

Publications

Wildlife Crime: from Theory to Practice

edited by William D. Moreto (2018) 306 pp., Temple University Press, Philadelphia, USA. ISBN 978-1-4399-1472-4 (pbk), USD 37.95.

Wildlife Crime: from Theory to Practice, an edited volume of 13 contributions from 26 authors across multiple continents, brings crime science and criminology to bear on the illegal exploitation of wildlife. The style is academic and introductory and the scope is broad, covering key criminological theories and social sciences methods while addressing diverse case studies across multiple species, geographies and stages of the illegal wildlife trade chain. *Wildlife Crime* is thus an ideal primer for anyone not trained in criminology and interested in its application to biodiversity conservation. The book's strength is in its comprehensive demonstration of the relevance of criminology to understanding the illegal wildlife trade, making it useful for interested conservation biologists and wildlife scientists.

The first four chapters consider different theoretical lenses through which one may understand wildlife crime, and a discussion of how tensions among these approaches may be reconciled. Here, the reader is given concise but insightful overviews of environmental, conservation and green criminology (the latter is given the least attention), along with case study applications. The case study on the use of environmental criminology and situational crime prevention to understand and address illegal fishing is particularly well-written and instructive. The second section comprises six chapters that showcase empirical studies in wildlife crime, drawing attention to the different methods used, such as investigative journalism, participatory risk mapping, multisite ethnography and market research, among others. This gives the reader a useful sense of the transdisciplinary nature of the field. Unfortunately, only limited examples of integrating insights from these diverse methods and theories are provided, despite this being repeatedly advocated for in the book. Chapter 9 (Gore et al.) is a notable exception: the authors' use of forest ecology and conservation biology, criminological routine activity theory, and multiple information sources (technological and human) to map rosewood harvest risks is inspiring and educative. Other topics in this section include a long-term interview study into the psychology and motivations of French Acadian game poachers in Louisiana, an analysis into the convergence of ivory and rhino horn trade with other forms of criminality, and a 'how-to'

guide for overcoming logistical and ethical challenges associated with surveying people involved in wildlife trafficking.

The third and final section seeks to foreground the perspectives of practitioners involved in addressing wildlife crime, thereby giving them a voice in academic circles. Chapters cover, respectively, the well-being of wildlife rangers globally, the real-world story of a team implementing technology to protect rhinoceroses in Kenya, and a conceptual overview of a transdisciplinary approach to wildlife crime that aims to close the knowing-doing gap amongst researchers, practitioners and other stakeholders. Although such perspectives are interesting and essential to the general conservation discourse, these chapters are not as seamlessly integrated into the broader volume as the preceding chapters. Sound reasons for promoting practitioner-driven research are briefly provided in the final section, but no clear link is made between the practitioners' insights presented and academic research. The book would be improved if barriers, opportunities and ways forward for incorporating these sorts of insights into future research were given novel attention.

The book has a number of strengths, the most significant being the provision of a comprehensive introduction to how criminological theory and methods can be applied to illegal wildlife trade. It will therefore be a useful reference text for undergraduate teaching or graduate self-study. Excellent case studies illustrate theories, demonstrate the use of criminological methods, and show the significance of understanding the practical environment in which wildlife crime interventions are implemented. This will prove useful to anyone seeking an introduction to wildlife crime research. The book also contains much interesting and engaging material. Whether it is convergence of abalone and rhino horn trade, Louisiana game 'outlaws' getting excited about outwitting game wardens, reconsidering wildlife trade networks as enterprises that mimic legitimate business corporations, or the conflation of wildlife tourism and trade in Peru, the book is full of much material that will be new and even surprising to most readers.

