

NATURE LIBRARY

A GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF VENEZUELA

RODOLPHE MEYER DE SCHAUENSEE
and WILLIAM H. PHELPHS JR. 1978.
Princeton University Press, Princeton
New Jersey. 423 pp. Cloth: \$50.00
Paper: \$19.95

When winter drags on and my spirits get so low that I have to be scraped off the floor with a putty knife, my wife has learned that a new field guide will improve my mood and make me more tolerable to live with. Through the pages of a field guide I have hiked in the foothills of the Himalayas, cut my way through the jungles of Indonesia and lunched beside a New Zealand fiord. I have visited every conceivable habitat and the birds I have come to know — well, even Roger Tory Peterson would be inspired.

Last winter, from my living room, I explored Venezuela. Manakins, toucans, cotingas, ant-thrushes and tyrant flycatchers all fell under scrutiny. An eerie cry drew my attention to the mouth of a cave. An oilbird emerged, navigating by echolocation, as it does every night to forage for fruit. Oilbirds are believed to be "possessed," their nocturnal habits and mysterious call arising from the entrapped souls of criminals and other miscreants.

On a frigid Saturday afternoon in

late February, with my sanity seriously threatened by winter, I decided to tramp the heavily forested lowlands and tally a few of the 97 species of hummingbirds found in Venezuela. Hovering makes great demands of these little birds and their heat loss is great. To compensate they must feed almost continuously on nectar, a high energy food. At night they become torpid and allow their body temperature to fall so that they can survive without feeding. My attention was drawn from a rufous-breasted sabrewing by movement in a nearby bush. Closer inspection confirmed it to be a hoatzin. What a lucky find! Among the birds of South America none is more bizarre than this 20th century Archaeopteryx. The hoatzin life cycle is a telescoped version of the story of evolution. Young birds have claws on their wings — evidence of their reptilian ancestry — which allow them to scramble through the trees and bushes.

Home to nearly 1300 species Venezuela is a bird watcher's mother lode. The authors of this book describe every species known to inhabit the country at present. Notes on appearance, habits, habitats, and nesting data make field as well as armchair discovery an easy matter for even the most basic enthusiast. Unfortunately a description of immature birds was omitted, but with so many species might have added confusion rather than clarity. Each avian family

preceded by a short account providing core information on the species to follow.

Both authors come well equipped for their task. Mr. Meyer de Schauensee has written *A Guide to the Birds of South America* and *Birds of Columbia*. I can attest to many enjoyable sessions spent with his South American guide. Co-author W. H. Phelps Jr., with 35 years field experience, has a broad knowledge of the avifauna of Venezuela (I wonder how many pairs of binoculars he has laid to rest?). Forty colour and 13 black-and-white plates plus many line drawings illustrate virtually all of the resident species of the country and I was pleased to find that females were included in many of the plates; there is nothing worse than a chauvinistic field guide! The line drawings of Michel Kleinbaum merit particular mention. I

have noticed in previous guides that migrants and other less glamorous species are either forgotten altogether or else depicted by drawings of questionable quality. Mr. Kleinbaum offers a refreshing, realistic interpretation of his subjects which contributes immensely to the overall impact of the book. As a field guide the book is large but not unmanageable and should interest the scientist as well as the amateur.

If you are fortunate enough to be considering a South American vacation or anticipate that next year the winter blues will have you contemplating an overdose of bird seed, consider *A Guide to the Birds of Venezuela*. You won't be disappointed. — Reviewed by Wayne Lynch, 1762 Kilborn Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1H 6N2

SUGGESTIONS FROM THE BLUE JAY BOOKSHOP

P. O. Box 1121, Regina, Sask S4P 3B4

Bob Symons speaks to us again! THE FIRST PEOPLE — drawings by Lee R. Updike, text by R. D. Symons: paper \$8.95; cloth \$14.95, 141 pp. 8x8¾, illus. by over 140 drawings by Weyburn artist and man of the cloth Lee R. Updike; a sensitive text written by Bob Symons enhances the fine artwork. Five Indian and Inuit life styles are illustrated and discussed.

BIRD BOOKS

AUDUBON BIRD GUIDES: Water, game, and large land birds of Eastern and Central North America, 380 pp., 623 illus. — 458 in col., 1951 — \$8.50. Land Birds (including owls) of Eastern and Central North America, 365 pp., 400 illus. in col., 1949 — \$8.50. Both vols. by R. H. Pough, col. illus. by Don Eckelberry, cloth. More general information than is usual in a field guide. A most satisfying set. (The Western Bird Guide covering the far west of North America is out of print.)

