

**Check-list of North American Birds and Synopsis of the North American Mammals.** *Condensed and compiled by J. E. Keays, 1952. London Typesetting Co., London, Ontario. 55 pp. (\$1.50).*

The unwary are told that the bird list presented in this publication is condensed and compiled from the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list of North American Birds, fourth edition, 1931. Actually the sequence of order families, and apparently in most cases the species also, is that of the *second* edition which was published in 1895! Why any compiler, with the latest edition before him, should copy instead the obsolete arrangement of 1895 and attempt to sell the results to amateurs of today is a mystery indeed.

Without any explanation whatever and with no warning to the inexperienced user of this list, the compiler has placed the English Sparrow and European Tree Sparrow (both clearly shown in the A.O.U. Check-list, fourth edition, to belong to the family Ploceidae) in, of all places, the Icteridae between the meadowlarks and orioles!

The species names are, as the compiler claims, those of the A.O.U. Check-list, fourth edition, but many of them are obsolete. Apparently the compiler was unaware that no less than eight supplements to the A.O.U. Check-list have appeared since the 1931 edition was published.

The least that one can expect from a list of this kind is that the correct spelling of the names be given. The very first generic name in the list is misspelled and this sets the pattern throughout. The many strange combinations of letters that follow are absolutely inexcusable, above all in a list that is purported to be "a handy reference for students of Ornithology". In a number of instances generic or subfamily names are used where family names were intended and, in the mammal list, the family name Sciuridae is listed ten times as a generic name. Fortunately annotations on the birds are few. The reader is given the erroneous impression that there have been no reports of the Eskimo Curlew since 1926; or of the California Condor since 1931; and that the Trumpeter Swan is close to extinction.

Pages 39-55 are devoted to mammals of North America. The classification and arrangement of the orders and families are those of D. G. Elliott, 1901! Nomenclature

is pathetically obsolete. Vernacular names, except in a few cases, are not given. Many familiar mammals such as the Varying Hare and Cottontail seem to be missing entirely from the list while space is wasted in an utterly futile hodgepodge of irrelevant or out-dated information. We are told that the first edition is small which would appear to be the best that can be said for it. — W. EARL GODFREY.

**Conservation in Canada.** *By Dr. O. M. McConkey. J. M. Dent & Sons (Canada) Limited, 1952; pp. 215, with 70 photographs, 6 diagrams and endpaper maps. (Price, \$3.50).*

Here is a book which will be welcomed by all who are concerned about the proper use of land in Canada. For the first time in book form, the problems of conservation in Canada are set forth clearly and fully by an author who views our situation from a world-wide background of practical experience and study. Farmers, cattlemen, foresters, engineers, hunters, naturalists, teachers, and those responsible for legislation on conservation, have all much to gain from this important book.

Professor McConkey deals first with the basic factors in land use. Practical applications are emphasized as the author turns to each of the basic industries of Canada. Farming, pasturing and forestry are given most attention. The text is nicely supplemented with maps, diagrams and photographs which will be valuable aids to teachers of conservation theory and practice. By clear and simple use of words and pictures the author has managed to compress a wealth of facts and figures into a short book. Author and publisher deserve praise for a handsome and well designed book.

Bad patterns of land use have had disastrous results when successive generations have followed poor traditional practices. We have been warned that the exhaustible resources of Canada have been dangerously wasted by extravagant practices. Dr. McConkey urges every Canadian, in no uncertain terms, to learn the lessons of older lands, to "tend his forest, cultivate his fields, and maintain a balance with nature, or he will destroy his heritage and perish". Promising beginnings have been made in Canada with certain aspects of conservation. What is needed now is a sustained effort which, Dr. McConkey believes, requires "a national plan, an oper-

ation map, and a national classification of the soils of Canada according to type and use."

"Conservation in Canada" deserves a wide audience and it is recommended both as a review of the present situation of land use in Canada, and as a reference book on the principles and practice of conservation.

—W. K. W. BALDWIN.

**HUNTERS AND HUNTED.** By Stephen Collins, Canadian Wildlife Service, Department of Resources and Development, Ottawa, 1952; illustrations by Ted Ingram; pp. 19.

