

Toronto Field Naturalists' Club

157

October Meeting

Monday, October 6, 1958 at 8:15 p.m.
at the
ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

Speaker: Mr. Chris. Chapman

Subject: Nature films outside the realm of the scientific

Mr. Chris. Chapman, well-known film maker and conservationist, will discuss nature films outside the realm of the scientific. He will show two of his excellent films - THE SEASONS, many times an award winner and chosen "Canadian Film of the Year 1953", and QUETICO, a new and unusual impression of Quetico Provincial Park.

All those who have seen THE SEASONS will, we are sure, be eager to repeat the experience and to see the latest production of this gifted and imaginative photographer. Any members who may have missed the former film will have a doubly, delightful surprise in store.

October Outing

Saturday, October 4, at Hanlan's Point, for fall migrants. Take the 9:30 a.m. Ferry. Leader: Mr. Jim Baillie.

Botany Group

The Botany Group will meet in the Library of Eglinton Public School, Eglinton Ave. and Mt. Pleasant Rd., at 8 p.m. sharp. Members will show slides taken during the Spring and Summer. New members welcome. President - Mrs. J. Goodwin, Hu.3-3909. Secretary - Mrs. M. Persson, LE.6-0975.

Christmas Cards

The Federation of Ontario Naturalists has again produced an exclusive nature greeting card. Samples will be on display at the October meeting, and orders may be placed there or mailed to the Secretary. Price - \$1.50 per doz.

Fees! Fees!

Fees for the 1958-9 season are now due! We urge that you mail these to the Secretary and save lining up at the meeting. The fee is still - \$2.00. If you have changed your address, please let us know.

Junior Field Naturalists' Club

The Junior Club is open to all children from 8 to 16. At the first meeting, October 4, there will be registration and organization of study groups, and two films will be shown - ANIMALS IN AUTUMN and BLIND AS A BAT.....

Help Wanted! Any members of the T.F.N. who have a fair general knowledge of natural history, a love of children, and plenty of enthusiasm, are appealed to, to help with our Juniors. Enrollment is growing every year and we do not want to turn away any child for lack of leadership.

Phone Don Burton - RU.2-2155.

An invitation is again extended by the F.O.N. to all members of this Club to watch the fall migration from the observation gallery of the Imperial Oil Company. The gallery will be open until October 15th from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, and from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays. It will not be open on Sundays. Members should identify themselves to the man on duty in the lobby by presenting their 1958 membership cards.

President
Dr. Walter Tovell

Secretary: Mrs. H. Robson
49 Craighurst Ave.
Hu.1-0260

Asst. Secty: Mrs. J. B. Stewart
21 Millwood Rd.
Hu. 9-5052



Number 157

September 1958

Motor rambles have become so much a part of the life of many naturalists that the report of one's experiences on such a jaunt should remind others of numerous pleasant sights and sounds on similar trips. Perhaps such a report may suggest a possible venture for more than a few of our readers, open a prospect for the spring or summer to come. We hope it will.

Mrs. Saunders and I set out in early June to visit Manitoulin Island and the Upper Bruce, parts of Ontario we had never seen. Before we were home again we had had several rare contacts with things of the wild, had seen miles of beautiful vistas, and had been daily reminded of all that we might have seen and did not, those many invitations to return and discover that are hidden in every unvisited bog, or uttered by each unseen bird. On such a trip one may see and hear much but it can only be a fraction of that which could be.

Battered briefly by one of the rare thunderstorms of a dry spring, we drove north on the morning of June 5th and found ourselves by evening at a lodge on the north branch of the French River near Alban, a quiet, secluded spot where in the last hours of a now sunlit day great granitic ridges, topped by evergreens and aspens, cast long shadows in smooth green water. On one of these ridges, as we took a little stroll after our meal, we found a group of tall green orchids sheltering beneath the undergrowth; Hooker's orchids, no less, whose acquaintance we had only made for the first time near Sauble Beach last year. Birds were few, or perhaps mostly silent, at this spot, though the next morning we were kept awake for an hour by what we first took to be a pileated woodpecker, only to discover that what we were really listening to was a sapsucker using the top of a telephone pole as a drumming post! What a satisfaction he must have gained from this performance! More than we did I can assure you. And what an unbelievable din he could make on his chosen instrument. Nor was he alone in this ac-

complishment, for a rival could be heard performing a similar tattoo in the distance, apparently on another pole farther along the line. Being awakened by this amorous swain reminded us it was shivering cold, so cold that we were close to a fringe of ice on the wash water, and there was no heat in that cabin. We just had to get up to keep warm.

