

# NATURE LIBRARY

## A PRAIRIE ALPHABET

YVETTE MOORE and JO BAN-NATYNE-CUGNET. 1992. Tundra Books, Montreal. 31 pp. \$19.95.

This is a delightful book for teaching children five years of age or older something about the Prairies of Canada. Settings for Yvette Moore's paintings in our western provinces can give children and adults alike an impression of the rural scene. Unfortunately, this scene is often blurred for many people by the flood of urban impressions that crowd our real lives and television screens.

The single sentence captions for each letter of the alphabet are reasonably accurate, grammatically correct and at the same time poetic; e.g., "Gophers gaze at geese flying over the grassland," and, "The quarter horses stand quietly by the quonset." The alliteration in the "alphabet" sentences and the page of other words with each letter will be useful to children learning proper use of our language. Also, the paragraph relating to each "letter page" provides useful information about what does happen on farms in our Canadian Prairies. There are some normal precautions and safety tips for young and old alike not familiar with farm scenes and hazards.

Sky dominance and small size of human figures is appropriate in the paintings. Location and identity of the animals in the loft (letter B) leaves a question in my mind but is excusable. Similarly, a few statements in the text are open to question, for instance, under "Y". Yardlights do not always indicate an occupied farm. Travellers may be deceived about

the distance to such a light, and this is a risk on winter nights in unfamiliar territory.

All in all, *A Prairie Alphabet* is a wonderful contribution to our culture. Buy it for your grandchildren and enjoy it yourselves.

Reviewed by J.R. Jowsey, Box 400, Saltcoats, Saskatchewan. S0A 3R0

## SAVING AMERICAN BIRDS: T. GILBERT PEARSON AND THE FOUNDING OF THE AUDUBON MOVEMENT

OLIVER H. ORR, JR. 1992. Univ. Florida Press, Gainesville, 296 pp., illus. Cloth. \$34.95 US.

Orr has pulled together materials from every source to document the life of T. Gilbert Pearson, a crusader in the cause of conservation.

T. Gilbert Pearson was born in Tuscola, Illinois, in 1873, and moved to Archer, Florida, in 1882. As a child in Florida, Pearson was an avid "egger" which was a common activity of most ornithologists during that period, a practice of considerable scientific value. At the age of 17 Gilbert began to read and contribute to the *Ornithologist and Oologist*, a popular journal for advanced bird students of the time. Pearson was also an avid supporter and member of the YMCA, and became highly involved in its bi-weekly meetings and lectures.

After joining the American Ornithologists's Union in 1891, Pearson was largely responsible for organizing a society devoted to the protection of birds that were at the time vulnerable to commercial

exploitation and unregulated hunting. In 1902, Pearson founded the North Carolina Audubon Society, which was the first such organization in the southern states. In considering which birds should be classed as pests, Pearson included the Bobolink with the House Sparrow in his list of not protected birds. He also added hawks, owls, and other species such as blackbirds, crows, and grackles to the unprotected species list. By 1911, Pearson had become the first major leader of the National Audubon Society and he was highly instrumental in the society becoming the strong international force in conservation it is today.

This superb volume gives an excellent account of Pearson's crusade for conservation. Pearson and other conservationists altered public attitudes toward birds, and lobbied laws through state and federal legislatures for bird protection. "Teddie" Roosevelt was highly supportive of the Audubon movement, and prior to retiring from office in 1909, he was instrumental in establishing 51 bird reservations, and 5 national parks for

future preservation of wildlife and our national heritage.

In South Carolina an Audubon warden was murdered in 1908, and in 1910 a chief game warden position was established. In 1911, Pearson employed National Game Association wardens on the South Carolina coast, and all bird colonies began to stabilize. Other states, such as Oregon and California, followed. In the same year Pearson resigned as North Carolina Audubon Society secretary, although, until his death in 1943, he was an active advocate for the National Association of Audubon Societies.

This book traces the career of T. Gilbert Pearson as a conservationist. It will be of interest to the lay person, the scientific community, and especially those active in Audubon Societies throughout the nation.

Reviewed by *Harlan D. Walley*, Department of Biology, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois, U.S.A. 60115



During the dust bowl years of the 1930s, a total of about 18 million acres was turned into desert by the winds. Huge clouds of plains dust billowed over New York City and darkened the skies over the city of Washington; throughout the plains themselves, street lights had to be turned on at noon. *Peter Farb, 1963. Face of North America; Natural History of a Continent. Harper & Row.*