AUDUBON SOCIETY FIELD GUIDE TO NORTH AMERICA BIRDS, by J. Bull and J. Ferrand, 773 pp. (Eastern Region) about 600 illus. col., 1977 — \$9.75. (Western Region), by M. D. F. Udvardy, similar — \$9.75. Both vols. are 4"x7½", flexible cover, sewn binding. They have several unique features and rely exclusively on colour photographs for identification.

BIRDS OF MANITOBA by Ernest Thompson Seton, paper, 186 pp., 1975 facsimile of the Proceedings of the U. S. National Museum, Vol. 13, pp. 457-643, pub. in 1891. Introduction to this issue by Dr. Robert W. Nero. It was specially produced for the AOU Convention in Winnipeg, August 1975. A great deal of Saskatchewan data included. \$6.50.

BIRDS OF ALBERTA by W. Ray Salt & Jim R. Salt; 1976, 498 pp., 303 col. illus., 13 b.w. drawings, 388 maps, 5½x8½, \$10.00. A totally new book with an entirely new updated and expanded text covering 329

species. Range maps include Saskatchewan & Manitoba.

BIRDS OF CANADA by W. Earl Godfrey, 1966, 428 pp., 69 col. pl., 71 drawings, 2 maps, cloth, \$17.50. Describes every bird found in Canada. See the enthusiastic review by Dr. R. W. Nero in *Blue Jay*, March 1967.

BIRDS OF THE EARLY EXPLORERS IN THE NORTHERN PACIFIC by Theed Pearse, 1968, 275 pp., map, illus. \$7.95. An interesting book compiled from the records of Russian, Spanish, English, French and U. S. explorers.

BIRDWATCHER'S GUIDE TO WILDLIFE SANCTUARIES by Jessie Kitching, 1976, 233 pp., b.w. photos, paper, \$5.95. This unique guide describes most of the major and many of the smaller sanctuaries and refuges open to the public in the U. S. and Canada, their birds and environment. Most useful for the travelling birder.

BIRDWATCHER'S BIBLE by Geo. Laycock, 1976, 207 pp., 8½x11, profusely illus. col. and b.w., paper, \$3.95. All phases of birding are discussed in this comprehensive book, such as activities (recording songs, photography, precautions, hazards etc.), equipment (binocs., scopes, cameras, etc.), attracting birds (boxes, plantings, winter food, etc.), where to go, and ending with a N. A. life list. A fine gift for a beginner.

BIRDS OF THE CYPRESS HILLS AND FLOTTEN LAKE REGIONS, SASKATCHEWAN by W. Earl Godfrey, 1950, paper, 96 pp. 65¢. Two fine annotated checklists of Saskatchewan.

BIRDS IN BOREAL CANADA by A. J. Erskine, 1977, paper, 8½x11, 73 pp., illus. b.w. photos, \$5.00 Can. Wildlife Service Report No. 41 covers an 8-yr. period to assemble baseline data on the composition and density of the bird communities in various habitat types. These data, with other material from a variety of sources, now permit an overall review of the boreal avifauna, its composition, evolution, and prospects for survival.

BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA by C. S. Robbins et al, paper \$4.95, cloth \$8.95. This book, which describes every North American bird in colour is maintaining its extraordinary popularity. At current prices it is by far the best buy when compared with

other field guides. The clothbound guide will outlast any paperback.

CRUICKSHANK'S PHOTOGRAPHS OF BIRDS OF AMERICA by A. D. Cruickshank, paper, 8½x11, 1977, \$6.95, 182 pp. This collection of superb b.w. photos show 15 species and subspecies with a brief explanatory text.

FIELD GUIDES: To (Eastern) Birds, cloth \$9.50; **Western Birds**, cloth \$11.25, paper \$7.95. both by Roger Tory Peterson. **The Birds' Nests in the U. S. east of the Mississippi**, cloth \$8.75, by H. H. Harrison.

FIELD GUIDE TO THE NESTS, EGGS AND NESTLINGS OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS by Colin Harrison, illus. with 48 col. pl. of eggs and 16 pl. of nestlings and many line drawings. \$11.95.

FIFTY COMMON BIRDS OF OKLAHOMA and the southern Great Plains, by G. M. Sutton, cloth, 113 pp. 1977, 5x8¾, \$8.15. A full-page colour plate by Sutton of each bird faces the page of text about that bird. Of the 50 bird portraits shown, 36 are breeding birds of Saskatchewan.

