

I know how many of them would — sooner or later — bite the dust, I might have chosen a different career. However, I cannot speak too highly of the aircrews and their willingness to land even large aircraft in strange and difficult places where nobody had landed before.

The author, Noel Gillespie, is a journalist rather than a scholar. He writes entertainingly, although the text is littered with typographical errors that could have been corrected by a good proof reader. But let that not deter the reader. This is a thrilling narrative of pioneering aviation in perhaps the most challenging environment on Earth. (Charles Swithinbank, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER).

MARINE MAMMALS AND NORTHERN CULTURES. Arne Kalland and Frank Sejersen. 2005. Edmonton: Canadian Circumpolar Institute Press. v +349 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 1-896445-26-8. doi:10.1017/S0032247407296342

Marine mammals and northern cultures is an excellent book on several grounds. One is as a synthesis of the relationship between a number of European and eastern Arctic Inuit societies and a wide range of marine mammals. The heart of this synthesis is a survey in time and space (see chapters two and three) of cetacean and pinniped hunting and its importance around the North Atlantic region. That this survey is not focused on one culture or society, Western or Inuit, sets this work somewhat apart from much of the literature on whaling and sealing and, as will be discussed below, is critical to the deeper aspects of the book.

Overall, the material about Greenlandic and European (Faroese, Norwegian, Newfoundland, and Icelandic) marine mammal exploitation and use in these chapters is stronger than that given to Canadian Inuit. This is not surprising, as none of the contributors to this volume has worked to any great extent with Canadian Inuit. However, as I must admit that I am at best only slightly informed about, for instance, Faroese whaling, I welcomed the emphasis on non-Inuit activities.

As hunting of sea mammals has become increasingly controversial, exploration of the politics of such use, not surprisingly, is a second major focus here. And, while any number of works have tasked themselves to address the pro and anti aspects of sealing and whaling, *Marine mammals* is not merely an addition, but also a substantial contribution, to this literature (see, for instance, Freeman 1988; Freeman and others 1992; Stoett 1997; Sullivan 2000; Vestergaard 1990; among many). In chapters six and seven, the authors address a wide range of issues related to the way(s) international organizations have approached the management of marine mammals and how user communities have responded. Not surprisingly, considerable attention is given to the International Whaling Commission, NAMMCO (North Atlantic

Marine Mammal Commission), the High North Alliance, and various anti-use organizations. Fortunately, a listing of relevant organizational and regulatory acronyms is provided at the book's end. Running to three pages, I took this list to be something of a comment on the prospect for compromise between pro and anti forces.

In some respects, the overall discussion is reminiscent of the sealing controversy of the 1970s and 1980s, especially regarding the trumping of scientific information by politics. However, clearly different from the case of sealing is the organizational sophistication and resilience of the pro-use community — something that could only be said of the anti-sealing movement around 1980.

Finally, there is a third focus. This concerns the nature of traditional, or local, knowledge and, most trenchantly, whether the knowledge of one culture or people should be privileged over that of other cultures or peoples. While most directly addressed in chapters four ('Hunting, Selfhood and National Identity') and five ('Perceptions of Nature'), these matters as a theme run through *Marine mammals*, are its intellectual center, and are its most thought-provoking aspect.

Up to a point, I agree with the authors' conclusion that setting apart the knowledge of indigenous users from similar knowledge held by non-aboriginal fishers and hunters may lead to false reification and stereotyping of the former and, thus, undercut 'the very cultural diversity that has enabled them to initiate and maintain a global discourse on indigenous rights.' However, in the end, I still see Inuit understanding of seals and whales as different from that of Faroese or Icelanders, not because the hunting, sharing, and consumption of sea mammals contributes less to non-Inuit identity or local culture than it does that of Inuit. Rather, my non-acceptance stems from my understanding of how Inuit see themselves in relation to marine (and other) animals and, more importantly, how this shapes their behavior.