A crisp, clear morning it was as we got under way, yet, as we neared the environs of Sudbury we saw such cloud ahead that we thought we were running into a heavy storm or a dense fog, but we quickly found ourselves in the midst of foul-smelling fumes, the outpourings from the tall chimneys of mine smelters. How do people live in such an atmosphere? And why? The ugly, fume-killed landscape is a horror -- black, bare, grim. We got past as fast as we could and breathed in relief when the last vestige had vanished.

As we turned south through Espanola and headed for Manitoulin we were once more in the midst of the natural beauty of Ontario's northland. This road was rough, very winding and tricky, but time and again we came onto the most unexpectedly dramatic scenes, especially as we drew near to Little Current, long perspectives of white cliffs and blue water that spoke of the long wild past more effectively than any man-made ruins could ever do. At one of these beauty spots we stopped and ate our lunch sitting on a beach with a lively north-westerly breeze tumbling the waves onto the sand at our feet. And at this stop, as at almost all we made, there was something new to us as naturalists, for in a field nearby we were attracted by a haze of reddish purple hovering like a heat wave a foot or two above the ground. When investigated this turned out to be a huge stand of a flower we had never seen except in pictures, *Geum triflorum*, or prairie smoke. What an appropriate name, so fitting to the effect produced. In this prairie bloom also was a reminder that we were here as much on the edge of the mid-west as in the north. All afternoon we were repeatedly made aware of this as we stopped to walk in woods and bogs, to watch birds and flowers. Ontario in Manitoulin is almost a prairie province. At the end of the day we came to Gore Bay and were fortunate enough to find a perfect place to stop, Gordon's Lodge, at the end of a road on the shore of the bay, where the water laps nearly to the bedroom door and the sun sets crimson in the waves beyond.

At Gore Bay we had hoped to make contact with the Department of Lands and Forests warden, Mr. Bailey. He, however, was away on business so his wife very kindly put us in touch with Mr. Larry Donaldson, to whom we addressed our hopeful enquiry. Could we see some of the prairie chickens we had heard were in this neighborhood? He wasn't too sure. It was late in the season for their displays. Still, we should go up to the airport, some seven miles out of the town, and see Mr. Rumley since one of the display grounds was right on the airport. We drove up immediately, found Mr. Rumley at the airport office and started a

lively discussion between him and his assistant as to whether the birds were still around. To settle this they jumped into their car, telling us to follow, and drove out onto the runway. Soon they stopped, Rumley beckoning and pointing. As we came up he showed us seven prairie chickens in the grass alongside the runway and a little ahead of the cars. Then he drove around and away, cautioning us to drive into the grass should an aeroplane appear. Hardly had they gone when the drone of a plane motor became audible. Our starter was stepped on in a hurry and we shot out into the grass, sending all seven prairie chickens into loud-voiced protesting flight. Then the wretched plane went blithely overhead, leaving us dismayed. However, we had arranged to come up early in the morning, and so drove back to our lodging, hoping for the best.

We set the alarm for 5:00. Awakening came long before that for shortly after midnight we heard the wailing of the town fire alarm. Soon it sounded again, loud and demanding. Adjoining rooms emptied of men, calling and driving off to the fire. A third alarm pierced the night. This was really serious. I slipped outside to see a sky throbbing with northern lights, and across the dark bay red flames leaping high. Men could be heard shouting, the pumps raising water from the bay creaked insistently, and the fearsome sound of the crackling of burning wood reached us over the water. All night the fire went on and was still going the next morning. Fortunately for Gore Bay there was no wind that night or the whole town would have gone as this was a business block on the main street. Several stores were gutted but the rest were saved, a real victory for men and equipment.

