

TWENTIETH CENTURY WILDLIFE ARTISTS by Nicholas Hammond. The Overlook Press, Woodstock, 1986. 224 pages; 125 color plates; 125 black-and-white illustrations. \$60.

Here is a volume that introduces the reader to the work, life, and artistic philosophy of a wonderful cross section of modern wildlife artists. Forty artists from eight nations (mainly English-speaking) are represented here, and even if you think you are quite the knowledgeable art critic, you are certain to make at least a few new acquaintances. The author, editor of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) magazine *Birds* knows his stuff, and his choice of artists for inclusion in this beautifully produced book is first class. Here are the masters Tunnicliffe, Fuertes, Liljefors, and Thorburn side by side with the "youngsters" Jonsson and Ullstrom. I would like to have seen Keith Brockie, Guy Coheleach, and Glen Loates included, but I really have no argument with the author's selection. A nice extra is the inclusion of pictures of the artists themselves. Get this one and **read** it before plunking it on the coffee table..

A WORLD OF WATCHERS by Joseph Kastner. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1986. x + 241 pages; illustrations by Louis Agassiz Fuertes. \$25.

The author, in this history of American birdwatching from about 1850 to the present, gives us a lively account of the personalities who were the principal players in the development of the American bird scene, both popular and scientific. Spencer Baird, William Brewster, Elliott Coues, Edward Forbush, and John Burroughs have chapters to themselves, but no less intriguing is a huge cast of other historical characters, and Kastner misses few. The author pulls no punches in his descriptions of the rivalries that developed during the famous Sparrow War and of the idiosyncrasies and indiscretions of some of our great nineteenth century ornithologists -- could Coues really have been that bad? But what of recent times? Where are the insights into the modern birders and ornithologists? Margaret Nice was considered the outstanding field ornithologist in America by her European counterparts, yet Kastner curiously tells us almost nothing about the woman, choosing instead to recount the comings and goings of Song Sparrows in the eleven pages of "The Scientist and Her Singer." The Roger Peterson anecdotes are the same I have been reading since I first started birdwatching -- certainly there must be something new to say about R.T.P.! Adding to the author's short-change treatment of modern birdwatching is the chapter "Listeners and Savers," which is full of inaccuracies. For instance, who says the Cape May Warbler is rare at Cape May or that a Massachusetts Boreal Owl "was rudely taken from its roost and had some feathers plucked out as proof of the sighting"? I recommend that you enjoy the book for its first eighty years and grin and bear the rest.