

MISCELLANEOUS

A Naturalist in Indian Territory: The Journals of S. W. Woodhouse, 1849-50

Edited by J. S. Tomer and J. J. Brodhead. 1992.
University of Oklahoma Press, Norman. 394 pp., illus.
U.S. \$29.95.

It is generally assumed that detailed natural history work did not get underway in the trans-Mississippi West until almost half a century after the Louisiana purchase. Although several government-sponsored surveys were sent into the region in the early nineteenth century, it was not until scores of Pacific Railroad parties fanned out across the western interior in the 1850s that the natural life of the area was systematically catalogued and described. John Tomer and Michael Brodhead have effectively questioned this view through their critical examination of the field work of Samuel Washington Woodhouse and his Indian Territory journals.

In 1849, Woodhouse, a twenty-seven-year-old doctor practicing in Philadelphia, was appointed surgeon-naturalist to the Creek Boundary expedition survey in Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma). The assignment was the first of its kind for the local ornithologist, and Woodhouse proved a worthy choice. During two field seasons, while topographical crews marked first the northern and then western boundary, Woodhouse made notes on the natural life of the region, as well as collected any new or interesting specimens. He was also a keen observer of Indian life and visited Native settlements whenever possible. Upon his return to Philadelphia, Woodhouse turned over his speci-

mens to the Academy of Natural Sciences and prepared various reports and articles on his findings. He took part in two other, lesser known expeditions in the early 1850s, but then decided to devote his life to medicine – a fact that probably accounts for the relative obscurity of his work today.

A Naturalist in Indian Territory reproduces Woodhouse's three field journals for 1849-1850. The publication of these notebooks is valuable in itself, but what enhances the monograph are the extensive explanatory footnotes that accompany Woodhouse's daily entries. In fact, Tomer and Brodhead are to be commended for their exhaustive, painstaking research. The book is as much a testament to their scholarship as it is to Woodhouse and his pioneering field work. The editors also provide a brief introductory history of the government naturalist in the trans-Mississippi West, a biographical sketch of Woodhouse, and an appendix of the specimens new to science that were collected during the boundary survey. They round out the journal with a number of photographs and illustrations.

A Naturalist in Indian Territory makes a strong case for the contention that the 1849-50 Creek Boundary survey, in particular the field work of S. W. Woodhouse, was a precursor to the detailed natural history surveys of the 1850s.

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A Naturalist's Mexico

By Roland H. Wauer. 1992. Texas A&M University Press, College Station. 304 pp., illus. Cloth U.S. \$38.50; paper U.S. \$14.95.

If you ever plan a trip to Mexico and enjoy natural history, get yourself a good map (preferably topographical as the maps included in the book are fairly primitive, and don't do justice to descriptions in the text) and read this book. If you don't plan a trip to Mexico, read this book anyway...you may change your mind! Wauer obviously loves and respects the Mexican landscape and its wildlife. With four regions subdivided into smaller areas which correspond to trips he has taken, and a series of both black-and-white and color photographs depicting many of the environments he describes, Wauer does a good job of impressing upon the reader the great diversity of Mexico's landscape and natural environ-

ment. Since he has visited Mexico to bird almost every year since 1966, he also has a good historical perspective on changes in land use and wildlife.

The preface gives a good summary of logistical things to be aware of when travelling in Mexico including safety, money, roads, accommodations, and food. Wauer is definitely a well-rounded naturalist, but his first love and the emphasis of the book is birding. He describes the vegetation well and mentions other animals such as mammals, insects, and reptiles; but generally only when they occur during his birding trips, which is fairly rare. This is not a criticism of the book, since it is probably a very realistic account of what one might expect to see during a natural history trip to Mexico, but perhaps a more descriptive title would have been "A Birder's Mexico". A useful feature of this book is what seems to be a fairly thorough

coverage of other references (often original descriptions) to Mexican vegetation and wildlife for the naturalist who wants more details.

While many of Wauer's trips were rigorous expeditions involving extensive travel over rough country, many others were simple half-day walks from his hotel or archaeological sites on the tourist circuit, so this book inspired me to include specific

birding plans in any trip I take in the future. The book is not a field guide, but rather a volume to whet your appetite and help plan a trip (or two, or three) to Mexico.

