

A Boater's Guide to the Upper Yukon River; Carcross, Yukon, to Fort Yukon, Alaska

By the Publishers of Alaska Magazine. 1975. Alaska Northwest Publishing, Anchorage, Alaska. 66 pp. \$3.95.

This small book should be invaluable for trippers setting out to explore the Yukon River, and it may inspire other readers to plan such a trip. Although travellers on the river are advised to check in with various RCMP posts along their route, the river itself is not a dangerous one. There is only one set of rapids and one portage along the greater part of its length, and if care is taken to stay close to shore on the large lakes, there should be little chance of mishap as long as one has taken along enough food to wait out rough water or high winds.

The book begins with a brief history of the river, explored first by prehistoric men seeking their livelihood among mastodons and mammoths, much later by Russians and Hudson's Bay Company men seeking furs, then by prospectors hunting for gold, and finally by rivermen. The river banks are well worth loitering along, as there may still be found strings of colored trade beads of the fur trade, old books in various languages, and prospectors' rusted shovels. None of these historic relicts or artifacts may be removed, so that the atmosphere of early days on the river still remains.

The body of the text is divided into five parts,

each dealing with one stretch of the Yukon River, beginning at Carcross, Yukon, and ending in Alaska at the Bering Sea. Each section, complete with map, describes what geographic features one can expect along that part of the river, what historical incidents occurred there, and sometimes what wildlife may be seen. The text is also eminently practical. One is told, for example, that for 60 miles below Whitehorse the river is unfit for drinking; water here should be boiled or taken from side streams. It is also uneconomic to fly your boat out when your trip is completed. Most craft are therefore abandoned near one of the many airstrips which serve the small settlements scattered along the 2000-mile waterway.

For anyone planning a trip by powerboat or canoe down the Yukon, or for anyone interested in the north, this book will be most welcome. I recommend it heartily.

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Among the elephants. 1975. By I. Douglas-Hamilton and O. Douglas-Hamilton. Viking Press, New York. 288 pp. \$14.95.

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Powell, Tom S. Sadler, and Margaret Powell. Environment Canada, Edmonton. Information Report NOR-X-133. 36 pp. Free.

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