

REVOYAGE OF THE MAYFLOWER: SOCIETAL VALUES—CONSERVATION'S DRIVING FORCE. Second edition. Herbert A. Raffaele. 2024. Kindle Direct Publishing, Seattle, Washington, USA. 266 pp. ISBN 978-1-7379789-6-1. \$16.95.

Most readers of the *Journal of Caribbean Ornithology* are familiar with Herbert Raffaele because he is the lead author of two excellent field guides to West Indian birds. However, his new book does not focus primarily on birds or the Caribbean islands; instead he addresses intrinsic problems with attempts to protect and sustain the world's wildlife. His basic message is that our current approach, which emphasizes scientific research on how to save declining animal populations and raising funds to protect their habitats, is not sufficient. Ultimately these approaches will fail unless there is a change in how people value the natural environment and the spectacular diversity and beauty of wild animals.

Raffaele addresses the issue of values by imagining how North American wildlife conservation would differ if the continent had been colonized by Indian Hindus rather than European Christians. (He doesn't directly consider the equally instructive alternate history that imagines that North America was never colonized and was managed by its indigenous people.) Naturalists who visit India are amazed to find wild peacocks, Hanuman langurs, and colonies of flying foxes on the outskirts of farming villages. The people in these communities are vegetarians who do not kill or mistreat wild animals. Even dangerous animals such as tigers and poisonous snakes are tolerated. The result is that despite high human population densities and widespread intensive farming, the fauna of India is surprisingly intact. Only two species of birds are known to have become extinct in historical times. If Hindus had been the colonists, North America would have retained a greater diversity of wild animals. Fewer species would have gone extinct. Passenger Pigeons and American bison would not have suffered from intensive, steady killing by commercial hunters. Their flocks and herds would probably be reduced due to the conversion of their habitat to farmland, but they still would have survived in good numbers.

Raffaele focuses on a Caribbean example to illustrate the effectiveness of how a shift in values can result in successful conservation. Traditional conservation approaches had failed to halt a steady decline in the number of endangered St. Lucia Parrots until the St. Lucia Forestry Department and the RARE Center for Tropical Conservation collaborated in an effort to show all island residents "how special their bird is". This parrot is only found on their island and it depends on forests that provide the island with a steady source of water and that protect coral reefs from sedimentation. Initially these ideas were primarily presented in school classrooms but they eventually were widely covered by local media and taken up in churches and business advertising.

The result was widespread support for protecting the parrots and their habitat, and for tolerating some loss of fruit from orchards and gardens when parrots visit.

Raffaele emphasizes the importance of working with local communities to save threatened species and ecosystems. This usually involves providing an alternative way of practicing agriculture or earning money that is both more environmentally sustainable and more productive for the residents. This has been a key component of conservation biology strategies since the 1970s, so there is nothing new about these recommendations. Raffaele emphasizes, however, that influencing values is ultimately as important as providing an attractive alternative way to make a living. This frequently happens with ecotourism, when natural history guides and people in communities near lodges become proponents of protecting natural beauty and biological diversity, but it may be a challenge in other situations.

Raffaele points out that effective local conservation may all be for naught if the government does not value preservation of natural landscapes. A new dam or mining complex can quickly destroy a natural landscape over the opposition of local people. This means that conservation values must spread beyond local communities to regional and national governments. He argues that conservationists must adopt the tools of mass marketing, using advertising to sell environmental values rather than consumer products. A national concern for conservation may also rise out of numerous local efforts to preserve natural environments when these efforts become coordinated.

The central theme of Raffaele's book is that developing conservation values in the wider community must take priority over identifying biological goals. This can only be achieved by recognizing the concerns and goals of a wide range of people within the community, including people who do not consider conservation important and those who treat conservation efforts with mistrust or outright hostility. People from diverse groups should be included in a democratic discussion to identify shared values about the preservation of the environment. To achieve this type of consensus, environmental professionals must be trained in a distinctly different way. Social and communication skills should take priority over scientific skills, although the latter remain important. Students should learn to work in teams and to work with a wide variety of people to develop shared conservation values.

Raffaele argues that instruction in scientific concepts rarely changes personal values. It's probably true that explanations of greenhouse warming or the nitrogen cycle may not influence people who don't already value nature. However, learning to observe nature closely, identify species, and watch animals in their natural habitats can be considerably more effective. Early bird identification books and field trips sponsored by local Audubon chapters led to growing support for protecting non-game species and their habitats in the United States in the late 1800s. Engaging people in field trips and other natural history experiences

continues to be an effective way to change how people value natural environments. Ironically, apps like Merlin and iNaturalist and the use of social media may enhance this process.

Raffaele is particularly critical of wildlife management agencies in the U.S. because they continue to emphasize game management, perpetuating a utilitarian approach to wildlife. Although his criticisms have merit, they overlook the historical importance of these agencies for conservation. Their most important contribution was successfully convincing the general population to adopt a new set of conservation values. In the early twentieth century, hunters proudly posed before wagonloads of dead ducks that they had shot during a single day of hunting. By the 1930s, most hunters had learned that wildlife numbers are not unlimited and that uncontrolled hunting would eventually destroy game populations. They obeyed hunting seasons and bag limits, and they paid for hunting permits and excise taxes on hunting and fishing equipment to protect habitat and to support research on wildlife populations. They also participated in research by returning bands on ducks and geese that they shot. Long before Partners in Flight set goals for protecting migratory songbird populations, the wildlife agencies in Canada, the U.S., and Mexico had collaborated to protect the breeding, stopover, and wintering habitats of waterfowl. This was achieved by employing some of the approaches Raffaele recommends. Wildlife managers supported values that resonated with a largely agrarian population, developed effective public education programs, engaged hunters in research programs, and earned the trust of hunters. In their

paper on population declines in North American birds, Rosenberg *et al.* (2019) noted that waterfowl were faring much better than other groups of birds due to harvest management and wetland protection and restoration efforts. Raffaele is correct, however, in emphasizing that the proportion of people who hunt with guns has steadily declined while the proportion of people hunting with binoculars and cameras has steadily increased. The appeal of sustainably harvesting wildlife populations is declining, so we need to adjust our values. Despite this, efforts to impose excise taxes on binoculars, cameras, and hiking equipment to support conservation have consistently failed.

Raffaele's book is provocative and thought-provoking. It challenges us to look at environmental ethics and values as central pillars of successful and long-lasting conservation efforts. If people don't learn to value well-functioning ecosystems and the beauty of wild species, then no protected natural area is likely to be safe over the long term.

### Literature Cited

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