

## Allan Brooks, Naturalist and Artist (1869-1946) The Travails of an Early Twentieth Century Wildlife Illustrator in North America

Joan Winearls

Volume 31, numéro 1-2, 2008

Natural Science in the New World: The Descriptive Enterprise

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/019758ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/019758ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

CSTHA/AHSTC

ISSN

0829-2507 (imprimé)

1918-7750 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Winearls, J. (2008). Allan Brooks, Naturalist and Artist (1869-1946): The Travails of an Early Twentieth Century Wildlife Illustrator in North America. *Scientia Canadensis*, 31(1-2), 131–154. <https://doi.org/10.7202/019758ar>

Résumé de l'article

Britannique de naissance, Allan Cyril Brooks (1869-1946) émigre au Canada dans les années 1880, et devient l'un des illustrateurs de faune aviaire les plus importants en Amérique du Nord pour la première moitié du 20<sup>e</sup> siècle. Ornithologue et collectionneur, Brooks entretient une correspondance abondante avec des ornithologues de son temps et fournit des spécimens à plusieurs musées d'Amérique du Nord. À partir des années 1890, il espère subvenir à ses besoins en peignant des oiseaux et des mammifères, mais cette activité ne s'avère pas suffisamment lucrative au Canada, et il se voit dans l'obligation de considérer la filière américaine pour obtenir des commandes. Ses oeuvres peuvent se comparer avec celles de Louis Agassiz Fuertes (1874-1927), influent illustrateur d'oiseaux américain de l'époque, et il existe des similitudes ainsi que des différences frappantes dans leur trajectoire de carrière. Cet article discute l'oeuvre d'un artiste animalier talentueux et autodidacte travaillant dans un milieu nord américain, ses difficultés et ses succès dans un champ émergent, et sa quête pour une reconnaissance canadienne.

# Allan Brooks, Naturalist and Artist (1869-1946): the Travails of an Early Twentieth Century Wildlife Illustrator in North America

Joan Winearls

University of Toronto

**Abstract:** British by birth Allan Cyril Brooks (1869-1946) emigrated to Canada in the 1880s, and became one of the most important North American bird illustrators during the first half of the twentieth century. Brooks was one of the leading ornithologists and wildlife collectors of the time; he corresponded extensively with other ornithologists and supplied specimens to many major North American museums. From the 1890s on he hoped to support himself by painting birds and mammals, but this was not possible in Canada at that time and he was forced to turn to American sources for illustration commissions. His work can be compared with that of his contemporary, the leading American bird painter Louis Agassiz Fuertes (1874–1927), and there are striking similarities and differences in their careers. This paper discusses the work of a talented, self-taught wildlife artist working in a North American milieu, his difficulties and successes in a newly developing field, and his quest for Canadian recognition.

**Résumé :** Britannique de naissance, Allan Cyril Brooks (1869-1946) émigre au Canada dans les années 1880, et devient l'un des illustrateurs de faune aviaire les plus importants en Amérique du Nord pour la première moitié du 20<sup>e</sup> siècle. Ornithologue et collectionneur, Brooks entretient une correspondance abondante avec des ornithologues de son temps et fournit des spécimens à plusieurs musées d'Amérique du Nord. À partir des années 1890, il espère subvenir à ses besoins en peignant des oiseaux et des mammifères, mais cette activité ne s'avère pas suffisamment lucrative au Canada, et il se voit dans l'obligation de considérer la filière américaine pour obtenir des commandes. Ses œuvres peuvent se comparer avec celles de Louis Agassiz Fuertes (1874-1927), influent illustrateur d'oiseaux américain de l'époque, et il existe des similitudes ainsi que des différences frappantes dans leur trajectoire de carrière. Cet article discute l'œuvre d'un artiste animalier talentueux et autodidacte travaillant dans un milieu nord américain, ses difficultés et ses succès dans un champ émergent, et sa quête pour une reconnaissance canadienne.

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a future as a specimen collector or wildlife artist appeared to be an attractive prospect. Museums all over the world were building up international collections of natural history specimens and using local collectors on the spot to provide these. With regard to wildlife illustration the developing bird conservation and bird-watching movements were creating a market for more popular illustrated field guides and regional bird books and the number of American published works grew exponentially in the first 30 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup>

But getting enough work to make this sort of a living in Canada alone at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was well-nigh impossible. In the realm of collecting there was little demand for specimens for Canadian natural history museums or private collectors. Some government museums such as the Victoria Memorial Museum in Ottawa (now Canadian Museum of Nature) were collecting and paying for specimens, but their small efforts were overshadowed by the collecting efforts of the better-funded American museums such as the Smithsonian in Washington, and the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh. On the Canadian publishing scene, there were few magazines that included natural history and few books being published in the natural history or outdoors fields whose publishers could afford to pay for original illustrations. In 1881 J.W. Dawson, in an address to the Royal Society of Canada, drew attention to the lack of support for publishing and illustration stating that:

...the Canadian naturalist is often obliged to be content with the publication of his work in an inferior style and poorly illustrated, so that it has an aspect of inferiority to work really no better, which in the United States or the mother country has the benefit of sumptuous publication and illustration. On this account he has often the added mortification of finding his work overlooked or neglected.<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, the handful of illustrated bird books that were being published in Canada contained wood-engraved illustrations copied from American sources. For example, Thomas McIlwraith's *The Birds of Ontario* (1894) had copies of Ernest Thompson Seton's line drawings taken from an American publication. Many artists came to realize that they must at least work for American publishers and perhaps eventually move to the United States to get work as illustrators as the Canadian wildlife artist Ernest Thompson Seton had done.<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Mark Barrow, *A Passion for Birds: American Ornithology after Audubon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 165.

2. Quoted in David Knight, *Zoological Illustration* (Folkestone: Dawson; Hamden: Archon-Books, 1977), 59.

3. Canadian and American bird art in this period is more fully covered in Joan Winearls, *Art on the Wing: British, American, and Canadian Illustrated Bird Books from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Library, 1999).

The career of Allan Brooks (fig. 1), Canada's main bird and mammal illustrator in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, reveals a similar understanding of the market. Brooks began his career as a naturalist, specimen collector and game hunter and wanted above all to be able to be independent and make a living from life in the field. He slowly became one of the leading ornithologists and wildlife collectors of the time, collecting mainly birds and small mammals. Throughout the 1890s he was providing specimens and helping with the identification of western birds for Professor John Macoun at the Victoria Memorial Museum who was bringing out his *Catalogue of Canadian Birds* in the early 1900s. He was also providing bird specimens to the few Canadian private ornithological collectors at this time such as James H. Fleming of Toronto, and Thomas McIlwraith in Hamilton. He built up his own collection of skins, corresponded extensively with North American ornithologists, and helped to supply bird and mammal specimens to many of the major North American museums, to collections in Great Britain, to individual ornithologists and to dealers as a way of supporting himself.<sup>4</sup> When this work was not lucrative enough to make a living he slowly moved into wildlife art and illustration. What is interesting in the case of Allan Brooks, however, is to examine exactly how the American connection came about, how he was viewed in the United States, his quest for Canadian recognition and the extent of his success at making a living from his illustration work in North America.

