

Life at the Sea's Frontiers

By Richard Perry. 1974. Taplinger, New York. 301 pp. \$9.25.

This, the third title of "The Many Worlds of Wildlife" series, deals mainly with the terrestrial vertebrate life of islands, coasts, and estuaries. The book is similar to other books of the same genre in that a good deal of it covers the more sensational aspects of island and coastal life. With seemingly little continuity, the dialogue moves randomly from atoll life to giant island tortoises, then on to such perennial crowd-pleasers as the evolutionary anachronistic *Tuatara* and the giant Komodo dragons. The chapters, for the most part, are interesting in their investigations of various kinds of wildlife, but one detects a lack of continuity between chapters. The only theme connecting them appears to be the ecological relationships found at the land-sea interface. This seeming discontinuity is heightened by the somewhat random arrangement of the chapters.

My main complaint with this book is in its lack of originality. Most of the material is taken from the writings of other naturalists. As such, I found

it a chore to continue in many instances, wishing that I were reading material from which the author seemed to be paraphrasing. I had the feeling, in many cases, that something was being lost in the translation. I must admit that Perry's work does have a few interesting sections that seem alive in comparison with the rest of the book. These bright spots occur whenever Perry writes from his own experiences as a naturalist. His chapter dealing with the Northumberland coastal region near his home is excellent, but unfortunately brief. Had the entire book been of that quality Perry could have made an important contribution to the corpus of natural history writing. As the book now stands, I can only recommend it for the few illuminating sections which are a product of Perry's own experiences.

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High Arctic—An expedition to the unspoiled North

By George Miksch Sutton. 1971. Paul Eriksson Inc., New York. 11 color plates, 16 black-and-white plates, line drawings. \$12.95. Separate portfolio of 11 color plates, \$14.95.

George M. Sutton, writer, artist, teacher, internationally acclaimed ornithologist, has made many trips to the Arctic, beginning in 1920 as a crew member on the Grenfell Mission's *Northern Messenger*. In spite of half a life-time of arctic associations he had never seen the far northern islands. The opportunity to complete this lengthy love affair with the arctic regions came in 1969 when Sutton was invited to join an expedition to remote Bathurst Island where long-term studies of animal behavior are being carried out by biologists of the National Museum of Natural Sciences (Canada).

His book, *High Arctic*, immediately captures the reader as Sutton recounts with engaging charm the narrative of this visit to the high north. The informality, freshness, and warmth with which the story is told make it an experience in which the reader feels a part. It conveys a sense of wonder, and even awe of the subtle beauty of the far north and the excitement of being in an

unspoiled land where muskoxen, wild white wolves, and King Eiders are part of the landscape.

The month-long period at Bathurst Island occupies most of the story. We are told little about the scientific endeavors of the expedition, but are given ample demonstration that progress towards the achievement of new knowledge is won by hard work and keen observation, and is made in tiny steps, often under trying conditions. The narrative does not purport to be an account of scientific accomplishment, but its spontaneity could easily stimulate young people to field studies.

We are told in an interesting way of camp life, the problems of logistics, the comforts of living in a Parcoll hut and of the camaraderie that prevailed. We became party to conversations about the lateness of the season and scarcity of spring birds, the death from starvation of an old bull muskox, and visitations of an almost legendary arctic wolf, "Bloodface." Beautiful descriptions, some lyrical, tell of the coming of the birds, their nests, the flowers, the storms, and bind together a life story of the transient arctic summer. At the end of the season a flight was made to Elles-

mere, Axel Heiberg, and Meighen Islands in search of the nesting site of Ivory Gulls. This search proved unsuccessful, but the described panorama of majestic arctic landscapes, impressions, and adventures which flow from Sutton's pen are a great success.

The text of *High Arctic* is enhanced by eleven full-page or double-page color plates of Sutton's paintings of birds and mammals. There are also sixteen excellent monotone photographs, and numerous line drawings. All are exceptionally well chosen, and add greatly to the reader's sense of participation. Dr. Sutton's descriptions indicate his remarkable capacity to observe, and his paintings superbly demonstrate his ability to share what he has observed with others.

Prints of the paintings are available in a separate portfolio and warrant comment in their own right. Eight are presented in 16 × 16-inch format, and three are 12 × 8 inches. All are delicate water colors, and portray the far north

with great sensitivity, perhaps in a way never before presented. The flock of seven Brant in flight is exquisite, and the painting of two Greater Snow Geese flying is so true to life in the atmosphere of beginning spring that one can almost hear the hum of their primaries in the wind. The others all have special qualities of their own to delight the eye. Whether in the book or in the folio they speak to us about the fragile web of life of the far north which we know awaits the onslaught of man's technology. How long can the High Arctic remain unspoiled?

I recommend *High Arctic* to everyone who is interested in the north and its wildlife; it will bring back cherished memories to those who have been there, and it will offer a vicarious journey to those who have not.

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Much is Taken, Much Remains. Canadian issues in environmental conservation

By Rorke Bryan. 1973. Duxbury Press, North Scituate, Massachusetts. 307 pp.

This book consists of six parts. The first is a brief Introduction and the last a still briefer Conclusion. The four parts which make up the main body of the book deal with pollution and development in the Canadian environment; transfer and export of Canadian water; the status and conservation of wildlife in Canada; and national parks in Canada. Although the specific problems dealt with are exclusively Canadian ones, the author's concern is not solely with Canada. As he points out (p. xiv), "If we can overcome the environmental problems in Canada, perhaps some of our remedies can be applied in other countries."

I recommend this book to anyone concerned about these problems. Probably most of the topics discussed in it have been dealt with elsewhere, but I have not seen any other book that deals with them all. It is lucidly written, and the author's approach is scholarly and thoughtful. Except in the discussion of eutrophication (pp. 29–30) which is not altogether satisfactory (the author gives the impression that the main troublesome biological consequence of eutrophication is the increased growth of rooted plants, whereas in fact it is the proliferation of planktonic algae),

the author has been remarkably successful, as far as I can judge, in avoiding errors in the wide range of subjects that he has covered.

The discussion of water export is particularly noteworthy for the absence from it of the nationalistic tone which has characterized so many discussions of this topic. Much that has been written has, in the author's words, "created the impression that the Americans are waiting to snatch our water as soon as our backs are turned" (p. 151) whereas in fact "many of the proposals for water export are of Canadian, not American, origin" (p. 152). I entirely agree that "it is irrelevant whether or not the water crosses a political boundary. If the costs of damage outweigh the benefits, all people are eventually losers" (p. 14).

It is in the section on national parks that the author appears to speak with the greatest authority. He recognizes the varied and incompatible demands that are quite legitimately placed on these areas, and the necessity for zoning if these demands are to be met. He does not believe, however, that zoning within parks will be successful, and recommends that different parks be zoned for different purposes. One possibility he suggests is that a distinction be made between wilderness parks, with a minimum of manage-



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