



BOOK REVIEWS

Where the Bay becomes the Sea—Video. Bullfrog Films Inc, PO Box 149, Oley, PA 19547. \$49.00.

Produced by the National Film Board of Canada, this 30 minute video deals with the rich and diverse ecosystem that is the Bay of Fundy. Structured overall as a longitudinal transect up the estuary, the video begins with the nearshore region at the mouth of the bay, moves to the mouth shoals and then to the salt marsh. In each environment it provides a compelling introduction to the bay ecosystem and builds up a clear picture of the ecosystem relationships that exist. We are told for example that upwelling of nutrients feeds photoplankton which are in turn fed upon by a variety of bay life. Visually, the video is adept in making the transition from excellent microscopic footage of copepods to whales and shearwaters feeding upon them. The same transition is accomplished equally successfully with krill, birds, whales and cod and serves to effectively illustrate the foodweb concept (implicitly although not explicitly). The concept of natural variability is also covered with reference to links between puffin reproductive success and food supply.

The role of humans in the ecosystem is touched upon throughout the video and the temporal changes in human pressure are covered through accounts of bird and egg removal initially for food and subsequently to make women's hats. The present uses for ecotourism too are reviewed and ideas of carrying capacity are implied by reference to limited visitor numbers.

The regional and international context of the bay is highlighted early with reference to migrating shearwaters and finback whales and this theme recurs periodically, reminding the viewer that estuaries have a wider dimension, a fact that is seldom contemplated in contemporary coastal management initiatives.

The structure and style of the video enable viewers to take from it as much or as little as they wish. It is never overtly academic in style and yet enables students to assimilate the information into concepts they may have been studying. In this regard concepts such as foodwebs, ecosystem management and integrated coastal zone management are well illustrated in this video, which brings to life classroom concepts that may seem a little stale. The Masters class in Coastal zone management at the University of Ulster watched the video and saw in it visual illustration of concepts they had addressed previously and which 'brought them to life'. On the other hand I showed this video to my 4- and 6-year-old children, both of whom watched from beginning to end and homed in on the visual highlights of the presentation. Key among these is the removal of a humpback whale from a fish weir in which it had been trapped while chasing a shoal of herring.

The video concludes using the North Atlantic right whale to illustrate the importance of such ecosystems to survival of wide-ranging species and highlights the degradation of other estuary mouth environments along the east coast of North America. Far from taking a parochial view of the Bay of Fundy, the video places it in international context and enables its findings to be extrapolated to estuaries everywhere.

The video should be of interest to university students as well as high school students as it can be viewed successfully at different levels of insight. As an introduction to the functioning and management of coastal environments it is excellent, and should appeal particularly to the non-biologist or all-rounder. The availability of the video for rental or purchase should increase its appeal.

Andrew Cooper
Coleraine
Northern Ireland