### Getting Started as an Illustrator

Brooks was born in India in 1869, the son of William Edwin Brooks, an engineer.<sup>5</sup> The senior Brooks was a noted ornithologist and specimen collector in his own right and he also drew birds in a small way. In addition he was keen to see one of his children become a naturalist. The young Brooks was sent home for schooling in England where he began

---

4. See Martin K. McNicholl, "Hoyes Lloyd: Ornithological Civil Servant (1888-1978)," in *Ornithology in Ontario*, eds. Martin K. McNicholl and John L. Crammer-Byng, (Burlington: Ontario Field Ornithologists, 1994), 177.

5. Much of the general biographical information on Brooks is found in the biography by Hamilton M. Laing, *Allan Brooks: Artist Naturalist* (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1979) in which the emphasis is on his life as an ornithologist, collector and game hunter. Other early articles include William Leon Dawson, "Allan Brooks—an Appreciation," *The Condor* 15, 2 (1913): 69-76; an early and enthusiastic report on his art to date: Marjorie Brooks, "Allan Brooks—a Biography," *The Condor* 40, 1 (1938): 12-17; Harry Harris, "An Appreciation of Allan Brooks, Zoological Artist: 1869-1946," *The Condor* 48, 4 (1946): 145-153. Jean Webber's, "Major Allan Brooks of Okanagan Landing," in the 42<sup>nd</sup> *Annual report of the Okanagan Historical Society* (1978), 72-89 is a good short summary of his life and work.

his interest in birds and collecting and through his father's connections met several important ornithologists of the period such as Henry Seebohm and John Hancock of Newcastle on Tyne. In 1881, at the age of twelve, the young Brooks emigrated with his family to Canada. The family first settled in Ontario near Milton where his father tried farming for a living and Brooks took every spare moment to collect birds and increase his knowledge of natural history. In 1885 he met Thomas McIlwraith, an eminent Ontario ornithologist who taught him much about collecting specimens and preparing a proper bird skin for a scientific collection. It is not clear when he began to draw birds although a few early drawings and some landscapes do survive, but drawing was for him a useful adjunct to collecting and recording information about birds and mammals.<sup>6</sup>

In 1887 the family moved to Chilliwack, British Columbia, again in an attempt to farm. Brooks was completely entranced by the beauty and wildness of the province and its great potential for natural history studies. Although his father soon returned east, by 1894 Brooks was effectively settled in British Columbia for the rest of his life. Living first in Chilliwack in the Fraser Valley, he moved after 1905 to the drier and more open parklands of Okanagan Landing (near Vernon in the B. C. Interior) and eventually after 1928 for the winters in Comox on Vancouver Island. He died in Comox early in 1946.

From the late 1880s and early 1890s Brooks began writing to U.S. naturalists, discussing specimens that he could collect for them and offering and receiving advice on bird and mammal identification. As a field man he soon won their confidence with his detailed knowledge of western wildlife and particularly birds. Robert Ridgway, Curator of Birds at the Smithsonian Museum and a prominent bird illustrator, had helped him to identify birds in the early years and was, as Brooks later recalled, the first to appreciate his early efforts in bird art.<sup>7</sup> When commissions for bird and mammal specimens slowed, he began offering sketches to collectors, notably by 1894 to the influential William Brewster, ornithological curator of the Museum of Comparative Zoology of Harvard University and one of the founders of the American Ornithologists' Union. In an 1895 letter to Brewster, Brooks indicated that he was pleased

---

6. In this period an artist-naturalist would paint the stance of a bird or mammal partly from a field sketch or memory and would add the details by examining a 'study skin', a collected and prepared specimen. However the soft parts of birds such as eyes, bills, and feet frequently faded fast so the artist would sketch or paint the specimen quickly while skins were still fresh. Fully realistic depiction of birds in art is still dependent today on painting from skins.

7. McGill University, Blacker-Wood Library of Zoology, Correspondence Files, Letters from Allan Brooks, 1906-32, Brooks to Ridgway, 23 May 1922.

*Figure 1. Allan Brooks in the field with his binoculars and collecting gun in 1938.*



*Source: Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Research Library & Archives.*

with the flattering comments on his drawings and wrote that if he thought he could make it pay he would work harder at it; but he notes that he had never had any lessons in water-colour or landscape sketching and that he was finding backgrounds difficult.<sup>8</sup> Brooks emphasized, however, that he had had ample opportunity to study the birds in the field and had studied the work of some of the great bird illustrators in Britain such as Josef Wolf (1820-1899) and J. G. Keulemans (1842-1912). He went on to ask if Brewster knew of sporting clubs or others who might be interested in his work. Receiving a very supportive response he began to do drawings and watercolours for Brewster and his colleagues, receiving apparently about three or four dollars for each.

---

8. Harvard University, Museum of Comparative Zoology, William Brewster Papers, Correspondence, Brooks to Brewster, 16 February 1895.

In 1897, probably through these contacts, Brooks began to send sepia or monochrome drawings to G.O. Shields, the editor of *Recreation* magazine in New York, and about forty of his drawings were illustrated in this periodical between 1898 and 1904. He sometimes accompanied these with short articles on the wildlife, revealing a considerable scientific knowledge particularly of the birds. Brooks enthusiastically reported to his father that he was able to make six dollars per month with this magazine. These illustrations were essentially bird or mammal portraits with small backgrounds and at this early stage the birds were rather wooden in execution while the small mammals were actually his better work. It is interesting to note that while Shields at first wanted this kind of portrait, by 1901 he was including more wildlife action story paintings by better-known New York-based artists such as Carl Rungius and the Canadian Ernest Thompson Seton, (as well as more photography) and Brooks' type of illustration seemed to be of less interest.

Brooks was also drawn briefly into doing illustrations for other popular American magazines; one of these was *St. Nicholas*, the children's magazine being published in New York by the Century Company, where he submitted an article and illustration in 1906 on "Feathered Highwaymen"—birds robbing other birds of their food. But his illustrations do not appear in any other issues between 1897 and 1914. It is clear that Brooks was interested in the more scientific rendering of birds, the drawing of bird portraits and what might be defined as the "fine art" of wildlife illustration. But doing illustrations that told stories similar to those of Seton or Rungius in *St. Nicholas* was not in his area of interest.

