

north. The Epilogue, added especially for this translation, tells how Claude was forced to move back south in August 2006 after he became partially disabled by multiple sclerosis.

Rob Sanders of Greystone Books deserves commendation for agreeing to publish this English translation of a book that first appeared in French in 2000. The

compelling story is told in sixty short chapters, averaging only four pages each. An ideal length for a bedside table, much preferable to watching the grisly television news before one turns out the light.

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Return to Warden's Grove: Science, Desire, and the Lives of Sparrows

By Christopher Norment. 2008. University of Iowa Press, 119 West Park Road, 100 Kuhl House, Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1000. Hardcover. 215 pages. 26 USD.

I was attracted to this book because Chris Norment and I share a love of maps, of reading, of banding birds, of subarctic Canadian history, and a special fondness for Harris's Sparrows. We both admired Marguerite Heydweiler Baumgartner, whose 1933 studies of Harris's Sparrows and American Tree Sparrows near Churchill, Manitoba, helped inspire this book. Indeed, *Warden's Grove* is a worthy response to Baumgartner's challenge that "some intrepid young naturalist will elect to fill in the many remaining gaps in our knowledge of this bird of mystery." Norment has produced a fascinating book about studying Harris's Sparrow in what was then one of the remotest spots in the Canadian barren-land wilderness.

Warden's Grove is part of a series of "sightline books", classed by Iowa University Press as "literary nonfiction" – hence, not as science. Personally, I would have preferred a bit more science and less introspection, more hard facts and fewer attempts at self-analysis, but I have already seen two other reviews that praised what I disliked.

Norment first experienced Warden's Grove when he overwintered there in 1977-78, as a member of a six-man expedition that canoed 2200 miles from the Yukon to Hudson Bay. His interest in Harris's Sparrows and romantic recollections of the unrivalled isolation of Warden's Grove led him to return there for three successive summers, 1989 to 1991. The book describes the adventures and difficulties of living in remote Grizzly Bear country, some 310 floatplane

miles from Yellowknife and at that time 180 miles from the nearest human neighbour. This book was written more than a decade after his research, yet he fails to tell us that diamond mines are today just outside the margin of his "nearest-neighbour circle."

While *Warden's Grove* vividly describes the difficulties in research on Harris's Sparrows, it also shares interesting facts about a bird which, in 1931, was the last species in North America to have its nest and eggs discovered. Among other things, we learn that the eggs, laid by females with an average weight of 33.7 g, have an average mass of 3.09 g. The average height of vegetation at the nest is 47.6 cm. Parental feeding rates of the Harris's Sparrow approach 13 trips per hour, compared to 16 for the White-crowned Sparrow. Norment's studies, however, provide no clue to the cause of the decline in wintering Harris's Sparrow populations in the U.S. mid-west. Nor can Norment come up with an answer for how the nestling sparrows stayed almost completely insect free, while he and his assistant were plagued by large numbers of blackflies.

I admire Norment's writing skills. I share his admiration of the Harris's Sparrow, which he describes as unremarkable yet miraculous. I share his concern that our generation lives mostly in a world of noise; that we seek to obliterate time, distance, silence and space; that we demand immediate gratification. *Warden's Grove* is all the more interesting because the wilderness and isolation will soon be no more.

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The Archaeology of Animal Bones – Second Printing

By Terry O'Connor. 2008. Texas A&M University Press, John H. Lindsey Building, Lewis Street 4354 TAMU College Station, Texas 77843-4354. 206 pages. 29.95 USD Paper.

Coincident with reviewing this book, an archaeology class was for the first time using the skeletal collection which I curate, to identify bones from a Mi'kmaq midden. Therefore, I have been getting a pleasant overload of zooarchaeology from two fronts – a thoroughly enjoyable experience. This review, of course, focuses only on Terry O'Connor's ability to convey information and passion about the discoveries, extractions

and problems associated with interpreting past peoples' lives by the animal bones which they left behind.

At just over 200 pages, O'Connor's book is a sampler of many aspects of zooarchaeology; because of its size, it simply cannot go into detail in the chosen topics. The author's own experiences, many of which are appropriately included in these pages, are a valuable contribution and give the book a sense of reality.

The preface has a prosaic passage, "This book is not intended to be a didactic account that explains *how* animal bones ought to be examined and studied.