

## DINOSAUR COUNTRY: UNEARTHING THE BADLANDS' PREHISTORIC PAST

RENIE GROSS 1982 Western Producer  
Prairie Books, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.  
128 pp.

Although many books have been written about dinosaurs in the past 2 decades, not one has specialized in the fossils of Alberta. The last major book on the subject was Charles H. Sternberg's *Hunting Dinosaurs in the Bad Lands of the Red Deer River*, privately printed in the early part of this century. *Dinosaur Country* breaks the long frozen ground by discussing not only the fossils from Alberta, but how the animals lived and died, the environment, the geology of the region, and practically everything you have ever wanted to know the about dinosaurs of Alberta.

One draw-back of this book, however, is that it discusses again *all* the different dinosaurs from the Late Cretaceous of Alberta. Several chapters are devoted to this, and I suppose it's unavoidable. But if you have read one popular dinosaur book, you already know what is written in the rest of them. However, Gross's ap-

proach is to put the story of dinosaurs in an Alberta context, and with her novelistic writing style, it doesn't seem as boring as it could be.

Fossil collecting in western Canada has been quite extensive and though Gross treats the history of this subject at some length, a few people are overlooked. While high ranking palaeontologists like Barnum Brown, Lawrence Lambe, Henry Fairfield Osborn, E.D. Cope and the Sternberg family (the father Charles H., sons George, Levi and Charles M.) are noted, no mention at all is made of the extensive work by Loris Russell who has contributed immensely to the knowledge of dinosaurs and other fossils, not just of Alberta but of all of Canada since 1926 (this was the year of his first published paper which was on a new species of mammal from the Paleocene of Alberta) and who is still actively working on fossils from western Canada.

In summary, this book has character, is well thought out and should be popular with people who have an interest in dinosaurs. It has been over 50 years since C. H. Sternberg's book appeared, and it will probably be a while yet before another is published. — Reviewed by *Tim T. Tokaryk*, Earth Sciences, Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History, Wascana Park, Regina, Saskatchewan. S4P 3V7

## FLORE DES CHAMPIGNON AU QUEBEC

RENE POMERLEAU 1980 Bibliotheque Nationale du Quebec. 652 pp. hardcover \$65.00

Mushroom Flora of Quebec is available in French only. It has 131 plates of line drawings and about 100 color plates, contains descriptions of 1400 species of fleshy fungi under the headings of historical background, nature of mushrooms, forms and structures, anatomy, colors and color tables, distribution, classification of odors, intoxication, toxicology, therapy and cultivation.

Each species has a list of names by different authors, a list of common names in French and the name in English. There are also detailed descriptions. At the back is an alphabetic index, glossary and bibliography.

This book is not too difficult to use with elementary French and a dictionary. — Reviewed by *Anthony Capusten*, 1139 River Street West, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. S6V 3A2

## THE CANADIAN ENCYCLOPEDIA

JAMES H. MARSH, Editor in Chief 1985 Hurtig. 2089 pp. 3 vol. hardcover \$175.00

"A solid, well intentioned, but much flawed beginning," quotes Charles Haines' review. This brickbat notwithstanding the article on the Geology of Canada is instructive. Of special interest to naturalists are the items on birds, fungi, insects, mammals and plants.

There is an article on hawks by Richard Fyfe and one on owls by C. Stuart Houston. Omissions are regrettable but understandable when the text had to be reduced to a third. The text is absorbing, illustrations good. — Reviewed by *Anthony Capusten*, 1139 River Street West, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. S6V 3A2

## THE WILDLIFE GARDENER

JOHN V. DENNIS. 1985. Alfred A. Knopf, New York. 293 pp., 65 drawings by Matthew Kalmenoff. Appendix. Hardcover \$25.50 (\$17.95 U.S. funds).

Have you ever wondered how to attract more wildlife to the place where you live? Perhaps you would like to see more butterflies in your yard, or have hummingbirds, chipmunks or even a toad visit more regularly? Perhaps you have been unsure whether a tree, shrub or flower in your garden is worth keeping, or wondered whether another plant might attract more wildlife? Dennis draws on his own experience and that of others to help answer these questions. This book is primarily directed to gardeners and amateur naturalists who have their own yards.

