

**People and Wildlife: Conflict or Coexistence** edited by Rosie Woodroffe, Simon Thirgood & Alan Rabinowitz (2005), xvii + 497 pp., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK. ISBN 978 0 521 82505 9 (hbk), GBP 75.00/USD 130.00; ISBN 978 0 521 53203 5 (pbk), GBP 38.00/ USD 65.00.

This book, with 62 chapter authors, is the result of a symposium held at the Zoological Society of London in December 2002. It addresses a major conservation conflict: that wildlife may kill people and their livestock, destroy their crops, or in other ways threaten the livelihoods of rural people. People have responded to these threats by killing wildlife, and this has led to the endangerment of many species that are difficult neighbours. As efforts are now made to save these species in reserves, conflicts arise again in surrounding areas where ancient knowledge about how to tackle the conflicts has been lost after generations of predator control.

The first two chapters set the scene by reviewing the problems, and chapters 3–16 review methods to reduce them, including technical solutions. The last three chapters describe policy approaches, such as zoning and revenues. Large parts of the book therefore represent thematic reviews, such as impacts of various wild species (e.g. numbers of people, livestock and game animals killed, agricultural losses, and problems with transfer of disease), methods used to fight problem animals, and even what persons who are attacked by dangerous animals should do. Although each chapter has its distinctive focus, there is also a lot of overlap. Overall, however, these chapters represent a large compilation of information that is otherwise widely scattered, often in journals that are not readily available. The book is therefore a valuable introduction and key to where to find more specific information. The reference list, at the end of the book, takes up no less than 71 pages.

The thematic chapters may be particularly valuable to project designers and managers of rural development projects, who are not game biologists by training and therefore need advice about practical solutions to wildlife conflicts. Electric fences against megafauna represent the expensive end of the spectrum. An interesting cheap method is to use capsicum peppers as a repellent against crop raiding elephants and monkeys, although more work is needed to develop effective context specific protocols.

As most chapters review numerous examples from a wide range of cultural contexts, readers in search of specific solutions will have difficulties finding what they want. Broad geographical overviews mean generalized statements, and clearer messages could have been made by a clearer subdivision of text dealing with developed and less developed parts of the world. In the first case, traditional land use is often maintained in marginal areas (around protected wilderness areas) by heavy subsidies and compensation schemes (motivated by political aims rather than by need for food). In the second case, the wildlife conflicts are felt by poor rural people, who are self-sustaining and highly vulnerable to calamities.

Fortunately there are also some interesting case studies with different contexts. It is particularly interesting to compare carnivore problems in Norway (Chapters 10 and 20) with that in Sweden (Chapter 20) and in developing countries (Chapters 14–18). It seems that it may be possible to mitigate conflicts where people put effort into protecting livestock and tolerate some losses (Sweden, northern Kenya), but not in Norway where husbandry of reindeer and sheep is maintained in rural areas by subsidies and the animals are left unattended for long periods of time. Continued hate of predators is described to be a result of powerlessness (Chapter 10), but may also represent a deeply rooted perception of nature as enemy (also described as the motive for persecution of jaguars, Chapter 17), which still persists in communities that are otherwise well integrated into modern economies and lifestyles. Although problems with powerlessness and vulnerability of local communities are discussed in several chapters, the role of perceptions of nature and rationalities is unfortunately not discussed, although these cultural devices are certainly important.

The book is somewhat biased in its geographical coverage (61% of the authors being affiliated with institutions in North America and UK, 12% Norwegian, 12% African), and thus does not provide solutions for all parts of the world. However, as the first review of a very controversial issue, it has the potential to become widely used by conservationists and also by land use and development planners.

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