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Louis Warren. *The Hunter's Game: Poachers and Conservationists in Twentieth Century America*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997. 256 pp. Cloth \$30.00.

Louis Warren's *The Hunter's Game* is a welcome addition to the field of environmental history. Warren states that conservation of wildlife in the late nineteenth century created a new concept of the "commons;" that is, wildlife was increasingly perceived as the property of the state, not individual landowners. This conceptualization often pushed together urban sportsmen (who saw game as a public asset) and local elites (who feared that excessive hunting by local hunters would damage their land). A new hunting order emerged. Characterized by the license system and no-sale-of-game laws, it replaced individuals hunting for the market with a state-managed bureaucracy and a well-defined system of rules. Under this new system the hunt itself was for sale. Managed by state and federal agencies, money made in this new order went back into the commons according to extra-local priorities. The local people lost the ability to control the wildlife population. Decisions were made in far away state capitals by officials who represented the interests of urban sportsmen.

Warren's contribution lies in defining and probing such underlying and interconnecting factors as race, ethnicity, gender constructions, livelihood, class, hunting ethics, and land ownership, each of which complicated the conflict between local hunters and extra-local forces. The commons, after all, was a cultural construct. During the closing years of the nineteenth century, power accumulated on the side of the extra-local urban sportsmen who controlled the state regulatory agencies. This allowed the urban sportsmen to enforce their view of the commons in the countryside. For many local hunters poaching became a way to protest this intrusion of external values in their affairs.

In the northern tier of Pennsylvania, this conflict became deadly. In the 1880s and 1890s local landowners cooperated with the sportsmen of Philadelphia to restrict hunting primarily to keep Italian workers from the nearby quarries off their land. As a result of a 1905 law preventing the hunting of female deer, the deer population had exploded by the 1920s. Local landowners began to view the crop-eating deer as a threat to their livelihood as farmers. Casting the does as the main culprits, the farmers began shooting

them. This conflicted with the urban sportsmen's code, according to which the female of a species was not to be killed. Warren convincingly argues that the ban on doe shooting had more to do with the urban sportsmen's middle class perceptions of motherhood than it did with the deer populations or the biological realities of overpopulation and its devastating consequences for local farmers.

Warren's evidence comes from an examination of Pennsylvania, New Mexico, and Glacier National Park. Each situation differs, but they all illustrate the way in which local and extra-local conceptions of the commons differed and conflicted. Extra-local forces such as urban sportsmen, federal conservation managers, tourists, and large (often absentee) land owners tried to enforce their attitudes on Indian tribes, immigrants, and market hunters. Most studies of the wildlife conservation movement, such as John Reiger's *American Sportsmen and the Origins of the Conservation Movement* (1975) and Stephen Fox's *John Muir and his Legacy* (1981), are concerned above all with the sportsmen. As such, local poachers and market hunters are often characterized as lawless thugs, much as contemporary conservationists George Bird Grinnell, William T. Hornaday, and Theodore Roosevelt would describe them. Warren, however, shows that the market hunters and poachers were more than just outlaws. They operated according to their own complex system of values, if one that was at variance with those of the urban sportsmen and their allies. As the aforementioned example of the northern tier of Pennsylvania illustrates, local hunters poached female deer to protect their farms and not simply to supplement their incomes - although that was important too.

*The Hunter's Game* is well researched. Warren's sources include court records, newspapers, game commission digests, magazines, state and federal agency records and reports, manuscript collections, and a handful of personal interviews. If issued in a shorter cover version, the book would be well suited for classroom use. It is an excellent addition to any environmental historian's reading list. By examining the deep tensions between local and extra-local forces, Warren explains why the conservation movement has been plagued with conflict. By focusing on the deterioration of local control of resources, Warren places *The Hunter's Game* in the broader perspective of twentieth-century history of the American West.

By Gregory Dehler

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