FOGSWAMP: Living with Swans in the Wilderness, by Trudy Turner and Ruth McVeigh, 1977, 255 pp., illus. with col. and b.w. pl. \$9.95. The Trumpeter Swan was brought back from the edge of extinction. Much credit is due Ralph Edwards, Trudy's father.

PRAIRIE BIRDS IN COLOUR by Doug Gilroy, 1976, paper \$9.95; cloth \$14.95, 8½x8¾; More than 150 of Doug's fine photos make up this book, a must for everyone who enjoys hunting birds with a camera. 99 species are shown.

A TREASURY OF BIRDLORE by J. V. Krutch & P. S. Eriksson (Eds.), paper, 1977, 390 pp., illus. b.w. photos, \$7.95. This most readable anthology has been made available in paperback. The 80 essays by our best writers about birds make an incomparable introduction to the study and appreciative enjoyment of birds.

PLANT BOOKS

THE CARNIVOROUS PLANTS by F. E. Lloyd, 1942 (1976 Dover repr.), 352 pp., illus. with b.w. drawings, \$5.50. Only increasing in reputation since its first appearance in 1942, this book is the definitive study of the plants which capture and digest animal prey. The

thorough and scholarly work covers 450 species. For serious botanists.

COMMON WEEDS OF CANADA by G. A. Mulligan, 1976, paper, 138 pp., 5¼x8, \$5.90. A compendium of Canada's most common weeds, this handy, quick-reference guide will be useful for anyone who wants to know about weeds. Each weed is illus. in full colour.

CULTIVATING CARNIVOROUS PLANTS by A. A. Swenson, 1977, 160 pp., illus. b.w. photos 6¼x9½, cloth, \$8.95. Gardening authority Allan Swenson gives complete instructions on how to plant, cultivate and propagate specimens indoors or outdoors.

DEADLY HARVEST: A GUIDE TO COMMON POISONOUS PLANTS by J. M. Kingsbury, paper, 1965, 128 pp., illus. b.w. drawings, 5½x8¼, \$2.35. With the increasing popularity of using edible wild plants for food, it is only common sense to know thoroughly the dangerous wild plants. Included are antidotes, eradication and history.

EDIBLE WILD PLANTS by O. P. Medsger, 1939, paper, 323 pp., illus. b.w. drawings, 5½x8, \$4.50. A complete, authoritative guide to identification and preparation of North American wild edible plants.

FIELD GUIDE TO EDIBLE WILD PLANTS by E. Angier, 1974, 255 pp., paper, 5½x8¼, \$6.50. An all-colour identifier of more than 1000 edible wild foods growing in North America. The illustrations are full page, opposite the descriptive text. Species are arranged alphabetically by common names.

FIELD GUIDE TO THE GRASSES, SEDGES AND RUSHES OF THE UNITED STATES by J. Knobel, 83 pp., 1899 (Dover repr.) illus. drawings, paper, \$2.35. Over 370 of the most common species are accurately described. For the 1977 repr. the scientific and common nomenclature has been brought up to date and a new preface and index prepared by M. E. Faust.

HOW INDIANS USE WILD PLANTS FOR FOOD, MEDICINE & CRAFTS by F. Denmore, 1928 (Dover repr. 1974), 120 pp., paper, illus. b.w. photos, \$3.25. Describes the uses of plants by the Chippewa Indians of Minnesota and Wisconsin.

WILDFLOWERS ACROSS THE PRAIRIES by Denton Vance, James Jowsey and James McLean, 1977, 214 pp., 5¾x8¾, cloth

\$14.95, NEW SEWN PAPERBACK \$9.95. The illustrations of the 270 species described have been carefully selected to permit identification by comparison with the plant in the field. Its extraordinary popularity attests to its success.

CAREX IN SASKATCHEWAN by John H. Hudson, 1977, paper, 8½x11, mimeo, 193 pp. \$10.00. This is a book for the serious botanist. The Research Assistant, W. P. Fraser herbarium, University of Saskatchewan, has combined keys, descriptions, range maps and photographs of the commoner species, into a volume that will be welcomed by everyone interested in sedges.

