

level reader and can be managed in a few hours. The material is pertinent and tries to give a balanced view taking material from both sides of the question as well as from history, with the bias being toward conservation of resources. You may not find this book in many bookstores but it is

available from the major chains on special order at the price listed above.

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The Environmental Promise of Democratic Deliberation

By Adolf G. Gunderson. 1995. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, Wisconsin. xiv + 265 pp.

It's hard to know what to think of this book. At first it seems like a wildly uncontrolled experiment: environmentalist graduate student systematically chats up 46 non-random inhabitants of Wisconsin for 4-12 hrs each, and finds that they develop environmentally responsible views during the interviews. But where might he have found a serious scholar to do the counter-interviews? Is there anybody who could make a plausible case that modern North American society expends too much effort in protecting its "environment?" (Very likely all our many opponents are really NIMBY's who think environmental protection is fine except when it affects themselves or their industry.) It would have been fascinating to see the results of such control interviews, especially since Gunderson finds that individual Wisconsinians are prepared for much stricter government policies than anything that would be imaginably enacted in that country.

He did form a picture of the environmental ideas of his subjects. Many of them haven't thought much about such issues, but they find that they support environmental reforms for many moral, philosophical, economic, personal, social, and religious reasons, but oppose those that they do oppose for a single reason. They think that environmental problems are the consequence of summing individual "sin," rather than seeing the societal structures that make it so hard for an individual to live responsibly. Perhaps the changes in their beliefs after this interview are a

sad commentary on the lack of conversation in a television age, but Gunderson sees the interviews as a model for turning personal beliefs and feelings of Americans into an effective political force for environmental reform.

This is a highly personal Ph.D thesis, cut up into chunks (text, appendix, and end notes) for the book, so one must read the notes with the text to appreciate the argument. No consideration is given to the date of the interviews (sometime before the 1991 date of the youngest references cited), or that Wisconsin is traditionally the most progressive of the United States. The text could have used really severe editing, as it is still turgid with the language of a dissertation, and rich in buzz words that are insufficiently explained for a general audience.

What are the reforms suggested? Gunderson states that to specify their form would contradict the method, which is more democratic deliberation, or political talk. It would have been inconceivable in the last century that there could be a lack of this commodity, and it may be inconceivable to naturalists that there is too little talk about the "environment." but Gunderson suggests that our retreat into privacy is so profound that most People just do not talk about these issues enough to realize how uniformly they feel the need for fundamental environmental reform.

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Wild Ideas

Edited by D. Rothenberg. 1995. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis, Minnesota. xxvii + 225 pp., illus. U.S. \$19.95.

Wild Ideas is a collection of 13 essays written by philosophers for philosophers. As such, the book on the whole (though not all of its parts) is a challenging read. The essays' authors challenge the reader's notions of wilderness from a number of perspectives. These range from quite an eye-opening look at the "urban jungle" and its parallel the "untamed wild" to

the contrast between the "wild" and our fenced in, admission required, don't feed the bears "wilderness".

The essays are preambled by an in-depth introduction by the editor who discusses in easy to follow wording, some concepts of wildness and wilderness; he also gives a brief introduction to each of the essays in the collection. The essays are separated into four sections: Whose Wild Idea, Cross-cultural Wild, The Art of Wild and The Wild Revised. The second and third sections (seven essays) are particu-

larly challenging and likely require some experience in philosophy to fully appreciate. The first and last sections (six essays) are easier going and will likely be the most appealing to naturalists. The essayists challenge the reader to think about wilderness in ways that s/he may not have thought of before. Is there such a thing as "wilderness" to people (e.g., pre-European North Americans) who do not segregate themselves from the land? Is setting aside tracts of land good? When we consider conservation areas - places of sanctuary for animals and plants - are we committing cultural genocide by not allowing a rea-

sonable harvest by those who have done so for generations?

This book took me quite some time to get through (I am not a philosopher), but I did read the whole thing out of interest for the material. It is a challenging, yet surmountable collection of essays full of enlightening perspectives on the wild.

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Losing Ground: American Environmentalism at the Close of the Twentieth Century

By Mark Dowie. 1996. MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts. 317 pp., U.S. \$25.00.

Losing Ground is a book about faith - faith in the ability of the irrepressible American spirit to breathe new life into the moribund environmental movement. Hard-fought victories may have been reversed during the Reagan and Bush presidencies, but the American creative imagination, according to award-winning journalist Mark Dowie, may yet lead to the emergence of a more radical, broad-based movement that will pursue environmental justice with an unprecedented vigour. In fact, if Dowie is to be believed, "the real environmental movement has barely begun".

Dowie reaches this conclusion by a curious route. The better part of *Losing Ground* is a stinging indictment of the history of 20th century American environmentalism. With deft precision, Dowie dissects the early conservation movement to reveal that its proponents were largely respectable, white outdoorsmen who sought to preserve their hunting and fishing privileges. He then describes how the inclusive nature of this group came to characterize the promising, new, environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Several pieces of landmark environmental legislation may have been passed, but the people behind the

movement were predominantly white and monied. This "polite revolution" made tree-hugging a safe and popular form of dissent for many Americans. But it had a price. Environmentalism not only evolved into a "mainstream" elitist activity dominated by well-funded Washington lobby groups, but it compromised its defining principles when it chose to negotiate with an unsympathetic Republican White House. In short, the American environmental movement became irrelevant and ineffective at a time when it was needed more than ever before.

That Dowie can find hope in this depressing tale probably says more about the author than the future of the movement. Indeed, if the recent U.S. presidential campaign is any indicator, it will take an ecological disaster of unprecedented proportions to goad the American public into action. Becoming "appropriately rude and decidedly American", in Dowie's words, will not bring about a better world; protest movements take flight only when citizens are motivated to do something about a perceived problem. Hopefully that time will come before it is too late.

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NEW TITLES

Zoology

Bats in question: the Smithsonian answer book. 1997. By D. E. Wilson. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington. 192 pp., illus. U.S. \$24.95.

Beluga: a farewell to whales. 1996. By P. Beland. Lyons & Burford, New York. 224 pp., illus. U.S. \$25.

***The birds of British Columbia, volume 3: passerines (flycatchers through vireos).** 1997. By R. W. Campbell, N. K. Dawe, I. McTaggart-Cowan, J. M. Cooper, G. W.

Kaiser, M. C. E. McNoll, and G. E. J. Smith. University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver. 635 pp., illus. \$95.

†**The ecology, status, and conservation of marine and shoreline birds of the Queen Charlotte Islands.** 1997. Edited by K. Vermeer and K. H. Morgan. Occasional Paper No. 93. Canadian Wildlife Service, Sidney, B.C. 148 pp., illus.

†**King and common eiders of the western Canadian Arctic.** 1997. Edited by D. L. Dickson. Occasional



Lauff, Randolph. 1997. "Wild Ideas, ed. D. Rothgernbnberg [Review]." *The Canadian field-naturalist* 111(3), 539–540. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.358253>.

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