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BOOK REVIEW

The Maritime Antarctic Coastal Ecosystem of Admiralty Bay, Stanisław Rakusa-Suszczewski (ed.), Publ. Office of Department of Antarctic Biology, Polish Academy of Science; 216 pp., 35 tabs., 39 figs., 10 photos.

A very interesting publication on living organisms of Antarctic waters appeared recently. It is a book "The Maritime Antarctic Coastal Ecosystem of Admiralty Bay" which was published in 1993 by the Department of Biology of the Antarctic, Polish Academy of Sciences under the scientific auspices of Prof. Dr. hab. Stanisław Rakusa-Suszczewski, the editor and significant contributor. Prof. Stanisław Rakusa-Suszczewski is a reknown scientist and an indefatigable organiser of biological studies of the polar regions of the Antarctic.

The book is an exhaustive monograph of the ecosystem of Admiralty Bay, richly documented and clearly edited. Admiralty Bay itself is a large embayment entering King George Island from the south; this island is the biggest one of the South Shetland Islands archipelago which constitutes the northern border of the Bransfield Strait; this area, in respect to the productivity and biodiversity belongs to the most intersting and richest in the southern hemisphere.

The book presents relations between the environmental abiotic factors and organisms living in this region of the Southern Ocean. This presentation of various mechanisms and dynamics of the processes is very clear and one reads this book with much interest.

A reader is greatly helped in assimilation of the vast scientific material of this book by:

- firstly — a clear lay-out, a rich and inventive graphical documentation and original schemes and models;
- secondly — a correct language and the precision of descriptions of regularities discovered, which seems to result from the fact that all parts of this monograph (20 separate articles), written by 32 authors are the results of their own research;
- thirdly — the team of authors consists of experienced and enthusiastic scientists, who are fascinated by the stern beauty of the Antarctic — hence one can feel in some chapters a light tinge of personal experience of particular authors.

This valuable monograph is not only a handbook describing an ecosystem of a peculiar, comparatively well recognized Antarctic area with descriptions of almost all levels of the living world — from bacteria to mammals and vascular plants. Some chapters of the book present a more detailed information on chosen species or an analysis of biochemical changes taking place in freshly caught *Euphausia superba* treated as a raw material for technological processing. Consequently, this book is also an important contribution to the consideration on the possibilities of using the living resources of these fertile waters surrounding the sixth continent. This utilitarian aspect rooted on sound and deep knowledge of the structure and functioning of Antarctic ecosystem is present in many years' programme of Polish research and presence in the Antarctic, the programme headed by Prof. S. Rakusa-Suszczewski.

In my opinion "The Maritime Antarctic Ecosystem of Admiralty Bay" is an essential contribution to our knowledge of the Antarctic marine ecosystems and its significance is not only local, limited to this particular area of the Bay. This book is worth reading since it is a rich collection

of scientific data and an inspiraton for research and reflection on the possibilities of future use of this reserve of food supply when there is more of us on the planet.

One may wonder how different would be a monograph of the ecosystem of Admiralty Bay in fifty year's time when there are more stations and more people on South Shetlands and when more and more tourists come to this region.

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