In the introduction and the first two chapters "Planting for Wildlife" and "Water — Key to More Wildlife" we learn about basic principles for successful wildlife gardening. Most of the ideas are "neither difficult to follow nor at odds with good landscaping." We can use plants to create edges, islands or screens: pruning if done judiciously can improve the usefulness of a tree for woodpeckers; selective weeding can leave food plants for butterflies or moths in their larval stages. Water, from a simple dripping tap to an elaborate pond, will attract far more forms of life than we dreamed were at our doorstep. Think of the birds that need

something as simple as mud to build their nests each year (robin, phoebes, barn swallows) and which benefit from our efforts to water the garden in dry weather.

Gardening for birds is the topic of the next three chapters: "Food Plants," "Nesting Sites" and "Attracting Hummingbirds." Plants providing valuable supplemental food in fall and winter are emphasised and plants which have harboured 10 or more nesting species are listed. For example, hawthorns, apple trees and dogwoods combine excellent food and shelter value in one plant. Because "nearly everyone who feeds birds sooner or later tries his hand at seducing hummingbirds" a detailed explanation (and lists) of plants preferred by hummers is given. Some good advice on hummingbird feeders is also helpful. Although the Saskatchewan gardener may at first be disappointed that many plants given by Dennis do not grow here, there are a surprising number which do grow well.

The next chapter, "Entertaining the Mammals," deals with the behavior and ecology of mammals, and numerous hints are given to the gardener for attracting mammals and dealing with problem visitors.

Insects are covered in four chapters on bees, butterflies, moths and other insects. Again much information is given on the lives of insects. Lists of plants attractive to larval butterflies and to a lesser extent moths are presented; 12 of 25 butterflies treated in detail occur in Saskatchewan. Dennis makes a plea for avoiding chemicals to control pest insects and provides an interesting list of species of insects which control our most damaging insect foes. The gardener can be amazingly successful in attracting a large number of insects, a commonly overlooked form of wildlife; one observer found 1,401 species in his small yard in New Jersey.

Earthworms are treated in one short chapter. This should be of special interest to those gardeners who love their compost heap.

The final chapter deals with reptiles and amphibians, and their ecology. While Saskatchewan has relatively few species of reptiles and amphibians it makes interesting reading. Every gardener will be pleased to know that toads love to eat cutworms!

The appendix covers 213 species of plants for the garden and their uses as food plants for wildlife. It is usefully cross-indexed. The bibliography includes 93 sources which may be helpful to the gardener. Some you may be able to borrow through your local library.

Perhaps the strongest feature of this book is that it helps us observe all forms of wildlife in our gardens. The rather large amount of general information provided on many groups of wildlife serves to show us their interrelationships with one another. Many of us enjoy watching birds and butterflies but when was the last time we watched an earthworm, dragonfly or a snake? I would like to have seen more of the ideas graphically illustrated as was done in the National Wildlife Federation's *Gardening with Wildlife* (1974).

Dennis (the author of two other books, *A Complete Guide to Bird Feeding*, and *Beyond the Bird Feeder*) has made a strong effort to make this book valuable to gardeners and naturalists across North America. It will be a useful source of information to those who want to attract wildlife to their garden, be it an urban apartment, balcony or a rural acreage. — Reviewed by *Philip S. Taylor*, 1714 Prince of Wales Avenue, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. S7K 3E5

## GUIDE TO OWL WATCHING IN NORTH AMERICA

DONALD S. HEINTZELMAN 1984 Winchester Press, New Jersey. 144 pp. illustrated 4 3/4 x 8 1/4 in. \$8.95 (US) paperback

The publisher indicates that "This is much more than a field guide! For the first time — here is an inexpensive, compact, truly comprehensive, illustrated manual covering all aspects of owl watching: observation methods, equipment, distribution, migrations, species accounts, nesting and feeding habitats and checklist of North American owls."

