

of only 55 square kilometers, no place in Bermuda is more than a kilometer from the ocean. It has a sub tropical climate due to its situation in the Gulf stream, and a fascinating geological history. Some 100 000 years old, Bermuda is a seamount with a limestone cap and red soil layers originating from sand blown from as far away as the Gobi Desert. It has a classic karst landscape perforated by caves and sink holes.

With 63 000 inhabitants it counts as one of the most densely populated places on earth, much exacerbated by an annual influx of 600 000 tourists attracted by its picture post card beauty. Humans have been coming to Bermuda since the 1500s when it was first sighted by Europeans, with permanent settlement dating from the 1600s. The island's terrestrial habitats were quickly transformed; originally covered by forest these were sadly depleted by ship building and other industries and today one finds only tiny remnants. The original inhabitants included a flightless rail and a "crow" rapidly exterminated by the new arrivals. In the author's words, "we may never know what delicate animals and plants were eradicated."

The author repeatedly returns to this theme, describing how humans have, intentionally or not, altered the Island's ecology. Boars, introduced by sailors prior to permanent settlement undoubtedly finished off the flightless rail and other vulnerable fauna. Two other examples tell the tale: Yellow-crowned Night Herons were successfully reintroduced to control an accidentally introduced land crab which had the bad manners to dig golf ball sized holes in golf courses, making a "hole in one a certainty". Less successfully, anoles were introduced to control an accidentally introduced, destructive fruit fly but ended up eating ladybugs which had in turn been introduced to control an accidentally introduced scale decimating native trees. Great Kiskadees, introduced to control the anoles, ended up eating the endangered Bermuda skinks. And so it goes.

Like all remote oceanic islands, Bermuda has a limited terrestrial biodiversity, consisting mainly of species that can be transported over long distances by the wind or ocean currents. This paucity is illustrated by the contrast between the number of native vascular plants, 156, and the number of marine fish, 423. Native inhabitants include birds, insects and plants originating from North America and the Caribbean: the marine life is distinctly Caribbean, sharing many of the same colourful reef species. Some of the arrivals have diverged sufficiently from their ancestors to become endemic species

or subspecies, for example the Bermuda Skink is thought to have evolved from a shared ancestor with the North American Five-lined Skink. Perhaps the most celebrated member of the Bermudian assemblage is the Cahow, or Bermuda Petrel; originally known only from fossils it was famously rediscovered in 1951 when a scant few pairs were found breeding.

All of this is set out by the author in 21 twenty chapters variously focused on key environments (reefs are the largest ecosystem, fresh water ecosystems the smallest) or groups of animals. The book is extensively illustrated with colour photographs but avoids being a "coffee table" book by the detailed narrative which introduces the reader to each theme and describes the key inhabitants and processes involved. Attractive maps are found on the front and end pieces. Occasionally the text reads like a catalog, but there is enough analysis and sufficient interesting observations that the reader's interest should be rekindled. It also reads from time to time like a university lecture, which is not surprising given that the author is a university lecturer. Because each chapter is rather self standing there is a fair amount of irritating repetition which could have been reduced through a final editing session. A few proofing errors are present such as mention of the "Blade-headed Gull", surely a cut above the usual lariid, and the geographically confused Antiguan Anole which apparently hails from Barbados as opposed to the Barbadian Anole transported from Antigua. While most groups are well covered, marine mollusks and sea shells receive scant attention which is curious given the level of interest these attract.

The final chapter looks to the future. Exports of the valuable endemic Bermuda Cedar were banned as early as 1657, however, systematic conservation measures only emerged much more recently. Marine ecosystems are relatively well protected, however, only 7% of the land surface receives official protection. A protected species act was introduced in 2003 and there are prohibitions on the importation of new species. Environmental education, particularly of youth, is a key priority and it is to be hoped that this handsome book will help especially as it is accompanied by a CD, making it an "electronic book." If you have an interest in island biogeography, or just want to dream about your next escape from a Canadian winter, this book will be of interest.

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Saskatchewan Uncommon Views

By John Conway. 2005. The University of Alberta Press, Edmonton. 135 pages. Illustrated. \$29.95.

The results of John Conway's photographic forays across Saskatchewan are certainly "uncommon". Sometimes strikingly beautiful, always minimalist, his photographs elicit reflection, nostalgia, even humour.

