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# NATURE LIBRARY

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## WATCHING BIRDS: AN INTRODUCTION TO ORNITHOLOGY

ROGER F. PASQUIER. 1977.  
Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston. 301  
p. \$10.00.

Have you ever wondered what gives a feather its colour . . . what is the meaning of a bird's song? . . . how a bird navigates?

*Watching Birds* will give you the answers. This very readable book was written not simply to answer questions on birds but also to stimulate the bird watcher to ask and try to answer his own questions. Pasquier wrote *Watching Birds* for the bird watcher and the environmentalist as a guide to the main topics of ornithology, such as origin and evolution, flight, food and feeding habits, voice, breeding cycle, migration, winter habits, distribution. He also explains how and why birds are studied, the role that the amateur plays in bird study, how birds can be attracted and protected.

The book has an introduction by Roger Tory Peterson, 112 attractive black-and-white illustrations by Margaret La Farge, a suggested reading list of 101 books and an appendix listing ornithological and conservation organizations, their magazines and journals.

Pasquier gives many interesting pieces of information. We learn, for example, that birds use tools — the Woodpecker Finch of the Galapagos uses a thorn to probe for insects on trees, while the Egyptian Vulture uses stones, thrown with its bill, to

break open Ostrich eggs. Two unusual incubating techniques are treated. The hole-nesting hornbills of Africa and south Asia plaster mud over the entrance sealing in the female with her eggs; the male then feeds her through a hole in the mud. A second curious behaviour is that of the male megapodes of Australia, which spend the entire year tending a nest pile in which several females lay eggs. The male then buries them and adjusts the amount of sand, warm volcanic ash or rotting vegetation on the nest. Young megapodes hatch fully feathered and capable of flight. Of perennial interest is the question of bird navigation. How is one to explain, for example, that a Manx Shearwater released at Boston, 3,050 miles from its home in Wales, was back at its burrow in 12½ days.

*Watching Birds* is a book for the beginning bird watcher, to be used as a companion to the field guides, a book that ". . . will show you ways to consider your own observations and will encourage you to investigate further the life of birds in the environment we all share." — Reviewed by B. W. Johns, 51 Beurling Cresc., Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, S7H 4V6.

## RARE VASCULAR PLANTS OF SASKATCHEWAN

*The Rare Vascular Plants of Saskatchewan* has just been published by the National Museum of Natural Sciences as one of its "Syllogeus Series" on the rare plants

of the provinces. It is written jointly by R. A. Maher and G. W. Argus of the Rare and Endangered Plants Project of the National Herbarium, and V. L. Harms and J. H. Hudson of the W. P. Fraser Herbarium of the University of Saskatchewan. It is an annotated list with information on the distribution and habitats of the plants in Saskatchewan, their status in the rest of Canada and in the United States, and the legal protection afforded them. Provincial distribution maps and an extensive bibliography are included.

In the introduction, the aims of the Rare and Endangered Plants Project are discussed, and the phytogeography of rare plants and their protection in Saskatchewan is reviewed.

Copies are available free from The Rare and Endangered Plants Project, Botany Division, National Museum of Natural Sciences, Ottawa, K1A 0M8.

## NATURE AND CHANGE ON THE CANADIAN PLAINS

The proceedings of the 1977 Annual Meeting of the Canadian Nature Federation have been published by the Canadian Plains Research Center as *Nature and Change on the Canadian Plains*.

Editor W. A. Davies selected and edited papers to provide a comprehensive view of the Regina conference. The more than 200 page publication is available for \$7.00 from the Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, or the Blue Jay Bookshop.

## INLAND BIRD BANDING

The Inland Bird Banding Association is making a number of changes to their journal. It is now called *Inland Bird Banding*, and will be a quarterly refereed journal similar in format to the *Wilson Bulletin*. They are soliciting manuscripts less than 10 pages in length dealing with bird banding techniques and the results of bird banding studies. Please send material to the Editor, Jerome A. Jackson, Dept. of Biological Sciences, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, Mississippi 39762.

## BLUEBIRD MAGAZINE

Bluebird enthusiasts will welcome the formation of The North American Bluebird Society and their new magazine *Sialia*. The first 40 page issue carries a wide range of articles including a profile of the late John Lane of Brandon.

Memberships in the Society including a subscription to the quarterly journal are available for \$10.00 from Box 6295, Silver Springs, Maryland 20906.

## SUMMER MEETING AT EASTEND, SASKATCHEWAN

The 1979 annual summer field meeting will be held at Eastend, Saskatchewan on June 15-16, 1979. Guided trips and illustrated talks will help naturalists to become familiar with this section of southwestern Saskatchewan. Details of the meeting arrangements will be published in the Spring issue of the SNHS Newsletter.