perceived need to be objective and data-driven despite our recognition that this is not what drives us to continue in our exhausting work. Maybe we have this wrong, a point clearly made by Dolly Jørgensen (2019): 'emotional frameworks matter deeply in both how people mentally understand nature and how they interact physically with it' (p. 5) and 'the way we see a species can impact its standing on the planet more than anything covered in ecology textbooks' (p. 6).

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Hunt for the Shadow Wolf: The Lost History of Wolves in Britain and the Myths and Stories that Surround Them by Derek Gow (2024) 256 pp., Chelsea Green Publishing UK, London, UK. ISBN 978-1-64502-042-4 (hbk), GBP 20.00.

Almost a decade ago, during a visit to the now-shut UK Wolf Conservation Trust in Beenham with my course-mates from the Silwood Park campus of Imperial College London, I got a fascinating glimpse into the history and current status of wolves in Great Britain. As the wolves paced in their enclosures, I learnt about how this once widespread species was hunted to extinction on the island by the combined effects of accelerated deforestation and a bounty system brought about through the cultural vilification of the species. It made me think about how wolves in my native India have a similarly bad reputation, particularly in popular literature, where they are often portrayed as brute and evil.

In *Hunt for the Shadow Wolf*, Derek Gow—an active rewilder who is known for his work with water voles, wildcats, beavers and other species—goes on a quest to uncover the true nature of the vilified wolf, hoping to help reconcile our troubled relationship with this apex predator. Gow begins this journey by illustrating the underlying dislike that people have for wolves, which led to the narratives, policies and actions that ultimately drove the species to extinction in Great Britain. In the introduction he writes about the death of the last wolf in Scotland, purportedly killed by the legendary Highland deer stalker MacQueen of Pall a'Chrocain in Darnaway Forest, Morayshire. From there, through assorted pieces of evidence painstakingly gathered from family histories, churches, museums and other sources during his journeys throughout Britain, Gow leads the reader to a better understanding of this majestic animal.

Humankind's engagement with the wolf, though often fraught in recent centuries, has at times been almost reverential. Drawing on the notion of the wolf as a larger-than-life, mystical creature, wolf-related terminologies have crept into the English language in several ways, including the names of human settlements, and wolf parts have long been regarded as powerful remedies to treat a wide range of ailments and afflictions, such as breast pain, for which a wolf's fore-foot was recommended, and epilepsy, the treatment of which was thought to be possible using a wolf's heart. Rogerius, the 13th-century Italian physician, gave the autoimmune disease lupus its name because he thought the facial lesions associated with the disease were reminiscent of wolf bites.

Reverence for wolves is found in many cultures and throughout human history, as are stories and reports of human children raised by wolves, such as the ancient Roman tale of the mythical twins Romulus and Remus, who were suckled by a she-wolf. In his book, Gow references Dina Sanichar, a feral boy who was discovered among wolves in India in 1872 and forced into an orphanage, and who, despite subsequently spending many years in human company, never learnt to speak and continued to vocalize in grunts and howls for the rest of his life; some believe Sanichar may have served as the inspiration for the character Mowgli in Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Book*.

Gow is a skilled storyteller and I appreciated his various personal anecdotes peppered throughout the book, such as his work with two captive wolves, Nadia and Mishka, who were adopted by the wildlife park in Kent where he used to work. However, although well-researched and referenced, the book's structure is slightly erratic, which does not allow the breadth of Gow's research to shine through to its full effect.

In light of the European Commission's proposal to change the status of wolves in the European Union from 'strictly protected' to 'protected', which would allow EU nations to cull wolves at scale for the first time in 4 decades, this book is a timely publication. Although the wolf population has recovered in many parts of Europe and the species is no longer teetering on the brink of extinction, environmental organizations fear that this conservation success could be jeopardized by the proposed change. Personally, I hope this often misunderstood animal receives the support it needs to thrive in our human-dominated world, and that we will find a way to coexist with these ecologically and culturally important predators. The book's overall tenor of encouraging environmental stewardship, could help to change public perception of this unjustly vilified animal.

