

NATURE RAMBLINGS

By FRANK THONE



Badger

The very ideal of solitary, stolid, surly truculence is embodied in the squat frame of the badger. His flat shape and short, bandy legs have earned for him the nickname of "door-mat". But let no one presume upon superficial similarities to treat him as such. His hole is his donjon keep, and woe to the dog or man who would molest him. He looks out upon the world and loves it not, nor does he care a broken bone—another animal's broken bone, of course—that it loves him just as little.

Yet when he is young the badger seems to be not a bad fellow at all. A few years ago, E. J. Sawyer, government naturalist at Yellowstone National Park, captured two young badgers and raised them by hand. They took very well to the bottle, and seemed to imbibe a good deal of the milk of human kindness as well, for they became quite tame, and would come ambling up to play with their strange nurse whenever he crawled into their cage and whistled for them to come out of their shelter. The badger cage came to be one of the great attractions at the park headquarters.

Mr. Sawyer reported also on his observations of the adult badger's method of hunting. It would seem that a heavy animal with such short legs would not have much luck pursuing such agile prey as the picket-pin gopher, and would have to lie in wait until chance brought one of them within reach of a sudden pounce. Yet the ones that the naturalist watched captured their prey simply by doggedly, persistently running the rodents down, rushing after one and then another, until a victim was finally seized.

Science News-Letter, June 29, 1929

The bald eagle is so called because the white plumage on its head and neck suggests baldness.

First Glances at New Books

ANTS, BEES AND WASPS—Sir John Lubbock—*Dutton* (\$3.75). The social insects have been fortunate in their writers. There is more real literature in this field than in almost any branch of science. Such writers as Lubbock, Fabre, Wheeler, Forel, Maeterlinck, and the Peckhams have attracted a large audience of readers outside the strictly scientific circle, and the study of these insects remains one of the very few fields of research still open to the amateur observer. Lord Avebury, better known as Sir John Lubbock, was one of the first to explore this rich territory, and the record of his observations on ants, bees and wasps remains a model of scientific investigation as well as of interesting writing. But since its publication in 1887 a vast amount of more thorough research work has been done upon the question of the senses, intelligence and power of communication of insects, and therefore this new and annotated edition containing one hundred pages on recent researches is just what is needed both by the general reader and the professional entomologist.

Entomology
Science News-Letter, June 29, 1929

FIRST REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON SOIL EROSION—A. G. McCall and others—*U. S. Dept. of Agriculture*. A program for soil erosion, moisture conservation and stream regulation research. Considering the rapidity with which the topsoil birthright of this nation is slipping into the rivers and thence to the sea, the committee behind this pamphlet is to be commended for rapidity in getting into action.

Agronomy
Science News-Letter, June 29, 1929

THE FAUNAL AREAS OF SOUTHERN ARIZONA: A STUDY IN ANIMAL DISTRIBUTION—H. S. Swarth—*Proc. Calif. Acad. Sciences*, Vol. XVIII, No. 12. Of interest to students of animal ecology and taxonomy.

Zoology
Science News-Letter, June 29, 1929

NOTES ON SOME ORIENTAL SAPROMYZID FLIES (DIPTERA), WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE PHILIPPINE SPECIES—J. R. Malloch—*Govt. Printing Office*. Of interest to dipterologists.

Entomology
Science News-Letter, June 29, 1929

YEARBOOK OF AGRICULTURE, 1928—*U. S. Govt. Printing Office* (\$1.50). The U. S. Department of Agriculture has undertaken to "sell" itself to the average reader. This is the third of a series of yearly handbooks showing that there's something besides dry-as-dust formulæ and statistics produced in the bureaus of that department.

Agriculture
Science News-Letter, June 29, 1929

A REVISION OF THE WOOD-WARBLER GENUS *BESILEUTERUS* AND ITS ALLIES—W. E. Clyde Todd—*Govt. Printing Office*. Of interest to systematic ornithologists.

Ornithology
Science News-Letter, June 29, 1929

A TRAVELOG OF BIRDS—*Cornell Rural School Leaflet* (free). An exceptionally good number of a series published for free distribution to teachers in New York State.

Ornithology
Science News-Letter, June 29, 1929

LAND SNAILS FROM HAWAII, CHRISTMAS ISLAND, AND SAMOA—H. A. Pilsbry and others—*Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu*. For many years the land snails of the Pacific islands have been classic material in the study of the evolutionist. This pamphlet adds its significant bit to the data.

Conchology
Science News-Letter, June 29, 1929

BIOLOGY EXPERIMENT SHEETS—S. R. Safir—*World Book Co.* (75c). A well-gotten-up laboratory notebook for use in elementary biology courses.

Biology
Science News-Letter, June 29, 1929

LIFE HISTORY OF THE LAKE HERING OF LAKE HURON AS REVEALED BY ITS SCALES, WITH A CRITIQUE OF THE SCALE METHOD—John Van Oosten—*Govt. Printing Office* (65c). A close study of the life history of an important freshwater fish. Of interest chiefly to fisheries men.

Ichthyology
Science News-Letter, June 29, 1929

MIGRATORY-BIRD TREATY-ACT REGULATIONS AND TEXT OF FEDERAL LAWS RELATING TO GAME AND BIRDS—*U. S. Govt. Printing Office*. Of interest to all persons interested in the welfare and conservation of American game and song birds.

Ornithology—Government
Science News-Letter, June 29, 1929