By early 1899 a glut in the U.S. market for museum specimens of birds and mammals enabled Brooks to step up his supply of art to U.S. sources.<sup>9</sup> As well, he submitted an article on British Columbia birds with one illustration to *The Auk*, the journal of the AOU, therefore putting his name more prominently before American ornithologists. In 1902, he became a corresponding member of the AOU. Unfortunately he continued to eke out only a bare living from his work and in 1906 he was finding it hard to find the five dollars necessary to become a sustaining member of the Society and wondered if he could work it off in a painting.<sup>10</sup>

As early as 1898 William Brewster had advised Brooks to get in touch with Frank Chapman of the American Museum of Natural History, a prominent New York ornithologist, bird conservationist, and AOU

9. William Brewster Papers, Brooks to Brewster, 21 January 1899.

10. Allan Brooks, "Notes on the Birds of the Cariboo District, British Columbia," *The Auk* 20, 3 (1903): 277-84. McGill University, Blacker-Wood Library of Zoology, Correspondence Files, Letters from Allan Brooks, 1906-32, Brooks to William Dutcher, 20 March 1906.

member. This was an important contact as Chapman, at the behest of the AOU, was in the process of establishing a popular and conservation-based magazine—*Bird-Lore*—which became very successful and was later taken over by the national Audubon society, becoming *Audubon Magazine*. Brooks' first two illustrations appeared in *Bird-Lore* in 1905 accompanying an appended leaflet series,<sup>11</sup> and from 1907 he was supplying coloured illustrations to this source. Brooks had steady work from *Bird-Lore* and the National Association of Audubon Societies and submitted about sixty-six bird portraits for this leaflet series until 1932. The Audubon society, which in the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was responding to the public demand for more popular bird publications, turned out to be one of the best sources Brooks had in putting his name and talent before the North American public. Many of his *Bird-Lore* illustrations were used again and again in Audubon Society publications and were borrowed by authors for other popular books, magazine articles and calendars. In addition, the Audubon society commissioned him to do other illustrations, including three small sets of bird cards.

Brooks' first real break in book illustration commissions<sup>12</sup> came in 1904 when William Leon Dawson, a noted amateur ornithologist and author of a book on Ohio birds, wrote him for information on birds for his forthcoming semi-scientific work on the birds of Washington State. Brooks replied and enclosed some sketches asking if he could use some for illustrations. Dawson was very favourably impressed with these and by 1906 had contracted with him for forty monochrome water-colours and later for some in colour for his forthcoming work.<sup>13</sup> All of these illustrations were very delicately done watercolour portraits with a good deal of attention to detail, and sometimes fine backgrounds. *The Birds of Washington* appeared in two handsome volumes in 1909 in both regular and deluxe editions and efforts were made to produce top quality for the

---

11. National Association of Audubon Societies (NAAS), "The Yellow-Billed Cuckoo," *Educational Leaflet* no. 15 in *Bird-Lore* 7, 4 (1905): 219; NAAS, "The Tree Sparrow," *Educational Leaflet* no. 16 in *Bird-Lore* 7, 5 (1905): 253.

12. In actual fact Brooks' first published coloured plate for a book appeared in W.B. Mershon's, *The Passenger Pigeon* (New York: Outing Publishing Company, 1907), 130, possibly through a contact from his work for *Recreation* or for William L. Dawson. Louis Agassiz Fuertes contributed the painting of the Passenger Pigeon for this book and Brooks supplied a painting of a similar but western species—the Band-tailed Pigeon.

13. Brooks made a note of what Dawson wanted: 52 species—coloured ones at \$5.00 each and black & white at \$2.00 each, Laing, *Allan Brooks*, 82. This can be compared to the \$20 per picture which Fuertes would receive in 1898-9 for small illustrations for Elliott Coues revision of his *Key to North American Birds* (Boston: The Page Company, 1903) cited in Robert M. Peck, *A Celebration of Birds: The Life and Art of Louis Agassiz Fuertes* (New York: Walker & Co. for the Academy of Natural Sciences Philadelphia, 1982), 50.



plates.<sup>14</sup> Although the birds were still being shown in Victorian vignetted style, Brooks showed great promise in the pleasing simplicity and accuracy of these early bird illustrations.

More than pleased with Brooks' work for the Washington book, Dawson quickly secured his services for his much more ambitious fine art publication—*The Birds of California*. Brooks had joined the Cooper Ornithological Club, Los Angeles, in 1906 and with his own location and expertise in British Columbia and Dawson's move west to California, he effectively began to do more work in the western United States from this date on. During the winter of 1911 Brooks took his first trip to California to familiarize himself with the birds and to begin work on the illustrations for the book. From 1911 to 1914 Brooks was mainly kept busy completing the over 100 full-colour watercolours that Dawson required for what was a magnificent four-volume work that eventually was published in 1923.<sup>15</sup> Many of the bird illustrations for this work were finer, more active in stance and more evocative than those for the Washington book and they represent the height of Brooks' achievements in transparent water-colour painting and precise rendering of the birds (See for instance the wonderfully vivid Road-runner in figure 2). Part of Dawson's enthusiasm for Brooks' work was price-related: he could get paintings from him more cheaply than from American artists. He had apparently tried to get Louis Agassiz Fuertes, the best known American bird illustrator of the first quarter of the twentieth century, but found him too expensive.<sup>16</sup> Despite subsequent difficulties with Dawson and the

---

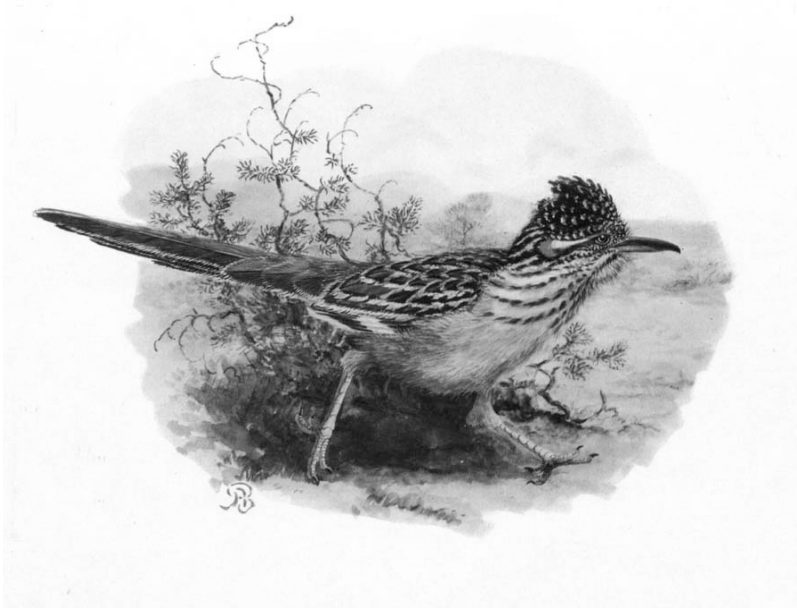
14. William L. Dawson, *The Birds of Washington...* [Prospectus] (Seattle: The Occidental Publishing Co., 1909), [2]. The prospectus also indicated that for all of the deluxe editions, 10 of the best plates would be executed in London "by the finest process known" and better papers would be used to get the best results.

15. William L. Dawson, *The Birds of California*, Students' Edition, 3 vols.; De Luxe Editions, 4 vols. (San Diego: South Moulton Company, 1923). The actual book has a long and interesting publishing history and required a lot of money to produce. Two different publishers were involved; the first issues of a subscription set did not appear until 1921, but this was quickly discontinued and later with an infusion of money from Ellen Browning Scripps the whole work came out in complete sets in 1923. It was issued in 3 different editions, with several different bindings and the complete set of Brooks' four-color process illustrations are found only in the De Luxe editions. Over 4500 copies of all editions were published and prices for the work ranged from \$45.00 for the 3-volumes Student edition in buckram to \$500 for the DeLuxe edition with "Full Levant Inlaid binding," W. Lee Chambers, "Bibliographical Notes on Dawson's *Birds of California*," *The Condor* 41, 6 (1939): 231-43.

