

the diaries kept by Farley Mowat during his 1947 travels with Charlie Schweder, who is featured in the chapter on trappers.

Beautifully produced for the Minnesota Historical Society, this multi-layered book is a fine addition to the cultural history of the eastern Barrens. The price was reasonable before the value of the Canadian dollar dropped in comparison to its American counterpart.

REFERENCE

Mowat, F. 2004. *No man's river*. New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers.

Gwyneth Hoyle
Research Associate
Frost Centre, Trent University
469 Thompson Avenue
Peterborough, Ontario K9J 6J2, Canada
ghoyle1@sympatico.ca

CARIBOU AND THE NORTH: A SHARED FUTURE.

By MONTE HUMMEL and JUSTINA RAY. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2008. ISBN 978-1-55002-839-3. 288 p., maps, colour illus, appendices, bib., index. Hardbound. Cdn\$50.00.

This is not a classic tabletop book because of its 254 mm × 203 mm format, yet it comes close because of its 42 maps, 120 photos, and general treatment of complex subject matter. Its purpose is to draw attention to the plight of caribou in Canada and Alaska and suggest remedies. Both the authors, as well as Robert Redford and Stephen Kakfwi in their forewords, maintain that caribou and the North are inextricably intertwined and that loss of caribou would be a critical blow to conservation and to northern aboriginal peoples. Caribou are shared by countries, jurisdictions, diverse peoples, hunters, the public, and resource developers. How those shares are allocated will determine the fate of the 200 or so populations of caribou in Canada and Alaska.

Each of the four major sections of the book is introduced by a Robert Bateman sketch. These are entitled "The Importance of Caribou," "Pressures on Caribou: Past, Present and Future," "Key Steps for Conserving Caribou," and "Expert Profiles of Different Kinds of Caribou." In Section 1, the case is made that caribou are not only essential to the well-being and social health of aboriginal peoples, as articulated in many quotations, but also barometers of ecosystem health. Many species of predators and scavengers are dependent on caribou for sustenance. The caribou most at risk are those at the northern and southern extremes of their range in North America. Climate change on the Canadian Arctic Islands and industrial activity in the south are tagged by the authors as primary threats to caribou. At the end of Section 2, the authors outline ten "litmus tests"

readers can use to assess how well caribou are being conserved. These range from protection of the calving grounds of migratory tundra caribou, to harvest limitations, to provisions for caribou habitat in areas of industrial activity and accommodation of critical habitat in land-use planning.

In the third section, the authors suggest that political leaders must become more knowledgeable and proactive about caribou conservation. Governments must fit development into a conservation policy, and not do the reverse (make commitments to industry prior to land-use planning). Funds must be dedicated to caribou conservation; for example, caribou conservation plans are of little consequence if there is not adequate monitoring of populations. Corporations must initiate practices that go beyond minimum compliance with acts, regulations, and guidelines. "No exploration or development should further endanger an endangered population, worsen the decline of a threatened one, increase the decline of a declining one, or destabilize a healthy one fluctuating within natural limits" (p. 180). This is a strong guideline that is achievable only if governments back off from a preoccupation with industrial growth and job creation. Finally, the authors make a plea for specific reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, for "unless we successfully address the larger issue of climate change... all the other governmental policy suggestions we have made regarding caribou won't amount to much in the long term" (p. 189).

In Section 4, the selected three major ecotypes of caribou are discussed, migratory tundra caribou by Anne Gunn, boreal forest caribou by James Schaefer, and mountain caribou by Dale Seip and Bruce McLellan. According to Gunn, most of the recent declines in migratory tundra caribou can be attributed to unfavorable weather, but they are exacerbated by hunting. Industrial activity is increasing rapidly on the ranges of most of the mainland populations and is known to have some effect on caribou distribution. Schaefer paints a different picture of boreal forest caribou: they are in trouble because of human activity, which has resulted in habitat loss and fragmentation, increased predation, increased access to humans, and climatic change. According to Seip and McLean, this picture is duplicated for mountain caribou in the deep snow zone of southern British Columbia and the adjacent United States. Climate change and human activities result in increased predation, and persistence of some caribou populations may not be possible without predator management. Populations of mountain caribou in northern British Columbia, Yukon, and Alaska currently are not at risk, but their status could change with increased development and climate change.

This reader-friendly tome is the best current review of what is happening to caribou across North America. The report contains remarkably few statistics on numbers and trends of individual populations. However, the attractive multicolored maps convey a wealth of current information. One can quibble with a few statements in the book, but in general it presents the subject matter objectively. The material was reviewed by some of the icons in caribou biology,

who are quoted directly in various sidebars. Only one “typo” was encountered. Some of the photographs, such as the large truck and boxed bulldozer bearing down on caribou (p. 140), are spectacular. Conversely, a few photos were underexposed.