We kept our appointment at the airport as there was nothing we could do at the fire. Just as we were starting from the lodge Anne saw a brown shape shoot past the front of the car from one side of the road to the other. In the dim light it was possible to know only at the last moment when a flash of white gleamed that a deer had nearly leaped over the hood of the car. It had been at the water's edge and we had caught it unaware in the pre-dawn. By the time we covered the seven miles to the airport there was sufficient light so that as we came onto the runway we had no trouble seeing our seven prairie chickens. For weeks in the spring the males are faithful to the same display ground; even a fright such as we gave them the evening before was clearly not enough to keep them from returning. Our fears of not seeing them again were calmed. But there is no question that we were immensely fortunate to see them at all for it was at the very end of the season and once the spring booming is over the birds scatter and are very hard to find.

We drove to within a hundred feet of the nearest birds and stopped. After a few minutes of nervous looking they paid no further attention to us so that we were able to sit in the car for an hour and watch proceedings.

First hint that something was going to happen was a weird moaning call -- ow-loo-oo-oo --, repeated time after time, caught up by one bird after another. Looking at the birds -- they stood out clearly now, seeming from the rear view like so many small turkeys -- we soon made out two or three with throats swelled out as if they were suffering from goiter. Streaming down beside each puffed throat were two long feathers. All at once these began to rise until they were quivering out horizontally like the sepals of yellow lady slippers. To make the analogy more apt two great yellow mounds or pouches suddenly burst from beneath brown feathering, one at each side of the neck. The quivering side feathers rose from horizontal position to straight above the head where, when the bird turned its back, they looked ridiculously like rabbit's ears, as if some fantastic biologic mixup had taken place. Now the excited performers, all males, facing each other in duos began to bow and boom. Tails were cocked high, showing flashing white, and feet stamping. Finally they rushed at each other, head foremost, as if mortal combat were about to ensue. Then abruptly, bill to bill, the onslaught and the display collapsed. Each pair lay down on the ground, still facing, almost touching, bill to bill, keeping this position for several minutes, when they would seem to lose interest, start dressing their plumage or picking up bits of food nearby. For a short while all the birds were brown lumps, doing nothing. We thought the show was over for the morning. Then, all of a sudden, without other preliminary, the moaning calls started again, the throats puffed, and the whole performance was repeated. Sometimes it was only one duo, sometimes two, occasionally more, but never all seven birds at once. Once or twice the actors got so worked up they pranced around each other in circles before settling down. Occasionally the moaning or booming was alternated with a barnyard-like series of calls -- wuk-wuk-wuk -- and cackles, though these seemed to come independently of the actual performing. After an hour they showed less inclination to continue. One or two began to edge toward the fields where they had disappeared the night before. We concluded that the show was really finished, and now it was time to go. What a wonderful play it had been, and one all the more pleasing to us inasmuch as we had never thought of seeing it. We had only hoped for a sight of the birds; this nuptial performance came as a glorious surprise. And to make the western prairie atmosphere complete, all the while that we were watching the drama beside the runway we could hear a western meadowlark singing beside the car.

The rest of the day, after breakfast, we spent visiting various places between Gore Bay and South Bay Mouth. The countryside on Manitoulin has a peculiarly antiquated appearance, for in many parts, the entire field-fencing is still split rail fences. In such quantity they give a striking look of confinement to the fields, as if stressing that hem in each field man has won a victory from the rough, from the wilderness. Seeing this landscape makes it easier to understand the attitude of

our colonial forebears that Nature was a force against which a constant war had to be maintained -- clear and conquer or be overwhelmed. These sturdy fences might well appear to be holding off the foe. So must much of the country in eastern North America have looked a century ago. Now the rails are old, mouldering away, and being replaced. In this stage they offer another possibility of interest to the naturalist; the many cavities in the old fences are natural homes for the bluebird, and when Jim Baillie was on the island twelve years ago doing a summer bird survey for the Museum he found bluebirds very plentiful. We were on the watch for them, and how many did we see? Only one bluebird in all the miles we covered! The fences are still there; starlings are not in evidence as competitors. Where are the bluebirds? It was a mute and saddening witness to the extremely low state to which that beautiful bird has fallen in Ontario today.