16. British Columbia Archives, Victoria, Hamilton M. Laing Papers, Ms 1900, Box 7, fol. 35, Allan Brooks Jr. to Laing, 12 January 1961; When Brooks left for World War I Dawson tried again to get Fuertes to take over and finish the illustrations for *Birds of California*, but in the end Fuertes supplied only one picture, Mary Fuertes Boynton, *Louis Agassiz Fuertes: his Life Briefly Told and his Correspondence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 247.

rather tardy publication of *Birds of California*, Brooks later indicated to his friend and biographer, the naturalist Hamilton M. Laing, that Dawson got him more work than he ever would have got by himself.<sup>17</sup>

Figure 2. *The Road-runner in an active pose and one of Brooks' best paintings done for Dawson's The Birds of California.*



Source: *The Birds of California (1923) Deluxe edition, vol. 3, opposite, p. 1136.*  
 Courtesy of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto.

By 1914 then, Brooks was well launched on his career as an artist and wildlife illustrator in the United States and was on the verge of getting his first Canadian illustration commission. In 1912 Percy A. Taverner, who had just been appointed Curator of Birds in the Victoria Memorial Museum in Ottawa, began work on a new official reference book on Canadian birds to be illustrated by Brooks. Taverner corresponded extensively with Brooks on this subject in these years, but World War I interrupted their planning, when Brooks, then age forty-five, proceeded to Europe. Thanks to his prowess as a sharpshooter, he later became Chief Instructor of the Snipers School; he won the D.S.O. at Arras in 1918, and returned to Okanagan Landing with the rank of Major. Meanwhile, Taverner back in Ottawa had been forced to find another artist—Frank Hennessey—to do the plates for what became *Birds of Eastern Canada* published in 1919.

17. Laing, *Allan Brooks*, 238.

### Allan Brooks and Louis Agassiz Fuertes

The period after the War was a good one for Brooks. There was excitement in the birding community about getting back to proper scientific work and there was a surge of interest in the publishing of natural history books. Brooks had numerous American commissions. The most important one was in 1919 for over forty-five plates for John C. Phillips finely produced *The Natural History of the Ducks* which came out in four volumes between 1922 and 1926 (fig. 3). It was at this time and certainly for this work that Brooks switched from transparent water-colour to opaque gouache or tempera as it was felt that this would reproduce better. This was a major change in his work and produced paintings and plates with much stronger and more vivid colours. It is not clear from whom he got the idea to do this, but possibly from George Lodge, the British bird artist and illustrator, whom he had finally met in England during the War. Lodge had found it difficult to work in transparent water-colour, preferring the opaque washes or oils. Brooks had taken his only painting lesson—a lesson in tempera from Lodge in 1918.<sup>18</sup> In 1920 Brooks was excitedly talking about his new painting medium in a letter to Taverner and sending three sample pictures he had done for the Dominion Cartridge Company in Montreal.<sup>19</sup> Most of his work after this period is in the more vibrant and colourful gouache and he influenced Fuertes to use this technique as well.<sup>20</sup>

---

18. "A Lesson in tempera, the only painting lesson I ever had, done by George Lodge in 1918 Caribou & trees put in by myself to make a picture." A.C. Brooks Family Collection, B.C., inscription on a painting, 1918.

19. Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa, Taverner Papers, Correspondence from Allan Brooks, Brooks to Taverner, 15 February 1920. The wildlife illustrations were probably some of the fourteen he did for *The Call of Canada* a pamphlet issued by the Dominion Cartridge Co. in 1920.

20. Peck, *A Celebration of Birds*, 25. In an interview with journalist G.E. Valentine in 1941 Brooks described this technique in more detail and was later quoted as saying "That's because I mix Chinese white with my colours....It's a technique I developed to make the pictures clearer for reproduction; a lot of other painters are doing it now. Makes watercolours opaque giving the effect of oils, and as I prefer watercolour, much of my work is done that way," *Vancouver Daily Province*, 23 November 1946.

Figure 3. *The Steamer Duck with downy young done for Phillips' The Natural History of the Ducks shows Brooks' great affinity for and skill with waterfowl.*



Source: *The Natural History of the Ducks* (1922-6) vol. 3, plate 65.  
 Courtesy of the Royal Ontario Museum Library and Archives.

Brooks was now approaching the height of his career and in 1920 he was persuaded by Taverner to come east and attend a meeting of the AOU. It was here that he finally met the great American bird artist Louis Agassiz Fuertes and they became good friends and colleagues. Allan Brooks' work has often been favourably compared with that of Fuertes. However, there are distinct differences in their work and careers, which deserve to be examined more fully as they throw light on some of the difficulties faced by the Canadian illustrator. Fuertes had roared onto the scene in the early 1890s and was deemed by the ornithological establishment to be the first great American bird artist since John J. Audubon.<sup>21</sup> While still a young man his talent had been recognized by

21. Blum in her seminal study on the relationships among natural history illustrators, authors and publishers in the nineteenth century suggests that by the end of the century (and faced with increasing amounts of popular literature) one way that the scientific establishment could control the quality of bird illustration in hybrid literature was "to select illustrators for semiofficial endorsement." In Fuertes case Elliott Coues discovered his talent and introduced him to the scientific community where "The discipline united in hailing Fuertes as the heir of Audubon." Ann Shelby Blum, *Picturing Nature: American Nineteenth Century Zoological Illustration* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 336.

Elliott Coues, a major ornithologist at the time, who commissioned him to illustrate his and Mabel Osgood Wright's *Citizen Bird* (1897) and later Coues' revision of his major *Key to North American Birds* (1903). Fuertes was younger than Brooks but better educated, graduating with a B.A. from Cornell. From the start he had other excellent mentors among leading ornithologists of the day such as Frank Chapman of the American Museum of Natural History, New York, and from the art world such as Abbott Thayer, an exponent of studies on the concealing colouration of wildlife in their habitat. As a result he was able to work full-time as an artist and illustrator soon after he graduated from college. Essentially his emphasis was on scientific bird portraits whether in a museum situation such as the work he did for Chapman, or for the official scientific expeditions to various parts of the world on which he was sent as a bird or mammal artist. Despite this scientific work, Fuertes was also heavily in demand as an illustrator, and, because he needed that work to make a living, Fuertes produced illustrations for over thirty-five books and eighteen different periodicals in his lifetime.<sup>22</sup>

Fuertes benefited greatly in his career from living in one of the main North American centres of ornithological research activity in New York State. Brooks, by contrast lived in a fairly remote area. He had dropped out of school soon after the family emigrated to Canada and was largely self-trained in ornithology and painting. As an artist he was always self-conscious about his lack of formal training. For instance he sometimes commented about using the wrong medium for his illustrations because of lack of knowledge of the most up to date materials in use.<sup>23</sup> He began trying to make a living from his painting when he was a decade older than Fuertes was when he began his work. Brooks too travelled extensively but mostly in North America and mainly collecting for himself or to sell to North American museums. Generally he had to finance these trips

---

22. The most recent assessment of Fuertes' life and work is found in Peck, *A Celebration of Birds: The Life and Art of Louis Agassiz Fuertes*.

