. By Kerry Wood. 1967. Published by the author. Box 122, Red Deer, Alberta. \$3.95. Post-paid autographed copies may be obtained directly from the author.

Have you wondered how you could use that piece of driftwood you picked up on your vacation? Have you ever wanted to try your hand at creating beautiful jewelry from pebbles and rocks? Did you know that you can create many exciting things from materials gathered outdoors summer and winter? Kerry Wood in his book *A Time For Fun* describes a number of different projects for people interested in handicrafts and hobbies.

He describes among other things how and where to look for Indian artifacts, how to make miniature kites "that will give pleasure to anyone whenever there is a wind blowing mares tails across the skies", how to make delightful bone-heads from vertebrae, candelabra, letter openers and lamp bases from a variety of woods, how to fry marbles, how to use horns and antlers, and even how to use branches of trees which have been infected with insect galls. And for vacation he gives instruction on the proper packing of a knapsack, the setting up of camps and a number of

simple methods for cooking outdoors.

This book with its black and white illustrations by Helen R. White will appeal to those interested in handicrafts and hobbies, particularly leaders of youth groups and teachers. Parents will find it a welcome gift to children who like collecting and building objects. This book gives a description of how to collect and finish a number of raw materials. Most of the hobbies described require time and effort but do have many rewards, and by participating in these hobbies you can discover a great deal about nature and can learn about plants and animals in their environment.

From the book you will discover that any time of year is *A Time For Fun*.—Gwen Jones, Regina.

AN ALBUM OF PRAIRIE BIRDS.
By Doug Gilroy. 1967. Modern Press, Saskatoon. 71 pp. with plates. \$3.50.

Every member will wish to purchase this new book, particularly if he has been fortunate enough to attend any of Doug Gilroy's illustrated lectures. Doug's 35mm. colour photographs have won prizes in international competitions and one appears each week with his nature column in the new colour section of the *Western Producer*. The Modern Press are to be congratulated for the fidelity of the good-sized reproductions of 33 of Gilroy's photographs that constitute this book. Only the White Pelican, Downy Woodpecker and Harris' Sparrow are a bit disappointing. One or two paragraphs of text, directed to the novice, accompany each photograph.

Doug's weekly column has for 14 years been one of the most widely read features in Western Canada's largest farm newspaper, reaching over 150,000 homes. The interest generated by such a column is inestimable, and it is an efficient carrier of the conservation message. This new book, at the very reasonable price of \$3.50, will help further an interest in nature among the rural population of the prairies. Congratulations, Doug!—C. Stuart Houston, Saskatoon.

OUTDOORS USA, 1967 Yearbook of Agriculture. Govt. Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. 408 pp. Illus. \$2.75.

This, the latest issue of the U.S. Department of Agriculture yearbooks, is a book that contains a wealth of information not only for the agricultural industry, but for all persons interested in conservation, natural history and the outdoors. Man's relationship with the world of nature is presented in an imaginative way. As the foreword states: "A mountain symbolizes man's goals, aspirations, and yearnings for a better life . . . From the mountaintop, we have a sweeping view of man's total environment—an environment we share with other living things."

The Yearbook is divided into four main sections. It starts out with a 32-page colour section. The remainder of the book is illustrated with photos and drawings to bring out the theme of each chapter, whether in conservation, natural history, or recreation.

Those of us interested in natural history will find the item on the Whooping Cranes interesting, as well as many other articles throughout the book. Although the book is primarily for Americans, we in Canada can transpose a great deal of the information for our own benefit.—Anthony J. Hruska, Gerald.

ALBERTA, A NATURAL HISTORY. This is a beautiful book with contributions from a large number of naturalists in Alberta on various aspects of the natural history of their province. Subsidized by the Alberta utility companies as a Centennial project, it has a handsome format and illustrations and would make an ideal gift. The first printing of the book has been sold out, and a second printing is now being undertaken, with the price, \$7.50. Orders for the second edition should be placed as soon as possible, with

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