

retreat cycle begins anew, hiding the traces of previous human activities. The authors argue that it is a challenge both for cultural heritage experts and for the communities themselves to support the endangered knowledge of indigenous peoples. This book, compiled by L. Bogoslovskaya and I. Krupnik, offers some solutions to addressing these problems.

A separate chapter is devoted to climate change data obtained using modern tools and telemetry techniques. The current trend toward sea ice reduction in the Arctic is described here and implicated in the demise of seal species and polar bears.

Comparison of observations made by ice scientists (or “observers”) and indigenous people (or “users”) allows the reader to see that traditional and scientific knowledge can coincide. Interestingly, it is noted that local knowledge gives unusually high resolution for describing processes and phenomena and, if wisely used, can be a valuable source of information for scientists. However, people’s knowledge of nature is very subjective and bears the imprint of personality. This aspect should be taken into account when such knowledge is incorporated into scientific work, which is supposed to remain unbiased.

The edition is richly illustrated by a large number of high-quality pictures. It will be interesting to read for glaciologists, historians, ethnographers, and climatologists, as well as biologists working with fauna of polar regions. In addition, the broad circle of readers, interested in the traditional livelihood of Aboriginal populations of the Russian North, the history of sealing, and Arctic nature in general will find this edition highly informative, enjoyable, and easy to read. With its insightful stories, interesting facts, and high-quality printing and design, *Our Ice, Snow and Winds: Indigenous and Academic Knowledge on Ice-Scapes and Climate of Eastern Chukotka* is sure to interest students and specialists alike. A highly enjoyable read, it will take a worthy place on a household bookshelf, as well as in the libraries of institutions of science and culture.

*Irina S. Trukhanova*  
Project Coordinator  
SPbCPO “Biologists for Nature Conservation”  
Birzhevaya liniya, 8-10  
St Petersburg, Russia 199034  
[irina\\_trukhanova@yahoo.com](mailto:irina_trukhanova@yahoo.com)

IT IS THE SÁMI WHO OWN THIS LAND: SACRED LANDSCAPES AND ORAL HISTORIES OF THE JOKKMOKK SÁMI. Edited by TERO MUSTONEN and EIJA SYRJÄMÄKI. Vaasa, Finland: Snowchange Cooperative, 2013. ISBN 978-952-5944-06-8. 136 p., maps, b&w and colour illus., references. US\$60.00; €50.

A reindeer herder on a snowmobile is watching his reindeer on the shore of an ice-covered lake, surrounded by steep alpine mountains in a grandiose landscape. However, the

horizon is broken by a windmill, the lake is a huge reservoir created for hydroelectric purposes, and the reindeer are kept to the narrow shore since the ice of the regulated lake is insecure. The cover photo of *It Is the Sámi Who Own This Land* is well chosen to illustrate the situation of the indigenous reindeer herding Sámi of Jokkmokk in northern Sweden. They have endured many hardships, from the inflow of settlers in the 18th century to the exploitation of forests, hydroelectric resources, and ores in modern times. Nevertheless, reindeer herding has constantly adapted to the changes of the Swedish society; it remains a vital industry of the region and is exclusively controlled by the Sámi.

This book was born out of discussions between the vice-president of the Sámi Council, Stefan Mikaelsson, himself a reindeer herder from Jokkmokk, and Tero Mustonen of the Snowchange Cooperative. Snowchange is a Finnish non-governmental organization that previously had several members, but according to information on the organization’s homepage, it is now maintained only by the founder Tero Mustonen and his partner Kaisu Mustonen. The organization is known for having performed thorough documentations of indigenous peoples’ perception of climate and ecological change in the Arctic, especially among the Kola Sámi in Russia. On Mikaelsson’s suggestion, Snowchange’s work was extended to Jokkmokk, with the objective to document reindeer herders’ experiences of climate change and traditional knowledge.

