

The Blue Jay Bookshelf

AMERICA THE RAPED. *The Engineering Mentality and the Devastation of a Continent.* 1969. By Gene Marine. Simon and Schuster, New York. 312 pp. Price \$6.95 (U.S.).

In one of the chapters of *America the Raped*, Gene Marine quotes the following comment from the *Milwaukee Journal*: "There have been enough studies. The major polluters are known, the job now is to get them to stop polluting." This bald and hard-hitting statement was made in 1966, but members of natural history societies and others concerned about conservation continue to be duped by promises to "study" conservation problems. Reading this book will remind them of what is actually happening to wild areas and recreation facilities while these studies are supposed to be "in progress."

As Marine sees it, the main threat to our environment is the philosophy of organizations that assume "they have the right to do anything we can't stop them from doing." The chapter headings are provocative invitations to examine the validity of this philosophy, for example: "The Effluent Society", "Everybody should Break an Ankle", "I gotta have my Road."

The devastation of an area like central and south Florida becomes for Marine "an uncaring and terrifying symbol of the triumph of the Engineers and the rape of America." Against the ruthlessness of the Engineer, even the most committed conservationist can do nothing: "America can't be saved from the Engineers in 77-acre batches bought by enthusiastic private citizens." Marine further insists that the engineering mentality shapes political policies and commercial development: "Politicians and businessmen, bemused by the dreams of the Engineers, remain blind not only to esthetics, but to economics" and Congressmen "build a dam . . . or vote for someone else's canal or dam . . . without even taking fifteen minutes to learn what the ecological consequences might be. Most of

them have yet to learn what the phrase 'ecological consequences' means."

Marine consistently capitalizes the word Engineer, and it is obvious that he sees the de-personalized Engineer as the main culprit in the rape of America. Without wishing to justify the "engineering mentality" as Marine defines it, the reader will be glad to recognize that there are many professional engineers genuinely interested in conservation. It is my personal feeling that the author gives the impression of having an unfortunate bias against *one* profession, whereas it is against the total uncritical pressure upon our environment that his criticism—and it is a valid one—should be directed.

The book is written in an open, readable style. Statements are amply supported by references to the findings of living scientists with well-established reputations. Read this book soon, order it for your school libraries. It is a sound guide for the preservation of our space ship "Earth".—James R. Jowsey, Regina.

PRONGHORN ON THE PINHORN GRAZING RESERVE. 1970. By H. C. Smith, D. A. E. Spalding and D. A. Taylor. Museum and Archives Notes No. 1. Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta, Edmonton. 4 pp. Free.

This leaflet is title No. 1 of the most recent extension publication series of the Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta. The format, easy style and extensive use of colour photographs all contribute to the attractiveness of the leaflet.

In addition to discussing the pronghorn and referring to typical mammals, birds, reptiles, and insects found on the Pinhorn Reserve in southern Alberta, the leaflet describes the geological features of the region, and the methods used by museum personnel in collecting materials for the pronghorn exhibit at the Provincial Museum.

In view of the planning involved in preparing this leaflet on the pronghorn, it is surprising that more care was not afforded the compilation of the facts and figures presented. The cover-page colour map of pronghorn distribution in the province fails to depict the former range in the Sundre area (Paliser's Journal . . . 1863), and neglects to show the current distribution of pronghorn in the Milk River Ridge region south of Lethbridge — a region where pronghorn are abundant and harvested during each legal season. Pronghorns are heavier than indicated, with mature males weighing 155 lbs. in late summer (Mitchell Ph.D thesis, 1965) and ranging from 91-133 lbs. during the hunting season. Other minor errors in the leaflet include the reference to the birth of young pronghorn in April and May, rather than May and June, and the omission of western wheat grass as one of the most characteristic grasses on the Pinhorn range. —George J. Mitchell, Regina.

THE MAMMALS OF JASPER NATIONAL PARK. ALBERTA. 1970. By J. Dewey Soper, Canadian Wildlife Service Report Series, No. 10. The Queen's Printer, Ottawa. 80 pp.

