

For younger children who are already reading on their own, the book may still require reading aloud by a parent. Put some drama into your voice (as if reading 'Little Red Riding Hood') to keep their enthusiasm from being overwhelmed by detail. Or get around this overload by doing the book in sections. There is certainly enough information about caribou and their habitat to stimulate a series of interesting discussions!

For older children the content will not be a problem. The writing is clear, and as mentioned, the book is not a long one. The quality of the text will give them more to sink their teeth into than the average nature book for children.

In any book endeavouring to relate factual material in an interesting format, there is a delicate balancing act necessary to keep the reader, of whatever age, involved. In *A Caribou Journey*, the impact of the migration itself (the sheer numbers involved and the enormous distances covered) is a little weak. Here again the illustration is well connected to the narrative and helps to create a more dramatic mood than the text alone might. As a 'long-in-the-tooth' caribou biologist, I could debate the exactness of several factual points. Those points are, however, mostly in the grey area of caribou biology or ecology and they do not overly detract from the high quality of the text. In reality, my concerns are again usually more a matter of too much brevity rather than one of too little accuracy. A good example is that lichens are the only forage plant mentioned by name throughout the book, with the one exception of "cotton grass," which probably should have been identified as a sedge. Passing references to a "few mouthfuls of lake plants" from a muskrat "push-up" and eating "the last of summer's green growth" really do not suffice. While lichens are indeed very important to caribou, the reader should have been given a fuller picture of the feeding requirements of caribou. That is, I think that the reader (even if a young child) should have had the benefit of learning that caribou feed on a wide variety of plants, including sedges, lichens, forbs, shrubs, and even mushrooms and horsetails (*Equisetum*). This becomes an important bit of knowledge, because a mixed diet of various plants is actually essential to the caribou's continual well-being. Caribou cannot persist over the long term on a diet of 100% lichens; thus, the unintentional omission (seemingly, due solely to the brevity) becomes in a sense an inaccuracy or at best an inadequacy.

A Caribou Journey does give a generally accurate and engaging picture of the caribou's daily existence, including its physiognomy, behaviour, and ecology. Debbie Miller treats her subject respectfully. She does not gloss over the dangers, either from predators or from the more unforgiving aspects of the northern wilderness. She presents caribou life realistically, but always bearing in mind the age group for which she is writing, does not cross the line into too-graphic or frightening description. The combination of Jon Van Zyle's illustration with Debbie Miller's text succeeds in allowing children to appreciate both the beauty and the precariousness of the caribou's life in the wild.

In an author's note at the end of the book, Debbie Miller briefly discusses the place of caribou currently and historically. The reader is given a strong sense of the unique

importance of this animal. We are also reminded that despite its isolated range the caribou, like many other species, is under pressure from human-induced as well as natural agents.

If you or your children are interested in the world of nature and would like to learn about a fascinating animal, then *A Caribou Journey* would be well worth a look.

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THE CRANE SITE AND THE PALEOESKIMO PERIOD IN THE WESTERN CANADIAN ARCTIC. By RAYMOND J. LE BLANC. Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, Archaeological Survey of Canada, Mercury Series Paper 148, 1994. 130 p., illus. Softbound. Cdn \$18.95.

Approximately 4000 years ago, a group of seemingly related cultures spread widely over most regions of Arctic North America. Their often meagre archaeological remains vary according to time and place, but show sufficient continuities that many archaeologists refer to them by the generic term "Paleoeskimos." More than half a century of archaeological research has provided us with comprehensive outlines of Paleoeskimo cultural development in both Alaska and the eastern Arctic. The western regions of the Canadian Arctic, on the other hand, until recently have remained quite silent on this era of arctic history. Discoveries of archaeological evidence of Paleoeskimo cultures in those regions have been sporadic, and such remains that have been found have often proven difficult to relate to the cultural and historical frameworks that have been devised for other areas.