23. He commented on this first in a letter of 1906: "I am sending in this a few sketches, not good ones, but still better than those awful things I used to perpetrate in "Recreation" which were poor in the first place, & looked worse in the halftone reproduction because of the medium I used—A self taught artist has a hard time learning his work in this out of the way spot." Royal Ontario Museum Library and Archives, James H. Fleming Papers: Correspondence, Brooks to Fleming, 21 May 1906. And again in 1922 in his work for Phillips book on ducks: "Have wound up the Phillip's work, he has been very good about it & only returned one picture. I wish he could have let me see a reproduction or two as I worked as the medium I use is different from what most of you work in & it changes with the light in a most amazing way." Cornell University Library Rare and Manuscript Collections, Louis Agassiz Fuertes Papers: Correspondence, Brooks to Fuertes, 26 November 1922.

himself. In British Columbia, he lived far away even from cities, and he was far from many other ornithologists and artists in a country with seemingly little support for artist-naturalists. But crucially this relatively remote location in the British Columbia interior was Brooks' choice and he was eager to remain a free agent with plenty of time in the field for study and collecting. When he was offered positions (including a tempting position in game-protection in 1923), he quickly turned them down.<sup>24</sup> For him painting and illustrating was a way of supporting himself rather than a conscious career choice.<sup>25</sup>

Both men were aware of each other's work and had opinions on it. As early as 1906 Brooks was commenting in a letter to J.H. Fleming

Fuertes is by far the best they have in America, in fact the only really strong artist in birds – yet his work is nothing like as popular as [Charles Livingston] Bull's or [Ernest Thompson] Seton's. Fuertes' water birds are however not nearly as good as his small birds & Hawks.<sup>26</sup>

And later in 1922 he commented on Fuertes' great strength with individual birds and particularly hawks:

His peregrine picture [from an exhibition] of which he sent me a print must have been fine. The print shows an amount of knowledge of anatomy & feathering that I have never seen equalled; to me it is the best hawk I have seen not excepting Wolf's or Lodge's.<sup>27</sup>

Fuertes himself made an astute judgment of the difference between his and Brooks' art in 1916:

I think he has achieved more success at pleasing and restrained landscape in his pictures than I have, and I think I have been longer a student of the comparative anatomy, appearance and general 'personal looks' of the birds than he has.<sup>28</sup>

Indeed Fuertes' strength was in his work done for scientific purposes and therefore in the rich detail he depicted in a portrait of a bird—feathering, the stance, cast light and colours; but many of these works had no backgrounds. After Brooks went into gouache his bird depictions became noticeably a bit more impressionistic, and he clearly spent much time on background habitats which became increasingly more detailed and

---

24. Royal Ontario Museum Library and Archives, Special Collection SC 76: Allan Brooks file, Brooks to Wallace H. Robb, 29 July 1923.

25. Brooks explained to Laing about the amount of work he had to do—"I average 3 letters a day 90 a month, draw about 20 big pictures a month & make up more skins than you & Ron [Stewart] put together and find time for outdoor work [ie. field-work] as well." Laing Papers, Ms 1900, Brooks to Laing, 17 March 1925.

26. Fleming Papers, Brooks to Fleming, 21 May 1906.

27. Taverner Papers, Brooks to Taverner, 14 November 1922.

28. Quoted in Boynton, 247.

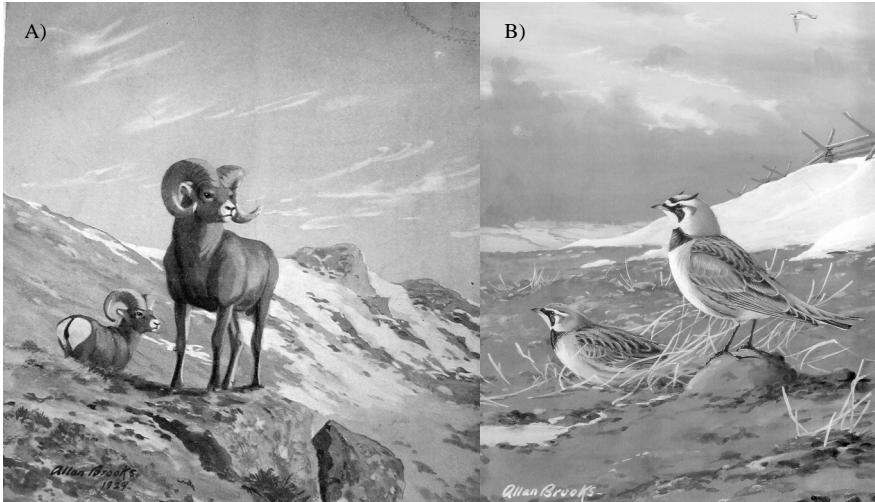
evocative. For Brooks, then, foregrounds, backgrounds and particularly mountains, skies, the use of light and the ability to capture the essence of a bird or mammal rather than the detail of the individual bird were his strength,—especially later in his career and in non-book commissions (See for instance figure 4 for paintings of wildlife in landscapes). Much of this emphasis on backgrounds and landscape was because he saw that it satisfied his private clients, particularly, and would sell well. In the early 1920s Brooks and Fuertes began working together on such illustration commissions as that for John Phillips' book on ducks. As a result their painting styles grew closer in an effort to achieve uniformity in the books. When Fuertes had too much work he tried to turn some of it in Brooks' direction.<sup>29</sup> A tragedy, ironically had the biggest impact on Brooks' career: in 1927 Fuertes, at the age of 53, died in a car crash. His death was mourned by many in the North American scientific and publishing arenas, but these people still needed illustrations for their books. They therefore turned to Brooks and for more than a decade he received several important commissions including finishing the illustrations for volume three of Edward H. Forbush's *Birds of Massachusetts* (1929) and eventually securing a large commission from the National Geographic Society.

During the 1920s Brooks had the most commissions for books, ephemera and magazines of any decade, producing over 850 illustrations largely of birds. All of this activity translated into a marked increase in income. Less than twenty percent of these commissions were for Canadian publications and the bulk of that was in fact for the one work: the second part of Percy Taverner's publication on the birds of Canada. In 1919 he had finally received a commission from Taverner to do over 100 small illustrations for *The Birds of Western Canada* (1926) for which he received fourteen dollars per picture. Later in the decade, he also had commissions for more than thirty covers for *Rod & Gun in Canada* (fig. 4-a). In the United States during this decade, he produced many more illustrations for over eleven American books including Hoffmann's *Birds of the Pacific States* (1927) and Bailey's *Birds of New Mexico* (1928) as well as continuing work for several American magazines.

---

29. Peck, 24-5.

Figure 4. A) A cover painting of Bighorn Sheep from *Rod and Gun and Canadian Silver Fox News* (vol. XXXI, no. 11, April, 1930) and showing his great talent in depicting mountains and light. B) *Snow Buntings* (1927) in an evocative landscape, one of the 72 original paintings of eastern birds he did for W.H. Robb.



