The first naturalists in Virginia were the clergyman and botanist, John Banister, who lived at Bristol Parish from 1678 until he was accidentally killed in 1692, and the Reverend John Clayton (1657-1725), who published information about birds and weather in the world’s first scientific journal, Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London; four pages of Clayton’s account are reproduced by Johnston. Sadly, although Mark Catesby spent seven years in Virginia, 1712-1719, he was then a botanical collector who had not yet learned to paint birds; from those years he mentioned only 33 bird species. When he returned later for another six years, Catesby spent his time farther south, so that his famous book deals mainly with the Carolinas and rarely makes specific mention of Virginia. In 1787, Thomas Jefferson, 14 years before he became the third president of the United States, made the first attempt to list all the birds of Virginia, adding 34 additional species to the 100 pictured for adjacent regions by Catesby. Later chapters deal specifically with topics such as the contributions of ornithologists with the Smithsonian Institution and the United States government; conservation and game laws; artist-naturalists; extirpated and introduced bird species; falconry; and regions of ornithological importance describing the observers Johnston’s scholarly and painstaking research makes this one of the finest ornithological histories available for any state. There are some weaknesses, such as the lack of a Virginia map and an incomplete and inconsistent index which omits names of some important people. This book is a necessity in every museum and University library in North America, and for any one with an interest in the history of ornithology.

All-Weather Hawk Watcher’s Field Journal

This handy pocket field notebook, 12 by 17.5 cm., consists of a conservation note, a one-page introduction, a three-page list of the diurnal birds of prey of North and Central America, and 51 pages for field observations. At the top of each page are blanks to fill in for date, time, weather, and location, including GPS coordinates. The special feature is the use of all-weather writing paper so that one can write in the rain!

Self-Portrait With Turtles: A Memoir

David Carroll first saw a Spotted Turtle at the age of eight. He has been enchanted by these amazing creatures ever since.

In this exquisitely written book the author of The Year of the Turtle and Swampwalker’s Journal shares his obsession with turtles, nature and art. This basically chronological book is divided into four sections: Early Years, Art School, Middle Years, Later Years. Through these sections we see the development of a consummate naturalist and artist, witness his choice of art school over science and the growth of his teaching and artistic careers. The book concludes with Carroll hunting for turtles on the 50th anniversary of his first discovery of a Spotted Turtle.

Carroll’s memoir overcomes the common pitfall of bogging down in autobiographical trivia. His writing is compelling and thought-provoking: “Consecrated to the God of my parents before my eyes were open, I lived my first eight years in a closed circle of family, relatives, church, and school. I lived in a totally human environment filled with human concerns and considerations. It was a world built by people for people.” And yet within three days of his family moving to a new home, Carroll had discovered a wetland and encountered a Spotted Turtle: “With that first turtle I crossed a boundary of greater dimensions than I can ever fully comprehend. I changed lives within a life, worlds within a world.”

Although Carroll’s passion is turtles, his deep connection with nature will resonate with any avid natu-