

circumpolar north, particularly in the formulation of theory for explaining variation in specific socio-economic contexts.

The emphasis on evolutionary ecology and stress on hypotheses in order to make quantitative predictions of hunter-gatherer behaviour is one that many anthropologists have rejected in favour of more humanistic approaches and a concern with the construction of cultural meaning. The author acknowledges this, saying that he does 'not view culture as theoretically or empirically irrelevant to understanding human foraging behaviour in general or the Inujjamiut case in particular' (pages 405–06), but nonetheless he defends his own position by pointing to the mass of empirical evidence he presents. The use of foraging theory for prediction and explanation, however, does leave out the person of the hunter as a conscious agent interacting with his social and natural environment and the subtle interplay of culture, social structure, ritual and belief, economics, exchange, and prestige. Nevertheless, the value of this work lies in the contribution it makes if allowed to stand alongside studies concerned with the cultural factors, social relations, and modes of subsistence of hunter-gatherers, not just in the Arctic but worldwide, as well as more pragmatic accounts of environmental adaptation and predatory behaviour. (Mark Nuttall, Department of Social Anthropology, University of Edinburgh, George Square, Edinburgh EH8 9LL.)

INTERTIDAL BIVALVES: A GUIDE TO THE COMMON MARINE BIVALVES OF ALASKA. N.D. Foster. 1991. Fairbanks, University of Alaska Press. 152 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-912006-49-8. \$30 (US). Softcover, ISBN 0-912006-54-4, \$20 (US).

Nora Foster, Coordinator of the Aquatic Collection at the University of Alaska Museum, offers in this book the first identification guide to bivalves written specifically about Alaskan species. Bivalves—clams, mussels, cockles, and scallops—abound in the intertidal zone and shallow waters of Alaska's 6000-mile coastline, and at least 184 species are to be found, of which 106 are included in this book.

Although the book is primarily a guide to identification, the author aims to do more than help 'clambers' correctly identify shells commonly found on the Alaskan coast, providing additional information on distribution and habitat, together with a discussion of paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP). Accurate bivalve identification can be more than a matter of simple curiosity, and those enjoying wild seafood will now be able to do so with an enhanced sense of security that they are not going to wake up the following morning with the dreaded symptoms of PSP, or—worse still—not wake up at all!

Following a brief introduction to bivalves in general and Alaskan bivalves in particular, a system of identification keys is described and used to indicate likely bivalve family. Entries for the 106 common Alaskan species are grouped under the 32 families. Each species is illustrated with a line drawing, and a short description is provided,

starting with size, characteristics, distribution, and habitat.

This is a very thorough guide of its kind, but it invites certain questions. From a polar point of view, what would have been even more useful would have been a comprehensive guide to Arctic bivalves. This book is restricted to Alaska and is not comprehensive even for Alaskan species. A perhaps fairer criticism, since Foster's book is clearly intended primarily for the Alaskan market, is that the publishers have chosen too large a format for a book that should fit conveniently into the pocket of any Alaskan beachcomber. These criticisms aside, the author has performed a useful service in compiling so thorough a guide. (William Mills, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

BRIEF REVIEWS

MEMOIRS AND MUSINGS OF AN OCTOGENARIAN BIOLOGIST. Colin Bertram. 1992. Hanley Swan, Self Publishing Association. 248 p, hard cover. £14.95.

The Self Publishing Association is doing a good job for recent polar history. Not long ago we reviewed Andrew Croft's autobiography *A talent for adventure*; here now are the memoirs of Colin Bertram, who before World War II took part in two Arctic summer expeditions and the British Graham Land Expedition 1934–37. After the war he was for seven years director of the Scott Polar Research Institute. He has also travelled widely and worked intensively as a biologist on other continents. Like his earlier *Antarctica, Cambridge, conservation and population* (1987), these writings distil some of the wisdom he has accumulated along the way. Idiosyncratic, in style often reminiscent of *Arabia Deserta*, never dull.

AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ANTARCTIC INVERTEBRATES (TERRESTRIAL AND FRESHWATER). William Block. 1992. Cambridge, British Antarctic Survey. 263 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0 85665 148 6. £25.00.

As Richard Laws's foreword reminds us, despite the popularity of seals, whales, and penguins, '... some of the most numerous Antarctic animals are the small and inconspicuous terrestrial and freshwater invertebrates, which are significant ... both for their contribution to our wider understanding of basic ecological and physiological processes and ... for what they may be able to tell us about environmental change.' Over 1430 references cite literature from the *Cocquille* expedition of 1822 to 1990, covering continental and maritime Antarctica, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, Bouvetøya, Marion and Prince Edward islands, Iles Crozet and Kerguelen, and Heard and Macquarie islands. Some ectoparasites are included; endoparasites are not. Each entry has a generous annotation, and is cross-referenced to taxonomic, species, and author indexes. In total, a most useful compilation that will never lose value. Obtainable from British Antarctic Survey, NERC, High Cross, Madingley Road, Cambridge CB3 0ET UK.