Book Reviews

Waiting for Wolves in Japan: An Anthropological Study of People-Wildlife Relations

John Knight
Oxford University Press,
Oxford, Uk, 2003.
296 pp. $99.00 Hardcover

Reviewed By John M. Marzluff

The Japanese people have shared their land with a diverse community of wildlife for millennia. They have revered, battled, hunted, and celebrated wildlife as a people with deep and close ties to nature. Some species, like the wolf, have been exterminated. Such loss brings relief to some, but challenges others to restore what has been lost. John Knight explores such complex and often opposed relationships between Japanese and wildlife in *Waiting for Wolves in Japan*. He sets out to explore wolf reintroduction and its possible role as a force to unify rural and urban Japan. Along his journey, he tells us about more than just wolves. We learn about the language and culture of rural Japan, notably those people who live in the mountain villages of the Kii Peninsula, and about a host of iconic wildlife with whom they share life.

Knight opens his book with a discussion of human and wildlife interactions, then takes a detailed look at the Japanese actors so that we quickly understand the current and historical perspectives of farmers, foresters and hunters, and come to know the animals they live among. The bulk of the book is a systematic, chapter-by-chapter discussion of human interactions with six wildlife species (wild boar, Japanese macaque, deer, serow, bear and wolf). Each species is introduced biologically first, with appropriate detail on taxonomy, ecology, behavior and references to the primary literature. Then the role of the species in human culture is described and discussed. We learn how the animal has influenced human iconic imagery, pets, recreation, mythology and the like. Finally, the current interaction of the species with groups of people (farmers, foresters, hunters, village residents) is discussed, often in their own words, so that the reader comes to know each species from a variety of perspectives. The book concludes with a synthetic treatment of wildlife-human interactions focused on the wolf's role in reweaving the rural Japanese social and ecological fabric.

I am an ecologist with a keen interest in the cultural connections between humans and wildlife. As such, I read *Waiting for Wolves* through only one of the lenses relied upon by Knight. Knight's primary view of the human-wildlife connection is anthropological. But the presentation of wildlife ecology by Knight, although brief, was excellent and replete with ample citations of current literature. The social perspectives introduced throughout the book were also excellent in their presentation of historical and modern views. Through the encounters between people and animals in Japan, we learn about opposing views of wildlife from actual accounts. For example, the dual nature of interactions with bears is seen by contrasting the stories of human mothers nursing orphaned bears in villages to reports of fear-stricken bus riders taunting their driver to run over a bear crossing the road. Likewise, the wolf is both a benign protector—limiting harmful agricultural pests like deer and boar—and a threatening predator. The ebb and flow of human values given to wildlife are evident in these and other stories. Increasingly, humans in Japan (and elsewhere) see wildlife as pests that threaten their agricultural livelihood or even their physical life. In the recent past, losses to wildlife were less dramatic and relationships with animals more positive. Both sorts of relationships have affected human culture, as Knight amply demonstrates. They also affect animal ecology, evolution and culture (Marzluff and Angell 2005a), a side of the relationship that is not developed by Knight.

In exploring the generality of his findings, Knight touches on several important concepts shared by the natural and social sciences. The influence of place on human valuation of wildlife is illustrated in comparisons of rural and urban perception of

wildlife pestilence. The issue of animal-human dualism is discussed in depth and its complexity fully revealed. Knight's detailed account of the positive and negative interactions among a variety of animals and people suggest that the Japanese people and their wild animals, while opposed in many interests, are in fact similar in kind. In Knight's words, the "human-animal continuity may well take the form of a human recognition of animals as equivalents or rivals with opposed interests."

The real utility of Knight's efforts will be their ability to stimulate further and more comparative investigations. How unique is the rural Japanese peoples' connection to these species, or nature in general? How does human valuation of nature change as the role of the animal changes? It often seems that wildlife-human relationships are mutually reinforcing until the wildlife populations build up to a point where they become an aesthetic or economic nuisance. Knight documents exactly this, but is this simply part of the natural cycle between humans and other animals? Does the cycle eventually return to one of positive association when pests are reduced to rarity? This appears to be the case for interactions between humans and crows (Marzluff and Angell 2005b). It may now be happening with wolves in Japan. It would seem to me to be a general phenomenon that could be formalized and tested with additional case studies.