Near Perivale we found a farmer who directed us to a quaking bog, the only one in the vicinity, where years ago Jim Baillie and Paul Harrington had found a yellow rail. We walked a good stretch of the bog, which was in truth a real quaker, but raised no rail, and heard no bird of this type of habitat except a short-billed marsh wren. In the open water beyond the bog a loon, spying our intrusion, sank as swiftly from view as any grebe, giving us no clue as to the whereabouts of its nest which was undoubtedly somewhere out on the water's edge.

A look at Lake Mindemoya where we saw a dozen goldeneye, all paired, and apparently still on the way to their northern nesting grounds; lunch by the outlet of Lake Manitou; a look into a bog near No. 68 highway, and we were at South Bay Mouth only to find the wind and waves so fierce that we decided against taking the ferry to Tobermory that evening. Staying the night at South Bay Lodge on one of the large coves of this bay, we spent the evening walking along the shore amidst anxious killdeer and interesting flowers. A real find came, as so often happens, quite unexpectedly, when I turned my binoculars on a flock of gulls some distance up the beach. In order to see them I had to look across two reedy points; as my eyes adjusted I became aware of a dark mass in the reeds on the farther point. Sharpening the focus brought into view a sight that made me shout right out loud, "I'm looking at a loon sitting on its nest!" So, in fact, I was. We could hardly believe it but there it was -- missed at Perivale, given to us at South Bay. Rigidly quiet, -- the mate had uttered one wailing call out on the bay minutes before --, here was the first loon we had ever seen actually on its nest. So as not to disturb it on this cold, windy night we climbed the bank, circled through field and bush, and came back to a cedar grove that stood on high ground directly back of the nesting point. Here, through an opening in the cedars, we could see the loon so well that its reddish eye gleamed like a jewel in the black head, the whole framed in sparse green reeds. We were amazed that a nest, so easily detected, should have been placed in this relatively open

spot, especially as a lane ran along the top of the bank to a cottage. We decided, though, that the lane must be seldom used, possibly not before the loon's young should be hatched. And if the nest seemed easily visible once seen, it would be very easy indeed to pass the sitting bird, by lane or by water, without seeing a thing unless you had the rare good fortune we had just experienced. We noticed later when we had returned to the beach, and the loon seemed to notice us, though we were at least 500 feet away, that then it stretched its neck and head out straight before and low down, holding this position rigidly for many minutes, until we had walked most of the way back around the cove. What was the reason for this? To reduce the mass visible at one place? To break the usual shape of the bird and so help to avoid detection? The loon on the nest was one of our most interesting finds of the trip, almost as exciting as the prairie chickens. To have them both on the same day made it really a red-letter occasion.

Next morning we took the ferry. The water had calmed and the wind was gone but in their place was a dense fog. This held all the way across for two and a half hours, so we saw nothing but a few yards of water until we rounded the island off Tobermory Point.

As soon as we landed we had lunch, then set out to explore this northern end of the Bruce where we had never been before. Our first stop was at Dorcas Bay where we found the bog, so well-known to the botanists, bone-dry thanks to drouth and the great drop in the level of Lake Huron. As a result pitcher plants and other bog flora were dried, crumbling or vanished. Around the edges under the nearest trees was, on the other hand, one of the most beautiful floral sights we have ever seen, a blue carpet of dwarf iris that seemed to reverse the sky and plant it underneath the trees. Only in the Syrian desert and on the slopes of the Lebanon Mountains have we seen such a display of bloom as this.

We had scarcely reached the road again when an auto came along, stopped, and out jumped two men with binoculars. They had hardly time for greetings when they announced, "We've got a first for Ontario!" When asked what this was they answered, "Kirtland's warbler". I was sorry to tell them, and they were chagrined to hear, that a Kirtland's warbler (found by George Fairfield) had been seen in Toronto recently, and that there were a few other Ontario reports from previous years. However, this was the first observation in the Bruce, the area in which this rare warbler might be most expected. They asked us to go along with them to have a look at the bird which we were only too glad to do. With them as guides we all drove out to No. 6 highway and down it to just below Mactier, where they had blazed a telephone pole to mark the spot. Here we walked a hundred yards into a dry, stony bush dotted with the same kind of small jack pine that is favored by the species in its Michigan nesting area. At an opening we