Anyone interested in the conservation of caribou in North America should purchase this book. It is hoped that it will also find its way to the desks of politicians and officials of resource companies who are in a position to make a difference. It is a reliable and current overview of one of the major conservation issues in North America. The cover price is reasonable, considering that the maps and photos are almost all in color. Furthermore, any profits from sales of the book will go to the two organizations affiliated with the authors, World Wildlife Fund (M. Hummel), and Wildlife Conservation Society Canada (J. Ray).

Donald C. Thomas
Emeritus Research Scientist
Canadian Wildlife Service
Environment Canada
Room 200, 4999-98 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T6B 2X3, Canada
caribou@shaw.ca

THE DEW LINE YEARS: VOICES FROM THE COLDEST COLD WAR. By FRANCES JEWEL DICKSON. Lawrencetown Beach, Nova Scotia: Pottersfield Press, 2007. ISBN 978-1-895900-87-3. 208 p., b&w illus. Softbound. Cdn\$19.95.

Stretching more than 3000 miles from Alaska to Greenland along the 69th parallel, the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line was a tremendous feat of geographical engineering that re-shaped the North American Arctic. Conceived as a response to the Soviet bomber threat in the early thermonuclear age, this technological marvel embodied the Cold War marriage of science and geo-strategy. It was also a human story, lived by personnel who conceived, built, and operated the radar and communication system. Several studies have traced the origins of the system, notably Joseph Jockel’s (1987) *No Boundaries Upstairs*, and others, such as R. Quinn Duffy’s (1988) *The Road to Nunavut*, have documented myriad impacts of the radar network on northern indigenous peoples. First-time author Frances Jewel Dickson, a retired public servant and the daughter of a pilot who lost his life on the DEW Line in 1957, should be commended for compiling an interesting series of anecdotes that reveal the experiences of the workers and pilots who worked the line.

Dickson’s accessible narrative, based largely on correspondence with nearly one hundred DEW Line veterans, paints an alternate narrative of the Cold War Arctic. “I once read a press release that referred to those of us on the DEW Line as ‘sentinels of democracy,’” veteran DEW Liner DeWitt Thompson II recounts. “I doubt any of us thought

of ourselves in those lofty terms. We were just a bunch of guys doing a job complicated by harsh conditions for which we were well compensated” (p. 8). This is the collective portrait that emerges in this book, where civilian “voices from the coldest Cold War” (as the subtitle characterizes the DEW Liners) appear to lack the discipline and patriotism of the professional forces documented in most Cold War military histories. At the remote stations, practical jokes were an essential antidote to the boredom, and good food, prepared by professional chefs recruited from high-end restaurants, was the key to morale. In overviews of everyday life along the line, readers learn of the centrality of POL (petroleum, oil, and lubricants)—“the lifeblood of existence” (p. 60)—in keeping the network functioning and the inhabitants warm enough to survive. Equally important for the well-paid and isolated workers was the illicit procurement of alcohol that kept them lubricated beyond the meagre ration of six cans of beer per week.

The classic trope of the battle between “man and nature,” with the Arctic cast as a quintessential “hostile environment” to be braved and survived by southerners (to borrow geographer Matthew Farish’s apt characterization), is well represented. The most memorable attacks did not come from Soviet TU-95 “Bear” bombers, but from polar bears intruding on the radar sites or encountered by workers exploring the surrounding landscapes. Commercial and Air Force pilots, flying everything from bush planes to giant “Globemasters” in the most ambitious airlift in polar history, were celebrated for conquering distance and weather. Not all of them succeeded. Some of the most tragic revelations in the book are those of airplane crashes like the one that claimed the author’s father, which confirm just how daring and dangerous the pilots’ daily exploits were. On another psychological plane, the burden of living and working in an isolated, homosocial environment, “cooped up inside several hours, even days, on end,” was too much for some workers, who went “bushy” and had to return south (p. 154). For others, the unforgettable experience was marked by camaraderie, interaction with Inuit co-workers and neighbours, and learning to adapt to unanticipated situations. “The first thing we learned is that you can’t fight the Arctic and win,” one of the DEW Line construction managers told *National Geographic* in 1958 (LaFay, 1958:142). “So we decided to roll with the punches.” These personal stories suggest that this philosophy was pervasive across space and time.

The DEW Line Years is not a scholarly monograph. It does not provide readers with a detailed background on the DEW Line, the geostrategic and diplomatic contexts in which it was conceived, Canadian Arctic policy, or a sense of the broader socio-economic, cultural, and environmental implications of this major Cold War project. There are no footnotes, and there is no bibliography to point the reader to further readings. It is a popular account dedicated to the memories of those who served on the line, which will be welcomed by former DEW Liners and their descendants. Northern researchers searching for first-hand accounts of