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NEW TITLES

Zoology

Ancient invertebrates and their living relatives. 1995. By H. L. Levin. Cambridge University Press, New York. c350 pp., illus. Cloth cU.S. \$59.95; paper cU.S. \$24.95.

The animal behavior desk reference. 1994. By E. M. Barrows. CRC Press, Boca Raton, Florida. c608 pp. cU.S.\$195 in U.S.A.; cU.S.\$234 elsewhere.

The amateur zoologist: explorations and investigations. 1994. By M. Dykstra. Watts, New York. 142 pp., illus. U.S. \$12.90.

Bird life of woodland and forest. 1995. By R. J. Fuller. Cambridge University Press, New York. c250 pp., illus. cU.S. \$64.95.

Bird song: biological themes and variations. 1995. By C. K. Catchpole and P. J. B. Slater. Cambridge University Press, New York. c250 pp., illus. U.S. \$34.95.

***Ecology and conservation of butterflies.** 1994. By A. S. Pullin. Chapman and Hall, New York. U.S. \$69.95.

Insects of the Los Angeles Basin. 1994. By C. L. Hogue. 2nd edition. University of Washington Press, Seattle. 448 pp., illus. U.S. \$45.

***Lady Gray: owl with a mission.** 1994. By R. W. Nero. Natural Heritage/ Natural History, Toronto. 176 pp., illus. \$19.95.

***Lake, river, and sea-run fishes of Canada.** 1995. By F. H. Wooding. Harbour Publishing, Madeira Park, British Columbia. 300 pp., illus. \$32.95.

***Lizard ecology: historical and experimental perspectives.** 1994. Edited by L. J. Vitt and E. R. Pianka. Princeton University Press, Princeton. xii + 403 pp., illus. U.S. \$39.50.

Mechanisms and physiology of animals swimming. 1995. Edited by L. Maddock, Q. Bone, and J. M. V. Rayner. Cambridge University Press, New York. 260 pp., illus. U.S. \$54.95.

†**Ornithology in Ontario.** 1994. Edited by M. K. McNicholl and J. L. Cranmer-Byng. Special Publication No. 1. Ontario Field Ornithologists, % S. Haddington,

R.R.# 3, Brighton, Ontario K0K 1H0. xiv + 400 pp., illus. \$24.95 + \$3.50 postage.

Population production and regulation in the sea: a fisheries perspective. 1995. By D. Cushing. Cambridge University Press, New York. c320 pp., illus. cU.S. \$69.95.

Rocky Mountain safari: a wildlife discovery guide. 1994. By C. Illg and G. Illg. Roberts Rinehart, Niwot, Colorado. 88 pp., illus. U.S. \$9.95.

***Sexual selection.** 1994. By M. Anderson. Princeton University Press, Princeton. xviii + 599 pp., illus. U.S. \$24.95.

Zoogeomorphology: animals as geomorphic agents. 1995. By D. R. Butler. Cambridge University Press, New York. c225 pp., illus. cU.S. \$49.95.

Botany

Centres of plant biodiversity: a guide and strategy for their conservation, volume 1. 1995. By World Wide for Nature. International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Cambridge, United Kingdom. £30 + shipping.

***Exploitation of environmental heterogeneity by plants: ecophysiological processes above- and below-ground.** 1994. Edited by M. M. Caldwell and R. W. Pearcy. Academic Press, San Diego. xvii + 429 pp., illus.

A field guide to the trees and shrubs of the southern Appalachians. 1994. By R. E. Swanson. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore. x + 399 pp., illus. Cloth U.S. \$55; paper U.S. \$18.95.

Forest resources in Europe. 1995. By K. Kuusela. Cambridge University Press, New York. 168 pp., illus. U.S. \$44.95.

Historical perspectives in plant science. 1995. Edited by K. J. Fray. Iowa State University Press, Ames. 216 pp., illus. U.S. \$44.95.

Remarkable agaves and cacti. 1994. By P. S. Nobel. Oxford University Press, New York. x + 166 pp., illus. Cloth U.S. \$39.95; paper U.S. \$19.95.

***Scientific and common names of 7,000 vascular plants in the United States.** 1995. By L. Brako, A. Y. Rossman,



Zettler, Erik R. 1994. "A Naturalist's Mexico, by Roland H. Wauer [Review]."
The Canadian field-naturalist 108(4), 517–518. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.356868>

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