

be out of focus, and in some cases even the specific feature identified in the caption cannot be easily discerned. This is extremely unfortunate, in that it detracts from what is otherwise a unique study of university-based northern research, seen from an insider's intimate perspective and spanning almost half a century.

All proceeds from sales of this book will go to a bursary for students from the North or with an interest in the North, tenable at the Department of Geography, Trent University.

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**ZACKENBERG—AN ARCTIC PEARL IN THE NORTH EAST GREENLAND NATIONAL PARK.** By THOMAS BJØRNEBOE BERG. Humlebæk, Denmark: Rhodos Science and Art Publishers, 2008. ISBN 87-7245-967-0. 232 p., 3 maps, 128 colour and 31 b&w illus. Hardbound. ~US\$60.00 + postage.

Captured in a diary of expressive wording and brilliant pictures are four short summers at Zackenberg, an isolated field station in the High Arctic on the northeastern coast of Greenland. This is a book about ecological field research in the short Arctic summer. But it is a book with a difference. It is not the sanitized presentation of research papers and textbooks. It tells the story of the real day-to-day life of fieldwork—its joys, its frustrations, and its dangers—during four summers. Most of all it reflects the challenges, beauty, and vibrancy of Greenland's ecology in the short Arctic summers.

The Danish Polar Centre selected Zackenberg in 1992 as a field station for a major multidisciplinary analysis of the dynamics of a High Arctic ecosystem. In 1995, the concerted field research effort began with a combination of survey, observation, and experiment. Researchers used an old hunting station, extended in 1996 by laboratory and accommodation buildings, for the three short summer months of detailed study. The effort reflects the intensive ecosystem studies of the International Biological Programme (IBP) of the 1950s and is similar to the Canadian study on Devon Island at virtually the same latitude (74°28'N). Like Devon Island, the field site is serviced by that polar workhorse—the twin engine otter—from Akureyri in Iceland. But the study of Devon Island was never documented like this!

Unlike the IBP studies and most research projects, this book is very personal. Written by a perceptive, patient, and knowledgeable ecologist, it tells the stories of many different challenges and methods of day-to-day fieldwork. The narrative moves easily from the 200 000 000 years of geological time, via the 10 000 years of post-glacial

history, to the daily life and short-term behaviour of the flora and fauna—and the researchers.

The text is in the form of a light-hearted but perceptive diary describing Berg's fieldwork and that of his colleagues. Berg describes his day-to-day research work as a field biologist in a completely non-technical language with a level of practical detail that is never seen in technical papers or books. But he does not stick to his personal research subject, the collared lemming. As the base leader, he was on site from beginning to end of the field season, while his colleagues were there only for short periods. He spent long hours making observations for his botanical, zoological, and geographical colleagues and he describes what he is doing and why. He regularly tramped many miles to census herds of muskox, to check on populations of other plants and animals and collect samples for analysis. Thus readers are taken out onto the tundra to experience the challenges and rewards of a diversity of patient, detailed field research—observations that bring them literally face-to-face with the animals, plants, and their physical environments. In between his fieldwork he seemed to consume large quantities of coffee—and occasionally, he slept. This is the real world of fieldwork!

The diverse colour photographs of landscapes, seascapes, fauna and flora in both panoramic and close-up shots are beautifully presented in large format on high-quality paper. The photography itself is stunning. It benefits from the photographer's patience and skill, his depth of ecological knowledge, but also from the curiosity of the animals themselves, who lack experience with humans. Can you imagine crawling slowly to within a few feet of a wolf, walrus, snowy owl, or gyrfalcon? Or holding your ground as an aggressive young bull muskox charges you, but then, thankfully, decides that you are not actually challenging him? The plants and landscapes are less dangerous but just as beautifully presented.

Scientists generate masses of research papers and books, but very rarely do they capture the challenge and thrill of field observations in this graphic and personal way.

This book will grace the bookshelf or coffee table in the department, library, school or home. It is for all Arctic researchers (actual and potential), and it will attract, entertain, and educate people of all ages, scientists and non-scientists alike. Readers will come back to it time and again to enjoy the fabulous photographs. In the detail and intimacy of his photographs and observations, Berg goes beyond most researchers to capture for us the excitement and reality of field study in High Arctic places. For those who have not yet had the privilege to visit the Far North (or South), this book is a glorious, entertaining, and educating substitute.

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