

## BOTANY

**Atlas des Plantes Villages du Nunavik – Atlas of Plants of the Nunavik Villages**

By Marcel Blondeau, Claude Roy and Alain Cuerrier. 2004. Editions Multi Mondes, 930, rue Pouliot, Sainte-Foy, Quebec G1V 3N9, Canada. xxvii + 610 pages. \$42.75 (includes taxes and shipping).

This small book (5 × 7 × 1 ½ inches) contains 433 pages depicting absolutely beautiful flowering plants and lichens that can be found around the villages in Nunavik, that part of Quebec north of latitude 55°N. Included on each illustration page is a distribution map which depicts the towns around which each species was found in Nunavik, together with a square mark which indicates its wider range into Iqaluit, Labrador, Newfoundland, Mingan Island and Gaspé Peninsula.

The Preface, Table of Contents, How plants are used by the Nunavik Inuit, List of Vascular Plants, List of

Invascular Plants and General Index are all provided in three languages: French, English and Inuit.

This book will be most interesting and useful to all visitors of the seventeen localities which were visited by the first author between 1983 and 1998 who made observations of the plants within a 10 km radius of each of the sites. It will also be very intriguing to anyone who has an opportunity to examine this beautiful book but never have an opportunity to visit the region.

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## ENVIRONMENT

**Boreal Forest of Canada and Russia**

By W. O. Pruitt and L. M. Baskin. 2004. Pensoft Publishers, Sofia, Bulgaria. 163 pages, Hardcover. \$94.76 (Can.)

Pruitt and Baskin are founders and directors of field research stations set up in the boreal forest regions of their respective countries. This book is far narrower in focus than the title suggests, however, concentrating on descriptions of the two field stations, their history, an outline of the work done there, and some observations on the surrounding terrain and landscape. The underlying idea, though unstated except through the title, appears to be that these two small areas can be considered representative of the vast regions of boreal forest on the two continents. The bulk of the book, though, does not deal with the forest but concentrates on its inhabitants. The text contains extensive discussion of the wildlife (pages 54–157) in the areas surrounding these field stations, with most of the discussion concentrating on mammals, which are the principal research foci of both authors. It is written in a straight-forward narrative style, with few in-text citations, and is clearly aimed at the avocational naturalist or general reader.

Most of the book focuses on the Taiga Biological Station, founded by Pruitt, which has been in operation since 1973. The station is located northeast of Winnipeg, near the Manitoba-Ontario border. It has provided a base for many ecological and zoological studies through the years. The Station's web page ([www.wilds.mb.ca/taiga/intro.html](http://www.wilds.mb.ca/taiga/intro.html)) lists sixty-three written items, of which ten are MSC dissertations. The station has been used as a base for undergraduate field courses, visits by naturalists clubs, studies by museum curators, and projects by researchers from other institutions. Thus outreach and education, both formal and informal, are prime reasons for the station's existence.

About a third of the text discusses the Kostroma Taiga Biological Station, located northeast of Moscow in the Volga River drainage basin, set up in 1977. From Baskin's account, it appears that this area has been much more impacted by human activity than the area around the Canadian field station. He describes how intensive logging, game hunting, and fur trapping was carried out in the region. Recently, scientific activity at the field station has concentrated on game management and the study of animal populations under severe hunting pressure. Baskin also recounts attempts to introduce bison and cattle to the forest, to take advantage of grazing not being used by other large mammals (pages 97–103).

The majority of the text describes the wildlife of the two areas. Many of the animals (such as hares, wolves, bears, and moose) are common to both areas. Following a general survey of the wildlife and habitats, Baskin describes in more detail two species of birds and seven of mammals, mostly large mammals or fur-bearers. Pruitt contributes descriptions of thirteen mammals or groups of mammals, seven groups of birds, and a brief survey of amphibians, reptiles, and a few invertebrates. He devotes much attention to the ecology of Woodland Caribou (pages 109–116), which he describes "as the most endangered mammal in Canada today" (page 116), under pressure from fragmentation of and development in its habitat and with the potential for further shrinking of available habitat in response to climate change.

Both field stations have been in operation for about a quarter century, yielding long-term data for their research areas. Such data sets are rare in ecology. Pruitt notes that he had the opportunity to set up studies of landscape recovery when the area around the station was afflicted by especially massive fires in 1980. Here,