

feeding, growth rates, parasites, mortality and effects on indigenous vegetation. For their future, far from advocating removal, the author draws attention to the need for a management plan, and the general scientific interest of these and other small stocks of introduced animals in alien situations. (Bernard Stonehouse, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

#### POLAR BEARS IN CANADA

**POLAR BEARS.** Stirling, I. 1988. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press. 220 p. illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-472-10100. US\$39.50.

Polar bears, like penguins, are among the world's most popular animals, and authors at a loose end find it profitable to write on them. Ian Stirling was never at a loose end; he is a dedicated professional zoologist — a senior research scientist with the Canadian Wildlife Service — with a strong and lasting commitment to polar bears. If he profits from this book he well deserves to, for it tells of his own research, set in a context of other recent circumpolar studies on this enigmatic, exasperating species. In *Polar bears* he collaborates with Dan Guravich, a leading wildlife photographer with a matching interest in the Arctic.

The result is all that a popular wildlife book should be, the text knowledgeable and intelligent, the pictures sensitive, colourful and a delight in themselves. Stirling covers the origins of polar bears, their background ecology, relationships with primitive man, reproductive and population biology, behaviour, and conflicts with modern man. A dozen other scholars might have done no less and congratulated themselves on a much duller book. This author uses his wide experience in lecturing and film-making to answer the kinds of questions that real people — not just scientists — ask about polar bears. Yet it is a thorough book; beyond the biology and pictures you find the texts of two important documents, the 1976 International Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bears and their Habitat and the more parochial 1988 Canadian/US Management Agreement for Polar Bears in the Southern Beaufort Sea, together with a good bibliography and index. All concerned, including University of Michigan Press, can be proud of this one. (Bernard Stonehouse, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

#### KINSHIP AMONG THE DENE

**KINSHIP AND THE DRUM DANCE IN A NORTHERN DENE COMMUNITY.** Asch, Michael. 1988. Edmonton, Boreal Institute for Northern Studies. 113 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-919058-74-4.

Michael Asch's work on the Dene is widely known and justly appreciated and this first published appearance of the material on social organisation and music from his PhD thesis (1972) is most welcome. The time is 1969–70, at a period of social stress but before the 'development of a

sophisticated political response'. The book's focal point is a community faced with a dilemma about how to conceptualise, and thus live through, changes in their own social organisation. The Canadian government had moved three local bands into one settlement, where they had now crystallised into two groups. Previously, marriage had been with people who lived elsewhere; now everyone was a neighbour. In terms of kinship, the two groups could now be seen either as 'nodal kindreds' or as halves of a 'Dravidianate' system of exogamy. This tension caused difficulty for the community's sense of solidarity as a whole. Asch then relates social organisation to different types of music, components of the Drum Dance. This dance, when 'successful', suggests that the community is indeed solid; but its success is not guaranteed on every occasion. The author clearly knows much more than he tells us in this short book and the reader is left crying out for more: more data, to show us the inner political process, case studies of persons making the choices which are here outlined in abstract form (eg the 'contentious issue of the election of a Chief' which made one dance unsuccessful). This book is tantalising and it is to be hoped that its appearance will not preclude a fuller account, not least because the situation described is one in which an updating would be very exciting. The postscript from 1988 leaves still obscure Asch's very interesting idea that the successful drum dance may create a social solidarity through resolution of present conflict but at the price of future social development. (Piers Vitebsky, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER).

#### BRIEF REVIEWS

**UNTENEHMEN POLARSTERN: DAS BORDBUCH DER ANTARKTIS-EXPEDITION.** Stonehouse, B. and Casarini, M. P. 1988. Düsseldorf, ECON Verlag. 302 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 3-430-18801-6.

Illustrated popular account, by two who took part, of Winter Weddell Sea Project 1986, a six-months' expedition aboard icebreaker RV *Polarstern*, of the West German Alfred-Wegener-Institut für Polar und Meeresforschung. Casarini covers the first half (June to September, Stonehouse the second half (late September to December), recording day-to-day life and scientific discovery on a modern polar oceanographic expedition. In German.

**DÄGGDJUR, GRODDJUR & KRÄLDJUR.** Curry-Lindahl, K. 1988. Stockholm, Norstedts Förlag. 396 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 91-1-864142-3.

A pocket-sized field guide to the amphibia, reptiles and mammals of Europe, with maps and both full-colour and black-and-white illustrations; it features especially the fauna of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, but covers also the British Isles, Belgium, Netherlands, Poland, Germany and western USSR, showing skulls, tracks and other details as well as portraits. Text in Swedish, a useful book in any language..