Sources: Courtesy of the Royal Ontario Museum.

There is no doubt that some of Brooks' later work was not of the calibre of his work for Phillips or Dawson (both fine art book productions); but on the other hand not all of Fuertes' published work was of the calibre of his scientific work. Brooks juggled many book commissions in an effort to make a living and in some of these he was forced by authors or publishers to create plates of birds that would not have been his choice in terms of meaningful compositions and ways of rendering the species. For example he was frequently required to cram in far too many species per plate, (fig. 5) and ended up with awkward arrangements of the birds in an effort to include suitable habitat backgrounds. And sometimes because of the need to include backgrounds his birds are shown too large or out of scale with the surroundings, a common problem of the time for Brooks and many other wildlife illustrators. But the style of Brooks' illustration work was as commissioned and had to reflect the economic realities as well as the tastes and ideas of his clients—the authors, publishers and public of the time and must be understood in those terms.



Figure 5. Plate 56 showing Nuthatches, creepers and titmice demonstrating the problem Brooks frequently faced of designing a meaningful composition for a plate with so many birds.



Source: T.S. Roberts, *The Birds of Minnesota* (1932).

### The Search for Canadian Recognition

Despite his success as an illustrator in the United States, by the early 1920s Brooks longed for some Canadian recognition and financial support for his art. In the early part of the century, he had attempted to connect with the Canadian art world—at least locally—by becoming a member in 1909 of the British Columbia Society of Fine Arts, exhibiting three works in their first annual exhibition in April 1909, but he apparently did not exhibit with them again until 1929.<sup>30</sup> He also was asked by the British

30. D.A. McGregor “Angle on the Square,” *Vancouver Daily Province*, 23 February 1950.

Columbia government to provide nine paintings for the International Sportsman's Exposition in Vienna in 1910-11 and he apparently had the dubious honour of having his work so admired that a magnificent painting of a Golden Eagle was "stolen by a high official."<sup>31</sup> But early attempts to sell paintings in Vancouver through sporting goods stores failed. In the early 1920s he tried to sell some paintings to dealers in Toronto, Montreal and even through British Columbia House in London. However these efforts proved fruitless and Brooks began to despair of major support or recognition of his work in Canada. Writing to the prominent Toronto ornithologist, J. H. Fleming, in 1921 asking for help in finding an eastern dealer, Brooks lamented

Canada is absolutely dead to anything but dollars & cents – far worse than any part of the States and away behind the other colonies... Nor is there a single picture in all Canada that represents me, only a few bad illustrations, made to other men's ideas mostly. Now I find a ready sale for all my things in the larger cities of the Eastern States ....<sup>32</sup>

And later in April, 1922 he complained

I have quite given up the idea of selling in Toronto after reading your letter. The Situation is this I can sell practically all my stuff at good figures in the U.S. but don't know how long the market will last. Also it will necessitate me leaving Canada I am afraid & living in the U.S. Before doing this I wished to test the Canadian market but am afraid it is hopeless. Artists have no idea of natural history subjects, they all scorn men like [George] Lodge & [Archibald] Thorburn in England so I would fare no better with them. Yet they would rave over an old drawing of a duck by [Albrecht] Durer because it was the thing. ....I am quite willing to sell my stuff in Canada for 25% less than I get in the States or even less, but that's as far as I'll go.<sup>33</sup>

In 1925 he exchanged some correspondence with Taverner about exhibiting and selling his pictures in Canada and soon informed him, somewhat bitterly, "What is the use of bothering with the Canadian Public! From the reports of all the dealers I can hear from they don't buy pictures anyway—And I can sell mine elsewhere." Taverner encouraged him to submit some pictures for exhibit with the Royal Canadian Academy so that he might become better known in Canada (as Frank Hennessey, illustrator for *Birds of Eastern Canada*, had done

---

31. Dawson, "Allan Brooks—An Appreciation," 72.

32. Fleming Papers, Brooks to Fleming, 28 September 1921 and 28 March 1922.

33. Fleming Papers, Brooks to Fleming, 13 April 1922. It is interesting to note that Brooks in the end did not move to the United States like so many other Canadian artists. He was in effect able to make a modest living in British Columbia from the combination of his art and specimen collecting.

successfully). Taverner went on to say that he doubted that there were fifty art lovers in Canada that knew of him and if they did it was only as an illustrator of bird books. He blamed Brooks for this and for not trying to market himself better in Canada.<sup>34</sup> But the fact of the matter was that at this time Brooks did not have the leisure to just be a painter as he was financially dependent on his book illustration commissions; unfortunately the latter were few and far between in Canada.

It was at this key time in his career that Brooks was approached by Wallace Havelock Robb (1888-1976), later the self-styled poet of “Abbey Dawn” (his farm near Kingston, Ontario). Son of a prominent Montreal businessman, by the early 1920’s Robb had given up the family business and was establishing himself as a writer, poet, nature photographer and bird conservationist in the United States. When he came across Brooks’ work in California and specifically his work for *Birds of California* (1923) he began to conceive of an idea for both supporting Canadian education in conservation and Brooks as a Canadian bird painter. He approached Brooks and by 1925 he had started to commission him to prepare a series of portraits of eastern birds at the going American rate of thirty-five dollars each, substantially more than he was usually paid in Canada (fig. 4-b). Robb funded the paintings by finding wealthy patrons mainly in Montreal and eastern Ontario to support his enterprise.<sup>35</sup> The work on the paintings, eventually numbering seventy-two, coincided with the annual conference of the AOU in 1926 held in Ottawa. Not only were Brooks’ paintings prominently exhibited for the first time in Canada, but Robb had also arranged for Brooks to receive the Canadian National Exhibition’s gold medal award of merit at the banquet. In his citation Robb described the award as “an international sign of Canada’s awakening to birdland and a symbol of Dominion-wide appreciation of your [Brooks’] artistic interpretation of bird life.” Despite some embarrassment over Robb’s eulogy, Brooks was clearly pleased that he was finally receiving some acknowledgement in his own country. However Brooks had earlier needed to reign in Robb’s enthusiasm about the work he did for him, writing a very strong letter to put the record straight about his American support:

---

34. Taverner Papers, Brooks to Taverner, 20 April 1925 and Taverner to Brooks, 27 April 1925.

35. The full story is told in Joan Winearls, “For the Birds: How an Extraordinary Partnership between a Painter [Allan Brooks] and a Poet [W.H. Robb] led to a Singular Group of Bird Paintings,” *Rotunda* 34, 3 (2002): 12-17.

I hope you will not take it amiss if I suggest a little restraint when among the folks from the other side at Ottawa [ie Americans]—These have all along been my mainstay, without them there would have been no Allan Brooks as a bird painter, and their orders have in many cases been on a large scale. Several private individuals have collections of my work which would make the ones I have done for you look like post cards [!]

