

Ice Blink: Navigating Northern Environmental History

Edited by Stephen Bocking and Brad Martin. 2017. University of Calgary Press. 526 pages, 41.95 CAD, Paper or E-book.

This book is about the effect of southerners on the “north” (mostly, Nunavut, Nunavik, Northwest Territories, and Yukon) and, to a lesser extent, the impact of the north on southerners. Chapters cover Reindeer management, bush planes, mineral exploration, northern nutrition, the DEW line, ghost towns, environmental contamination, and the politics of climate change. Most of the chapters have interest for those concerned about the north and all are well-written and (for social sciences, especially) refreshingly free of jargon. A short final chapter summarises and attempts to synthesize the diverse threads of the book, but it is not entirely convincing: the book remains a collection of one-offs. Do not be daunted by the more than 500-page length: about

100 consist of footnotes. Readers of *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* should note there is little natural history. The index names only three animals: Polar Bear (of course!), Reindeer/Caribou, and Walrus. There is mention of generic ‘geese’ and ‘whales’. A whole chapter on northern contaminants – a very welcome surprise – for which much research has been conducted on birds and marine mammals, fails to mention any actual species sampled. It is almost as though the authors of this collection are scared of biology. A good read for northern enthusiasts, but not recommended for naturalists.

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