

Reports and Journals

The Biological Significance of Climatic Changes in Britain, edited by **C. G. Johnson** and **L. P. Smith**. Symposia of the Institute of Biology, No. 14, Academic Press, 42s.

This interesting volume consists of the Proceedings of a Symposium held in London in October 1964, and shares with almost all other reports of symposia the weakness that only subjects of particular interest to the participants get covered. Hence we have an admirable survey by H. H. Lamb of the changes in our climate since the end of the last Ice Age—yes, we *have* been getting cooler and wetter summers and colder winters in recent years, and 1900-1940 really was a halcyon age for weather—but the rest of the contributions deal with agriculture, marine life and vascular plants, and not at all with terrestrial or freshwater animals or any possible impact of the climate on conservation generally. A single author can be expected to take a synoptic view of his subject, but a committee, such as presumably planned this symposium for the Institute of Biology, inevitably reveals itself as a loose amalgam of special interests. Within its limits the volume makes fascinating reading for all naturalists and conservationists who are undismayed by the gaps.

Muskoxen in Canada, A Biological and Taxonomic Review, by **J. S. Tener**. Canadian Wildlife Service, Ottawa, \$3.25.

Between 1888 and 1891 the Hudson's Bay Company records show that 5,408 muskox hides were traded. From then on numbers declined steeply, and since 1917 the muskox has been protected. To-day the population on the mainland is estimated at about 1500—three times the 1930 figure of about 500—and on the islands 390. In this complete and interesting survey the author points out that, living in a cold desert, the muskoxen's reproduction rate is low and their economic use limited. Their most serious predator is man with firearms, for the animal's well known defence against danger—a tight circle facing outwards—is disastrous against guns. Climatically the chief risk for them is the marked warming-up of the Arctic in this century.

Range Relationships of Elk and Cattle in Riding Mountain National Park, Manitoba, by **Donald A. Blood**. Canadian Wildlife Service, Wildlife Management Bulletin, Series 1, No. 19.

This report of an investigation into the competition between elk *Cervus canadensis* and cattle for range forage in the only national park in Canada where cattle grazing is permitted, concludes that "under prevailing levels of elk and cattle stocking, forage competition between the two species can largely be discounted as a factor threatening the welfare of either".

Der Alpensteinbock in seinem Lebensraum, by **Bernhard Nievergelt**. Paul Parey, Hamburg, 18 DM.

The first in a series *Mammalia Depicta*, in German with an English summary, this is a study of six ibex colonies in Switzerland that increased at different rates. The increase in numbers was greater in the smaller colonies, and in these colonies the bucks died earlier so that the life span of a generation was shorter. In one colony once numbers had increased breeding began later and the bucks lived longer. "The conclusion is that the variation in turnover regulates the development of the population".