paused and waited. A bluebird sang nearby (our only record of one on the Bruce), a prairie warbler in the distance, no other for half an hour. It was hot and we were getting a little impatient so I tried a little pishing. It had the desired effect at once. The warbler chipped, then appeared, singing vigorously, coming near to look us over, wagging its tail and asserting its identity unmistakably. Everybody was gratified to see the bird, but no one more than myself for here was my second Kirtland's warbler in Ontario in one spring! And I had never seen the bird before in my life, and had expected like everyone else that I would have to go to Michigan to see it.

We congratulated the finders -- Mr. and Mrs. C. R. Skelton and Mr. and Mrs. George Moore of Walkerton. This really was a first-class discovery and we were happy that they should have shared it with us.

After a night at Tobermory Anne and I returned the next morning to the Kirtland warbler's bush. We had no trouble calling it out in the same way. It came straight to us, taking a perch in a jack pine a few feet away, and singing lustily for fully ten minutes. From its actions there seemed little doubt that this must be a breeding bird. We looked around a bit but found no sign of a nest, nor did we put up a mate. When we visited the Skeltons at their cottage on Pike Bay later in the day we discussed the possibility of finding a nest. That really would be a first, and a major first, for it would be the only time a nest has been located outside the confined nesting area of the species in Michigan. Years ago Mr. Taverner, author of The Birds of Canada, advised ornithologists to watch the Bruce Peninsula for possible nesting Kirtland's warblers since, being situated directly opposite the Michigan sites, and being so like that area in character, it seemed a very likely place to find the bird. Now his anticipation seemed about to come true. I wish that I could report that it had, but that is yet to come. Neither Messrs. Skelton and Moore nor the many others who trekked to that remote spot to look for it could locate a nest. It was all very puzzling, frustrating and challenging. I haven't any doubt that a close watch is going to be kept on this place when next spring comes along, for it will be a feather in anyone's bonnet to be the discoverer of the first Kirtland warbler's nest in Canada.

That night we were guests of Tom Murray, one-time member of the T.F.N.C., now at Leith. The next day we spent the day at Sauble Beach. Once more a fog had lowered over the water though this did not bother us in looking for flowers or even in lunching on the beach. For the latter we spread a blanket on the sand, and took up a position behind a sheltering dune. As we had accumulated a store of broken crackers I threw out a few when two ringbilled gulls flew past. Just as if they had been watching for some such move -- as possibly they had -- the two gulls swerved, dipped, and came down. Finding the cracker

pieces they set to gobbling them as fast as they could. Another ringbill in the air saw them. In it came, crying loudly: a squabble ensued. All three started to shrill and shriek. I threw out more pieces. What a scramble! Two, three, six more gulls arrived. From up the beach more could be seen flying in. As I continued to offer largesse the gulls, at first hesitant, speculative, nervous, crept forward. Two were extremely belligerent, trying to keep each other and all the rest away, darting at all that tried to come forward, screaming. They were real bullies. The flock, swelling to two dozen, to thirty, could not be contained by this bellicose pair, and soon I had a company of ringbills within six feet of my shoes eagerly awaiting my next handout. The two bullies nearly went mad, becoming so enraged that they not only threatened but even rushed at other gulls so violently as to bunt them forcibly off their feet, or sometimes to seize their bills and force them into the air. Their actions were amongst the most truly violent I have ever seen birds indulge in for so much of avian fighting is only show. When I ran out of cracker bits I threw out Rykrisp, and was much interested to see the gulls take whole sections to a nearby brook, there dipping the biscuit into the water until it softened enough to break and be swallowed. When I offered salted potato chips they ate them readily but went quickly to the brook and drank copiously. Thirty ringbills screaming and fighting for food just off the end of our boots really made this an exciting lunch hour and added another first-class observation for our trip.

With all that we saw and experienced you can see why we say to our naturalist friends, when you are planning another trip and want to go to a region of prime interest to all naturalists, don't forget the Bruce Peninsula and Manitoulin Island.