J. Dewey Soper, currently Honorary Research Zoologist at the University of Alberta and one of Canada's senior wildlife biologists, is widely known for his contributions to exact scientific knowledge. A rich background such as Soper's is undoubtedly an asset in the difficult task of gathering together detailed scientific descriptions in order to present them in a general work which can be read and understood by almost anyone interested in the subject. To increase the general reader's interest in his work, Soper takes information from the writings of such mammalogists as Ernest Thompson Seton, who wrote with the purpose of giving readers an insight into the nature of animals. This report systematically describes all the mammals known or believed to occur within Jasper National Park. It is the first attempt at the consolidation of such data.

The excellent format of the report

complements the author's clear and concise style of writing. A brief account of the park's colorful history precedes the informative descriptions of the mammals inhabiting the park. This historical background is made especially interesting and realistic through the inclusion of some personal observations of numerous fur traders and explorers. For example, Soper quotes John McLeod who, while traveling east through the Athabasca Pass with the express in late April of 1826, wrote in his diary concerning the tremendous depth of snow: "We clomb the pathless Pass, resting at night literally, at times, on the tops of the trees".

There is also a section devoted to naturalists "past and present" who have made contributions to the subject. The well-known Canadian naturalist William Spreadborough, for instance, captured a least weasel in the summer of 1898—to this day the only record for Jasper Park.

A brief summary of physical geography, climatic conditions and faunal life zones is also presented. Soper explains that the effects of such climatic factors as temperature, humidity, precipitation and sunshine on soil, vegetation, drainage, erosion, etc., determine the kinds of environment and the types of habitat available to the various animal species. Mammal distribution, for example, is thus more complex on the mountains than on the plains. Other factors involved are the kind of cover available, food requirements, predator-prey relationships and, with a number of species, the length of winter hibernation.

Many of the mammals listed for Jasper Park are also found to the north and south along the mountain range. Thus, a vacation to any Canadian mountain region affords an ideal opportunity to search out some of these species. As a member of an ecology field trip to Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park this past summer I was surprised at the ease of sighting and observing many of these mammals.

In total, 52 forms of native animals have been listed for the park. A challenge is extended in that five other

TERC AND THE PRINCESS

by Frank H. Brazier, Regina

species, though their presence is hypothetical, should eventually be found—the pygmy shrew, big brown and hoary bats, woodchuck and brown lemming. Wherever possible, Soper uses actual field results, and he includes in his bibliography an excellent list of published items concerning wildlife and related matters. In this way he provides an easy guide to more detailed information. To facilitate easy reading by all, each species is given an English vernacular name. This is followed by the scientific name in current use. For each species, Soper gives the subspecies, external measurements, weight, and status (relative abundance in the park), followed by a description of the habitat and method of reproduction, and some concluding general remarks. Once again, the use of quotations adds to the meaningfulness of the text. For example, Hollister (1912. *Four new mammals from the Canadian Rockies*. Smith. Inst. Misc. Coll. 56(26):1-4) is quoted as remarking on the marmots: "Crossing an alpine flat with its snow banks, boulders, and quiet, one is often startled by a sharp, shrill whistle . . . A search of the surrounding flat reveals a fat vigilant marmot, perched on a huge rock, and watching the intruder from a safe distance. The marmots are wary creatures and at the first whistle of alarm all the animals inhabiting the flat seek a safe place near the burrow entrance, ready to retire in a flash." I personally witnessed just what Hollister recorded, when I stopped with four members of the ecology class this past summer at the upper Carthew Lake, at an elevation of about 7800 feet.

The report is accurate and well-written. It gives you a good understanding of the mammals, and sends you out to make your own observations in the field, where you discover how fascinating these animals are. By enlisting our interest in these mammals, Soper's book also reminds us that preventive measures must be taken now to insure a future for our wildlife. We ourselves will not long be able to inhabit a place where wildlife cannot exist.—*Paul Hart, Regina.*

Recently, two new bird books came to hand simultaneously — *Warrior of the Skies* by John A. Giegling, and *Flashing Wings: The Drama of Bird Flight* by John K. Terres. The two are linked by a common theme, the superlative flight powers of those falconers' favourites, the Goshawk and the Peregrine.

Mr. Giegling gives us a real insight into the first year of life of a Goshawk through his story of Terc, a young male (tercel) hatched in Ungava, and Mr. Terres in his book illustrates his study of the phenomenon of bird flight time and again by reference to the flashing wings of his own Peregrine, the Princess. Accipiter and falcon are brought together and the flight differences between them most ably described by Mr. Giegling when Terc and a falcon spar during migration.

