

- were pasted onto the text pages as the pasters pasted.
7. Everyone had a chance to do each activity.

About 175 children contributed to the book over the five years of creation from 1972-1977. The energy and freshness of their voices will be heard with pleasure by other children, teachers, professors, librarians, and general readers.

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## Lighting the Spark

*JAMES AND JO ELLEN BOGART*

*The Canadian Wildlife Almanac*, Darryl Stewart. Lester and Orpen Dennys, 1981. 134 pp. \$9.95 paper. ISBN 0-919630-68-5.

*Wild Horses of Sable Island*, Zoe Lucas. Greer de Pencier Books, 1981. 36 pp. hardcover. ISBN 0-919872-73-5.

*Birds 1 Canadian Album Series A Coloring Adventure in Canadian Themes*, Dr. Robert W. Nero. Illus. by Jim Carson. Hyperion Press Limited, 1981. 40 pp. paper. ISBN 0-920534-17-1.

*Small Mammals, Canadian Album Series: A Coloring Adventure in Canadian Themes*, Dr. Robert E. Wrigley. Hyperion Press, 1981. 40 pp. \$4.95 paper. ISBN 0-920534-16-3.

*Natural History Notebook*, Charles Douglas. Illus. by author. National Museum of Natural Sciences, 1981. 110 pp. \$2.50 paper. ISBN 0-660-10321-4.

Nurturing a child's appreciation of the natural world is a noble aim and a joyous task. There is so much life around us that cannot be seen without the knowledge of how and where to look. Conservation of this life can only be achieved through education and cooperation with the environment.

Books make a large contribution to this kind of education. Books which deal with the child's own familiar world, and with animals which he might encounter on outings, can have the effect of increasing his own sense of importance and involvement. At the same time, the idea of books being a helping tool for his own life is reinforced. Here are some Canadian works which could serve as such tools.

In writing *The Canadian Wildlife Almanac*, wildlife author and columnist Darryl Stewart has undertaken an ambitious task. To touch on so many different topics from across Canada's vast expanses calls for much research and expertise. Mr. Stewart does best in his fields of specialty which are ornithology, entomology, and endangered species. He is to be applauded for his steadfast espousal of wildlife conservation.

Included in the text of the *Almanac* are many useful and interesting lists such as the addresses of conservation associations and government agencies dealing with wildlife, locations of antivenin depots in Canada, and the natural history museums and national parks. Lists of animal statistics detail speed, size, and longevity records, gestation periods and litter size, and migration dates. Stewart also lists every species which is known to occur in Canada, and those which are rare or endangered.

The body of the book consists of articles on various animal species and topics such as predation, animal behavior, hibernation, bird watching, and protective coloration. The text is divided into twelve sections with a heading and a calendar of wildlife-related items for each month. Seasonal topics are arranged under the appropriate month and less seasonal articles and tidbits are tossed in helter-skelter. A good index should have been included. Information on the same animal may appear in several locations through the book and illustrations of an animal may or may not accompany the article concerning that species. For example, the item on the killer whale on page 15 is illustrated with a picture of a skeleton belonging to another species of whale while an untitled picture of killer whales appears in the appendix.

Placement of illustrations may sometimes lead to confusion, as in the case of the article on rattlesnakes on page 63. The article does not continue to the next page, but three pictures of the rattlesnake appear. The article on page 64 deals with the hognose snake, so that the text under the picture labeled "Head of a Rattlesnake" reads, "In actual fact, this species is one of the most harmless and docile of snakes . . ." The reader would have to follow carefully the lead of the text to know that the animal discussed is the harmless hognose. Space on page 64 might better have been used to discuss some other interesting Canadian reptile. Mislabeling is also a problem. It is unfortunate that the picture captioned "snapping turtle" on page 44 is not at all the sharp-beaked, craggy-backed, long-tailed creature that Canadians see crossing the highway.

The *Almanac* contains some items which a sensitive child might find disturbing. In the case of the trapping article on page 73, the reader

is presented with true, but very gruesome descriptions of mutilated, suffering animals, savaged by inhumane traps. Since what Mr. Stewart is advocating is the killing of fur animals, but in a more humane manner, the subject is a difficult one to explain to a young audience in a limited space.

