

PROTECTING THE ARCTIC: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND CULTURAL SURVIVAL. MARK NUTTALL. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998. ISBN 90-5702-354-7. (hardbound). 195 p., map, index, bib. Hardbound, US\$48.00; Softbound, US\$20.00.

This book focuses upon the involvement of Arctic indigenous peoples in international environmental policy making. It does so by examining indigenous groups' claims and uses of indigenous knowledge, their subsistence hunting and involvement in the global economy and the growing arctic tourism industry, and the construction of an "indigenous environmentalism." According to Nuttall, these are all critical issues that continue to shape environmental discourse in the contemporary Arctic.

The author states that with respect to the Arctic environment and resource development, indigenous peoples' organizations "play a pivotal role in agenda setting and political debate...challenging the authority of the state and questioning both the processes and meanings of modernity and development...and have been the driving force behind many recent initiatives in Arctic environmental protection and sustainable development" (p. 23).

In reviewing recent environmental policy making, Nuttall examines how indigenous knowledge (IK or TEK) has been institutionalized (and thereby legitimated) by such international regimes as the Arctic Environment Protection Strategy and the Arctic Council and how IK articulates with diverse—and contested—visions of sustainable development. In an assessment of options for economically viable sustainable development, Nuttall examines two in particular: the development of markets for marine mammal products and arctic tourism. In regard to marketing marine mammal products, the author identifies a number of national and international constraints facing indigenous peoples trying to develop small-scale, community-based economic enterprises that involve the sustainable use of these local resources. These constraints include the opposition of many influential anti-whaling groups to accepting that edible whale products be offered for sale.

The debate about the role of money in subsistence is described well. Nuttall (in common with other social scientists) notes that subsistence economies are dependent upon market forces and monetization. The boundaries between subsistence and commercial activities are necessarily blurred, and have been so for more than a century in the Arctic: "When [Greenlanders] sell seal and whale meat and fish...they are participating in forms of exchange which have long been part of the subsistence economy" (p. 114). Although animal protection groups and some environmentalists hold that the selling of meat by hunters is nontraditional and leads to resource depletion, hunters and most outsiders familiar with contemporary hunting societies see it as an adaptive strategy that is essential for people living in a modern and rapidly industrializing society: "Money is a supplement to the subsistence economy

generally, and is part of a symbolically constructed framework that emphasises cultural continuity rather than being based on large-scale profit" (p. 114).

Nuttall emphasizes the need to place any analysis of Arctic issues into a global context and to avoid an exclusively Arctic-centred perspective apparently adopted by the Arctic Council. The activities of transnational corporations and the consequences of transnational practices are important for the future of the circumpolar North because decisions affecting resources are made elsewhere, often not even in the capitals of the Arctic states.

In emphasizing the role indigenous peoples need to take to ensure that Arctic development initiatives are sustainable, Nuttall states: "Resource agencies need to take into account the environmental values of local people and adopt a participatory approach to resource management" (p. 123). A fact not mentioned, but nevertheless worth noting, is that the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission [NAMMCO] is currently studying how to accomplish this. The author also observes that "indigenous peoples would rather have self-management than co-management and the power to decide on the quotas that they feel they should be able to set" (p. 123). Again, it is worth noting that the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board recently devolved decision making on narwhal (and some beluga) quotas to community hunters' associations. And when the author concludes that "the future of whaling...relies on reconciling the interests of...local communities...and...environmental and conservationist organisations" (p. 123), it is gratifying to report that World Wildlife Fund-Canada has taken a commendable lead in recognizing the conservation benefits that result from responsible whaling practices in Canadian Inuit and Inuvialuit communities.

Nuttall discusses the potential contributions that cultural tourism and ecotourism—if carefully developed—can make to Arctic sustainable development. However, increasing the numbers of tourists and encouraging them to part with more money will require increases in infrastructure investment. In view of this need for expensive infrastructure development in regions generally operating with deficit funding, the author's lack of reference to tourism based upon sport hunting was surprising. In the Canadian North, the economic benefits derived from the visits of sport hunters to Inuit communities are considerable, sustainable, and require little local investment. In addition, the Canadian Federal-Provincial Polar Bear Technical Committee recently drew attention to the conservation benefits of hunting (e.g., fewer bears, and fewer female bears, are killed than under a purely subsistence regime). In addition, it is reported that young Inuit men appear to look favourably upon guiding sport hunters, and such guiding serves to strengthen certain traditional cultural norms and practices.

