

REVIEWS

The Murres

By LESLIE M. TUCK. Ottawa, Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, 1960. 260 p. \$2.50.

Leslie Tuck's eagerly awaited account of the Common and Thick-billed Murres is announced as Number 1 of a series of monographs from the Canadian Wildlife Service. As such it sets a high standard for the series. The book will be of value to biologists in several disciplines; for the murres are among the most thoroughly marine of birds and play an integral part in the food chain in the northern seas. The two species of murre are so closely related, and breed together in so many colonies, that the author has been able to avoid much duplication by treating them together, although distinctions are faithfully presented.

Mr. Tuck's own studies cover most of the Canadian murre colonies and he is thus eminently qualified to write this monograph. His extensive personal knowledge of every phase of the murres' natural history has allowed a realistic interpretation of data from other parts of the world. The book is divided into 21 chapters grouped in 5 parts: Evolution and Adaptation; Distribution and Populations; Breeding Biology; Factors Affecting Populations; and Economics.

Nonmarine biologists will be well advised to read Dunbar's cited paper on arctic and subarctic marine environments; for marine usage of these terms is necessarily very different from the more familiar terrestrial usage. In other respects the text is thoroughly comprehensible without supplementary reading.

The narrative is strictly factual. It may be as well, therefore, to remind readers unfamiliar with the terrain of any of these colonies that study of the nesting birds can be both strenuous and hazardous. Frost-shattered arctic sedimentary cliffs are miserable places for study of any sort; and casual complications range from vile weather to inquisitive polar bears. This

monograph is not the place for such dramatic sidelights; but the reader should remember that it was only through subjection to varied hazards and discomforts that the quantitative data so vital to the story could be secured by the author and his collaborators.

Much information is presented in the form of maps in which murre distribution is shown in relation to the phenomena under discussion. This is an excellent system; but a more accurate base map might have been used in a few instances. The inaccuracy is a minor matter in this monograph, but might be more serious in later works dealing with species that range further into the arctic islands. A minor point worth noting is that murre wrecks can be brought about without an on-shore gale. That of December 1952 was accompanied by only moderate easterly breezes. The birds seem to have been brought overland by a wind shift after dark, and, once lost, to have drifted downwind. The printing and illustrations are attractive and surely deserve a better cover. Plastic-coated paper becomes ragged-edged after the first handling.

D. B. O. SAVILE

Status Terminology and the Social Structure of North American Indians

By MUNRO S. EDMONSON. Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1958. 84 p. \$3.00.

This book will probably be of little interest to the general reader. It will, however, be of no little value to anthropologists, ethnologists and others engaged in the study of North American aborigines.

The author is Associate Professor of Anthropology at Tulane University. For his study he has selected nine American Indian societies in different parts of the continent: the Eskimo, Chipewyan, Shoshone, Kwakiutl, Yokuts, Zuni, Sioux, Algonkin and Choctaw. The book is an analysis of the social levels



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