

HISTORICAL ATLAS OF CANADA, VOLUME 1

HARRIS, R.C. and G. J. MATTHEWS. 1987. University of Toronto Press. 198 pp. 11x15 in. 69 double page colour plates; cloth, \$95.

My initial reaction was to revel in this book; it was just too beautiful to want to read the adjacent small print. Once over my euphoria, I began to skip about and read snippets of text and began to wonder about life in preconquest Quebec City and if I ever walked along a prehistoric trade route.

The majority of maps have a wealth of information without being cluttered; a very difficult task to achieve.

The text unfolds as curtains opening an historical stage. We first see a map of the last ice sheets 12,000 years ago. As the scene recedes we note in the next plate the advent of the Fluted Point People. We know very little about them. All that remains of their existence is scraps and chips of rocks and bones. To the knowledgeable archeologist these are traces of planned human endeavour and purposeful tool making unlike that of any other beast, but man, on earth.

Over time the climate changes and the ice is replaced with vegetation. There is now more evidence of human activity. Activity which points to more complex technology and the beginnings of special- and hunting and food-gathering techniques.

This first section titled "Prehistory" is made up of 18 separate numbered coloured plates. The plates are made up of both cartographic representations, written footnotes and descriptive charts.

The next group of plates, numbers 19-32, fall in the section titled "Atlantic Realm," deal with the early European fishery off the coast of North America and the first tentative footholds of whitemen on the adjacent land mass. Following are plates 33-44 outlining the "Inland Expansion." Here we note from one ethnocentric viewpoint, the inland incursions of the French bringing fur trading and the fear of God to the native peoples. From another perspective one may see the upset of well established trading patterns and the introduction of apocalyptic plagues upon the innocent, white disease and native population decimations. The period ends with the military defeat of both French and Indians by the British.

Plates 45-56, "The St. Lawrence Settlements" present the settlement of Quebec as the economy diversified to include both fur trading and farming. Vestiges of the images presented by these plates are still evident today when one visits Quebec City and the surrounding countryside.

Of particular interest to the Westerner is the section titled "The Northwest." It deals with that area of Canada that we today call Western Canada. Given that the mandate of the Atlas is Canada prior to 1800 this section of the text outlines the activities of the fur traders. Missing from

these snapshots of Rupert's Land is a description of the settlement patterns of the Indians of this region before the advent of the fur trade. While I can sympathize with the authors' intense desire not to speculate on our past, and only deal with what is known for certain, I would have liked to have found out how the fur trade with its purposeful introduction of firearms and the chance acquisition of horses changed the balance of power between the tribes and the territories that they occupied. While this view of the Northwest may be missing, Plate 61 gives you a very succinct description of the growing competition between the Hudson's Bay and the Northwest companies. One can easily visualize from this plate how over time the Northwest Company encroached on the London based company's official monopoly cutting it off from its sources of furs. Similarly, one can note how the Hudson's Bay Company counter-attacked the Montreal based engrates and eventually grabbed back more territory than they originally claimed.

The final plates, Plates 68 and 69, "Canada in 1800," are a synopsis of white settlement and native Canadian distribution at the end of the 1700s.

Overall, the Historical Atlas is a commendable effort dealing with a number of topics and epochs in a logical and contiguous manner. And while maintaining rigorous standards of scholarship, the document never falls into the depths of hyper-academic exactitude.

This book is the first of a three volume set. I look forward to Volume Two: the 19th century, and Volume Three: the 20th century. In concert these texts will weave a fabric representing the circumstances of ordinary life in Canada. — Reviewed by *Martin Bailey*, 3634 McCallum Avenue, Regina, Saskatchewan. S4S 0S5

HOME PLACE — ESSAYS ON ECOLOGY

STAN ROWE. 1990. NeWest Publishers, Edmonton. 253 pp.; \$14.95 paper.

This book is a collection of thought-provoking essays on the state of the world in which we live. I think the author summarizes the contents of this book very well when he states that "The common theme of these essays is that you and me, we people, have evolved, grown in numbers and intelligence, developed values and cultures, all within a nurturing global Ecosphere that is neither well known nor deeply appreciated." This book certainly broadens one's environmental conscience.