The discussion on indigenous knowledge (IK) is wide-ranging and insightful. The author draws useful attention to the dangers inherent in decontextualizing IK—dangers that some indigenous spokespersons appear to ignore when

advocating aggressive efforts to commit oral information to computerized databases before it is lost. Nuttall observes that IK “is a difficult and long enough process to explain and teach in local contexts, where it is vital and real, so how can it be gathered and stored in databases without decontextualising it and depriving it of meaning?” (p. 172). Acknowledging the continual loss, modification, and addition to the stock of IK, Nuttall argues for a re-contextualization of knowledge, to relocate it within appropriate local spheres. Insofar as IK is seen to be important for ensuring that resource use is sustainable, this suggests the importance of an ongoing involvement of local user communities in all aspects of decision making regarding resource use.

With regard to his extensive discussion on indigenous communities’ whaling practices, the author has been careful to distinguish between the actions and beliefs of conservationists, those of environmentalists, and those of advocates for animal rights. However, he is less careful in stating that opposition to the Makah gray whale hunt came from conservationists. In fact, the opposition to the Makah gray whale hunt was voiced overwhelmingly by radical environmentalists (espousing a protectionist position), animal welfare and animal rights supporters, anti-Indian activists, and political opportunists. The author also makes reference to indigenous people as “managers” of living resources (e.g., p. 99). However, despite the use of the term “manager” (or “management”) by some indigenous spokespersons, indigenous people are increasingly at pains to point out that the term “management” is not merely inappropriate (“how can humans manage animals’ behaviour?”) but, according to indigenous values, it is ethically offensive (as it implies human control over nature). Elsewhere the author shows appreciation of indigenous concern about others’ inappropriate use of the term “wilderness” when referring to their homelands—which are anything but untrammelled by human activity, having been fully occupied for millennia.

This book is a useful examination of the ongoing debate regarding sustainable development in the Arctic, although focused mostly upon Greenland and Alaska, where the author has personal experience. The book should appeal to a broad readership of Northerners and northernists, environmentalists, and those with an interest in contemporary indigenous affairs. It is mercifully jargon-free, although it could have benefited from tighter editing, as there are a number of repetitive sections and several incorrect spellings of names (e.g., Chisasibi, Watt-Cloutier, Marquardt, Stenbaek). This reader also regrets the publisher’s choice of very small print for the notes at the end of each chapter.

*Milton M.R. Freeman
Canadian Circumpolar Institute
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
T6G 2E1*

RINGED SEALS IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC. Edited by M.P. HEIDE-JØRGENSEN and C. LYDERSEN. Tromsø, Norway: NAMMCO Scientific Publications, 1998. Vol. 1. ISBN 82-91578-04-4. 273 p., maps, b&w and colour illus., bib. Hardbound. NOK 350.00.

The primary goal of this volume was to compile papers that reflect the present state of knowledge on ringed seals in the North Atlantic. However, it also includes information on other ringed seal populations, such as the relict Baltic, Ladoga and Saimaa seals, and studies on ringed seals in the Russian Arctic and the Canadian Western Arctic. The volume covers a wide range of topics, from biology to population assessment, feeding, and contaminants in seal tissues.

A difficulty in trying to construct a unified volume on a particular species from a group of separate papers is that the articles themselves vary in scope and subject matter. It falls on the shoulders of the editors to blend these into a presentable form, by linking them together with a thorough introduction to the subject and outlining the areas where future research is needed.

Of the 13 papers in the volume, the overview paper by Randall Reeves is probably the most useful. It is an extremely thorough summary of the many studies, both past and ongoing, that have been conducted on this important Arctic species. This paper also contradicts a statement in the introduction to the volume, which says that far too little is known about this dispersed and important marine mammal species. In fact, as can be seen in the overview paper, the ringed seal has long been the subject of research by scientists seeking to manage Arctic seal populations in the face of Inuit subsistence harvests. Several previous monographs exist on the species from the Eastern and Western Canadian Arctic. Reeve’s overview paper does an admirable job of summarizing previous work and cataloging new results from research now being done in the whole of the Arctic.

It is inevitable that the quality of the individual papers in such a volume will vary greatly. Of the three papers that summarize the regional status and biology of ringed seals, the review by Christian Lydersen clearly shows that the Norwegians have been very effective at using modern methods to advance our knowledge of the species. Research in Svalbard on captive and free-ranging ringed seals has yielded important new information on behaviour and energy budgets. However, Belikov’s paper on ringed seals in the Russian Arctic reflects the low level of research effort in that area. There is little new information about Russian ringed seal stocks, which are now relatively unimportant in the local economies. Sipila and Hivarinen’s paper on the Saimaa and Ladoga ringed seals suffers from a lack of systematic scientific data and depends on many anecdotal reports. Some intriguing and unexplained statements about large numbers of stillbirths vaguely linked with high levels of pollutants leave the reader wishing for more interpretation and analysis. Judging by the authors’ description, the situation of the apparently endangered