He went on to say that while he was doing the work for Robb he also had many American private commissions for paintings, at prices ranging from \$100 to \$250 and for over 300 illustrations for books at prices nearly double Robb's orders! He closed with the warning that "it would hardly be fair to these people to tell them that you have 'discovered me'."<sup>36</sup> Despite Brooks' desire for recognition at home, he later stated that he continued to prefer doing business with the Americans, for, among other reasons, Canadian magazines often reprinted his work without permission or remuneration, but the American publishers honoured their copyright commitments.

Robb had always intended to reproduce the paintings in the cause of bird conservation, and he gave Brooks added exposure in Canada by using some of them as illustrations in his popular articles and poetry publications in the 1920s, and later used them as slides in lectures to Boy Scouts and other groups. Through Robb's contacts, the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, which had just acquired the paintings, was soon negotiating with the Howard Smith Paper Mills of Montreal to reproduce twelve of the better known birds for the company's 1928 calendar, with individual prints to be sold separately for framing. The printing done by the Rolph, Smith & Company was excellent and produced strong and vivid colours. Brooks was amazed by the quality of the reproductions and indicated that they were much better than those in some recent American books that he had illustrated. The production was very successful and certainly went some way towards making Brooks better known in Canada. Since this calendar had proved so popular the Howard Smith Paper Mills brought out another calendar with twelve more reproductions in 1930, and continued to reproduce these and other Brooks paintings in calendars for over forty-five years (See figure 6 for a sample of one of the larger works that they commissioned from him in the mid-1930's).

---

36. Royal Ontario Museum, Library and Archives, SC 76: Brooks file, Brooks to Robb, 19 September 1926.

Figure 6. A Painting of Canada Geese (1936) in a prairie landscape, one of a series of 12 landscape paintings with birds commissioned by the Howard Smith Paper Mills Ltd. for a calendar.



Source: Private Collection.

Brooks also became better known in Canada with the 1926 publication of Percy Taverner's *Birds of Western Canada*. Despite poor reproduction of his 101 paintings large numbers of this book were printed and sold and there were many offshoots from this work and the later revision, *Birds of Canada* (1934) (which had additional Brooks illustrations).<sup>37</sup> The Imperial Tobacco Company created several sets of bird cards from each edition and Taverner recycled them into two smaller bird guides. In effect the Taverner books and offshoots with Brooks illustrations became standard references for bird-watchers in Canada for the next two decades. In the end it is apparent that Brooks got what was possible out of the Canadian market for book illustration but aside from the Robb collection failed to create a market for his original wildlife paintings in Canada. In fact because he did many more originals for private American buyers and

37. Brigden's, a well-respected printing firm in Toronto had been commissioned by the Government Printing Bureau to produce the plates for printing by the four-colour process, and Brooks and others thought the first proofs were excellent. But then the plates were subsequently damaged while being re-backed for printing and this resulted in muddy skies and backgrounds; Taverner Papers, Taverner to Brooks, 31 December 1925 and 4 January 1926.

more plates for American books he may be better known in the United States today than in Canada.

During the Depression and World War II, times were difficult for Brooks. In the early 1930s the few Canadian commissions dried up and there were fewer American commissions. Although Brooks also did original paintings for private customers, it is apparent that approximately 80 percent of his business came from commissioned illustrations for publication and that over 80 percent of this was for the American market (See Appendix). Of his later American commissions perhaps the one that gave him the most exposure was the series of plates which he did for the National Geographic Society (NGS). Fuertes, who had illustrated eight different series of birds and mammals for the NGS in the period from 1914-1920, had been urging Gilbert Grosvenor of the NGS in the 1920s to employ Brooks as the most capable other bird artist of the period. As a result of Fuertes' death in 1927, the NGS commissioned over 200 illustrations from Brooks to accompany 22 articles on the various bird families in North America. These appeared in issues of the *National Geographic Magazine* between 1932 and 1939 and are some of his best bird portraits, partly because he was not required to put too many species on each plate. These and a few other regional works he illustrated, such as his plates for *Birds of Minnesota* (1932), were very influential among bird-watchers until North American field guides began to show all species in colour.

## Conclusion

How can we gauge Brooks' level of success? As a self-taught artist, as so many were, and in terms of his conscious choice to stay in British Columbia, Brook was very successful managing to operate from there in the lucrative American market and becoming one of the top North American wildlife illustrators during his lifetime. He remained independent and he made a reasonable living. Although he struggled in trying to break into the very small Canadian market, in the end he was modestly successful in becoming recognized for his work. And he eventually became known as the main artist for the first official illustrated book on Canadian birds—*Birds of Canada* (1934)—a book that was well-used in the next few decades by many Canadians interested in birds and conservation. He left a large body of work. He participated in about twenty wildlife exhibitions of original works (the majority of these in the United States) including two major solo exhibitions in California.<sup>38</sup>

---

38. The most important exhibitions in Brooks' lifetime are represented by the following exhibition catalogues: Harry Harris et al, eds., *First American Bird Art Exhibition*, Cooper

Contemporary critics during his lifetime were very supportive of his art and generally viewed him as the best bird illustrator of the time after Fuertes' death. Indeed in the period around 1920 some North American ornithologists went so far as to think that Brooks was becoming a better artist than Fuertes.<sup>39</sup>

Recent criticism has been more mixed: David Lank, a noted Canadian researcher in wildlife art, has said that Brooks demonstrated a natural talent for capturing a sense of mass and tension in a bird rather than just feathers and colouration, that he superbly depicted sunlight and light in his landscapes and that he deserves far greater recognition as a fine artist.<sup>40</sup> However one critic, Robert Mengel, a professor of ornithology and a bird painter in his own right, writing in 1980, rejected the idea that Brooks could be seen as an equal to Fuertes and characterized Brooks as "a British Columbian of early promise who foundered in trite, syrupy

Ornithological Club, Los Angeles Museum, April 1926: Brooks had 6 paintings and was one of 13 artists represented; *Exhibition of Bird Art Held in connection with the 44<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union*, Ottawa, October 1926: Brooks exhibited 32 paintings from the Wallace Havelock Robb Collection, approximately 96 paintings done for *Birds of Western Canada* (1926) and 6 other pictures; Harry Harris et al, eds., *Exhibition of the Work of Maj. Allan Brooks held in connection with the Third Annual Meeting of the Cooper Ornithological Club May 4-6, 1928...*, Fine Arts Gallery, Bilboa Park, San Diego, May 1928: Brooks exhibited 85 works; Harry Harris ed., *An Exhibition of Original Water Colors by Major Allan Brooks, D.S.O., Zoological Artist*, Cooper Ornithological Club, Los Angeles Museum, April-May 1936: Brooks exhibited 44 works.