While I appreciated the depth of anthropological and ecological information presented in *Waiting for Wolves*, I had a few issues with its presentation. There is too little reliance on graphical or tabular presentation of data for my taste (two tables, no maps, no graphs). Certainly, the readability of the text would be improved by moving many of the statistics on costs, stakeholder demographics, and animal encounters into tables and charts. Knight is very loyal to the Japanese perspective throughout the book, which adds authenticity and important insights into the cultural topics he presents. An important element in this loyalty is the use of Japanese words in recounting the opinions and values of local people. The accuracy of interpretation is served by the use of Japanese language, but the readability of the work suffers as one must constantly pause in thought over each word, read Knight's definition of the words, and then continue with the main thought. I would welcome some of the original language in the text, but would have been satisfied with most Japanese words simply placed in a scholarly glossary referenced from the text.

Knight's primary goal was to explore wolf reintroduction as a force that unifies rural and urban Japan. This exploration is thorough, although the impact of wolves in uniting the Japanese people cannot yet be ascertained. Wolves have not been reintroduced, so one can only speculate on their role in controlling other wildlife that challenge Japanese agriculture and perhaps the sustainability of a rural Japanese lifestyle. If wolves can return a more tenable agricultural lifestyle to rural Japan, they will certainly be appreciated by those people who will live among them; such a view may never be granted fully to American or European wolves because people in these areas 'control' agricultural pests more directly without the reverence for other life that is evident in the Japanese views described by Knight. I ended the book with hope for wolves in Japan and with appreciation for the human culture that will determine their continued evolution. For those interested in human-wildlife interactions and conflicts, Japanese culture and the tensions between rural and urban people, this book has a wealth of information. The wading is often slow, but the rewards quickly repay the effort.

Waiting for Wolves is a solid reference that should be in large academic collections and on the desks of ecologists, anthropologists and sociologists investigating the connections between people and wildlife. This is not a book for the researcher or student with a casual interest in human-wildlife interactions, but it has utility as a stimulus for those with casual interests. As such, it would make a good base for a graduate seminar on human-wildlife interactions, and sections of it would broaden undergraduate offerings.

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References Cited

Marzluff, J. M., and T. Angell.
2005a Cultural coevolution: How the human bond with crows and ravens extends theory and raises new questions. *Journal of Ecological Anthropology* 9:67-73.

Marzluff, J. M., and T. Angell.
2005b *In the company of crows and ravens.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Conservation and Globalization: A Study of National Parks and Indigenous Communities from East Africa to South Dakota.

Jim Igoe
Wadsworth/Thomson Learning,
Belmont, CA, 2004.
xii + 183 pp. $26.95 Paperback

Reviewed by Jennifer Coffman

The front cover of anthropologist Jim Igoe's book shows a jubilant and matronly woman, perhaps from South Dakota given the book title, with one hand clutching the hand of a Maasai warrior, and her other hand firmly wrapped around a beaded rungu, the quintessential symbol of Maasai manhood. The woman and warrior dance in front of other Maasai warriors, as well as other jubilant, matronly non-Maasai women. What's wrong with this picture? Everything and nothing. Maasai warriors don't hold hands with women, let alone older women. But the book cover clearly shows that they do. Women of any age do not carry rungus in Maasailand. Yet, the photo tells another story. The book's cover succinctly conveys the simultaneous normalcy and absurdity that is the intersection of conservation and globalization. How do protected areas attract tourists and their dollars? How do locals make a living? Who gets to design and manage the multiple types of conservation and ecotourism schemes? And most importantly, what has and hasn't worked, according to whose standards? These are the basic, complicated questions that enhance the author's research. He undertakes the challenge of responding to them in this chatty book directed to a young, American audience. With the use of analogies and popular culture references, the author attempts to make controversial issues surrounding conservation accessible and interesting. Though a worthwhile read for practitioners and academics working in East Africa, this book is best suited for undergraduates or high school students, especially in courses dedicated to environmental studies, anthropology, sociology or cultural geography.

