

of the lake. Part of this justification is: ‘... a rule of science states that if it is possible to conduct an “experiment” (in a philosophical understanding of the word), it should be done as soon as possible if there is a scientific demand for it.’ I, for one, am not familiar with such a rule and have a difficult time relating it to Lake Vostok, one of the last unexplored frontiers on our planet. Chapter 11 also provides the first text that describes the international politics behind the penetration of Lake Vostok. Statements such as ‘... regarding scientific studies of Lake Vostok and penetration of the lake, the earlier spirit of the Antarctic Treaty has disappeared’ are clearly the views of the author and do not appear to be reflected among the majority of the scientific community. The sub-glacial group of specialists convened by SCAR in 2000 has maintained deliberations within the spirit of the Antarctic Treaty and has attempted to promote sub-glacial lake exploration in international scientific terms, while still engendering the environmental stewardship inherent in all Antarctic ventures.

I believe that, except for the biological interpretation, Zotikov has done a nice job of presenting an overview of the history and future of Lake Vostok. The presentation of the Russian literature alone makes this book an important read for those interested in the exploration of Lake Vostok. However, given the price (originally listed at US\$129, but recently reduced to US\$85), it may be best to check it out of your local library. (John C. Priscu, Department of Land Resources and Environmental Sciences, Montana State University, Bozeman, MT 59717, USA.)

WHALING AND HISTORY II: NEW PERSPECTIVES. Jan Erik Ringstad (Editor). 2006. Sandefjord: Kommandør Chr. Christensens Hvalfangstmuseum (Publication 31). 192 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 82-993797-7-6.

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A quarter-century has passed since *The history of modern whaling* by Arne Odd Johnsen and Johan N. Tønnesen appeared in 1982 — a condensed version of their monumental four-volume *Den moderne hvalfangsts historie*, published between 1959 and 1970. Rightfully regarded as the standard reference work on the subject, it nevertheless had a leaning towards economic, technical, and legal aspects. And although the aim was to give a global overview, it was only natural that it was treated from a Norwegian viewpoint. Recent research has focused more on social, ecological, environmental, and ‘moral’ sides of the whaling industry.

In 2005, Kommandør Chr. Christensens Hvalfangstmuseum in Sandefjord, well-known internationally as the Norwegian Whaling Museum, hosted its Second Symposium on Whaling and History, calling for papers with primary focus on topics not or only superficially treated by Johnsen and Tønnesen. Eighteen speakers gave insight into their research results. While most papers were of Norwegian origin, the speakers hailed from seven

countries as far apart as Chile, Canada, the UK, and Germany. They presented a varied range of topics related to the whaling industry, of which 17 have been published in *Whaling and history II: new perspectives*, which appeared as number 31 in the series of publications from the Whaling Museum, edited by Curator Jan Erik Ringstad.

The symposium — and the book — concentrated on four main themes:

- People – The Whaling Man and his Family;
- The Economic Aspects of Whaling;
- The Environment – Ecology – Resource Management; and
- Opposition to Whaling.

Topics presented include comparative demographic studies of whaling families (Gunnar Thorvaldsen: ‘Whalers and their families in census data from the late nineteenth century’); the social and economic impact of land-based whaling stations on small coastal communities (Kjell-Ivar Berger: ‘The establishment of three whaling factories in Norway 1925–1971,’ and Steinshamn, Hestnes, and Skjelnan: ‘Their influence on the settlement, economy and family life’); blacklisting of whalers (Dag I Børresen: ‘The black book of 1913 — a means of disciplining whaling employees’); the interaction between whalers and polar explorers (Robert K. Headland: ‘Whalers and explorers; logistic assistance provided to people whose work, and indeed survival, depended on whalers,’ and Robert Burton: ‘Shackleton and the Norwegians’); and coastal and offshore whaling in Chile and Norway (Jorge Guzmán-Guitérrez: ‘Whales and whaling in Chile,’ and Berit Drejer: ‘Aukra Hval, Forsøksdrift and the Møre investigations’).

To me some of the most-engaging papers focused on ecological aspects: how the decimation of cetaceans by human whaling may have influenced the ecosystem — for example, the food chain, as exemplified by increasing number of avifauna — seagulls in the Arctic and penguins in the Antarctic — feeding on plankton and krill, and staple food for baleen whales (Louwrens Haquebord: ‘Two centuries of bowhead whaling around Spitsbergen: its impact on the Arctic avifauna,’ Dorete Bloch: ‘The Faroese whaling,’ Christina Lockyer: ‘Cetacean feeding, growth and energetics in the relation to the marine ecosystem: implications for management,’ and Arne Bjørge: ‘Are whales subject to management under the ecosystem approach?’).

While most topics deal with the twentieth century, one paper discusses how research into American nineteenth-century hunting for sperm, humpback, and grey whales can be helpful in the implications for management in the twenty-first century. By understanding the present status of populations of such species it may be easier to determine whether the current concerns about these species are well founded (Tim D. Smith and Randall R. Reeves: ‘Pre-20th century whaling: implications for management in the 21st century’).