Most of these essays have been published elsewhere in magazines and books and one might expect such a compilation to be disjointed and incoherent. Quite the opposite is true. *Home Place* presents groups of well chosen essays under the headings of Virgin Prairie, Farewell; Facing Reality: Growing Up; Strictly Academic; Agriculture; Trade and Travel. Although this book covers a great diversity of topics, Dr. Rowe's writing style is consistently readable regardless of one's background or interests.

Although I had read some of these essays before (and most of you will have, too — such as "Beauty and the Botanist," published in the June 1982 *Blue Jay*), reading them in context of a series of related essays made them enjoyable, thought provoking and most of all, very educational. I recommend that you read this book and gain an insight into what we have done and where we are going on this earth on which our lives depend — our Home Place. — Reviewed by *Wayne C. Harris*, Box 414, Raymore, Saskatchewan. S0A 3J0

BIRDS OF THE CANADIAN ROCKIES

GEORGE W. SCOTTER, TOM J. ULRICH, and EDGAR T. JONES. 1990. Western Producer Prairie Books, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. 170 pp., illus. colour and b/w, maps, paper \$22.95.

Prairie Books has a reputation for producing good books. Alas, something has gone amiss with this volume. Perhaps because of the technical requirements of an ornithological text, the publishers were unable to find an editor with the expertise needed to vet this book properly. That would not account, however, for the many grammatical errors. A mixture of singular and plural in the species accounts often makes the grammar awkward and confusing. There are some misspelled words. For example, "specules" should read "spicules" in the Osprey account. More importantly, the style of writing itself is stilted and lacks grace; sentence structure is slipshod and ill-balanced.

The introduction is the highlight of *Birds of the Canadian Rockies*. It is essential that the reader studies it carefully before attempting to use this book. It lays out the format, delineates the limits of the territory covered, explains a bit of the geology of the area, sets out the terms of status and abundance and explains the system used to "idiot-proof" the distribution code. There is useful information on bird-watching and tips on where and when to find birds. The reader is directed to the maps, which are well done, and to the glossary and diagram of bird parts, so very helpful. The book covers some 100 of the 315 bird species which occur in the Canadian Rockies but a checklist at the back includes all species recorded in the area, along with locations and status. The checklist can also be used by visitors to record species seen. There is a list of selected references, separate in-

stances of common and scientific names and brief biographies of each author. Indeed, if the whole book were as well done as these sections of it, the reader would be well served.

The photographs are clear, bright and useful for identification, and some are lovely just to look at. There are a few problems, however. A Short-billed Dowitcher has been labelled Long-billed Dowitcher. The duck captioned Lesser Scaup looks suspiciously like Greater Scaup. In some cases, the addition of sex or age labels on the photos would have been helpful, since not all the pictures are of males in breeding plumage as the introduction advises us. An example of this is the photograph of the Swainson's Hawk; beginners to birding looking at an adult hawk could easily be confused by the immature plumage depicted here.

The main body of the book is comprised of species accounts, arranged following the sequence of the AOU Check-list. Photographs face the texts. Common and scientific names are given, with measurements, family relationship and distribution. Most of the plumage descriptions are of breeding adults. This is not enough; descriptions of males, females and immatures are essential for identification of most birds. What is the purpose of this book? It cannot function as a field guide without complete descriptions of plumages. If it is not to be a field guide, plumage descriptions should be omitted and emphasis placed on habitat, behaviour or some other aspect of bird study.

The reader of *Birds of the Canadian Rockies* can be confused by a series of apparently contradictory statements regarding species in certain groups of birds. For example, in the account of the Northern Harrier, where the author states that "when soaring, this harrier holds its wings decidedly elevated above the body instead of almost horizontal as other

hawks do." Indeed, the harrier does do this, but so does the Swainson's Hawk. Nothing is said about the flight pattern of the Swainson's Hawk in its account. However, in the description of the Red-tailed Hawk, the Swainson's is acknowledged to have a "somewhat upward tilt" to its wings while soaring. Hawk identification is very difficult at the best of times; the ambiguities of this text make a difficult task even harder. Similar problems occur in the comparison and identification of other groups of birds treated in this volume.