In the end, while I disagree with the authors, I appreciate the persuasive case they make about the deep knowledge held by non-Inuit about the animals they interact with and about the meaning of these animals in their lives. But this is secondary to the fact that what they present made me re-examine my thinking about Inuit and traditional knowledge. (George W. Wenzel, Department of Geography, Burnside Hall, McGill University, 805 Sherbrooke Street West, Montréal, Quebec H3A 2K6, Canada.)

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Brief Reviews

MARINE MAMMALS: EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY. Second edition. Annalisa Berta, James L. Sumich, and Kit M. Kovacs. 2006. Burlington, MA, and San Diego: Academic Press. x + 547 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-12-088552-2. £43.99; \$US69.95; EUR 63.95.

doi:10.1017/S0032247407306347

Marine mammals: evolutionary biology was originally published in 1999, but a number of significant changes and improvements have been made to this second edition. There is a new chapter on energetics, improved colour art and distribution maps, and the sections dealing with ecology and behaviour have been expanded. Most chapters have been updated to include the latest scientific advances in the field.

Like the first edition, the second is aimed at two audiences. It is intended as a text book for senior undergraduates or graduates studying the biology of marine mammals, but the authors also wrote it as a source book for anyone working in the field of marine biology, not just biologists and zoologists, but those engaged in marine mammal management issues, and legal or policy development.

The book begins with a basic brief introduction that defines terms and outlines the development of marine mammal science. The rest of the book is divided into two sections: Part I relates to evolutionary history, while Part II deals with evolutionary biology, ecology, and behaviour.

Part I includes an overview of mammalian systematics and classification, then the three subsequent chapters relate these issues to pinnipeds, cetaceans, and sirenians, sea otters, and polar bears. The section concludes with a discussion of evolutionary biogeography.

Part II is longer, and begins with a review of integumentary and sensory systems, an analysis of the musculoskeletal system and locomotion, and a concise guide to respiration and diving physiology. The new chapter on energetics is an important addition, because of recent developments in the study of marine mammalian metabolism. Part II continues with a chapter on echolocation and communication, one on diet and feeding patterns, one on reproduction, and one on population structure and dynamics. The book concludes with a discussion about the exploitation and conservation of marine mammals, and there is a very useful appendix on classical systematics.

In some ways, the book is misnamed, because only the first part deals with the evolution of marine mammals in detail, and the remainder of the book is a good, solid guide to their complex biology. That said, *Marine mammals: evolutionary biology* will certainly be popular with students, because it is clearly and concisely written, and intelligently illustrated.

NEWS MEDIA AND POWER IN RUSSIA. Olessia Koltsova. 2006. London and New York: Routledge (BASEES/Routledge series on Russian and East European studies 24). xv + 271p, hard cover. ISBN 0-415-34515-4. £65.00.

doi:10.1017/S0032247407316343

This welcome book on the formation of the new media climate in Russia, at a time of national experimentation in an unfamiliar, and crude, capitalist environment, is of more relevance to readers of *Polar Record* than might appear obvious at first sight. The book examines the different actors who 'make' the news in the country and considers the roles of the various agents of power involved in the process. It provides great detail on the actual daily practices, many of them unsavoury, of news production, and confirms, if anyone were in any doubt on the matter, that the motivations of the interested and powerful parties engaged are an intrinsic part of the process.

The author takes examples from many parts of the country and not a few of these are from Arctic and sub-Arctic regions. Here a familiar theme in Russian history becomes evident: the farther from Moscow (or in Tsarist times, St Petersburg) one was, the more local circumstances, in particular local power structures, came into play. For example, in Syktyvkar, Komi Republic, in 1996, there was a power struggle between local moguls concerning the issue of licensing. One company was shut down because it did not have a specific broadcasting licence even though it had a media producing licence, while at the same time two other channels, under different control, continued on air without such licence.

The position of journalists is also commented upon and especially the exercise of violence against them by state and non-state agencies. Here, the richer the area, the more dangerous it seems to be for journalists. The author comments that it is 'unlucky' for the Krasnoyarsk area