Opposition to whaling and sealing is not a recent phenomenon, but the reasons behind resistance have

changed. Coastal whaling in Norway was banned by law in 1904, after many years of fierce opposition among fishermen in north Norway, based on the argument that the fisheries were seriously affected by the whaling industry. The ban was imposed to protect the fish, not the whale. A political consequence was a breakthrough of the Norwegian Labour Party, as whaling versus fishing was regarded as capitalism versus basic earning. Similar, but more short-lived and less consequential protests also occurred in Scotland (Shetland and the Hebrides) and Ireland (Sigrid Alvestad: 'Opposition to whaling in Scotland and Ireland before WWI'). Among the first international protesters against whaling and sealing was the Swiss Dr Paul Sarasin, as part of his universal campaign for nature protection, triggered by the news of a whaling company to be established by the Norwegian polar explorer Otto Sverdrup in 1909. His, and other, campaigns were aborted by World War I, and protective measures in the inter-war period were focused more on sustainability than a total ban (Klaus Barthelmess: 'An international campaign against whaling and sealing prior to World War One'). One interesting exception is Bjarne Aagaard, a versatile and colourful Norwegian entrepreneur, author of a substantial work on whale catching and research in the South Atlantic, who already in 1929 warned publicly against a total decimation of the Antarctic cetaceans — the inevitable result of the armada of floating factories in operation and on order, which would ultimately lead to the self-destruction of the whales and the whaling industry (Jan Erik Ringstad: 'Bjarne Aagaard and his crusade against pelagic whaling in the late 1920s'). The conclusive paper by the Deputy Director of the Norwegian Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs discusses Norway's official attitude versus the International Whaling Committee, maintaining that some pleadings against whaling are opportunistically shifted as older, emotional, arguments are refuted by new scientific facts (Halvard P. Johansen: 'Opposition to whaling — arguments and ethics').

The conversion from oral to printed presentation has been successfully carried out by the editor and his assistants. The relatively few, but highly relevant, illustrations are well reproduced; the publishers and printers have every reason to be satisfied with the book.

If anything is missing, it is an extract of the questions and discussions that supposedly followed each paper or session. That aside, the symposium and the book seem to me to be a good starting point towards the fulfilment of the hope expressed by Bjørn Basberg in the conclusion of his keynote speech 'In the wake of Tønnessen and Johnsen: trends in whaling history research after 1970': 'My final hope is that I would... like to see more international cooperation on projects relating to whaling history — maybe a truly international research project that reflects the international or global nature of this historic industry.' (Bard Kolltveit, Norwegian Maritime Museum, Bygdøynesveien 37, 0286 Oslo, Norway.)

FIELD GUIDE TO THE ANIMALS AND PLANTS OF TRISTAN DA CUNHA AND GOUGH ISLAND. Peter Ryan (Editor). 2007. Newbury: Pisces Publications, for the Tristan Island Government. vi +162 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 978-1-874357-33-9. £13.50. doi:10.1017/S0032247407007279

Field guides are usually pocket books, designed to tell naturalists what they are looking at. This book, measuring 21 by 15 centimetres, is a bit big for the average pocket, and contains more information than many guides. The editor, Peter Ryan of the Percy FitzPatrick Institute in the University of Cape Town, has brought together a team of contributing authors, all of whom have lived and worked on the islands, and they have consulted widely. The result is a superb record of the wildlife of the world's remotest inhabited island group, illustrated by outstanding colour photographs.

The book begins with an account of the islands themselves, contributed by Peter Ryan and James Glass, a Tristan Islander who has served as the elected head of the island community and is currently in charge of its Department of Natural Resources. Succinct accounts of the topography and volcanic history of the four islands of Tristan, Nightingale, Inaccessible, and Gough are followed by descriptions of their wet and windy, but temperate, climate; the range of habitats they support; the distinctive biological features resulting from their isolation in the centre of the South Atlantic Ocean; and the history of human discovery, occupation, impact on, and conservation of the island flora and fauna. This brings out the uniqueness of many island species, evolving prior to human contact, and the recent surge of introduction of humanity's fellow-travellers. But it also records the commitment of the Tristan community and the UK government, which administers the islands as an Overseas Territory and Dependency of St Helena, to conservation. Conservation ordinances have been in force since 1976, and were up-dated in 2006, while Gough Island and Inaccessible Island are designated natural sites under the World Heritage Convention.

Most of the book, however, is concerned with describing the plants and animals of the archipelago. Inevitably, the treatment is uneven, partly because not all groups are equally well-known, and partly because space would not permit a comprehensive description of the lower plants and invertebrate animals. The result is a very thorough and well-illustrated account of all the native vascular plants, birds, and mammals, together with pictures and descriptions of the more widespread and important introduced plants and the commoner vagrant birds, and more superficial treatment of the lower plants, terrestrial invertebrates, and marine life.

The section on plants describes and illustrates 77 flowering plants (43 native to the islands including 28 endemic species or varieties found nowhere else in the world), 32 native ferns (14 endemic), and three club-mosses (one endemic). The descriptions are brief but