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are too vague to be useful. Few are mentioned by name. The fungal kingdom, though outside the scope of the book, plays an important role in most ecosystems in recycling nutrients, and this could have been dealt with more fully. However, the book is a fascinating addition to any bookshelf and provides many hours of interesting reading.

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Aboriginal/Subsistence Whaling (with special reference to the Alaska and Greenland Fisheries)

International Whaling Commission Reports, Special Issue 4, 1982, £8.00*

Consideration of so-called aboriginal/subsistence whaling has in recent years demanded attention by scientists and delegates to the IWC out of all proportion to its real economic, nutritional or cultural significance. Arguments about whether the Alaskan Eskimos should be permitted to take one more or less bowhead whale per year (on the basis of results from intensive and costly research) have delayed the entire annual proceedings of the Commission. Under the same term quotas for North Atlantic humpback whales—probably an even more endangered population—to be caught by Greenlanders, much of the meat from which is exported to Denmark (for consumption, it is claimed, by expatriate Greenlanders) are decided rapidly, on the basis of virtually no scientific evidence.

A book to put all this in perspective would be welcomed. Valuable though it is this is not such a book. 'Aboriginal/subsistence whaling' is defined here as

'whaling, for purposes of local aboriginal consumption carried out by or on behalf of aboriginal, indigenous or native peoples who share strong community, familial, social and cultural ties related to a continuing traditional dependence on whaling and on the use of whales'

*Available from IWC, The Red House, 135 Station Road, Histon, Cambridge CB4 4NP, UK. Price £9.25 including postage and packing.

—a definition that begs more questions than it answers. The book is constructed around reports of Panel Meetings of Experts, on Wildlife, Nutrition and Cultural Anthropology convened by the IWC in February 1979. The Reports are preceded by an introduction by Dr Ray Gambell, the Secretary of the IWC, who in a succinct, clear and informative way reviews the history of the treatment by the Commission of the problem of setting appropriate quotas for bowhead whales. This useful short essay is balanced by G.P. Donovan's 'Postscript' recounting developments from the close of the Panel Meetings through various meetings of Technical and Scientific Committees to the Annual Meeting of the Commission in July 1981. In between are sandwiched the three Panel Reports (all with useful short bibliographies) and a major working paper by Danish scientists F.O. Kapel and R. Petersen.

As the subtitle hints, only a few of the 'aboriginal/subsistence' whaling activities remaining in the world are considered; there is virtually no mention of the assorted patterns of whaling still pursued in Polynesia (Tonga), the Azores, the Caribbean (St Vincent), Eastern Siberia and Indonesia. This is a pity because a broader examination might have led to better definitions and, in turn, to a more useful management procedure than has so far emerged from the IWC. Instead, the Commission's scientists are now saddled with criteria for advice which they clearly cannot meet, with quotas consequently being set largely arbitrarily.

The Panel Reports contain summaries of facts about the subjects with which each group was concerned, but only with respect to the situation in Alaska, except for a glance at the nutritional status of Eskimos in Canada. The consideration of whaling and consumption of whale products in the broader context of the utilisation of wildlife, terrestrial and marine, is commendable. The three reports differ greatly in style and quality. The Wildlife Panel emphasised it had 'worked in haste at short notice' and was offering only 'a collection of ideas and a guide to literature and problems'; members were clear that management decisions should not be based on their work. Nevertheless, the scope of their work is impressive. The four members of the Nutrition Panel claimed they all had extensive practical

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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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