This is a gross overstatement. I found the book full of mistakes, misleading, incomplete and certainly not comprehensive. Let me elaborate. The most blatant error and the one that irks me most is that the title says North America yet the book only covers the continental United States and Canada. Mexico and south to the Panama Canal are excluded as is the Caribbean; thus only 19 of the 41 species listed by the American Ornithologists' Union's *Check-list of North American Birds* are treated in detail. (The Oriental Scops-Owl is mentioned as accidental in Alaska.) Nomenclature appears to follow the 6th (1983) edition of the A.O.U. Check-list, yet the new spelling using hyphens for Barn-Owl, Screech-Owl, Hawk-Owl and Pigmy-Owl is not used. The author misuses the words "juvenal" and "juvenile" throughout the species accounts. Incubation periods are not all correct, e.g. Long-eared and Short-eared owls are listed as 21 days instead of 28 days, and I strongly suspect that 14 days is incorrect for Elf Owl. Do Snowy Owls really occasionally nest in old eagle nests in trees? The ranges are out-of-date for such species as Barred Owl which is expanding westward, and Boreal Owl now known to breed in the western Rocky Mountain states south to Colorado. It is

incorrectly implied that ear-tufts are erect only in alarm - I have watched sleeping Long-eared Owls with ears erect. Food for Eastern Screech-Owl includes "fruit and seeds" — which they ingest as stomach contents of prey not directly as food.

How does the book rate as a guide to where to watch owls? Very poorly. Firstly, it includes only 40 of the 49 continental states and Canada has been reduced to 6 provinces and no territories. Are there no owls in South Dakota, Alaska, Rhode Island, Alberta, Northwest Territories and, heaven forbid, Saskatchewan? The site guide is limited almost exclusively to parks and refuges. As I cannot use Saskatchewan for a check on thoroughness, I will use Manitoba and Montana. In Manitoba five owling sites are given and one can expect to find only four species in the province — Snowy, Short-eared, Great Gray and Hawk-Owl. Montana fared worse with only one site and two species.

You would be much further ahead to purchase a good field guide with range maps (such as the Golden Guide by Robbins *et al.*) and another book which gives relatively detailed information on habitat utilisation and habits (e.g. Bent's Life Histories). You will know where to look for owls, both by area and habitat, and when to look for them. You will even know what they sound like!

Save your money — don't buy this book. — Reviewed by *Wayne C. Harris*, Box 414, Raymore, Saskatchewan. S0A 3J0

## WINGS ALONG THE WINNIPEG:

The birds of the Pinawa - Lac du Bonnet Region, Manitoba

PETER TAYLOR. 1983. Reprinted with supplement and minor corrections 1985. Manitoba Naturalists Society Eco Series No. 2. M.N.S., 302 - 128 James Avenue, Winnipeg, Man. R3B 0N8 223 pp. Paper \$9.95

Peter Taylor's book deals with the avifauna of a section of southeastern Manitoba familiar to many because Robert Nero and his associates did much of their research on the Great Gray Owl there (see *Blue Jay* 42:130, 1984).

*Wings along the Winnipeg* describes the bird population of the tract of forest and farmland which is drained by the Winnipeg River, and includes Lac du Bonnet and Natalie lakes, parts of the Whitemouth and Oiseau rivers and the towns of Pinawa, Lac du Bonnet, Seven Sisters and Whitemouth.

The first section of the book includes the geography and the boreal forest vegetation, and traces the history of human settlement. A few pages devoted to some of the best birding localities of the region serve, along with the two maps, as a guide for resident and visiting birders alike.

The summary of historical bird observations mentions such men as Victor Latta, Fred Rogers and Douglas Shanks. Their records, along with information from Winnipeg newspaper columns "Chickadee Notes" and "Wild Wings," and contemporary records, supplement Peter Taylor's own observations; together they form the bulk of the volume, the species accounts, documenting 301 species.

Taylor writes in a very readable style,

with clarity and humour; there is a pleasant blend of science and anecdote, appealing to readers of both general and specialised bent. Each account is a concise review of the status of that bird species and is likely to be spiced with interesting tidbits of information and even some amusing remembrances. The account of the Common Raven illustrates this:

"Local Ravens start to establish breeding territories in February, about a month before winter visitors leave. At this time they indulge in spectacular aerobatics, soaring to great heights and tumbling, rolling and somersaulting in the air; their funereal appearance evidently belies a rare zest for life. At other times they present a more sombre aspect as they patrol highways for road-killed skunks and similar delicacies. In April or May, if a Raven encroaches on the nesting territory of a Crow, some impressive aerial combat may ensue. The Crows dive repeatedly at their larger relative, passing close but rarely if ever striking, while their target rolls and side-slips out of the way, not appearing unduly anxious to leave. Still more spectacular aerial performances may sometimes be seen when Ravens themselves harass a Bald Eagle in similar fashion."