The demand for well-written, accurate literature on natural history subjects far exceeds the supply. This is particularly true of inexpensive booklets and pamphlets that are within the financial means of the average student. Most of those available have been written by professional writers who are often careless about their facts, or by scientists who have little to recommend them from the literary standpoint. It is an unfortunate fact that "those who know about science can't write about it and those who can write about it don't know about it."

It is a pleasure, therefore, to review the present pamphlet. It seems to have achieved that rare quality of literary excellence combined with scientific accuracy. Although obviously written for students in the intermediate and senior grades, it should provide pleasant and informative reading for the adult who has an interest in wildlife conservation.

"Hunters and Hunted," as the title implies, deals with the relationship that exists between predators and their prey. The author sets out to answer the question, "Are predators, in the long run, detrimental to man's interests?" This is a very pertinent question that is almost certain to arise in any discussion on wildlife conservation. Most of us, unfortunately, are biased in favour of the prey. From the days of bedtime stories onward, we have been taught to look upon the wolf, the bear, and the hawk as blood thirsty killers that deserve the harsh treatment meted out to them by farmers, trappers, and hunters. Personal experience is unlikely to change our attitude greatly. When we see a fox run down and kill a rabbit, our reaction is unfortunately emotional rather than rational and the episode serves only to strengthen our preconceived ideas. In this day and age, however, it is time we relinquished our prejudices and considered the problem from a disinterested vantage point. "Hunters and Hunted" will provide a good basis for such a reconsideration.

By means of well-chosen illustrations based on scientific evidence the author points out that (1) predators play an important role in the "balance of nature," and their existence is necessary in order to maintain a proper balance between herbivorous species and the latter's food supply, (2) since the number of herbivorous species resident in an area is strictly limited, the excess population must be removed by predators and other factors, (3) predators are the natural, and, therefore, most effective means of limiting the density of prey species, (4) each predator is especially adapted for the capturing and killing of a certain type of prey, and it is, therefore, capable of doing so much more effectively than any means devised by man, (5) if the proper balance between predator and prey is upset through the partial or complete elimination of predators, many prey species may increase to such an extent that they constitute a serious threat to man's interests (examples: meadow mice, rabbits, squirrels, etc.), (6) predators are often accused of killing domestic and game species, when in fact, the necessary evidence is lacking, or at least wrongly interpreted. And most important of all, it must not be forgotten that man himself is the most effective and, at the same time, the most despicable predator there is.

The excellent illustrations by Ted Ingram add immeasurably to the value of the pamphlet as a teaching aid.—AUSTIN W. CAMERON.

#### **NOTES ON THE BOBCATS (*LYNX RUFUS*) OF EASTERN NORTH AMERICA WITH THE DESCRIPTION OF A NEW RACE.**

By Randolph L. Peterson and Stuart C. Downing. Contributions of the Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology and Palaeontology, No. 33, p. 23, illus.

The present study is a review of the taxonomic status and distribution of the bobcats (*Lynx rufus*) in eastern North America, with the description of a new race, *Lynx rufus superiorensis* from the area around Lake Superior. Heretofore only two forms, *rufus* and *gigas* have been recognized from eastern Canada and their taxonomic status has been poorly understood. Consequently, the thorough study carried out at the Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology and Palaeontology will be welcomed by mammalogists who have had to deal with this perplexing genus.

As many mamalogists have long suspected, *gigas* is shown to be conspecific with



Baldwin, W.K.W. 1952. "Conservation in Canada, by O. M. McConkey." *The Canadian field-naturalist* 66(5), 148–149. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.341452>.

**View This Item Online:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/89102>

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.341452>

**Permalink:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/341452>

#### **Holding Institution**

Harvard University, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Ernst Mayr Library

#### **Sponsored by**

Harvard University, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Ernst Mayr Library

#### **Copyright & Reuse**

Copyright Status: In copyright. Digitized with the permission of the rights holder.

Rights Holder: Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>

Rights: <https://biodiversitylibrary.org/permissions>

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.