

Book reviews

experience over many years and a 'good theoretical knowledge of nutrition, human health and biology'. Despite this, their report is somewhat inconsequential and thin on facts. They did, however, conclude that 'Any risk to the survival of the bowhead whale that might be posed by the continuance of aboriginal whaling cannot be justified on nutritional grounds'. The Cultural Anthropology Panel, benefitting from a larger participation, produced a more solid document, the value of which may be less ephemeral than the others.

The value of this book is greatly enhanced by inclusion of the Kapel and Petersen paper, 'Subsistence Hunting—the Greenland case'. Their well-documented and illustrated review is orderly, informative and critical. It provides a good basis for current controversial problems of whaling (and sealing) in Denmark's overseas territories—but with one important omission: details of international trade in products from these marine mammals.

The quality of the book would have been improved by omission of a short paper by W.S. Laughlin and A.B. Harper entitled 'Demographic Diversity, Length of Life and Aleut-Eskimo Whaling'. Embedded in the practically impenetrable prose of this muddled document are such gems as 'Both Aleuts and Eskimos are clearly addicted to whales' and that marine mammal hunting depends more on teaching ('intense and specific programming of') children boat handling and navigation than does the hunting of land mammals!

There are indications that commercial whalers in countries such as Norway, Iceland and Japan will seek to have their activities included in the hazily defined category of 'aboriginal whaling for local consumption', in order to evade the implications of the 1982 decision by the IWC that commercial whaling should cease everywhere by 1985/86. The next Special Issue of IWC Reports on this subject may be very different from the present one.

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The Badgers of the World

Charles A. Long and Carl Arthur Killingley

Charles C. Thomas (Springfield, Illinois), 1983, \$39.75

This book is frustrating. Badgers are popular animals and there is a wealth of fascinating information available on their biology and relations with man, but these authors' compilation is disappointing. They state that,

'it is difficult today to write a manuscript in the old-fashioned natural history style because there is such disparity in basic observations and popular information on the one hand, and elegant and highly technical scientific information on the other. We have attempted to walk a tightrope between.'

Unfortunately they have fallen off. The old-fashioned natural history writers are a pleasure to read because of their literary skills. Long and Killingley have amassed a pile of popular and scientific information but it is poorly organised: muddled, sometimes repetitive and occasionally contradictory. Worse, discussion and comment are often so lame or badly stated that one wonders if the authors have fully comprehended the subject themselves. The book does have a place on library shelves, however, because it is a useful source of information which is otherwise difficult to obtain, namely on taxonomy of badgers and the biology of species other than the European.

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A Complete Guide to Monkeys, Apes and other Primates

Michael Kavanagh. Introduction by Desmond Morris
Cape, 1983, £10.95

This is a fascinating book with excellent illustrations; the text is both informative and interesting, and in places entertaining. After an introduction to classification, evolution, primate origins and

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