Raymond Le Blanc's research on the Crane site reported in this monograph significantly advances our understanding of the Paleoeskimo period in the history of the western Canadian Arctic. In 1986 and 1987, while employed by the Archaeological Survey of Canada to develop an inventory of archaeological sites in the outer Mackenzie Delta region, Le Blanc discovered an impressive array of Paleoeskimo sites along a now-extinct channel of the Horton River on the Cape Bathurst Peninsula. Until recently it was commonly thought that coastal erosion had erased most evidence of Paleoeskimos who had camped along the unstable shores of the Beaufort Sea. Le Blanc's discoveries have shown that archaeologists have perhaps not spent sufficient time in attempting to understand other changes in the landscape that might have hidden, rather than erased, archaeological sites. Among the finds along the fossil river channel was the Crane site, which Le Blanc began to excavate in 1987 and continued two years later.

The Crane site is of interest as it contains a wide variety of artifact types, including well-preserved organic tools, and abundant faunal remains, which enabled Le Blanc to analyze technological and economic dimensions of a western Canadian Arctic component of Paleoeskimo culture. The major part of the monograph contains descriptions of the site, and of the artifact and faunal assemblages that were excavated. In a chapter on the artifacts, Le Blanc uses comparative evidence combined with straightforward analytical procedures to identify the functions of many of the tools. He also delves into aspects of stone and bone tool production, covering topics such as raw material procurement strategies and the techniques used to shape those materials into various types of tools. Le Blanc argues convincingly that this kind of analysis can reveal linkages between components of the assemblage that conventional typological categories used by archaeologists tend to isolate. Le Blanc's analysis also reveals some of the decision-making underlying raw material selection for various categories of stone tools. These and other observations of this kind add welcome depth to the outline of the archaeological culture provided by artifact descriptions alone. The section on faunal analysis also goes beyond mere description. Included are reconstructions of procurement strategies based on the types of animals represented in the faunal assemblage (primarily caribou, seals and waterfowl), together with analysis of the butchering elements which are present. Faunal evidence is also used to determine that the site was most likely occupied during the spring and summer seasons.

In discussing the cultural affiliations of the Crane site, Le Blanc notes that the archaeological remains are closely related to those from the Lagoon site on southern Banks Island, which until now appeared as a major enigma in the cultural-historical framework of the Paleoeskimo period in the Canadian Arctic. When it was first described in 1975, the Paleoeskimo culture represented at the Lagoon site was defined on the basis of a woefully small sample of artifacts and faunal remains. Nonetheless, it was distinguished by a significant number of technological traits that could not be easily related to contemporary Paleoeskimo cultures in the Canadian Arctic. Many of these traits are found in the Crane site assemblage, including distinctive harpoon and lance heads, incised decorative motifs, needles made from bird bone cores, the use of quartzite for tools, and the generally large size of stone tools compared with other Paleoeskimo finds. The two sites are separated in time by perhaps two centuries, a persistence which is key to Le Blanc's proposal that the Crane and Lagoon sites, together with a smaller occupation at McCormick Inlet on Victoria Island, constitute elements of a regional cultural entity of at least several centuries' duration which he has named the "Lagoon complex." This complex seems to carry strong influences from Alaskan Paleoeskimo cultures; it will be interesting to see what ties Le Blanc is able to demonstrate to earlier Paleoeskimo occupations in the same area which he has not yet reported on.

The monograph is technically very well produced for an inexpensive publication. Diagrams and tables are easy to read, and the photographs, while somewhat dark, are reason-

ably clear. Le Blanc writes with the clarity and confidence of a professional who knows his craft. Analytical procedures, and even complex statistical treatments, are presented in a comprehensible, straightforward manner. I recommend it to those who are interested in the Paleoeskimo cultures which occupied the far northern reaches of North America more than 2000 years ago. It is also an excellent example of how to carry out archaeological fieldwork, analyze and present data; it could be used in archaeological instruction as a model of good reporting.

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