

## BOOK - REVIEW

**Coasts and Estuaries** by Richard Barnes, Editors James Ferguson-Lees & Bruce Campbell. *Hodder & Stoughton Limited, London (Publishers)*, 1979, 224 pp. Price £ 4.75

The book—Coasts and Estuaries is the fifth and the only book dealing with marine oriented subjects in the series on the Natural History of Britain and Northern Europe published by Hodder & Stoughton Ltd., London. From the title one could guess that the book would include some information on physical and chemical features of the coasts and estuaries. But the book is purely on living creatures of the transitional zone between land and sea and this has been clarified by the editors in the foreword itself. The area of study covered in this book is half of the northern Europe including Britain and Iceland towards west of Russia.

The text of the book is divided into two parts. Part I, written by Richard Barnes, includes ecological essays with an introduction. In the introduction the author has described some of the physical features which are important for the living organisms. Some of these include the sea-level, coastal changes, erosion, forces and tides. Thus the introduction becomes a very important part to read before starting the part I of the book. The author has dealt with the different habitats one by one and has described their fauna and flora, ecology (habits, behaviour) particularly of those which are found in each habitat. He has classified the habitat as sandy beaches, mud flats, shingle beaches, rocky shores, salt-marshes, sand-dunes, sea-cliffs and coastal seas which also include estuaries. The description given is very comprehensive and meticulously compiled and put in a limited space. The book is very well illustrated with excellent coloured photographs. The author has gone upto species level and the names have been given in binomial nomenclature. Zonation has been given at appropriate places, particularly of the rocky shores. After going through 65 pages, one can easily understand which of the intertidal species of plants and animals are found on the various beaches of northern Europe and their ecology.

Part II of the book contains very useful information for marine biologists and this part can act as a field guide to a representative collection of plants and animals. The description has been given in an evolutionary trend, *i.e.*, starting from plants, invertebrates, fishes, birds, amphibians, reptiles and ending in mammals.

In the guide the editors provide the common and biological names, size, colour and the habit and habitat of about 700 species of plants and animals. All of them are wonderfully illustrated and serve as real field guide for the identification of plants and animals atleast upto generic level.

The glossary and abbreviations in between the two parts form a very useful additions to the reader.

The overall get-up, production, printing, design and plastic-coated binding make it a very attractive book. It gives a measuring scale up to 200 mm on the back cover—a rare feature and an added attraction to the book to use it in the field.

Although a physical or a chemical oceanographer could be disillusioned by the title but the book contains a treasure of information for a marine biologist or a naturalist who will find almost everything connected with intertidal animals of the northern Europe. The book would thus be an useful addition to all libraries of universities, research institutes and even individuals connected with marine biology. The price of the book is quite reasonable.

— R. M. S. BHARGAVA