

## East Coast Basin Atlas Series, the Labrador Sea

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## Book Review

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### East Coast Basin Atlas Series, the Labrador Sea

Geological Survey of Canada, Energy Mines and Resources, Canada. Atlantic Geoscience Centre, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Coordinated by J.S. Bell, 1989. 112 p. Canadian \$65 (individual), \$135 (institutional).

The first atlas in the East Coast Basin Atlas Series, the Labrador Sea, is now out and will be followed by the Scotian Shelf (to be released later this year), the Grand Banks of Newfoundland, the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and the Hudson Bay atlases, all projected to be completed by 1993.

The team of co-ordinators, editors and contributors to the Labrador Sea Atlas is to be congratulated for putting together a very comprehensive summary of the geology and geophysics of this important basin, from a number of different perspectives. The maps, figures and tables are generally clear, informative and well designed in format and color, and the accompanying notes generally useful for additional information as well as explanatory. Inevitably with so many authors there is some unevenness in quality of presentation and some inconsistency in use of stratigraphic terminology, but typos, spelling mistakes and examples of wayward English are few.

The order of presentation of chapters and general organization of the atlas is sometimes a bit baffling and seemingly arbitrary. Deep Water Sediments sandwiched between Quaternary Geology and Bedrock Geology, Structure between Stratigraphy and Isopach Facies, Engineering Constraints between two Quaternary sections, for example.

A few other minor quibbles. In the Quaternary Geol II section the interpretive geological history comes before the data map rather than after it. In the Quaternary Geol III section the legend is a bit confusing and explanations of the maps and diagrams are too brief. What is crystalline lithology? Titles of some maps are misleading, for instance the Isopach and Surface Texture Map (Quaternary Geol. IV) should be Isopachs and Isoliths of Quaternary Formations and the Acoustic Interpretation Map is more precisely a Seismic Facies Map.

A by no means trivial criticism concerns the binding and lay-out of the atlas. The publishers have wisely opted for a coil binding to facilitate studying the maps, etc., but the system is far too flimsy for the large heavy pages and I predict that the whole atlas will come adrift within months if it is well used. As for the lay-out, there are a number of irritants. First, the atlas is unnecessarily big (30" x 20") and unwieldy, and has too many folded pages so that it is practically impossible to flip pages to compare maps and figures. Many of these could have been reduced in size (the folded pages are 40" x 30"), consolidated, and put on single pages instead of folded pages. A considerable number of these large pages (but not all) are entirely blank on the reverse side or have only a caption. In some cases a map caption occupies a whole

double sided page and is then repeated on the actual map (e.g., Bathymetry, Labrador Sea). This kind of waste of space is ludicrous. There are other unnecessary repetitions, most of page 38 for instance is repeated on pages 40, 42, 44, 46 and 48! There are two almost identical maps showing seismic coverage, and all the references are repeated at the end of the atlas after being given in each relevant section. Finally, the inclusion of a French text to parallel the English and the cluttering of all maps, figures and tables with both English and French labelling (against all accepted principles of good scientific illustration) not only makes the atlas bigger and clumsier but also much less readable.

In spite of these criticisms the Labrador Sea Atlas should prove useful to a wide range of earth scientists for the wealth of information it contains and for the able commentaries of its contributors. It is also not without its imaginative interpretations.

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