In the account of the Chestnut-sided Warbler there is a comment on the relationship between declining numbers of this species and the rapid loss of its winter habitat in Central America. Amongst the birds of the vicinity, even the unfortunate Passenger Pigeon of yesteryear is given a place, its former status based on accounts by Hind in 1860 and Thompson in 1891.

The sequence and vernacular names of the American Birding Association have been used, with deference to the American Ornithologists' Union in the

matter of scientific nomenclature. The A.O.U. 1983 checklist was not available in time to be used in the first edition of this book, but it is unfortunate that the 1985 edition was not revised to conform to A.O.U.'s Sixth Edition. The index gives only the English names; Latin names would have been a welcome inclusion, especially since a standardised format is not followed. Extreme and normal dates of occurrence are a helpful feature of the species accounts and are drawn mostly from the author's own records of the years 1975 to 1983.

There are three appendices: a summary of breeding evidence for summer resident species; a table of Christmas bird count totals from 1964 to 1982; and the last, updating species' records since the first edition of the book was published in 1983.

The table of contents and the index allow easy access to almost all of the topics; only the newest species documented in the third appendix are not indexed. Although the printing of some of the 59 photographs of habitat and birds leaves something to be desired and a few of the pictures are exceedingly small, they are useful and the captions are interesting. The author's lively sketch of a hawk owl decorates the cover of the book and another appears inside.

Peter Taylor's *Wings along the Winnipeg* is an excellent book, well written, and is based on sound study and extensive research. It will whet the appetite of readers for new sights and sounds, drawing them to further adventures with birds. As I read, I was seized by the desire to go there and see for myself. I recommend the book to ornithologists of all stripes, from sedate scientist to jaded twitcher! — Reviewed by *Carol Bjorklund*, Box 32, Bromhead, Saskatchewan. S0C 0N0

## LOON MAGIC

TOM KLEIN. 1985. Paper Birch Press Inc., Ashland, Wisconsin. 130 pp. U.S. #39.95.

I have been privileged to read *Loon Magic*, a book about loons by a loon devotee, Tom Klein. Although the other three species of loons (Arctic, Red-throated and Yellow-billed) are involved the hero of this exhaustive study is the Common Loon. At last, the Common Loon has its very own book written for the ordinary person. I am sure that the loon's many friends, including those who know and admire the loon only through brief and casual contacts during summer vacations, will enjoy this lavishly illustrated and knowledgeable text.

The first section of *Loon Magic* consists of acknowledgements, including one to Woody Hagge who, while only one of 14 photographers, "... carried the visual weight of the book." The combined efforts of the 14 is absolutely stunning. The sensitive preface by Sigurd T. Olson and the author's delightful Introduction set the stage for the rest of the book.

In the following 130 pages one will find just about everything he needs to know about loons but, remarkably, the scientific papers assembled and digested are served up without using difficult scientific terms. Thus the book presents loons as loons; one does not study it, one reads it, and enjoys it — and learns!

There are four sections: 1) Looking for Loons: the people who love loons; the four species of loons; the physical loon; status and distribution (in this chapter SNHS president Dale Hjertaas contributed a paragraph on Saskatchewan loons); diet; the language of the loon.

2) Loons through the Seasons: migration; territory and courtship; nesting; predation (raccoons, gulls); family life; fall

migration and wintering.

- 3) Looking Ahead: pollution, botulism, and acid rain; people problems; recovery.
- 4) Sources: the contributors whose offerings were distilled into the 130 pages of text and photographs; selected bibliography; loon organizations; photographs (with a letter from Woody Hagge; Common Loon summary and index for quick reference by topic.

In spite of the volume of facts presented by the author (and his fluent, flowing prose and homely idiom conveys them so easily that one is scarcely aware of the knowledge gained) there are still gaps where research is needed to explain the roles of photoperiod, temperature and behavioral clues from other migrating birds. Precise information about the exact routes overland is needed and here the author suggests that radio telemetry projects would help.