Terc's story is aimed at younger readers, who will respond readily to the imaginative approach of Mr. Giegling. Giving Terc a personality by attributing to the bird such human motives as revenge may be unacceptable scientifically today, but it engenders a bond of sympathy between young readers and Goshawks, and thus with all birds of prey. Children have not always been given such a sympathetic picture of the noble birds of prey. In fact, those who grew up on the stories of the great Thornton W. Burgess, for example, learned a warm regard for all the little creatures who inhabit field and forest, river and marsh, and the dangers they faced daily won their sympathy, but no sympathy was enlisted by Hooty the Owl, who provides a needed check on Peter Rabbit, Whitefoot the Wood Mouse, and Jerry Muskrat. Mr. Giegling is one of the few that have begun to present the other side of the story to young folk.

I recall a story current in the Cajun country of Louisiana which told of the effort to determine the world's most useful animals. The merits of the horse, cow and dog were advanced but

the palm went to the bull alligator because, as the Cajun raconteur explained, if it wasn't for his habit of eating alligator eggs whenever he got the chance, "We'd be fork-deep in alligators right now!" Similarly, if it wasn't for Terc and Hooty the Owl and their kind we'd be fork-deep in Peter Rabbits right now.

The story of bird flight is expanded in *Flashing Wings*. Mr. Terres (past editor of *Audubon Magazine*) has given us the results of a lifetime of patient observation of bird flight, supplemented from many authoritative sources, which are listed in an excellent bibliography. *Flashing Wings* is, of course, written for adults, but it is a splendid introduction to the wonder of bird flight for just that group of younger readers who would get so much out of *Warrior of the Skies*.

Mr. Terres gives scientific information skilfully by weaving personal adventures into his analytical study of bird flight. One feels that the author must be a warm and refreshing person after reading his moving account of his decision to return the Princess to the wild, her rightful home.

I once sat on a spring day observing myriad shorebirds feeding in a flooded field just south of Regina. I knew a Peregrine was nearby as I had earlier seen it sitting motionless on a clod of earth, doing what I was doing—bird-watching! Concentrating on the "peeps" and other waders, I had however forgotten the Peregrine, so I was totally unprepared for the sudden muted shriek as the falcon hurtled down right over me in the glorious, dramatic stoop that has ennobled the species in the eyes of man over the centuries. Terres likens the sound of the dive under the bird's full power to ripping canvas; and my impulse (that of the person who has once been at the target end of artillery shells) to throw myself to the ground at the sudden sound of the Peregrine's plunge, may give an idea of how it sounded to me.

Obviously flight contributes greatly to the success of birds as a class in the animal kingdom, but Terres points

out that there are also many dangers inherent in flight. We have all observed accidents that have happened to flying birds. I remember some years ago a utilities line in Moose Jaw holding the body of a Greater Yellowlegs for months, suspended by its bill. Evidently the bird had flown into the line and its bill had struck at precisely the point where one of the double wires looped around the other, forcing the bill between them and fatally trapping the bird.

To his own entertaining and instructive account of bird flight, the author has appended a list of source material that will be useful to the more serious student. One of the books that Terres recommends is a magnificent work on hummingbirds by C. H. Greenewalt which is regrettably out of print. However, from Germany comes something similar to fill the gap: *Hummingbirds* by Walter Scheithauer, in English translation. This is a delightful account, superbly illustrated by magnificent, high-speed colour photography of hummers in flight taken with the most technically advanced methods.

Warrior of the Skies. 1970. By John A. Giegling. Doubleday. New York. 135 pp. \$4.25.

Flashing Wings: The drama of Bird Flight. 1968. By John K. Terres. Doubleday. New York. 177 pp. \$5.95.

Humming Birds. 1967. By Walter Scheithauer, Tr. from the German. Crowell. New York. 176 pp. ca. \$12.

Saskatchewan Christmas Bird Count 1970

List the number of each bird species seen on the One Best Day from Tuesday, December 22, 1970 through Sunday, January 3, 1971. In addition, list other species observed during the above dates. See March 1970 *Blue Jay* for other details. Send reports as soon as possible to Mrs. Mary Houston, 863 University Drive, Saskatoon.