

## LEOPOLD IN COLOR

*A Sand County Almanac Illustrated*. Aldo Leopold. Photographs by Tom Algire. 1977. Tamarack Press, Madison, Wisconsin and Oxford University Press, London. 152 pages. \$25.00.

Tamarack Press has come up with a new version of *the* classic work in conservation. The text is untouched: how could one improve on Leopold's prose? The "newness" is in the collection of color photographs interspersed throughout the text. The photographs are excellent, but do not seem to correspond closely with the text. On page 49, for example, Leopold discusses the woodcock and its courtship "sky dance." The facing page features, not a typical display area used by woodcocks, but a sunrise scene over the Wisconsin River.

Whatever the photography adds or detracts, the words of Leopold still work their magic. Each re-reading of *A Sand County Almanac* evokes welcome memories of earlier readings, and brings fresh insight into Leopold's thinking. Ideas newly noted on this occasion included the comment on "wheating land to death" in the western prairies (page 21). Leopold's definition of a conservationist (page 118) neatly separates the "preservationist" and the exploiter: "A conservationist is one who is humbly aware that with each stroke [of his axe] he is writing his signature on the face of his land." And his recognition (page 127) that tree diseases made his woodlot "a mighty fortress, unequaled in the whole county," should be noted by the modern-day foresters who crave "clean" woodlands.

The major concern with this version is the photographs. They give it the appearance of a coffee-table book, but Leopold is meant to be *read*, not displayed. If the photographs attract readers, then they are well worth the extra costs they entail. If the photographs distract the reader from Leopold's words, that reader would be far better served by an inexpensive paperback version.

Staff