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Corporate Nature: An Insider's Ethnography of Global Conservation by Sarah Milne (2023) 272 pp., The University of Arizona Press, Tucson, Arizona, USA. ISBN 978-0-8165-4701-2 (e-book), USD 35.00.

After many years of effort and advocacy, it is now widely agreed that social research has a vital role to play in biodiversity conservation. This research comes in various different forms and flavours, based on different objectives, methods and disciplinary perspectives. Some are obviously useful to conservation, such as studies of factors influencing pro-environmental decisions amongst consumers. Others may at first glance appear less useful, and even hostile or damaging to conservation, but have the potential to offer profound longer-term value if taken seriously.

Sarah Milne's book *Corporate Nature* is a perfect example of this latter category of conservation social research. It provides an in-depth account of the work of Conservation International in Cambodia over more than a decade, exploring how the idea of payments for ecosystem services became crystallized within the organization as a global policy idea that was then implemented on the ground without taking sufficient account of the local context. Milne alleges this led to a series of failures, including, in her view, complicity in a major illegal logging operation that was devastating for the unique biodiversity of the Cardamom Mountains and for the livelihoods of resident people. Milne also sees links between these failings and the murder of Chut Wutty, an environmental activist and former Conservation International employee who was her personal friend.

In carrying out the research for this book, Milne moved between different roles with respect to Conservation International over the course of more than 10 years—as an employee, an independent researcher and an external advisor and consultant at various times. This is highly unusual, and gives the book an incredible level of detail and depth of analysis that would not have been possible without the insights Milne gained through

being an active participant in much of what she describes. At the same time, it creates a challenging ethical and personal context in which Milne had to navigate what she calls her multipositionality. Milne's writing on this topic is a real highlight of the book, blending discussion of how she maintained academic rigour with a highly personal account of the difficulties she faced.

Milne's book is deeply critical of the work of Conservation International as an example of what she calls Corporate Nature: 'that which emerges from the technocratic, bureaucratic, and power-laden practices of mainstream global conservation organisations' (p. 6). She sets out in meticulous detail how a combination of new funding models and idealized policy narratives created conditions in which the organization had strong incentives to overlook failures, even in the face of overwhelming evidence that the prescribed approach was not working on the ground. Although the book is about Conservation International, I believe that the story it tells will resonate with many conservationists who have worked with or for international conservation organizations. Given their significant influence on contemporary conservation practice, this raises important questions about how international conservation is structured, funded and regulated that matter for everyone working in conservation. As Milne says, 'It is not just the mainstream conservation edifice that is at stake but nature-society itself' (p. 227).

I found most of the book highly convincing, yet one point struck me as less strong: the way Milne argued that replacing an expatriate country director with a Cambodian national had contributed to the problems she describes. Although this may have been true in this particular case, I was surprised not to see some broader reflection on how this relates to current debates about decolonization and efforts to encourage local leadership, which her argument seems to contradict.

As a piece of academic writing, Milne is careful to situate her thinking in the relevant social research literature. She draws on theories such as Foucault's work on power, Igoe's on spectacle, and Scott's on legibility. These ideas may be unfamiliar—and possibly daunting—to some readers. However, the text is written in a highly accessible style, with new ideas being clearly introduced and explained before being applied to the particularities of the study context. As a result, *Corporate Nature* acts as a kind of primer for a body of theory that is highly relevant to the work of many people in conservation, but is often overlooked. The book will give readers a theoretical framework to understand, and perhaps to change, problematic things they see happening in conservation.

Milne challenges the structure and function of mainstream conservation, using meticulous evidence combined with social theory to make the case that conservation needs to change. The final section provides some ideas as to how this could be done, from a starting point of humility and willingness to embrace diverse perspectives rather than operating from a standardized top–down model. While the specifics of these recommendations need further development, I find the central message of the book compelling. I would encourage everyone working in conservation to read it, and hope that it will stimulate deep reflection about the way conservation works and how things could be done differently.

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