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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★☆ ECOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

The Cost of Being Green before Green Was Cool: A 51 Yr. Odyssey

T. J. Elsbury
Xlibris (Aug 7, 2013)
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In-depth and well-documented research bolsters this emotive account of wildlife mismanagement.

T. J. Elsbury's *The Cost of Being Green before Green Was Cool* affirms that state wildlife agency mismanagement of the mule deer population in western states has led to the "mysterious" disappearance of numerous children and adults. His controversial debut book reveals how these disappearances can be traced to the cumulative effects of policies that led the deer's natural predators to seek out other prey or face starvation.

Elsbury's passionate, eloquent, and meticulously documented book is a testament to one man's struggle to warn government wildlife agencies that their incorrect understanding and mismanagement of the mule deer population is putting ecosystems and human lives at risk. The book begins with a moving dedication to the children that he "could not save"—all victims of mountain lion, coyote, or bear attacks. Elsbury's dedicated efforts to get to the bottom of the problem challenged the egos of powerful officials and those who funded their rise to power, and exposed the misdoings, cover-ups, perjuries, and the cooking of records engaged in by agency employees. As a result, Elsbury was harassed, threatened, and arrested. He convincingly demonstrates his contentious relationship with government wildlife agencies led to losing custody of his granddaughter, a loss he grieved deeply. His detailed explanations of those events provide a chilling exposé of the failures of the American "justice" system.

Elsbury calls on wildlife biologists to "quit rewriting history and take personal responsibility for their mistakes" instead of blaming every downturn in deer populations on weather, development, pathogens, or the curtailing of wildfires and logging. The truth of the matter, he argues, is the downturn is due to the wildlife managers "holding of general buck hunts during the rut and the taking of exorbitant numbers of breeding age females from select herds."

Elsbury's engaging stories benefit from his long personal history in hunting and trapping, taxidermy, and wildlife photography. The author holds undergraduate degrees in wildlife biology, mass media, and journalism, received a Xi Sigma Pi (Forest Resources Scholarship Achievement Award), and is a member of the College of Natural Resources Society.

The book merits a thorough review by a proofreader to correct its many errors in spelling, word usage, grammar, and syntax. Examples of such include the incorrect use of "than" and "then," as well as "where," "we're," and "were"; the incorrect spelling of the name "James Fenimore Cooper" as "Fedimore"; the lack of possessive apostrophes, as in "the departments own records," and misuse of the apostrophe in general; other errors such as "political incorrect" for "politically incorrect" and "he still harbored I'll feelings," where "ill" is intended, also abound.

On a positive note, the book is thoroughly researched and annotated, with a detailed table of contents, an extensive bibliography, and a helpful appendix filled with charts (though some of these are difficult, or impossible, to read due to their faint and fuzzy reproduction), lists, correspondence (official and otherwise), and copies of relevant newspaper articles; the book is also well indexed. While the cover is attractive and the back matter is sufficiently informative, a good number of the photographs of deer in the text are grainy and dark.

Overall, Elsbury's work is a highly valuable contribution to the literature on wildlife management and ecology. It is recommended reading for wildlife management professionals, scientists, journalists, hunters, and concerned citizens.

KRISTINE MORRIS (December 16, 2013)

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