

Lecture #10: Hunters and Hunted

Suggested Readings:

Peter Matthiessen, *Wildlife in America*, 1959
James A. Tober, *Who Owns the Wildlife: The Political Economy of Conservation...*, 1981
Louis Warren, *The Hunter's Game*, 1997
Karl Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature*, 2001.

Outline:

I. The Passing of the Bison

theme: expansion of 19th c market networks (von Thunen) increasingly affected wildlife
bison herds in 1865 est at 15 million; note role of herding as survival behavior
Indian hunting had shifted from foot with arrow to horse with gun; not in balance??
but relatively small market in bison nonetheless, so no dramatic shifts in population
two key changes: market in buffalo hides developed with improved tanning in 1870s, and arrival of railroad
shifted transportation costs to make sale economic: bison market
professional hide hunters feed railroad workers, sell meat east; 4 mill killed/yr 1871-2
by 1883, virtually no animals left; 1889, only 85 in wild, 1091 left in world; bones sold

II. Extinction: Passenger Pigeons

passenger pigeon flocked in ways similar to bison's herds: billion birds to a flock, collective nesting that made
capture extremely easy, flights darkened sky
easy to kill several with single gunshot, netting techniques brought in millions
well-organized market: telegraphic communication of prices, location of nesting areas
destruction of habitats as one source of decline: loss of deciduous forests
but vast hunting pressure during nesting made reproduction difficult, bird evidently needed critical mass to
sustain breeding population. last pigeon died in zoo 1914
not alone: cf. Carolina Parakeet, Great Auk, Dodo; last heath hen dies 1933

III. Flesh Markets

note implication of market expansion: free good converted to privately-owned dead animal
meat market among most important reasons for hunting: rural demand for subsistence in frontier and poor
areas (cf southern common rights); urban demand for wild meat, with \$500,000 worth of game sold in
Chicago alone in 1873, handling game to NY and Europe
individual market hunters killed thousands of birds per year, sold by wagonload
game also for clothing, esp millinery and feather trades: women's hats, songbirds
also: taxidermy, stuffed trophy bodies and heads, leading us toward sport hunting

IV. Sportsmen and their Code

hunting and angling had long been popular aristocratic activities in England & Europe
American blood sports complicated by additional icon of individualist frontier hero
key promoter of new ethic of sportsmanship: Henry William Herbert (1807-58), born England, migrated NY
1831, wrote *Field Sports in the U.S. and British Provinces of America*, 1848 under pseudonym Frank
Forester, followed by several other manuals before suicide
sport hunting a leisure activity done for the love of fair play, shoot only on wing, use proper technique, seek
to display noble manhood, chase only worthwhile if done with style, risk, dash; unfair advantage of
quarry a sign of unethical hunter
sportsmanlike values promoted by sporting press in post-Civil War era, esp. Charles Hallock and George
Bird Grinnell's *Forest and Stream*, 1871; also *American Sportsman*, 1871); *Field and Stream*, 1874);
American Angler, (1881)
rise of press accompanied by wave of new sport organizations at local and state level: rod and gun clubs,
private game preserves protecting lands for game and for members
game preserves as retreats for wealthy elite, in some areas eroded common rights of lower classes to do
subsistence hunting as supplement to farming and other food
upstate NY emerged as center for game preserves in much same way as for picturesque
Adirondacks begin to get attention: Emerson, Lowell, & Agassiz's Philosophers' Camp, 1858
post-Civil War, large estates emerge for truly wealthy, and railroad access and hotels for less well-to-do.
lodges as centers for hunt, rustic architecture as urban retreat

V. Conserving Game

romanticism again: reencounter nature outside city to revive spirit; add vigorous manhood
assault on market hunters now began in earnest: destructive of sport hunters' game, wasteful because
(Grinnell) killed capital **and** interest on principal; unfair methods
Grinnell & Roosevelt form Boone & Crockett Club, 1887: promote manly sport, save game
game regs: closed seasons, bag limits, ethical techniques, regulate sale, transport
1st Audubon Soc. 1886-89; Mass Audubon Soc, 1896; Nat. Assoc. Aud. Socs, 1905: songbirds
1900: Lacey Act (IA Rep John F. Lacey) provided interstate regulation of game sales