While this is not a book on natural history, it will appeal to many readers, especially to serious practitioners of photography and to residents of Saskatchewan steeped in its history and geography. Superficially, the photographs confirm the popular belief that Saskatchewan is flat, dull and colorless. But a closer

scrutiny (St Denis hills, for example page 43, or cattle and hay bales in a snowy landscape, page 5) suggests the beauty he could have depicted had that been his primary intention. In addition to the photos, the book contains three thoughtful essays by well known Saskatchewan writers: Sharon Butala, Helen Marzolf and David Carpenter. A careful reading of these essays is likely to result in a deeper appreciation and understanding of Conway's art and sensibility.

Essentially, Conway shows what the prairie once was and what has since happened to it and to the dreams of thousands of farm families who immigrated to the West in the first decades of the twentieth century. His photos suggest a variety of reactions to a land that can be both inviting and cruel. Small towns are disappearing; many farm homes sit forlorn and abandoned; the larger urban centres reflect a new way of life, essen-

tially industrial and commercial, isolated from the land which nurtured aboriginals and early settlers. However, several of his pictures reveal the tenacity and spirit of the people still living in rural Saskatchewan: the remains of a bicycle mounted on a fencepost in imitation of modern art (page 13); a roadside sign: Shirl's Upholstery, standing in heavy grass. Conway's caption: "Shirl has done upholstery out of a mobile home for twenty five years."

A handsome book, reasonably priced, *Saskatchewan Uncommon Views* is a significant achievement, particularly fitting since it appeared in the province's centennial year.

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MISCELLANEOUS

Manly Hardy (1832-1910): The Life and Writing of a Maine Fur-buyer, Hunter, and Naturalist

By William B. Krohn. 2005. Maine Folklife Center, 5773 South Stevens Hall, University of Maine, Orono, Maine, USA 04469. 343 pages. \$24.95 hardcover, \$19.95 paper.

Manly Hardy documented more about Maine's wildlife during the last half of the 19th century than any other writer. He was "a keen and reliable observer ... a faithful recorder," and a "widely capable, fiercely independent, highly intelligent and positive man." Krohn demonstrates "just how dynamic Maine's natural environments were during much of the nineteenth century." This book was possible because the author had access to the documents collected by two unrelated people: Fannie Hardy Eckstorm, Hardy's first child, and the late Dr. Ralph S. Palmer. In addition, Palmer was responsible for much of the annotated bibliography which appears at the end of the book.

The first 78 pages, written by W. B. Krohn, deal with Manly Hardy's life. Hardy was a complex person with many seemingly contradictory qualities. A small and sickly child in the small town of Brewer, Maine, he became religious as an adolescent, and studied Greek and Latin in a private school taught by a minister. In his twenties he became a hunter and trapper who regularly took life for food and fur, yet he loved pets and could be sentimental about animals. When Hardy was 32, he inherited from his father the family fur business; he handled over half a million dollars worth of furs during his career, the largest fur business east of the Rocky Mountains.

When Hardy was growing up, Indians outnumbered white people in Brewer. Hardy's approach was unusually enlightened for his time; hunting and traveling with them, he learned their ways. He respected their knowledge and skills. They confided in him and he guarded their secrets.

Krohn deals mainly with Hardy's interests outside of his business. Hardy amassed a collection of over 3000 birds; he traded Passenger Pigeons from Maine to obtain some of the specimens. He wrote at least 150 articles about nature, over half of which appeared in *Forest and Stream*. Ernest Thompson Seton (some of whose delightful sketches are reproduced in this book) considered Hardy's writings to be among the most useful information in print; he quoted Hardy 72 times in his monumental, four-volume *Lives of Game Animals* (1925-1928). Ralph S. Palmer cited Hardy 21 times in *Maine Birds* (1949).

The main portion of the book, 203 pages, reproduces some of Hardy's most interesting articles, including two accounts of long winter trips in the Maine woods. The mammal articles selected by Krohn concern four species that are now extinct or nearly so in Maine, the woodland caribou, wolf, cougar and sea mink, plus others of special interest, the lynx, bobcat, fisher, moose, beaver, river otter, and porpoise. Hardy's well-written accounts are still of interest today, offering the best available comparison with what things were like more than a century ago. The final 32 pages give an annotated bibliography of Hardy's other bird and mammal vignettes. I found only one minor error, made by Hardy, who misspelled the surname of Roderick Ross MacFarlane [not MacFarland].

For those with an interest in the history of fur-bearing mammals in the days when Maine's woods were in a pristine state, this book is a treasure. It will be of nearly equal interest to residents of adjacent New Brunswick.

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