The physical appeal of the book is considerable. Its horizontal format best accommodates the numerous full-page colour photographs of loons which are 'horizontal' birds. (Available from The Blue Jay Bookshop, P.O. Box 1121, Regina, Saskatchewan, S4P 3B4, for \$44.50 net special.) — Reviewed by *Frank Brazier*, 2657 Cameron Street, Regina, Saskatchewan. S4T 2W5

## BIRDWATCHING: A GUIDE FOR BEGINNERS

JOAN EASTON LENTZ and JUDITH YOUNG. 1985. Capra Press, Santa Barbara, California. 178 pp. Drawings. \$9.95.

Every now and then a book appears which I wish I'd had the good sense to think of writing myself. This is one of those books. No longer will I have to

spend hours seeking materials for introductory bird-watching classes; almost everything I'll want is right here in this small volume.

The authors are both California naturalists, who present here a beginners' bird-watching course. Bearing in mind that a birdwatcher is made, not born, and that learning the subtleties of field identification takes long practice, they nonetheless feel that basic information and techniques can be successfully learned from a book. They present a synopsis of bird classification, notes on behaviour and habitat, suggestions on how to observe and how to record sightings and advice on equipment from binoculars to bird song tapes. Details are copious and accurate.

Descriptions of two typical bird walks make lively and interesting reading. On each trip some ten common species are met and learned in detail, from field marks to behaviour and habitat. An eastern bird walk in early May is described with the visual and auditory detail which brings a reader right into the hardwoods and lush undergrowth where Blue Jays are calling. Nine of the ten species described here are readily found, in similar circumstances, throughout much of Saskatchewan. The second walk, on a misty May morning on the California coast, is equally evocative, albeit a bit more exotic for Prairie birdwatchers.

A chapter on activities and projects includes a good variety of suggestions to encourage new birders to extend their involvement in a vastly varied hobby - - keeping lists, making fieldnotes, mapping local habitat, making nesting calendars, monitoring migration, participating in special counts (e.g., Christmas Bird Counts), and generally becoming part of their local birding 'network.'

The bibliography is excellent and extensive both in number of entries and in





Idiosyncrasies of northern flying squirrels are also included. Their propensity for developing drays in "witches' brooms" of conifers is described as is this species's strong affinity for caching and consuming mushrooms. She speculates that both species of flying squirrels may play an important role in spreading beneficial mycorrhizal fungi to the roots of different tree species. These particular fungi are known to assist trees in the absorption of nutrients and water while excluding harmful fungi. Wells-Gosling believes that by foraging on and caching mushrooms, flying squirrels may spread the spores of mycorrhizal fungi over a larger area of forest, and she suggests that the value of flying squirrels to the proper functioning of the forest community may have been greatly underestimated.

A later chapter discusses field techniques for studying these elusive species and methods to attract flying squirrels to feeding stations and nesting boxes. Another chapter discusses important considerations for maintaining these animals in a healthy state in captivity.

The text is nicely illustrated. Black-and-white photographs of flying squirrels in flight, of young at various stages of development, and of different field signs left behind by these species are among those that enhance the text. At places, however, I wished that some of the photographs had been printed in a larger format.

Flying squirrels are difficult creatures to study. The author has done an admirable job, both in doing research on these elusive creatures and in communicating the findings of her research. She is currently studying montane flying squirrels in the tropical forests of Costa Rica, and we can look forward to learning what she discovers about this isolated population of "gliders in the dark." — Reviewed by *J. David Henry*, Waskesiu, Saskatchewan. S0J 2Y0

## NATURAL HERITAGE OF MANITOBA: LEGACY OF THE ICE AGE

Edited by JAMES T. TELLER 1984  
Published by Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature and Manitoba Nature Magazine. Soft cover \$19.95

Nine knowledgeable men combined their considerable talents to put together this interesting and informative book on Manitoba, past and present, its geology before and after the ice age, the soils and vegetation, animals, prehistoric man, groundwater and minerals, and the impact of man on the land. Beautifully illustrated with numerous photographs and drawings, it gives references and suggested readings at the end of each of the nine chapters.

Since this book is so well written, it is startling to read on page 63 the word "lay" when it is assumed "lie" is intended. The odd proportions of the book make it difficult to put on a library shelf or in a book rest but it is printed on quality paper and is well bound. The lists of animals, birds and fish are useful. For anyone interested in the world around them this book is fascinating reading and a great reference. Would that every province which has not already done so could follow Manitoba's example and put together such a book. — Reviewed by *Christine Pike*, Box 117, Waseca, Saskatchewan. S0M 3A0