Drawing mostly on ethnographic research beginning in 1992 in Tanzania, East Africa, the author launches the book with some basic explanations of and contexts for the terms conservation, globalization, ecotourism, and Maasai. This first chapter summarizes the author's experiences with how those four terms–and the ideas they represent–have become complexly intertwined in the Tarangire National Park and Simanjiro District, Tanzania. Although some initial passages are inelegantly rendered, the author draws the readers into his narrative through personal anecdotes. Starting with his own trials as a budding cultural anthropologist and tracing the outline of his research over time, he demonstrates the challenges (e.g., gaining entry, accessing authoritative informants, negotiating hostilities among informants) and rewards (e.g., comparative studies based on multiple locales to help determine patterns, as well as aberrations) of multi-sited ethnographic research.

Conservation and Globalization finds its stride in the author's passionate critiques of the rise and fall of Maasai non-governmental organizations, discussions of which also lead to examinations of the various ways in which "conservation" has been deployed. These are the threads that run throughout the book. Chapter 2 presents how "Maasai resource management"—open-access and multiple-use systems that flexibly exploit various ecological niches—clashes with the fixed locales and restricted access of national parks. The author notes that although

both systems promote anthropogenic landscapes, the ways in which those landscapes are managed and who manages and benefits from them vary greatly. To illustrate this point, the author offers the striking example of the many Simanjiro residents who began to treat with great suspicion the very words "conservation" and "good neighborliness" because of their association with Western conservationists and exclusionary national parks.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of why the national park model became dominant as a means to protect indigenous flora and fauna by excluding people. From the English enclosure movement burgeoning in the 18th century and overlapping with 19th century U.S. westward expansion (and its repercussions), to the expansion of the British empire's "landscapes of control" (p. 91) and fortress conservation in 20th century East Africa, the author traces the momentum of Western conservation and relates it to the useful case study of Tarangire National Park. Chapter 4 ties together the preceding three chapters by describing attempts to transition from fortress conservation to community-based conservation on the borders of Tanzanian national parks. Here, the author blasts the commoditization of communities and the often Byzantine bureaucracies that surround "community-based conservation" schemes funded by non-governmental organizations. Sympathetic to the entrepreneurial inclinations of some formally educated Maasai trying to make a living in these circumstances, the author nonetheless catalogs abuses of power in non-governmental organizations that ultimately led to the fragile state of individual projects, as well as to the fragmentation of the very ideals of "good neighborliness" supported by institutions like the African Wildlife Foundation.

In an effort to provide comparative case studies and some hope, the fifth and final chapter provides summaries of how indigenous communities and national parks interact in other parts of the world. The author organizes this chapter into four types of cases: the traditional exclusionary model, indigenous people as endangered species, co-management and indigenous protected areas. In addition to encouraging the reader to visit Ute Mountain Tribal Park, this chapter provides a good overview of several other significant attempts to confront pressing issues of ecological soundness and the complicated ideologies of conservation. The reported moderate successes, failures and/or survival of these varied examples are indeed instructive.

Igoe notes in his preface that *Conservation and Globalization* resulted from his experiences teaching *about* political ecology in undergraduate classrooms. Engaging students in political ecology, he suggests, may best be accomplished by cultivating an interest in relevant subject matter, getting them invested in the drama of particular case studies, and encouraging them to launch their own initial critiques about conservation models or community-based conservation schemes. From there, perhaps the author and the next generation of policy planners—which would, we imagine, include grassroots, genuinely democratic representation from the targeted populations—can be part of collaborative endeavors that more closely approach some of the ideals the author sketches for us in the book.

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