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Giving New Context to the Adage “Man versus Beast”

NATURE WARS

*The Incredible Story of How Wildlife Comebacks Turned
Backyards into Battlegrounds*

By Jim Sterba

Advance Praise for *Nature Wars*

“Jim Sterba employs humor and an eye for the absurd to document the sometimes bizarre conflicts that arise as a consequence of America’s transformed relationship with nature. . . . An eye-opening take on how romantic sentimentalism about nature can have destructive consequences.”

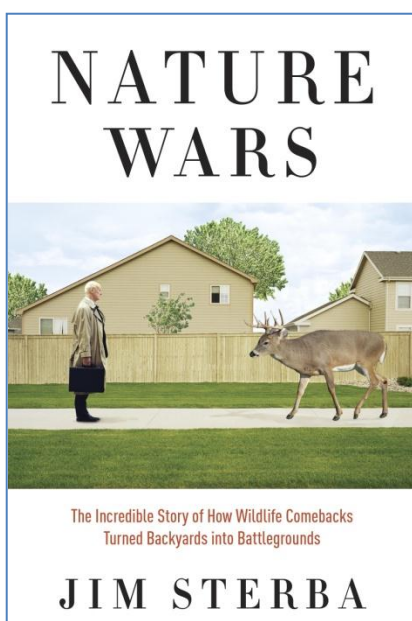
—*Kirkus*, starred review

“This is an excellent introduction to a ‘problem’ that is often one of human perception.”

—*Booklist*, starred review

“Sterba provocatively and persuasively argues that just at the moment when humankind has distanced itself irrevocably from nature, its behavior patterns have put people in conflict with a natural world that they don’t know how to deal with. . . . A valuable counternarrative to the mainstream view of nature-human interaction.”

—*Publisher’s Weekly*



If you are among the more than four thousand drivers who will hit a deer today, or your kids’ soccer field is an unplayable mess of goose droppings, or a coyote has snatched your cat, or beavers have flooded your backyard, or wild turkeys have attacked your mailman, or bears have looted your bird feeders, you might be wondering why. As award-winning journalist and reporter Jim Sterba explains, “It is very likely that more people live in closer proximity to more wild animals and birds in the eastern United States today than anywhere on the planet at any time in history.” The trouble, Sterba tells us, in **NATURE WARS: The Incredible Story of How Wildlife Comebacks Turned Backyards into Battlegrounds** (Crown; November 13, 2012), is that modern Americans have become so estranged from nature that many of them don’t know how to cope with the wild bounty in their midst. So they battle one another over what, if anything, to do as conflicts between wildlife and people mount.

Four hundred years of colonial expansion culminated in an “era of extermination” in the late 1800s—a crescendo of forest and wildlife destruction so egregious that it spawned a backlash, the conservation movement, and an incredible turnaround. As trees took back farm land, conservationists nurtured numerous wild populations back to health. All the while, Americans were moving out of urban settings into new suburbs and beyond. By 2000, more than half the population lived neither in cities nor on farms but in a vast tree-filled in-between that demographers call sprawl. Today, as Sterba shows in **NATURE WARS**, more people live in forested sprawl than anywhere else, and they coexist—not always blissfully—with growing populations of wild animals and birds. But unlike their farming forebears, modern Americans typically get their nature indirectly, from film and television shows in which wild creatures often act like humans worthy of protection even as their populations grow, causing billions in damage, degrading ecosystems, and polarizing communities.

NATURE WARS offers an eye-opening look at Americans’ interactions with nature and animals, illustrating how we’ve failed to be responsible stewards despite our best efforts and intentions. A deeply

researched, eloquently written, counterintuitive, and often humorous look at relations between humans and nature—and the deepening chasm between the two—**NATURE WARS** will be the definitive book on how we created this unintended, sometimes disastrous, mess.

About the Author

Jim Sterba has been a foreign correspondent, war correspondent, and national affairs reporter for more than four decades, first for the *New York Times* and then for the *Wall Street Journal*. He lives in New York City with his wife, the author Frances FitzGerald.

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By Jim Sterba

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www.CrownPublishing.com

www.JimSterba.com

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