This book is not a field guide. However, judiciously used in conjunction with a good field guide, it can be a pleasant companion during a birding trip to the Canadian Rockies. — Reviewed by *Carol Bjorklund*, 3634 McCallum Avenue, Regina, Saskatchewan. S4S 0S5

RETURN OF THE WHOOPING CRANE

ROBIN W. DOUGHTY. 1989. University of Texas Press, Austin. 182 pp., illus. colour, maps, cloth \$xx.xx

The plight of the Whooping Crane and its rescue from near-certain extinction (only 16 birds were left in the migratory flock in 1942) has caught the attention of the world. Much has happened in the 24 years since Faith McNulty published *The Whooping Crane: The Bird that Defies Extinction*. Robin Doughty brings us up-to-date on the Whooping Crane story, with an informative and sumptuously illustrated book.

The success story is that of the wild flock that breeds in and near Wood Buffalo National Park and winters in and

near Aransas Refuge in Texas. These cranes are carefully monitored and protected at both ends of their flight thanks to cooperation between the two governments concerned, and to a lesser extent during their migration.

Careful, well-planned studies at Wood Buffalo determined that most pairs lay and hatch two eggs, but are rarely capable of rearing two young. This justified collection of one egg from each nest, every second year. Fortuitously, and somewhat contrary to genetic theory, the Wood Buffalo crane pairs produced, on average, more young when they tried to raise only one young than when they tried to raise two. The extra egg was taken either to augment the captive flock at Patuxent Refuge, Maryland, or for use at Gray's Lake, Idaho, where a Whooping Crane egg was substituted for a Sandhill Crane egg.

The team at Wood Buffalo, led by Ernie Kuyt of the Canadian Wildlife Service, landed at each nest by helicopter to band most of the young and place both aluminum and color bands above the bird's knee, not on the tibiotarsus where bands are placed for shorter-legged species. A tiny blood sample taken at the time allowed chromosome karyotyping to determine the sex of each bird. Banded individuals are followed throughout their lifetime to determine the age when breeding begins and which pairs are the most successful, year after year.

The only well-meaning intervention that seemed to have harmed the young cranes was in 1981-83, when radio transmitters were attached to the legs of 15 young, 12 of whom died, whereas four of five banded but without radios survived. The "big jump" occurred in 1984 when 15 young made the southward migration trip successfully, followed by 16, 21, 25 and 19 in the four succeeding years. In December 1988 there were a record 138 cranes in the wild flock.

The captive breeding program at Patuxent, planned to allow propagation and return of cranes to augment the wild population, has been a disappointment. The first six eggs from Wood Buffalo were transferred to Patuxent in 1967, with production of five young that year. With development of artificial insemination techniques, 93 Whooping Crane eggs were laid at Patuxent; 35 were fostered at Gray's Lake, augmenting the eggs from Wood Buffalo, and 18 were raised for the Patuxent breeding stock. At first the chicks had too little exercise, grew too fast, and often died of skeletal deformities as a result. Seven of the cranes, mostly breeding-age females, died of equine encephalitis in 1984. In 1988, there were still only 46 cranes in the Patuxent captive population, and reproductive performance has declined. No cranes have been returned to the wild. Recently the captive flock has been split, sending some to the International Crane Foundation facility at Baraboo, Wisconsin.

The highly-touted experiment of fostering eggs into nests of Sandhill Cranes was first promulgated by the late Fred Bard of the Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History. In spite of intelligent and well-directed effort led by Rod Drewien, who had done his thesis on the Sandhill cranes at Gray's Lake, Idaho, the Gray's Lake program has been a disaster. This program to develop a second population of Whooping Cranes began in 1975, set out 277 eggs, yet reached a high of only 38 individuals in 1984, with a drop to 16 in 1988. There was a disproportionate mortality for females, many killed by predators, fences and powerlines. No breeding pair formation has occurred and no eggs have been laid. The Gray's Lake experiment has been given up as a failure. Future releases may be in Florida, to begin a sedentary flock.

