

### ARCTIC WILDLIFE

THE ARCTIC AND ITS WILDLIFE. Sage, B. 1986. Beckenham, Croom Helm. 187p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-8160-1083-8.

This is an excellent general account of the environment and biota of the Arctic. In one volume it bridges the gap between highly technical and popular accounts of these aspects of the region. The principal emphasis is on the terrestrial environment and inhabitants, birds, marine mammals, and trophic chains; fish and marine biology generally are also discussed. The physical environment is considered with special reference to its effects on the biota and their adaptations to meet its rigours. The author and contributors have used a wide range of sources covering the whole of the Arctic although, owing to availability of information and access, the American Arctic, Greenland, and Svalbard are treated in greater detail than the Asian Arctic.

The first chapter 'Defining the Arctic' analyses the limits of the region and, for the purposes of the book, establishes these as the 10°C maximum isotherm; thus the region covered is that close to the Arctic Ocean and extending south to the Aleutian archipelago. For biological studies this is the most appropriate separator. The information is very well presented and includes results from the latest research with a well selected range of colour plates and good diagrams to supplement the text. Maps are well and frequently used to show particular aspects, but the treatment of place-names is rather variable with apparently random use of anglicisation of some and original forms of others. In contrast the treatment of Linnean and vulgar names of animals and plants is systematic. Although anthropological and historical material is not covered in much detail, the effects of modern human activities are considered with their complex interactions and probable future consequences. These include conservation of biological and other resources, adverse effects of pollution (notably of contamination by pesticides), mineral exploitation, other industrial development, and increasing human activities such as recreation and tourism (especially in the American Arctic). A very comprehensive bibliography is provided which gives an up-to-date summary of the literature concerning the region. (R. K. Headland, Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

### EXPEDITION TO BRABANT ISLAND

ANTARCTIC YEAR: BRABANT ISLAND EXPEDITION. Furse, C. 1986. London, Croom Helm. 223p, hard cover. ISBN 0-7099-1058-4. £14.95.

A naval engineer by profession and a keen ornithologist by inclination, Cdr Furse is above all a dedicated Antarctic explorer with two previous expeditions to Elephant Island to his credit. On the last occasion he spent three months on the historic island leading a Combined Services team of 16 members, climbing, canoing and making the customary obeisance to science. *Antarctic year* is a monthly journal narrative of his latest venture, this time to Brabant Island in the Palmer Archipelago. The scenario is much as before but now on a more ambitious scale, involving a team of 35 service personnel with logistic support from HMS *Endurance* and encouragement and help from the British Antarctic Survey. For summary of the expedition see his note in this issue of *Polar Record*.

The expedition was divided into three parties, a summer party, a wintering party and a second summer party. The time spent on the island spanned from January 1984 to March 1985. In this way the entire Antarctic winter could be experienced. Like Elephant Island Brabant presents a formidable challenge to the explorer. The first recorded landing there was by Lt Adrian de Gerlache's *Belgica* expedition at Buls Bay in 1898; it is pleasing