The volume does, however, have a number of notable limitations. It lacks continuity and integration: the various contributions do not build on or complement each other clearly, it is difficult to detect any overarching key messages, and there are few compelling arguments carried through the book, nor a conclusion chapter. This means that this volume is unlikely to be considered a novel advancement

in the field, but rather a consolidation of current theories and methods. More experienced readers will be disappointed if they are looking for empirical research with novel findings and rigorous methods. The use of evidence to draw conclusions is at times tenuous, with broad generalizations made from limited data (particularly in chapter 9). Minor concerns include a methodological focus that is squarely within the qualitative social sciences, with very little treatment of quantitative methods or natural science, which would have been desirable in a comprehensive volume. Although the book demonstrates the use of a variety of methods, it does not equip or train the reader to carry out similar research. Lastly—and somewhat amusingly—the book's subtitle *From Theory to Practice* might lead some unwitting readers to expect guidance on how to turn their theories about wildlife crime into action.

Overall, I would recommend this book as an introduction to students, researchers and teachers interested in an overview of the application of criminological research to the illegal wildlife trade.

TIMOTHY KUIPER *University of Oxford, Oxford, UK. E-mail timothy.kuiper@zoo.ox.ac.uk*

The Ethnobotany of Eden: Rethinking the Jungle Medicine Narrative by Robert A.

Voeks (2018) 328 pp., University of Chicago Press, Chicago, USA. ISBN: 978-0-226547718 (hbk), USD 45.00.

Adam and Eve got all the attention. The snake got second billing. But who thinks about the plants in the Garden of Eden? Except perhaps the tree that produced the apple that got Adam and Eve expelled into a world of sin.

Robert Voeks cares about all the rest of the plants that bedecked the Garden of Eden. But not really, what he cares about is how humans have taken the story of the plants of Eden and transferred it to the forests of the tropics. And what happens as a result. The reader realizes early on that the title is not an accurate depiction of the book. The Eden part of the title is clever and attention-grabbing, but the book isn't about Eden, except superficially. Which is, parenthetically, too bad as 'the ethnobotany of Eden' would make a great book. The book is really about the 'jungle medicine narrative'—the changing Western/European narrative about tropical forests and the people who inhabit them.

Voeks' thesis is that the most compelling narrative to emerge from the last decades of scientific, media and public attention to the tropics is that 'tropical forests are pristine, largely unknown to science, and home to mysterious and wise native people who are privy to their great botanical secrets ... [including] ... miracle-cure medicinal plants known and dispensed only by indigenous shamans and herbalists' (p. 4). This narrative then sets up, in the minds of many Europeans and Westerners, that the value of tropical forests lies in their potential to provide cures for their intractable ailments.

The book develops this narrative and then proceeds to deconstruct and refute it, using history, botany and anthropology. The pressing issue of loss of tropical forests plays a role in this jungle medicine narrative, being portrayed as a loss of both plants and traditional knowledge about the utility of plants. So too do the big-bad pharmaceutical companies which are portrayed, in this narrative, as exploiters of both forests and traditional healers.

The first portion of the book provides a satisfying, although not original, review of the concept of the noble savage and the myth of the pristine tropical forest. From here on the book wanders, deviating from a tight focus on the central jungle medicine narrative. First is a history of the Western pharmacopeia based on the Mediterranean experiences and how it influenced the search for medicine in tropical climes, including the history of *lignum vitae* (tree of life), nutmeg and cinchona (the first effective drug for malaria). The stories of flamboyant explorers and rich Europeans desperately seeking cures for what ailed them and the terrible treatment of those peoples from whom the plant uses were learned are satisfyingly woven in with ethnobotany to repeat a story that has been told before but here receives a satisfying remake.

From there the jungle narrative stops being the structuring device for the book and instead the reader follows the author as he highlights his field research experiences around the world—but particularly in the northeast of Brazil. Interesting though it is to learn about the loss of knowledge about medicinal plants in Brazil or the role of gender in ethnobotany, it is disappointing to lose the strong thread and rich discussion of the first part of the book. Voeks' book has many interesting observations and details based on a close reading of history and a long time in the field. However, it is a bit dated in the sense that the jungle medicine narrative has been overwritten by a new narrative—that of jungle ecosystem services. Perhaps this will be the author's next book.

