

## 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