

some cultures tipped their harpoons with aconite poison and the mummified oil of whalers of renown? Similar informative and entertaining knowledge is contained throughout the book.

This detailed, scholarly book is a great contribution to whale literature and will be most valuable to the scientific and research community. It is an essential purchase for whale researchers and research organisations. It also has much information on conditions in the Arctic and will be a valuable

### Kangaroos: The Marvelous Mob

By Terry Domico (Photographs by Terry Domico and Mark Newman). 1993. Facts on File. New York. xix + 202 pp., illus. U.S. \$39.95; \$49.95 in Canada.

We Canadians cannot relate to these animals and their habitat, but it is always fun to read about kangaroos in Australia. This book describes the biology of these animals and their interactions with people. Chapter 1 describes kangaroos, their evolution, present distribution, and physiology. Chapter 2 is devoted to reproduction and development of the young. This whole chapter is appropriate given that marsupials are essentially defined by reproductive characteristics. Chapter 3 deals with individual and mob (group) behaviour. Then follow three chapters giving specific details about particular species. We go from rat-size and mid-size kangaroos (with colorful species names such as potoroos, bettongs, quokkas, pademelons, wallabies) to species living on rock faces and in trees (kangaroos are a diverse lot) to the big kangaroos that we are used to seeing on TV. Then we come to an interesting chapter on commercial exploitation (did you know that Italian shoes may be made of kangaroo leather?), and finally a chapter on measures currently taken to better understand and conserve these animals (although a few species are so abundant they are considered pests, most are rare and threatened). The book closes with a list of further reading and two appendices, on raising orphaned young and on the conservation status of each kangaroo species. The writing style is pleasant and easy to read throughout. Within each chapter the text is divided into short, clearly marked subsections.

To be critical, I noted passages on physiology and behaviour that were too short. Three examples: only six lines, and no illustration, are devoted to the role of elastic tendons in making hopping a more eco-

resource for all scientists who work in this wild, cold region. Anyone, scientist or not, who has the opportunity to visit the far north and to look for Bowheads should, at least, seek out a copy and glean from it what they can.

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nomical mode of locomotion than walking (it certainly takes me more than that to explain this topic in class): kangaroos are said to pant when they are hot, but we are not told how panting helps to cool off; and the caption to a photograph tells us that eyeshine at night comes from the tapetum lucidum, a light-reflecting membrane at the bottom of eyes, but how does this membrane help animals see better at night? In contrast, there were some repetitions between the first three chapters on general biology and the following three chapters on particular species.

On the plus side, the text often comes alive with anecdotes experienced by the author while he did the research for this book in Australia, with reports of his contacts with several scientists working with kangaroos, and with interesting tidbits (for example, legend has it that "kangaroo" is what an Aborigine answered when asked by Captain Cook how the animal was named; there are now reasons to believe that "kangaroo" actually means "I don't understand"). I also liked the exposition of the paradoxical way in which Australians as a society treat kangaroos, at once adopting them as a national symbol, shooting them, trying to conserve them or to exploit them, or as one photograph shows, trying to play golf in the middle of a grazing mob of them. And speaking of photographs, they are abundant, all in color, and superb, as is usually the case with books from Facts on File.

Overall, I liked this book. This side of the Pacific, I am not aware of any better way to get acquainted with kangaroos.

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### Lady Grayl: Owl With A Mission

By Robert W. Nero. 1994. Natural History Inc., Toronto. 176 pp., illus. \$1

The mention of the name Robert brings to mind the image of a researcher dedicated to Great Gray Owls. The book *Owl With a Mission*, presents a different man. This informal and very personal his fascinating relationship and love for a specific member of the species.

Removed from a nest when it was she was going to perish next to her larger siblings, "Grayl", short-form "Gray Owl" was subsequently reared. This book details Dr. Nero's fascinating relationship with the owl from its Imprinted upon humans, the owl released into the wild, and thus became a very effective and popular human-education team. After many years in schools throughout Manitoba and beyond, describes with obvious satisfaction the owl's dramatic effect on school children. It was met with enthusiasm and interest, went, with Grayl usually perched in the author's station wagon. Many memories are related — of the reactions of passengers in the car, of shopping mall visits that the owl was a mounted specimen, of pouncing on a photographer's shoe, of impact was obviously on the children, enthralled with the size, majesty, and presence of the owl. Imagining an owl with a long wingspan swooping over a group of children in a darkened auditorium, it was the impression this owl had on school children a precondition to school visits, school visits about owl biology, and were involved in owl conservation. The owl appeared to be overwhelming interest, increased understanding of the owl, and the need for their conservation.

Although the book is clearly not a scientific treatise, the author's observations often provide insights into the life of wild owls, and help to interpret the owl's uncanny ability to observe at great distances, her ability to pick up unimportant noises and things in the background, and her aggressive reactions to predators such as cats and dogs are a feature. An entire chapter is devoted to a study of owl chronology, whereby Dr. Nero removed, identified, and entered into which Grayl moulted over the mo-