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From my good friend, Mgr. Arthur Maheux of Laval University in Quebec, came a letter too late to get into the last number of the Newsletter in the spring. Since, however, it concerns his experiences with winter feeding it is very appropriately placed in this first issue of the fall. Mgr. Maheux writes,

"I always read with pleasure the Toronto Field Naturalist Club bulletin. In the last issue I was interested especially in the 'Bird Feeding at Happy Nook, Dunbarton'. I live very far from Toronto, as you know, since my cottage is twelve miles west of Quebec City. The place is well covered by piles of snow during winter. Some ten years ago I began to provide some food for the birds. Up to that time I had never noticed the presence of birds in that place; but as soon as I put suet, the chickadees began to come, about twenty in number. The following year I saw two kinds of nuthatches. Another year, two kinds of woodpeckers, and finally a blue jay.

"The suet was an attraction, of course, but on your advice I also put sunflower seeds, which were a success. However, your best recommendation was the "pudding"; its success was immediate and permanent. In the melted suet I put cut raisins, cut almonds or peanuts, sunflower seeds, cut apple, bird sand (grit); that mixture seems very popular. I take empty tin cans, which I fill with earth, about two-thirds or three-quarters, and I fill the top with the pudding before it comes stiff. I also put plain suet in those baskets used for protecting electric bulbs; the birds eat through the open spaces.

"Now come the squirrels, the red one, the only one we have. They do not hibernate since there is plenty of food. I attach a grapebasket or two full of acorns to a nail on a tree. Squirrels and blue jays both enjoy that food. I also give them plain suet, preferably in places where the birds would not be interested. Also to the squirrels goes a big jar of chicken seed.

"Even with such provision the squirrels will try to steal from the birds' restaurants! I have noticed, also, that they will try all sorts of acrobatics to get to them. I suspend a thin wire between two trees distant about twenty feet, far from branches. To this wire I suspend the tin cans filled with the pudding or plain suet. The squirrels, apparently, will not try a thin wire farther than five or six feet; the restaurants are suspended at the middle of the wire.*

"It seems to be true that the squirrels having plenty of other food are less tempted by the food suspended on the wire. Outside the window near our dinner table I have put a special feeder for the squirrels; it consists of a big empty tin can, open at both ends, with a small aperture at the base on one side, about 1-1/2" wide by 1" high; in it at the top I put seeds and plain peanuts; the squirrel has to make effort to draw the things from within the can. Care must be taken, for the squirrel may overturn the can! A stone put on top, and three nails on the lower side of the can usually suffice.

"I put the various restaurants in the last week of September till May. I no longer spend the winter at the cottage, but I visit it often, in order to refill them, and my small fry company remains quite faithful."

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* Ed. Note - Readers of the Newsletter who have had experience with squirrels at feeders will nod sagely at the P.S. I received from my Quebec friend on May 8th. He writes:

"As to those squirrels a surprise awaited me. I thought I had the better of Mr. Squirrel, but finally he had the

better of me. I had put sunflower seeds in a little can, just in the middle of the wire attached to the two trees. From the high branches Mr. Squirrel saw them and resolved the seeds were for him as well as for the birds!

"But how to get there? He found the trick. Miss G. called me: 'Look, the squirrel sits on the tin can!' I could not believe it, but it was true. I stood watching how he would return to the tree. He suspended himself under the wire with his paws and walked easily in that position.

"Really, how to beat him?"

I am sure that Mgr. Maheux and many others would be glad to hear of any effective ways of getting the better of squirrels at bird-feeding stations that any Newsletter readers would care to suggest.

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Book Reviews

The Tree Identification Book. A new method for the practical identification and recognition of trees. By George W. D. Symonds. Photographs by Stephen V. Chetminski. (New York. M. Barrons and Co. 1958. In Canada, Geo. J. McLeod, Ltd., Toronto). Pp. 268. Price \$11.50.

In this magnificently turned-out work photography is made to serve the purpose of nature identification -- in this case of trees -- in the most systematic and creative way that this reviewer has yet seen. Composed almost entirely of pictures, the book is arranged in such a way as to fulfill the aim of the author -- "to present, visually, details of trees essential for practical identification, which in turn leads to tree recognition" -- with telling effect. In consequence we have here a superb introduction to the world of trees as it is to be seen in eastern North America, one that can be used at home, in schools, and anywhere that there is any desire to enquire into or to teach about this fascinating realm of nature.

