

John Sandlos, *Hunters at the Margin: Native People and Wildlife Conservation in the Northwest Territories* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008).

Tina Loo, *States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Wildlife in the Twentieth Century* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007).

As can be discerned from the titles of their books, both Sandlos and Loo examine the historical developments of wildlife conservation in Canada. Sandlos focuses on the relationship between federal wildlife policy and officials and subsistence hunters, most notably the First Nations, in northern Canada; whereas Loo focuses on individuals and institutions, both government and non-, who contributed to Canadians' understanding of how best to manage wildlife for human use and consumption. Both books seek to demonstrate the varied and at times conflictual history of conservation that arose out of differing ideas of the human/nature relationship and the differing needs of wildlife by those who had an interest in it, government officials, sports-hunters, subsistence and rural hunters, and recreationists. As a result, both books demonstrate an immense interest in conservation by a wide variety of constituents, thereby belying the predominate myth, as espoused, for example, by Janet Foster, that conservation in Canada was the result of the efforts of dedicated and talented, but very few, civil servants.

Themes common to both books include: the exercise of state power to the disadvantage of local hunters, the commercialization of game, the ethical and societal values that humans gain from a relationship with wildlife and the role of science versus other forms of knowledge in managing wildlife populations. Yet despite their common themes, the organization of the books is very different. While both books provide an introductory overview of the history of wildlife conservation, Sandlos remains focused on government wildlife policy whereas Loo delves more into cultural theory and the social significance of wildlife to Canadian society. From there, the books diverge even further. Sandlos focuses on big game, organizing his chapters so that first the bison, then the muskox, and finally the caribou are the featured topics. Loo looks at constituents within Canadian society who influenced Canadians' ideas of wildlife such as First Nations, Jack Miner, Percy Taverner, the Hudson's Bay Company, and Farley Mowat.

When examining the themes of state power and commercialization, Sandlos argues that conservation policy represents the exercise of federal state power over local subsistence hunters, especially Aboriginal hunters. Conservation is the means whereby First Nations are brought within the framework of federal legislation and hence Canadian society; it is the means whereby First Nations will be assimilated and more importantly, whereby they will be 'civilized'. Sandlos argues that despite the official rhetoric of the state exercising its power to stop the "wanton slaughter" of big game by Aboriginal hunters, conservation policies were

really reflective of an antipathy to local Native knowledge and management (237-238). Additionally, the federal government viewed game species, such as bison, muskox, and caribou as potential domesticates and believed that if these animals could be herded onto ranches, then First Nations could become ranchers and farmers and therefore adopt civilized occupations. Conservation of big game species was therefore not about preserving or protecting animals but about managing them for production. Conservation was the tool not for sustaining First Nations' local economy but for bringing them into the industrial economy.

For Loo, state conservation policies were only one of a myriad number of ways in which wildlife was preserved and protected. She agrees with Sandlos on the effect of federal policies on First Nations but demonstrates that some Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people who became guides were able to create a niche for themselves within the commercialization of wildlife that, in some cases, made them prosperous, but also earned them respect for their skills and knowledge. Additionally, she also examines state employees who resisted the reduction of wildlife to units of production. Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) employees for example recognized the importance of habitat preservation to conserving wildlife, and as a result took a more holistic and less utilitarian view of the natural world. Other advocates such as Farley Mowat and Bill Mason, who were hired temporarily by the Parks Branch and CWS respectively, took the idea of conservation even further. To them, it was of paramount importance to regard all wildlife as valuable and worthy in and of itself. To champion their position, Mowat and Mason 'rehabilitated' the wolf through books and movies; they transformed it from a savage, ruthless, beast fit only for slaughter to a noble, co-operative animal that rendered valuable service to the natural world by killing the weak and infirm of a species and doing so only when necessary.

When examining the theme of ethics and values, Sandlos views conservation as a paternalistic, colonialist agent. It is imbued with the values of commercialism; wildlife was not to be preserved, that is left alone, free from human interference, but rather it was an economic resource which would enable the northern landscape and its peoples to become useful to Canada. Conservation was also imbued with the values espoused by science. Rational management practices would displace local, 'serendipitous' knowledge and ranching, herding and slaughter-houses would replace seasonal hunting and trapping activities. First Nations and other local hunters resisted these values and their results but had only limited success. Treaty rights of First Nations were constantly challenged by conservation policies and wilderness preserves were carved out of Native hunting and trapping territories. Sandlos refers to these preserves as "prisons" for wildlife and details how the First Nations were reluctantly accorded "visiting rights" (77). Thus Sandlos focuses on the clash of views about wildlife between federal officials and local First Nations.

