

BOOK REVIEW

Fauna and Flora of St Andrews Bay. This book* contains all the known records of marine plants and animals from the coastal region between the Tay estuary and the Isle of May. The records which cover the period from the great days of marine biology in the latter part of the 19th century up to the early 1960s have, for the most part, been made by workers at the Gatty Marine Laboratory, St Andrews.

The botanical section, edited by Dr M. C. Helen Blackler (mysteriously condensed to "M." by the publishers), lists 362 species of algae plus a few flowering plants, fungi and lichens. She also gives some information on the types of habitat in which the plants are to be found, their reproductive features and, occasionally, their abundance. In nomenclatural matters concerning the macroalgae Dr Blackler claims to follow the Parke & Dixon (1968) check-list but, in fact, she departs from that publication in some instances. For example, *Desmotrichum undulatum* (J. Ag.) Reinke has now been lumped with *Punctaria tenuissima* (C. Ag.) Grev., probably justifiably but unfortunately without explanation. In other instances it would have been more sensible not to use the check-list; e.g. *Gomontia polyrrhiza* (Lagerh.) Born. & Flah. has been a fairly meaningless name for 15 years and this record should now be given as *Eugomontia sacculata* Kornmann. Dr Blackler has retained some of the infraspecific taxa long abandoned in recent check-lists. Wholesale rejection of these taxa was always wrong but their modest (and unexplained) revival here has been conducted in a haphazard manner and with scant regard for the rules.

Some of the reproductive records are puzzling; e.g. unilocular sporangia in *Dictyota* (? tetrasporangia), spermatangia and carposporangia as well as α spores and β spores in the Bangiaceae. The index, which purports to italicise synonyms in fact contains too many typographic errors to be of much use as a guide to synonymy. These are fairly minor points and it would be wrong to labour them excessively because this section contains a great deal of valuable observation.

The zoological section compiled by Professor M. S. Laverack has, by contrast, a much tidier and more professional style of presentation. However, zoologists will be disheartened to see that in more than one third of the records nothing at all has been added to our knowledge of the species at any time in the present century. Information on even such well-known creatures as *Flustra foliacea*, *Nephrops norvegicus*, *Tellina tenuis*, *Solea solea* and *Clupea harengus* remains as when they were first reported by McIntosh 100 years ago, for all the world as if preserved in formalin. The botanical section is certainly free from this fault and one feels confident that Dr Blackler has both seen and known her plants. Nevertheless, the fact of her retirement a few years ago only deepens the impression that this book is a piece of marine biological history rather than the product of sustained academic research.

The quality of book production is not high enough to survive the heavy usage one expects or hopes a systematic text will receive. The inclusion of a map showing substrates, depth contours and place names would surely not have added much to the cost but would have greatly enhanced its usefulness. There is too much evidence of shaky proof reading everywhere and the price is a bit stiff.

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* *Fauna and Flora of St Andrews Bay*. Edited by M. S. Laverack and M. Blackler. 310 pp. Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh. Price £5.00 net.