

## Running with the Fox

By David Macdonald. 1987. Facts on File Publications, New York. 224 pp., illus. U.S. \$23.95.

This is an engaging book. The bulk of the text relates the author's extensive and varied personal experiences with the Red Fox, *Vulpes vulpes*. For 15 years, David Macdonald tracked, radio-tagged, photographed, and studied the ecology and behavior of this elusive animal, becoming a world's authority on the species. He has discovered considerable new information on their social behavior dispelling some widely-held misconceptions in the process: "In these circumstances (watching 11 foxes interact good naturedly) the prevailing wisdom on foxes as solitary animals seemed less compelling than it had been in the library." One easily catches his enthusiasm for foxes and also can appreciate the difficulties and discomforts of extensive year-round field work. The chapter "First Find Your Fox" will surely be meaningful for anyone who has struggled with the setbacks and frustrations of attempting to define and initiate a doctoral research program utilizing new techniques.

The 11 chapters are largely a narrative of Macdonald's observations, experiments, and discoveries on red foxes primarily in England. Interspersed within these chapters are 32 half-page boxes describing specific aspects of fox biology,

history, and ecology. These boxes are as informative as the narrative chapters are interesting. They include level-headed evaluations of foxhunting and whether or not urban foxes are a nuisance. In the section on foxhunting, whose history goes back more than 2000 years, we learn of some of its unexpected impacts. For example, Hyde and Regent's Parks in London were established largely so that Henry VIII could hunt foxes close to home. Particularly well done is an explanation of the theory and practice of radio-tracking. Candid advice on the difficulties and effort involved in raising foxes as pets is also provided.

The book contains excellent color and black and white photographs and useful illustrations. I noticed no typographical errors.

Throughout this book, it is clear that the author knows and appreciates foxes and he writes about them in a captivating and informative manner. It is easy to get caught up in stories about his hand-reared "spies" which enabled observation of wild subjects at very close range and I suspect many readers will find it difficult to read the last page of the final chapter with dry eyes.

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## Game Management

By Aldo Leopold, with a new foreword by Laurence R. Jahn. 1986. Reprint of 1933 edition. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison. xxxiv + 481 pp., illus. \$14 (softcover).

While making small talk at a social function a number of years ago, the inevitable question of occupations came up. The newly-introduced circle of acquaintances consisted of a customs broker, an auto salesman, a homemaker, our host (a travel agent), and me, at the time a doctoral candidate studying ecology and wildlife management. "Wildlife management?!?", exclaimed our host incredulously. "How can you possibly manage wildlife?"

Indeed, the prevailing attitude amongst legislators and the general public in North America until about 50 years ago was not unlike that of my bewildered host. Prior to the turn of the century, wildlife was viewed as a resource beyond human control, a fortuitous bounty to be harvested opportunistically until it was exhausted. In the first third of this century, the fledgling conservation movement began to perceive wildlife as a potentially renewable resource, a living legacy that

required protection and husbandry by government agencies to ensure its survival and wise utilization. However, it was not until Aldo Leopold published his monumental 1933 treatise *Game Management* that the art and science of wildlife management was truly born.

Leopold synthesized a cogent discipline from a diverse and complex array of scientific methods, literature treatises, intuitive insights, and personal observations, and produced a classic text which still defines the basis of modern wildlife management. Very few current textbooks in the field deviate substantially from the formula established by Leopold over fifty-six years ago. Though techniques have been revised and updated, and though the scope of wildlife management has been broadened to include nongame species, Leopold's central tenets of responsible use are still in evidence: detailed knowledge of natural history of the animals; empirical assessment of population dynamics and characteristics; careful census methods; protection and improvement of habitat; establishment of clear management objectives; control of disease and predation; appreciation of



the aesthetics and economic potential of wildlife; and recognition of the need for sound wildlife policy and administration.

His empirical acumen is counterbalanced by a deep and abiding respect for the integrity of the natural environment, the celebrated "land ethic" which suffuses his writings and shapes his perspective. *Game Management* still provides a unique and unsurpassed historical overview of the evolution of wildlife management and the conservation ideal, from scriptural passages in Deuteronomy 22:6 to the author's own thoughtful insights on "man's proper relation to the fruitfulness of the earth".

In the author's own words, *Game Management* aspired to a three-fold function: "First, to serve as a text for those practicing game management or studying it as a profession. Second, to interpret for the thinking sportsman or nature-lover the significance of some of the things he sees while afield with gun or glass, or does in his capacity as a voting conservationist. Third, to explain to the

naturalist, biologist, agricultural expert, and forester how his own science relates to game management, and how his practices condition its application to the land."

That Leopold has succeeded in his goals, there is little doubt; the esteem in which his writings are held today is an eloquent testimonial to the depth and substance of his philosophy. The re-issue of this classic text, with corrections made from Leopold's personally annotated copy and a new foreword by Laurence R. Jahn, provides an opportunity for all readers to experience the practical legacy left behind by this visionary conservationist.

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## Eric Hosking's *Birds of Prey of the World*

By Eric Hosking, David Hosking, and Jim Flegg. 1988. Stephen Greene Press (distributed by Penguin, New York). 176 pp., illus. price not given.

If one had to classify *Eric Hosking's Birds of Prey of the World*, somewhere between a coffee table book and a reference text would be just about right. There is no question that Eric Hosking is one of the world's top bird photographers and it readily shows in his latest volume on what I suspect is his favourite group of birds.

With just the odd exception, virtually all of the photographs are refreshingly new. In fact, some of the species have seldom, if ever, appeared in previous books. I was surprised that during the globe-trotting efforts of Eric and David Hosking to obtain their portraits, Bald Eagles in North America proved elusive. Perhaps trips to the east or west coast of Canada or for that matter, Alaska, where these birds are quite populous, were not possible.

As a final remark on the photographs, I did like their layout on the pages with smaller photos inset into larger ones and with the borders or background removed on others. My only criticism is an occasional repetition of similar pictures, e.g., the female hen harriers on pages 64 and 65.

As for the written information in the book, the Hoskings make it quite clear in the preface that they "are not authors" and that they "owe a great debt to Dr. Jim Flegg for writing such a responsible text". Essentially, the book offers seven chapters including an introduction to

raptors, a description of their physical adaptations and the hunting skills derived from them, a section oddly entitled "Birds of Prey the World Over", portraits of some of the members of the different families of birds of prey, separate discussions are provided of conservation, falconry, and, finally, a complete list of all the species in the world and their distribution. Added onto the portrait chapter in peculiar fashion (perhaps due to an abundance of good photos of these birds) is a special section on Australian birds of prey. Some suggested supplemental texts and a much appreciated index round things out.

Overall, the text is a little sparse, but this may be a function of the objectives of the Hoskings in producing the book. There is a nice balance of information though, with much of the material being up-to-date for 1987. The lengthy treatments of some species, e.g. sparrowhawk, reflect the availability of information on them.

In terms of conservation, more information on the success of captive breeding and release programs, as well as the mushrooming interest in raptor rehabilitation and public education could have been addressed. Even a list of important centres focusing on raptors in the various countries would have been welcomed.

The information on longevity on page 15 was quite misleading. Flegg gives the impression that even wild raptors are quite long-lived, when in fact, the average lifespan for the tiny American kestrel, as an example, has been shown by banding studies to





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