The article on the golden eagle, page 59, does little to dispel the misconception that the eagle sometimes kills large prey. Mr. Stewart explains that the eagle would be very unlikely to kill something which weighed more than its own weight of five or six kilograms. The antique, uncaptioned illustration, however, shows a huge eagle carrying a sizeable child. Printing such a picture in a supposedly factual book might have the effect of continuing the myth in the minds of some readers who cannot sift through the text on the subject.

For his illustrations, Mr. Stewart has chosen many wood engravings of unstated date and origin from books of no-longer copyrighted work. While such a system might be good for the budget, it is not always in the best interest of the reader. Although many of the engravings are top quality art with accurate detail of anatomy and environment, others seem to reflect archaic attitudes and are better suited to storybooks. Mr. Stewart's own drawings, which grace each month's title page, are nicely done. His "bog turtle" for May, however, is not mentioned in the text, and does not appear in the list of Canadian turtles on page 117.

Two glaring omissions occur in the *Almanac*. There are no articles about or pictures of Canadian Frogs. Mr. Stewart also fails to mention the disease which is a serious and continuing problem in several Canadian provinces and which greatly affects our relationship with animals. Any wildlife education source should contain information on rabies because of the deadliness of the disease and the confusion which exists concerning it.

Bringing together information about Canadian wildlife is a great idea and much of this book is very interesting. Unfortunately, the book is flawed in ways which lessen the pleasure of reading it.

In contrast to the wide reaches of the *Almanac*, *Wild Horses of Sable Island* zooms in on one tiny place off the coast of Nova Scotia. An amateur naturalist with a deep love for the barren sandbar, Zoe Lucas gives her readers an intimate look at the lives of a stallion named Seafire and his small family herd. Lucas has photographed the horses through the trials of a long, hard winter and recorded their triumph in the birth and survival of a foal. The swing from summer to winter and back, with its intense contrasts, is an emotional experience for the reader, who will come to realize that the same story will be played over and over again each year with new players and new generations.

The strength of this Owl True Adventure book is the simplicity with which the information is presented. No embellishment is needed. The beauty shows through in the story itself. Lucas has added names for some horses, but no intrusive analysis of their behavior. It is not surpris-

ing to find this book on the "Our Choice" list in the June 1982 "Children's Book News" from the Children's Book Centre.

*Owl* has no follow-up book from Zoe Lucas in the works at present. True adventures cannot and should not be hurried, just reported. However, readers eager to hear of Ms. Lucas' continuing work on Sable Island will enjoy the picture story about a rescued baby seal in the September 82 issue of *Chickadee* magazine.

Other books which could serve to heighten awareness of Canadian fauna include titles in the *Canadian Album Series*, subtitled *A Coloring Adventure in Canadian Themes*. The two bird volumes, by Robert Nero, provide large, well-executed line drawings for coloring, maps of each bird's home range, natural history information, and the scientific name. Detailed descriptions are given as a guide for coloring, but some children would no doubt be drawn to the illustrations in field guides and other bird books for added information. This should be seen as a benefit in itself.

The small mammal book in the series is arranged somewhat differently from the bird books. Natural history information is divided into a story-like section and a more business-like factual section. The effect is very interesting. The mammal book omits three important kinds of information which are included in the bird books. These are the scientific name, the range in Canada, and the size of the animal. Nevertheless, it is a fine book, well worth its price. Books of this series should be very stimulating for older children, who can be encouraged to write in additional information from other sources if they like, making the book a personal study guide.

From Ottawa's National Museum of Natural Sciences, the *Natural History Notebook Series 4* deals with species of animals which are threatened, endangered, or extinct. In the introduction, Museum Director Louis Lemieux advises his readers, "Read about nature, understand its ways, join naturalists groups or societies, respect our environment and insist that others also respect it." This book is a fine handbook for such study, and a good buy.

Each of the 52 plates features an excellent drawing by zoological illustrator Charles Douglas and information concerning the species' status and the efforts which are being made, or should be made, to preserve that animal. The reader is saddened by tales of wanton, wasteful slaughter, but heartened by the knowledge that some species have been given full legal protection. For some of these, however, protection has come too late.

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