KENT H. REDFORD *Archipelago Consulting,*
Portland, Maine, USA
E-mail redfordkh@gmail.com

The Anthropology of Conservation NGOs: Rethinking the Boundaries edited by Peter B. Larsen & Dan Brockington (2018) xv + 289 pp., Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, Switzerland. ISBN 978-3-319-60578-4 (hbk), GBP 89.99.

This edited volume aims to showcase and challenge some of the latest engagements between critical social science and conservation NGOs. It starts with an insightful introduction, which includes challenges both to critical social scientists (e.g. to move beyond treatment of conservation NGOs as monolithic entities) and conservation professionals (e.g. to engage more with informed criticism that can reveal more than a comfortable consensus). The bulk of the book is then given to a series of chapters that focus on a range of studies concerning different scales and aspects of Conservation NGO practice. This first section is followed by a shorter Discussion Forum section with responses to the book by seven conservation thinkers and practitioners.

Larsen's second chapter is particularly useful in tracking the project economy and the impact that has on what NGOs are, what they do and how they behave. The chapter also serves to show how the use of mischievous language can undermine attempts at building trust or willingness to collaborate from members of the NGO community, as made clear by Wilkie and Cleary in the Forum section of the book.

Subsequent chapters give significant attention to Conservation NGOs' engagements with the private sector, markets and neoliberalism, with contributions concerning the increasing influence of corporate interests at the world conservation congress (Chapter 4); the effectiveness of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil voluntary standards (Chapter 5); the consistency of pro-market perspectives held by conservation professionals (Chapter 6); the rationale used by conservation organisations in their engagement with markets (Chapter 7); and the validity of conservation NGOs in REDD (reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation) project development (Chapter 8).

The final chapter in the main section of the book is a reprint of an article originally published in *Oryx* (2011) by Kent Redford in which he makes the case for open-handed collaboration with conservationists and social scientists—with a focus on anthropology,

political science and geography—to create a resilient practice that conserves the world's biodiversity while respecting and empowering people.

The discussion provided in the Forum section of the book gives direct, concise and considered responses to the main chapters of the book. David Cleary's chapter in particular stands out, in which he questions the possibility of substantive dialogue between conservation practitioners and the academy given the conceptual frameworks adopted by the book's authors. Cleary argues that these frameworks foreclose a real exchange of views, exclude centrally important types of information and create fundamental misunderstandings of how conservation organisations work.

The introduction of the book recognizes this discontent with critical literature and points out that the difficulties of meaningful engagement persist more than a decade after they were raised by Brosius in 2006. In essence the majority of the book's chapters and the proceeding discussion sections serve to showcase such ongoing discontent. The lack of more fertile co-productive work shows the challenges of achieving trust, understanding the role of criticism and the acceptance that transdisciplinary collaboration cannot (and should not) be comfortable all of the time.

Beyond the content of the book per se, its structure is undermined by the previous publication of five of the nine main chapters, without substantive changes. Four of these chapters have been published in the open access journal *Society and Conservation* and the Discussion Forum section was at the time of review also freely available on the Springer website. Although it is highly commendable that the work of contributing authors is freely available to the conservation NGO community, greatly increasing the chances of garnering interest in dialogue, new and different forms of collaboration, it diminishes the value of the book itself.

In summary, the intent of the book to open up new and productive spaces of collaboration should be welcomed. It serves as a reminder to conservation NGO staff of the need to find space for reflection in practice, which may well be possible at an individual level but is challenging for an institution. Since its publication the book has helped me to frame new transdisciplinary collaborations and only time will tell how (un)comfortable these will turn out to be.

ROB SMALL *Fauna & Flora International,*
Cambridge, UK
E-mail rob.small@fauna-flora.org