OTHER NATURAL HISTORY BOOKS

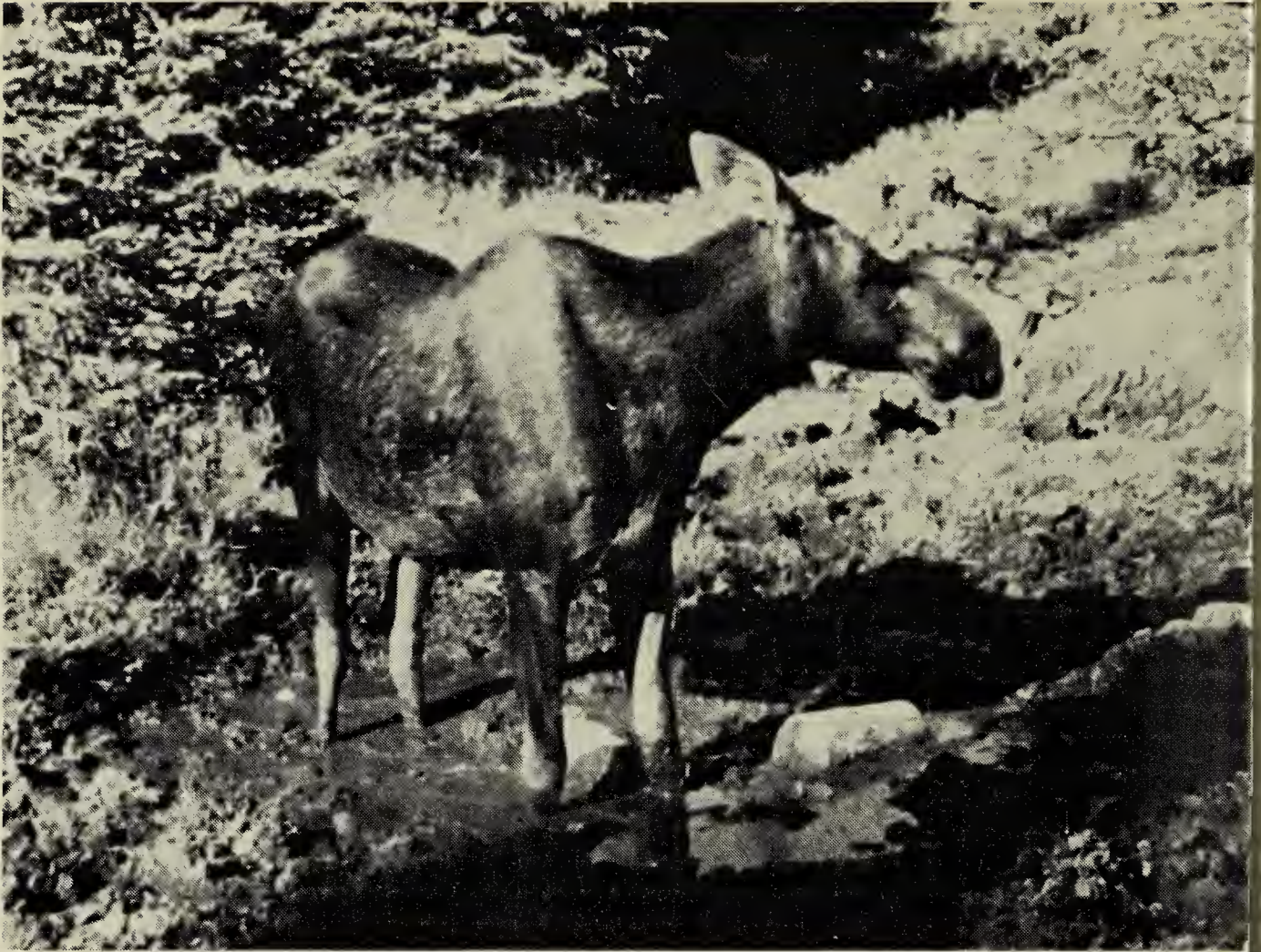
THE AMATEUR NATURALIST'S HANDBOOK by V. Brown, 1948, 473 pp. 4¾x7, cloth, illus. with drawings, \$6.50. An extraordinarily comprehensive book for young people. It is divided into four sections: The Beginner, The Student, The Advanced Student and Becoming an Explorer-Naturalist. Animals, plants, rocks and minerals, are all considered.

BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO FRESH-WATER LIFE by L. A. Hausman, 1950, cloth, 4¾x7½, 128 pp., illus. drawings, \$4.15. A handy reference to the most common forms of animal life found in swamps, pools, ponds, lakes, brooks, and larger streams of North America.

THE CONTROVERSIAL COYOTE: Predation, Politics, and Ecology, by L. Pringle, 1977, cloth 84 pp., illus. b.w. photos, 6½x9¼, \$7.75. Villain? Invaluable Predator? Both? Can we have both coyotes and sheep in abundance? Pringle writes with clarity and balance.