In contrast, Loo elaborates on the clashes that existed not only between

the government and First Nations, but between 'folk biologists' and scientists, national and local interests, private enterprise and public responsibility. Specifically, she explores the ideas and suggestions about how to manage wildlife that came from non-government sources and in so doing demonstrates culture's importance to approaches to nature. The Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), for example, became an exponent of conservation as a means of protecting its commerce in furs. During the early twentieth century, beaver stocks were so severely depleted in northern Quebec, that James Watt, an HBC employee, took it upon himself to encourage the Cree not to trap beaver but rather leave them alone and report back to Watt whenever they came across an active beaver house. In this example, conservation is a management tool of business and serves as the means of maintaining product supply. Jack Miner was another conservationist who originally made his living, out of sheer necessity, by trapping, hunting and then guiding. He later became concerned about the decline of migratory birds and endeavoured, through his individual efforts, to provide sanctuary for Canada Geese. For this, he was dubbed 'Father Goose', and more significantly the father of conservation in Canada. Miner's approach to conservation arose out of his rural background and his religious convictions. Miner believed that 'Man' held dominion over the earth and as a result had the responsibility to manage its resources, including wildlife. He believed that wildlife existed for man's benefit and should therefore be exploited as such. Miner was also what might be called a 'folk biologist'. His approach to conservation was not based on science but rather on personal experiences and beliefs. As a result, Miner believed that Canada Geese were 'good species' because they were a source of food for humans and because they seemed to exhibit noble traits such as loyalty to family and bravery in the face of danger. Hawks were 'bad species' because they were not loyal nor useful. As result, in terms of conservation, geese should be protected, hawks should be exterminated (74-78).

This point about 'good' and 'bad' species also highlights another approach to conservation discussed by Loo, one that brought local and national interests into conflict by the second half of the twentieth century. As scientific views broadened to consider wildlife within an ecological context, debates over bounties for nuisance animals such as wolves and coyotes increased. Whereas federal biologists and others could recognize the importance of these animals to the natural order, rural farmers and ranchers continued to be threatened by these animals' predations on their sheep, chickens and other stock. These local interests therefore continued to propose the necessity of destroying these animals and advocated the continued use of a bounty to encourage that end. Biologists, ecologists and naturalists, whether employed by the state or not, cared little for local concerns and instead advocated for the end of the bounty. For Sandlos, the debate over good and bad usually involved discussions of hunting practices. Good hunters were sport-hunters, who gave game a fair chance to escape, who did not

shoot an animal until they were sure to get off a good shot, and who did not hunt to 'fill their pots'. This meant therefore that bad hunters were the opposite and their characteristics were usually ascribed to First Nations and other subsistence hunters.

Finally, both authors devote some time to discussing wild places and how they came to be preserved. Sandlos discusses the creation of Wood Buffalo National Park and its use as an abattoir for surplus and diseased buffalo, and Loo examines the individual efforts of Tommy Walker and Andy Russell to set aside areas within the Rocky Mountains. These men believed that living in 'pristine' areas allowed people to live ethically, that is, in unity with the natural order. For those interested in the history of conservation, wildlife management, First Nations, state power and individual agency, Sandlos and Loo offer insightful analyses within provocative narrative frameworks. As a result, both books make a significant contribution to the literature on conservation in Canada and both books are enjoyable to read.

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**Jamie Benidickson, *The Culture of Flushing: A Social and Legal History of Sewage* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007).**

It is difficult to imagine this book being published twenty or 30 years ago. In the 1970s and 1980s neither the secondary literature, which it expertly summarizes and interprets, nor the world waste and water crisis by which it is ideologically and conceptually underwritten, had come fully and visibly into being. Benidickson's book is described as a social and legal history. But it is more than that. An excellent interim overview of the historiography of water and waste, *The Culture of Flushing* draws on a wide range of specialist publications. Information from this body of literature is intermixed with findings based on original research into Canadian, American, British and, on a more limited scale, European sources. The somewhat recondite term "flushing" may reduce potential readership. Firmly and authentically rooted in nineteenth—and much earlier—discourses and experience, it will fail to resonate with those struggling against pollution problems in twenty-first-century Lagos or Rio and near-critical drought conditions in the mightily affluent south-eastern United States. Something along the lines of 'water and waste, then and now' might have made better marketing sense.

Over the last two decades historians concerned with the origins and development of large-scale water supply, sewage disposal and treatment systems have intensively explored what Joel Tarr has classically described as the search for an "ultimate sink". Throughout the nineteenth and on into the twentieth century rapidly expanding urban communities in Europe and the United States urgently—