The system used to enable anyone to build up a knowledge of trees is a series of keys, based on leaves, thorns, flowers, fruit, twigs and buds, bark, and needle-leaved trees.

In each key the details are pictured separately. Then in the latter part of the book, the "Master Pages", the species are presented with the details now being associated together along with full portraits of the trees in question. Trees having similar characteristics, hence likely to be confused, are grouped and carefully compared. In all this the remarkably fine quality of the photographs, showing the form, texture, and general character of the trees and their parts, is what drives home the information.

There is, of course, no attempt to cover the identification of all trees in the area. This would be possible on such a scale only in a series of volumes. This is really an introduction to the main tree families of the area. With such a beginning, and with such a method established in their minds, people can easily go on to more specialized books if they wish. A helpful list of these books is provided at the end of this work. Considering the large size of the book and the fine reproduction of more than 1500 photographs in it, the price is unusually moderate.

The only criticism that might be made is one that arises from our geographic position. The emphasis in the book is on the common trees of the area south of the Great Lakes, and therefore contains not quite the selection one would expect of a primarily northern work. This difference was unavoidable in view of the book's origin. In spite of this there is little in its pages that could not be of practical use to Canadians. We recommend the book most emphatically to all naturalists, but especially to all who wish to learn about trees or to teach others about them.

The B.B.C. Naturalist. Edited by Desmond Hawkins. (Rathbone Books, London. 1957). Pp. 93. Price \$2.50.

The publication of this delightfully written and beautifully illustrated book is a tribute both to the imaginative and effective handling of "nature news" by the B.B.C. and to the widespread interest in the world of nature which has become so prominent a part of the lives of countless dwellers in the British Isles.

Being a series of articles which originally were talks given over the B.B.C., this collection covers all kinds of topics, enters into the most varied, even unsuspected of nature's realms. James Fisher tells us how many British birds have learned how to take the tops off milk bottles; Philip Brown how the avocet returned to England as a nesting bird after a century's absence. Ernest Neal takes us into the countryside at night, where he has us listen to little known sounds and make the night air fascinating with what one hears. We are introduced to spiders

by W. S. Brisbane, to seals by Humphrey Hewes, to hawk moths by Walter Murray. And so we go from one aspect of nature to another, wondering all the while how there could be so much we had never heard of or known before. Yet, how many times have we seen just the kind of blindness that has made such gaps in our knowledge and experience exhibited in our own lives and in those of our friends and neighbours. A thousand opportunities are waiting at our doors. If we only seize one of them we may have a lifetime of enjoyment as the result. Such a book as this is an admirable introduction to the world of nature, its indications and invitations, as applicable in North America as in the British Isles. Moreover the lavish illustrations make the book a valuable addition to any library table, even if those who enjoy the pictures never go out of doors, though my bet is that after looking at what can be seen in nature's haunts they won't be able to stay at home.

Clear Lands and Icy Seas. At Voyage to the Eastern Arctic. By
Theodora C. Stanwell-Fletcher. (Dodd, Mead & Co.
(Canada) Ltd. 1958). Pp. xi, 264. Price \$4.50.

A pleasant, chatty account of the author's impressions of people and nature during a summer trip on the Hudson's Bay Company's ship Rupertsland from Montreal to Churchill. In this book, as in her two previous works, Driftwood Valley and The Tundra World, Mrs. Stanwell-Fletcher shows that she has both a perceptive eye for people, character and the artist's appreciation for the beauties of the natural world. Her emphasis upon simple pleasures and elemental personal values as she saw them exemplified in the ship's crew, the Eskimos and the other dwellers in the Arctic are pleasing to note. So too is her ability to see beauty where others find only bleakness and hard living. There is something of the incurable romantic in the author, and her attitude will find a sympathetic response amongst many who do not find that hard, prosaic "realism" is all of reality. This is a good book to relax with anywhere.

R. M. Saunders

Editor.