FROM DUCK LAKE TO DAWSON CITY: The Diary of Eben McAdam's Journey to the Klondike 1898-1899. Interested in science and art, perceptive and articulate, McAdam has given us a vivid chapter of our past as worked out by Editor R. G. Moyles from "The McAdam Collection" at the University of Alberta.

FROZEN FIRE by J. Houston, 1977, cloth, 149 pp., \$6.95. A story for children. A white boy and his Inuit friend go off from Frobisher Bay by snowmobile to search for his lost father. The story of the struggle is based in part on a true and perilous journey made by an Inuit boy.



Moose

J. B. Goll

Prairie rattlesnake

Wayne Lyn



A HISTORY OF THE ORIGINAL PEOPLES OF NORTHERN CANADA by K. J. Crowe, paper, 1974, 226 pp., \$3.75. A history of the Indian and Inuit of northern Canada interpreted from a native standpoint.

THE HOT-BLOODED DINOSAURS: A Revolution in Palaeontology, by A. J. Desmond, cloth 7x10, 238 pp., illus., \$5.95. A palaeontologist, the author could not believe that the dinosaurs, particularly the giants, were cold-blooded lizards and has produced convincing argument to the contrary.

NAHANNI by Dick Turner, cloth, 1975, 286 pp., illus., \$8.95. The author arrived in the Nahanni country in the early 1930's and survived as trapper, trader, river-man, gold-miner and bush pilot. A vivid account of a way of life now gone.

NATURE'S ODDBALLS by L. Zappler, cloth, 1978, 148 pp. illus. 6½x9½, \$6.50. With fascinating descriptions and unusual photographs we are introduced to those animals which defy classification and grouping. A fine gift for a young naturalist.

NATIVE TREES OF CANADA by R. C. Hosie. 1969, 380 pp., 6½x9¾, paper, illus. \$6.00. About 140 species are described.

NEW FIELD BOOK OF NATURE ACTIVITIES AND HOBBIES by W. Hillcourt. 1970, cloth, 400 pp. illus. 5x7½, \$8.95. Absorbing activities and hobbies such as photography, field study, collections, raising insects, aquaria, weather recasting, star-gazing, etc.

NORTH AMERICAN MOOSE by R. L. Peterson, 1955 (repr. 1978), paper, 280 pp., 9, illus. b.w. photos, \$13.50. This is still the most comprehensive work available on the moose. It brings together a detailed review of published literature and the results of the author's personal studies in the field and laboratory. It continues to provide the basis for a sound management programme for the moose's continued conservation.

VENOMOUS REPTILES by S. A. Minton and R. Minton, 1969, cloth, 274 pp., illus. 6½x9, \$2.65. In this lively and authoritative account, the authors describe venomous reptiles as they are, and as men believe them to be. They offer a lucid summary of scientific knowledge about these reptiles, including their own research.

WALK INTO WINTER by G. Wolfram. 1977, paper, 127 pp., 5½x8½, illus., \$4.50. This is a complete snowshoeing and winter camping guide. Everything the individual or family need to know about snowshoeing and camping out.

MISCELLANEOUS

MAPS: Land Capability for Waterfowl, scale 1 in. = 15.78 miles, Alberta, Sask. Manitoba each province \$1.50.

Land Capability for Ungulates, scale 1¼ in. = 5 miles; Melfort, Hudson Bay, Yorkton, each 50¢. Land Capability for Waterfowl, same scale; Swan Lake, Medicine Hat, each 50¢; Land Capability for Recreation, same scale; Regina, Willow Bunch Lake, Weyburn, Pasquia Hills each 50¢. (Many others available)

FIELD GUIDE JACKETS of heavy, clear vinyl — preserve your expensive field guides — Standard (fits Audubon, Peterson, Robbins soft) \$1.85; Large (fits Robbins hard cover only) \$1.85.

AUBREY BEARDSLEY BOOKPLATES; identify your books with these elegant Art Nouveau designs. 122 plates, 12 designs (florals, knights, angels and beautiful women) from the pen of the 19th Century's young genius. \$2.35.

RECORDS: Cries of the Wild; Land of the Loon — \$6.50 (These are by Dan Gibson). Sounds of Nature series by Bill Gunn: Songs of Spring; Warblers; Finches; Thrushes, Wrens & Mockingbirds; Prairie Spring; each \$6.95.

Saskatchewan residents add 3% E. & H. Tax for all Miscellaneous items above; 10% discount for Sask. Members; no postage required.

SNHS ANNUAL MEETING

October 13-14, 1978
at Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan
Banquet Speaker — Doug Gilroy
See Newsletter for details.