39. Contemporary reviews of his work are found in George Miksch Sutton, "Fifty Years of Progress in American Bird-Art," in *Fifty Years' Progress of American Ornithology, 1883-1933*, rev. ed. (Lancaster: American Ornithological Union, 1933), 189-190; Roger Tory Peterson, "Bird Painting in America," *Audubon Magazine* 44, 3 (1942): 169-70; Harry Harris, "An Appreciation of Allan Brooks, Zoological Artist: 1869-1946," *The Condor* 48, 4 (1946): 147. Taverner, admittedly a devotee of Brooks' work, wrote in 1918 "Fuertes is a fine bird illustrator and in his best work I see little often to choose between his individual birds and yours but he makes many pot-boilers,—he has to if he is to support himself and family with his brush... You however make pictures that are pictures as a whole and not mere illustrations of details. This is your great strength..." (Taverner Papers, Taverner to Brooks, May 3, 1918); and in a letter in 1920 referring to discussions Taverner held at a recent AOU meeting in New York "Incidentally it may interest you to know that the general impression seems to be that your work stands first now in American bird illustrating. There is a feeling that Fuertes, fine as he is has about reached his limit and is standing still, whilst you are still going ahead. [Frank] Chapman, Fuertes personal friend, admitted this." Taverner Papers, Taverner to Brooks, 20 December 1920. Indeed Fuertes had had a difficult time a few years earlier doing illustrations for Frank Chapman who was a perfectionist, Boynton, 156-8.

40. David Lank, "The Modern Era—Part 3 Louis Agassiz Fuertes—Allan Brooks—Francis Lee Jaques," Wildlife Art Lecture Note, Prepared for Concordia University, ART 298E/ 4-A, <http://www.geocities.com:80/Hollywood/6120/fuertes.html> (access date 16 February 2001). David Lank, "Natural History Illustration: An Introductory Essay," in *Nature Classics: A Catalogue of the E.A. McIlhenny Natural History Collection at Louisiana State University*, ed. Anna H. Perrault (Baton Rouge: Friends of LSU Library, 1987), 72.

puerility under the burdens of excessive illustration.”<sup>41</sup> This is an unjustified generalisation about Brooks’ overall work and is perhaps reflective of the palpable sense of loss to the wildlife art world caused by Fuertes’ premature death. Like Fuertes, Brooks wanted more time to produce his own art to his own taste and economic pressures meant he seldom had time for this. A much fairer assessment of his work was made by Roger Pasquier and John Farrand who wrote in 1991 that although “he [Brooks] never achieved Fuertes spontaneity or surety of touch, ... his work was well appreciated in the 1930s and 1940s when no other painters equalled his ability and he is still admired today...”<sup>42</sup> Brooks’ great ability was in capturing the ‘jizz’ or feel of the creature in its habitat. Much of his illustration, besides contributing greatly to the education of the public about North American birds in the first half of the twentieth century, has a real charm about it. In the end illustration—and he modestly referred to himself as an illustrator,<sup>43</sup>—was for him only a part of his life but in effect for much of his life the main way he made his living.

Throughout North America the bird art of the early twentieth century was being supplanted in the 1950s and 1960s by new concepts of wildlife art based on much more exact and sensitive renditions of birds in their habitats, new and better painting materials and enormously improved reproduction methods. With the advent of the true field guide pioneered in 1934 by Roger Tory Peterson, illustrators increasingly have found work in the exacting preparation of plates of fully accurate renditions of comparable species (usually without backgrounds) for more and more field guides. These largely met the needs of ornithologists and the public and there were as a result fewer regional bird books with major numbers of coloured illustrations such as the ones Brooks had illustrated. On the other hand there were more books devoted to the art of one artist such as those on J. Fenwick Lansdowne and Robert Bateman, two of Canada’s best wildlife artists today. By the 1960s and 70s there was a real market in Canada as well as elsewhere in the world for wildlife art and these kinds of publications. Significantly, many of the modern wildlife artists such as Bateman and Lansdowne speak warmly of the ground-breaking work of Allan Brooks and his important influence on their early careers.

---

41. Robert Mengel, “Beauty and the Beast: Natural History and Art,” *The Living Bird 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Report* (Ithaca, NY: The Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell University, 1980), 41, 57.

42. Roger Pasquier and John Farrand, *Masterpieces of Bird Art* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1991), 205.

43. Laing, *Allan Brooks*, 230.



## Appendix

### Major book illustration commissions by publication date

(Books for which Brooks was sole illustrator or largely so are marked \*)

- 1909 \*Dawson, William L. *The Birds of Washington*. (Seattle: The Occidental Publishing Co., 1909). 2 vols. (48 illus.).
- 1923 \*------. *The Birds of California*. (San Diego: South Moulton Company, 1923). 4 vols. (141 illus.).
- 1922-6 Phillips, John C. *A Natural History of the Ducks*. (Boston & New York: Houghton, Mifflin; London: Longmans, Green, 1922-6). 4 vols. (1 of 5 artists; 63 illus.).
- 1924 \*Grinnell, Joseph & T. I. Storer. *Animal Life in the Yosemite*. (Berkeley: 1924) Contribution from the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California. (15 illus.).
- 1926 Taverner, Percy A. *The Birds of Western Canada*. (Ottawa: Victoria Memorial Museum, 1926). (1 of 3 artists; 101 illus.).  
\*------. *The Birds of Canada*. (Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, 1934). (includes 34 new illus.).
- 1927 \*Hoffmann, Ralph. *Birds of the Pacific States*. (Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1927). (210 illus.).
- 1927-9 \**Audubon Bird Cards Set No. 1... 2... 3*. (New York: National Association of Audubon Societies, [1927-9]). (150 illus.).
- 1928 \*Bailey, Florence. *Birds of New Mexico*. (Santa Fe: New Mexico Department of Game and Fish et al, 1928). (1 of 2 artists; 24 illus.).
- 1927-32 *Rod & Gun and Canadian Silver Fox News*. (Woodstock, Ont.: W.J. Taylor Ltd., 1927-30; Montreal: Rod and Gun Ltd., 1930+). (30 illus.).
- 1929 Forbush, Edward H. *Birds of Massachusetts and other New England States*. Vol. 3 (Boston: Massachusetts Department of Agriculture, 1929). (1 of 2 artists; 24 illus.).
- 1932-9 \*Grosvenor, Gilbert and Alexander Wetmore eds. *The Book of Birds*. (Washington, DC: National Geographic Society, [1937]). 2 vols. (1 of 2 artists; 204 illus.). Articles and illustrations first appeared in issues of *National Geographic* from 1932 to 1939.
- 1932 Roberts, Thomas S. *The Birds of Minnesota*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Museum of Natural History, 1932). 2 vols. (1 of 6 artists; 38 illus.).
- 1935 \*May, John B. *The Hawks of North America*. (New York: National Association of Audubon Societies, 1935). (1 of 2 artists, 37 illus.).
- 1937 \*Grinnell, Joseph et al. *Fur-bearing Mammals of California*. (Berkeley: University of California, 1937). (16 illus.).
- 1943 \*Brandt, Herbert W. *Alaska Bird Trails*. (Cleveland: Bird Research Foundation, 1943). (1 of 2 artists; 9 illus.).
- 1951 ------. *Arizona and its Bird Life*. (Cleveland: Bird Research Foundation, 1951). (1 of 4 artists; 12 illus.).
- 1974 Banfield, Alexander W.F. *The Mammals of Canada*. (Toronto: National Museum of Natural Sciences...University of Toronto Press, [1974]). (1 of 6 artists; 20 illus.).