In spite of the success of the wild flock, beyond the expectations of most of us, the breeding and wintering areas are both

small and near capacity. A single storm or toxic spill at either site could wipe out most of the wild flock. A second population would still be good insurance.

This definitive work on the Whooping Crane contains seven excellent maps, seven informative tables, and 30 breathtakingly beautiful color photographs, some two pages wide. I wish the index were a bit better — you cannot find the earliest age of breeding from the Index. Otherwise, the University of Texas Press has spared no expense to make this the best book possible. Read it, enjoy it, and treasure it. — Reviewed by *C. Stuart Houston*, 863 University Drive, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. S7N 0J8

WILDERNESS ALBUM SERIES, NATURE STORIES FOR CHILDREN

Sterling Publ. Co., Inc., Hyperion Press,
Winnipeg, Man. 8.9 x 11.4" \$. paper.

The following books in this series were reviewed by children between the ages of 9 and 13.

DINOSAURS

G.E. LAMMERS.

I like this book because of how the story is laid out and on the bottom of the page how it tells about a dinosaur or dinosaurs. Almost all of the titles are good, but ornamentation; how could a child know what that meant?

The pictures are also very good. They look like real dinosaurs and they have a nice background. You can also color them if you wish. I really like the cover: it is drawn nicely and has nice colors on it.

The book could have shown how to pronounce the names of the dinosaurs.

I like how it was in Canada instead of some far off place. I also like how it was about Drumheller and the Tyrell Museum. When we were coming home from Edmonton we stopped at Drumheller to see the museum.

I like the book and I would buy it. —
Reviewed by *Suzanne Zimmer*.

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

R.E. WRIGLEY.

I thought the book *Reptiles and Amphibians* was very interesting. From the information I found out many things I didn't know. I thought the drawings were very well done. They are more than just a picture of the reptile or amphibian, they show what type of a place they live in and sometimes what kind of food they eat.

My favorite type of amphibian is the Tiger Salamander. I found out that the Tiger Salamander is related to the Mole Salamander because they spend a lot of time underground, and that the Tiger Salamander is almost never seen.

My favorite kind of reptile from the book is the Painted Turtle. I learned that the Painted Turtle hibernates from October until March, and it eats frogs and worms.

I also like the part about the Coral Snake. Now if I ever see one I will know that it is poisonous by remembering the poem from the book:

Red on yellow,
kill a fellow;
red on black,
venom lack. — Reviewed by *Anemone L. Harris*, Box 414, Raymore, Saskatchewan. S0A 3J0

WILD EDIBLES

Compiled by Mary E. Hamilton. Art by Teddy Cameron Long.

This is a coloring book. It has interesting pictures and stories. It is very useful and handy. It gives me interesting information on edible plants. The pictures are drawn very well and the stories are very well written. It is very helpful with edible plants. Some names are Bog Cranberry, Wild Mint, Giant Puffball, Sunflower, Box Elder, Dandelion and more. The stories tell what parts of the plants you can eat. There is even a recipe for Uncooked Strawberry Jam made from wild strawberries. If there are plants that look alike which are poisonous there are pictures of them, too.

The list of contents tells you what page the plants are on. That makes it easy to find them to check on the information. Besides the stories there is a section on how big they are, what color they are and where to find them. They tell you what color they are for the pictures in the coloring book. There is lots of information but some of the words are too hard. They do not show the flowers for all of the plants. I would like to know what they look like.

The cover has different plants on it and is very colorful, too. This is a good size for a coloring book, but the cover doesn't stay together very well. I have used the book lots. There are different books in the Wilderness Album Series. I would buy them if I could. — Reviewed by *Valeriana L. Harris*, Box 414, Raymore, Saskatchewan. S0A 3J0