

Auditioning AudioVisuals

By staff members of the Audio-Visual Center
of Indiana University, unless otherwise noted

Journey into summer. 16 mm, color, sound, 51 min. (part I, 27 min.; part II, 24 min.). 1970. Xerox Films, Stamford, Conn.

This film is in the series "We Need Each Other," which is based on the books of Edwin Way Teale; other titles are *North with the Spring*, *Autumn Across America*, and *Wandering Through Winter*. Part I of *Journey into Summer* emphasizes the wildlife found in a variety of environments, from the mountains of New Hampshire to the coast of California, and contrasts man's exploitation of nature with his conservation efforts. Scenes of black bear, hawk-banding, and deer are contrasted with polluted, lamprey-infested Lake Michigan and the hydrocarbon pollution in southern California. The narrator tells of man's tragic actions as mounted specimens of extinct birds are shown. Fortunately, through man's efforts, the buffalo herds are growing. Part II contrasts the graves of cow-punchers of the Old West with a used-car graveyard. Scenes of the Arizona desert show gophers, kangaroo rats, snakes, wild pigs, roadrunners, and foxes. Bighorn sheep are seen in the distant mountains. The film concludes with shots of the Santa Barbara oil slick, the brown pelican (virtually extinct on the coast), and sea elephants.

Journey into Summer was produced for television, and its general audience appeal is obvious. It combines a pollution message with the pleasing and informative photography of a good nature film. Scenes of wildlife and landscapes dominate, with an occasional contrasting environmental pollution shot. Some teachers may be reluctant to use the film because of its length. If a 15-to-20-min. version of the film could be edited, increased use in classrooms may result.

Basic ecology [series of four films]. 16 mm, color, sound. Centron Educational Films, Lawrence, Kan.

This series ranks among the best of the hundreds of ecology films released in the past four years. It presents basic concepts rather than the emotional appeal of many other ecology films. The visuals are excellent; the narration is paced slowly and doesn't dominate the visuals; the editing is good; and key words are overprinted. The narrator in

each film asks questions inviting overt and covert audience participation. Although the slow pacing and the vocabulary suggest use in elementary or even primary schools, the films would be effective for any group unfamiliar with basic ecologic principles.

"What Ecologists Do" (15½ min.; 1971) links the decreased bald eagle population with pesticides; shows ecologists using sampling techniques, dye markers, radio transmitters, and other methods to collect data; and concludes with the man-made problem of the water hyacinth and possible solutions.

"Cave Ecology" (13 min.; 1970) asks and answers questions, such as "How can organisms survive in a closed system?" and "How do cave organisms differ from the same species found outside the cave?" Drawings help to explain a food web, and final scenes compare the closed system of the cave with the world outside it.

"Lakes: Aging and Pollution" (15 min.; 1971) shows various kinds of lakes, the importance of food and oxygen to the inhabitants, the change in inhabitants, and man's addition of minerals that accelerate the aging of lakes. The film asks many questions, concluding with "What can we do to prevent the pollution of lakes?"

"Grassland Ecology: Habitats and Changes" (13 min.; 1970) shows how natural phenomena, man, bison, prairie dogs, and other animals and plants change grasslands habitats. It gives examples of predators and of the effects of eliminating natural grassland enemies by poisoning.

George Vuke

The sea otter. 16 mm, color, sound; 17½ min. 1971. Grover Film Productions, Monterey, Calif.

This excellent film is entertaining, educational, and suitable for a wide range of audiences. It briefly shows the history of the sea otter, its behavior, and the relationships among the sea otter, kelp, and the sea urchin. Opening scenes discuss the first discoveries of the colonies of sea otters and their subsequent near-extinction for their valuable hides. In 1938 a colony of 100 otters was discovered off the northwest coast of mainland United States and has since been extensively studied. The unusual behavior of the otter is shown; for ex-

ample, their ability to use tools: an otter places a stone from the ocean floor on its chest and breaks shellfish while floating on its back. The film discusses the development of an unusual relationship between the otter and kelp. The otter uses the kelp for protection from natural enemies, such as killer whales and sharks, and for resting by draping the kelp canopy over its body. The otters eat sea urchins, which thrive in kelp forests, feeding on the kelp hold-fasts. The otters are a biologic check on sea urchin populations which, if unchecked, would destroy entire kelp forests.

Environmental awareness. 16 mm, color, sound; 6 min. 1970. National Park Service; distributed by Audio Visual Center, Indiana University.

This imaginative film depicts environmental catastrophes in a subtle but effective manner. It shows only an artist's hand as he fingerpaints on glass, gliding from sequence to sequence. The artist presents stages of environmental deterioration associated with industry, housing, and automobiles, and the effects each has upon a child. The film is not highly informative but will hold the attention of an audience and should produce lively discussion.

Tom Held



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