

doi:10.1017/S037689290723365X

**Conservation Across Borders: Biodiversity in an Interdependent World**

BY CHARLES C. CHESTER

xv + 262 pp., 23.2 × 15.6 × 1.9 cm, ISBN 1 55963 610 6  
 clothbound, US\$ 60.00/GB£ 41.95; 22.8 × 15.2 × 1.5 cm, ISBN  
 1 55963 611 4 paperback, US\$ 29.95/GB£ 20.95, Washington, DC,  
 USA/London, UK: Island Press, 2006

Biodiversity (well defined in Chapter 1 of this monograph) is under worldwide assault. One indispensable component of its conservation is via the establishment of sufficient nature reserves that enjoy the necessary combination of *de jure* and *de facto* protection. A substantial problem to overcome here is the fundamental disconnect between the diverse regions of biological integrity in need of protection and the 193 or so sovereign states into which the globe has become divided, the author referring to the latter as 'territories of chance' (developed especially in Chapters 1 and 5). Indeed, an estimated one-third of the sites worth protecting straddle the currently existing 220 thousand kilometres of national boundaries. It would be especially advantageous if all such established transfrontier reserves were on the one hand to be formally demilitarized, and on the other to be recognized as UNESCO Biosphere Reserves (the ins and outs of which the author covers in Chapters 2 and 4) and/or World Heritage site.

The modern notion of more or less formally establishing transfrontier reserves for achieving some combination of political security (for example, as a political confidence-building measure) and environmental security (especially as a biodiversity protection measure) goes back to at least the immediate post-World War I period; several dozen reserves of varying degrees of formality and success are now in existence. With the present monograph devoted in essence to North America, it will be of interest to note three examples: (a) the symbolic linkage in 1932 between the Canadian Waterton Lakes National Park and the US Glacier National Park (alluded to in Chapter 2); (b) the symbolic linkage in 1979 between the Canadian Kluane National Park and the US Wrangell-Saint Elias National Park; and (c) the linkage bilaterally proposed officially in 1990 between what is now the Russian Chukotskiy Nature Ethnic Beringia Park and the US Bering Land Bridge National Preserve.

The present book represents an updated condensation of the author's 2003 Tufts University Ph.D. thesis, with the bulk of the supporting notes not included, but available online. Following a more general introduction to transfrontier reserves (Chapter 2), this monograph represents a detailed analysis of each of two large-scale grassroots non-governmental organization (NGO) North American transfrontier initiatives: (a) the Mexico/US 1993 'International Sonoran Desert Alliance' ('ISDA' to its participants; Chapter 3); and (b) the Canada/US 1993 'Yellowstone to Yukon Biodiversity Strategy' ('Y2Y' to its participants; Chapter 4).

Both ISDA and Y2Y represent unrelated heroic attempts by NGOs to protect biodiversity over vast landscape-scale transfrontier areas while at the same time providing for culturally sensitive regional sustainable development. The ISDA ecoregion covers almost 10 million hectares, roughly half of which is in Mexico, whereas the Y2Y ecoregion covers fully 120 million hectares, roughly one-quarter of which is in Canada (the author, I might note, being a bit confused in presenting the ecoregion areas, cf. pp. 53 and 137). With ISDA, the author presents in extensive detail the tortuous history of its birth and subsequent development, not shying away from the formidable obstacles presented especially by the USA's recalcitrance

toward perceived unacceptable assaults upon its absolute sovereignty. It should go without saying that in any formal bilateral arrangement each side must be able to give up at least a tiny sliver of sovereignty in return for mutual political, environmental and possible economic advantages. ISDA was floundering a bit at the time of writing, but was in the process of reorganizing to continue its efforts. Meanwhile, Y2Y was still going strong, providing an example for similar initiatives elsewhere and, although without significant tangible success to date, appearing to have some chance of ultimate success.

The concluding section of the book (Chapter 5) elaborates on the levels of effectiveness of the two border-straddling 'territories of chance' upon which the author dwells. Effectiveness is considered in great detail via the multiple criteria of biodiversity protection, regional sustainable development, social (cultural) equity and transfrontier cooperation. For both of his well-presented case studies the author lauds the persistent citizen initiatives and their attempts at achieving the necessary regional cooperation. But he is quite forthright in noting the lack as yet of either achieving its truly challenging basic aims.

On the somewhat negative side, the title of the book is misleading, and might perhaps have read 'Conservation Across North American Borders' (or else the subtitle might have read 'Biodiversity in an Interdependent North America'). And I must admit to having been a bit put off when in his otherwise erudite and perceptive concluding remarks, the author waxed eloquent over American zoologist William Hornaday's contributions to conservation philosophy (pp. 217–219), establishing Hornaday as a moral exemplar in the face of his profoundly racist views and despicable related actions (for example as Director of the venerable Bronx Zoo in New York, finding it amusing to proudly display a caged African Bushman in the monkey house). But to end on a more properly positive note, I can certainly commend this addition to the growing literature on the subject to the attention of protected-area officials and relevant national and international NGOs, political scientists and environmental conservationists. And since this fine book focuses on North America, it would be fitting to close with a quotation of 1908 from the then American President Theodore Roosevelt with which the author in fact opens his presentation (p. ix): 'It is evident that natural resources are not limited by the boundary lines which separate nations, and that the need upon this continent is as wide as the area upon which they exist'.

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doi:10.1017/S0376892907243656

**Flooding and Environmental Challenges for Venice and its Lagoon: State of Knowledge**

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xxv + 691 pp., 25 × 19 × 3.5 cm, ISBN 0 521 84046 5 hardback,  
 GB£ 85.00/US\$ 180.00, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University  
 Press, 2005

There are few cities in the world that arouse so much passion and concern as Venice. To anyone who has visited the city, this is immediately understandable. Often Venice seems frozen in time, a place of great architectural beauty and a vibrant history situated among the shallow waters of an extensive lagoonal system. Few