

## SKETCHES WITH WORD AND PEN

*Wild Things*. Dion Henderson. Illustrated by Meryl Meisler. 1979. Tamarack Press, P.O. Box 5650, Madison, Wisconsin. 89 pages. \$7.95.

This short book contains 36 single-page essays on plants and birds, insects and mammals and on their ecologic relationships. The essays are grouped according to the seasons of the year, and a pen-and-ink drawing faces the text of each.

The author makes no glaring errors of biology, except perhaps crediting birds as beneficial because they eat weed seeds. How many of these seeds pass through the bird in viable condition, as well as fertilized and dispersed? How many others are dislodged by the birds while feeding, to fall to the ground ready for germination?

But the author's statements are generally well thought out and expressed with a flair (he reflects his early teacher, Aldo Leopold). For example, he notes that winter dormancy is reflected in uneven growth of plants and animals, which thereby produces scars: tree rings, fish scale ridges, and the like. To a northerner his statement, "Man himself must bear winter's scar, if nowhere else, upon his spirit," seems particularly apt.

Henderson's essays are brief, but incisive, and well worth reading.

Staff