

promise and the development of a realistic policy of ecosystem management.

The book lacks an analysis of the wildlife situation as a whole or in specific detail. One quarter concerns the sea otter; the half-million caribou rate a few lines only, and other species are assessed by the tired and inaccurate 'decimated'. Les Line's comments on wildlife in the introduction are uninformed, and the many factual and scientific errors reflect the quick-trip approach to the exceedingly complex ramifications of the Alaska wildlife picture. It is to be hoped that those conservationists thinking of coming to Alaska to walk her hills for themselves will not be put off by the author's warning that a footstep on the tundra will show for five years; one wishes that Laycock had been here at least this long before committing pen to paper.

The many very attractive photographs are of excellent quality. The dust jacket shows an Eskimo, in a parka of the eastern Canadian type, firing an arrow directly overhead. The reader may wonder whether the unseen target is an oil company helicopter or a flock of geese on spring migration.

JOHN HENSHAW

High Arctic, by George Miksch Sutton. Paul S. Eriksson, New York. \$12.95.

Animals of the Arctic, by Bernard Stonehouse. Ward Lock, £2.75.

Dr George Sutton, American ornithologist and bird-artist, made his first trip 'down north' in 1920; winter and summer, he has been there many times since, and no one else now living can look back on so long a professional involvement with wildlife in arctic Canada. His scientific contributions have been many and are highly valued by his fellow workers in the north; but it is as an artist, illustrator, lecturer and populariser that his name is most widely known to the world. *High Arctic: an expedition to the unspoiled North* reproduces eleven of his water-colours, eight of them in generous double-page spreads; they are marvellously evocative of the high arctic spring, depicting migrant birds newly returned, or muskoxen – the special feature of the trip the book describes – among the melting snow and the budding shrub willows. It was in 1969 that he had this opportunity of joining his younger colleague of earlier expeditions, Dr. Dave Parmelee, and others on flying visits to Bathurst and Axel Heiberg Islands, roughly 70 to 80 degrees north in the Canadian arctic archipelago. The 116 pages of text contain a simple narrative of our active weeks, and achieve their modest purpose, to carry the reader away briefly to the purity and fascination of an arctic biome, which he cannot easily get to himself. The author, a most perceptive, practical, hardy individual of 74, who undertakes nothing without making sure it is done well, has produced an aesthetically pleasing book, well bound and printed, with many choice photographs in addition to the plates, and with small black-and-white colophons of wildfowl, jaegers and muskoxen to decorate its 10½ x 8¼-inch pages.

Dr Bernard Stonehouse's book is the same size but rather thicker (172 pages), with over 200 colour pictures in the text, most of them from photographs; many of them are strikingly beautiful or technically superlative or both. Considering this wealth of illustration the book is very moderately priced. I was sorry to find therefore, as I read it, signs of hasty preparation on the author's part, and signs that he has not had enough first-hand contact with the animals of the Arctic to justify

embarking on so comprehensive and ambitious a book. I do not doubt that its sequel, a companion book on the animals of the Antarctic and Subantarctic, announced on the dust-jacket, will be an entirely different proposition, for it is in the south that the author's most notable polar experience has been gained. Very little of the present book except the lively prose owes its origin to Stonehouse. Even selecting agency pictures of places and things one has never seen and giving them captions is asking for trouble; compiling a popular scientific text in similar circumstances is perilous indeed. The book consequently has little depth and is sometimes factually adrift. If like the Humane Mikado one could make the punishment fit the crime, the author would be sent to arctic Siberia (alternatively the District of Franklin) for a summer or two, with hard ecological labour.

V.C. WYNNE EDWARDS

The Struggle for the Great Barrier Reef, by Patricia Clare. Collins, £2.50.

Refreshingly different from the recent deluge of books about various aspects of the Reef, this is neither a picture book nor an account of reef life, but an account of the Reef's future. Until recently no one has questioned this and little scientific attention has been given to this enormous and extremely complex ecosystem with incredible species diversity.

Miss Clare has woven a fascinating story, and her skilful descriptions of the people most intimately involved make whole sections read like a novel. Other chapters describe her visits to the Reef and the threats from mining and oil interests, increasing coastal development, oil tankers, uncontrolled tourism etc. She gives a wide insight into the problems currently to be faced on this assemblage of reefs extending 1250 miles along Australia's eastern seaboard, and leaves the reader with a feeling of considerable disquiet as to its future and the way in which decisions are arrived at.

Of the fifteen colour photographs, many of them extremely good, ten are by Keith Gillett, the doyen of Reef photographers. Since a whole chapter early in the book is devoted to the crown-of-thorns-starfish threat to the Reef it is unfortunate that plate 1, captioned 'Crown-of-thorns starfish' shows a common reef sea urchin. All the captions are terse and most uninformative. For instance the caption for plate 4 – a superbly reproduced photograph of the fringing vegetation at Heron Island – is merely, 'Trees and beach – Heron Island'. Apart from the fact that this much is obvious, identification of the trees as casuarinas would at least be informative. But these comments do not detract from the text; I hope that it will be widely read, both inside and outside Australia.

ROBERT BUSTARD

The House of Life – Rachel Carson at Work, by Paul Brooks. Houghton Mifflin, \$8.95.

Rachel Carson was a bestselling author, with books translated into a score of languages, long before she published *Silent Spring*, her last and best known work. An aquatic biologist, she wrote mostly about the sea and the shore and their teeming life, skillfully mingling scientific knowledge with her sense of wonder at the endless beauties of nature; and she wrote well.