The result of the Jokkmokk project is presented in this book, which is beautifully illustrated with photos of high quality, including black-and-whites photos by Jan Håkan Dahlström from the 1970s and recent color photos by the reindeer herder Carl-Johan Utsi. The first part of the project’s objective, to document experiences of climate change, is quite briefly presented and includes reindeer herders’ observations on changing temperatures and seasons as well as on the expansion of certain species and the disappearance of others. The second part of the objective, the documentation of traditional knowledge, covers subjects such as place names, the role of women, star lore, cosmology, bear hunts, language issues, and reindeer herding. So many aspects are treated that very little is said about each one. Some of the oldest interviewees have previously provided information for other documentation projects and are known to possess an almost endless knowledge of traditional Sámi life. Here, they are not done justice. When traditional knowledge is included as part of a book of 136 pages, it is necessarily fragmentary.

Most of the interviews were carried out in 2003, but the processing of the material did not start until 2012. This time lag was unfortunate, since by 2012, climate change was no longer the most serious concern of the community. Instead, the Sámi of Jokkmokk were busy fighting off international mining companies. Snowchange performed a few additional interviews to cover this new issue, but could only treat it in a brief section of the book.

The editors declare that they consider oral histories to be equivalent to scientific publications. However, while

scientific publications are continuously subject to critical evaluations of both methods and conclusions, the oral histories of this book escape such scrutiny. The reader is unable to evaluate the methodology, since no information is provided on the setting of the interviews, how long the sessions lasted, or whether a questionnaire was used. The background of the interviewees is presented very briefly, in most cases lacking even information on age. Also, the content of the oral histories is said to be compared with “over twenty” (p. 128) scientific sources, but such comparisons are rare. Even easily verifiable information, such as the evolution of summer temperatures during the last decades, is not compared to external sources. As a rule, the histories are presented but not discussed.

Only in the historical overview of the Sámi and the state in the Jokkmokk region are scientific sources used to any extent. However, some fundamental works on the Sámi history of the region have been overlooked, including the ones by Filip Hultblad (1968) and Lennart Lundmark (1982).

The most interesting part of the book is the section dedicated to a socio-ecological analysis of the issues that emerge from the oral histories. These issues include Sámi knowledge, reindeer herding, Sámi language, hydroelectric development, mining, and weather change. The scale of impact of each issue on the Sámi is assessed along with their responses. To my knowledge, an assessment of this kind has never been undertaken in Sweden before. The section should be compulsory reading for politicians and others responsible for the development of Sámi areas.

The editors conclude that the strongest message emerging from the oral histories is that “the Sámi wish to keep their land and decide themselves” (p. 113). This sounds fair enough, but is more complicated in reality. The central problem of the Sámi is that there is hardly any land for them to keep, since the state divided most of northern Sweden and gave it away to settlers more than a century ago. The title of the book is therefore somewhat naive. Since the Sámi usually are not the owners of the land that they use for reindeer herding, and since the right to private property is protected by the constitution, Sámi land use is never on a par with the interests of the land owners. Some ways around this problem are touched upon in the book, but only very briefly and only with suggestions borrowed from other authors. It would have been interesting to know whether Snowchange’s Jokkmokk project had yielded any new ideas on how the empowerment of the Sámi people may be realized.

I would recommend the book for anyone interested in understanding the full extent of the impact that changes in the surrounding society have had on Sami culture in Jokkmokk.

## REFERENCES

- Hultblad, F. 1968. Övergång från nomadism till agrar bosättning i Jokkmokks socken [Transition from nomadism to farming in the parish of Jokkmokk]. With an English summary. Uppsala: Uppsala University.
- Lundmark, L. 1982. Uppbörd, utarmning, utveckling: det samiska fångstsamhällets övergång till rennomadism i Lule lappmark [Tax collection, impoverishment and development: The Sami hunters’ society transition to reindeer nomadism in Lule Sami district]. With an English summary. Lund: Arkiv avhandlingsserie.

*Gudrun Norstedt*

*Department of Forest Ecology and Management  
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences  
SE-901 83 Umeå, Sweden  
gudrun.norstedt@slu.se*