

Guy Wright in *Sons and Seals* gives us a new aspect of the harp and hooded seal hunt. He joined a Newfoundland sealing vessel in 1979 for its annual voyage to the 'Front' (the ice off the east coast of Labrador/Newfoundland). This self-confessed soft academic signed on as a working sealer with a rough, tough ship for four weeks of working conditions which must be about the worst in the world. He describes the excitement of the hunt, its practical, sometimes rather grisly details, and its perils (he was evacuated to hospital with frostbite), but the interesting part of the book is his analysis of the importance of the annual voyage to the ice to the men and communities of Newfoundland. His writing on this emanates from his direct contact with the men, and is thus convincing. He presents the viewpoints of those for and against the killing of seals, but by the end of the book it is clear that his sympathies lie with the men of Newfoundland. The facts he gives are largely accurate and up-to-date, though some of his seal biology must have been gathered from old sources. The book is cheaply produced, which has resulted in a few minor defects such as the maps being printed too near to the spine. But it can be recommended as a good read and a refreshing insight into a neglected aspect of this modern controversy. (Sheila S. Anderson, Sea Mammal Research Unit, Natural Environment Research Council, Madingley Road, Cambridge CB3 0ET.)

BRIEF REVIEWS

REPORT ON THE SCIENTIFIC WORK OF THE TRANSGLOBE EXPEDITION 1979–82. Fiennes, R. (editor). 1984. London, Transglobe Expedition. 325 p, illustrated, soft cover. Available direct from Transglobe Expedition Ltd.

Fourteen reports on glaciology, meteorology, human physiology, sea ice studies, biological observations etc, mostly carried out by expedition members and written up by specialists.

THE STORY OF THE EARTH. Cattermole, P. and Moore, P. 1985. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. 224 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0 521 26292 5. £12.95.

Illustrated account of earth history at popular-academic level, including brief sections on the origins of the Arctic basin, Antarctica and the Southern Ocean.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL MUSKOX SYMPOSIUM. Klein, D. R., White, R. G. and Keller, S. (editors). 1984. Fairbanks, University of Alaska. (Biological papers of the University of Alaska, Special Report 4.) 220 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISSN 0161 3243. US\$20.00.

Recording the symposium held at Fairbanks 22–25 May 1983, this includes over 50 papers on muskox biology, under the headings Status worldwide; Population dynamics and management; Ecology and range relationships; Behaviour; Systematics and prehistory; Veterinary practice and husbandry; Physiology and nutrition.