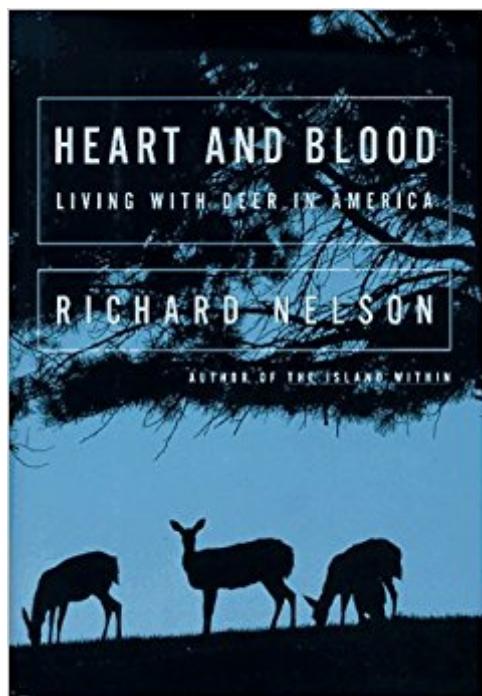


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# Heart And Blood: Living With Deer In America



## Synopsis

"When it comes to deer, wildness is the greatest truth. And tameness is a tender, innocent lie." So writes Richard Nelson, award-winning author of *The Island Within*, in this far-ranging and deeply personal look at our complex relationship with this most beautiful, but amazingly elusive, creature. *Heart and Blood: Living with Deer in America* begins with the author tracking a deer on a remote island off the Alaskan coast. From there he takes us on a kaleidoscopic journey, visiting such disparate territories of the deer as a hunting ranch in Texas; a state park in California; a Wisconsin forest on opening day of the hunting season; Fire Island, New York; and the suburbs of Denver--where the deer have become so numerous that they pose hazards to landscape, motorist, and pedestrian alike. Nelson examines the physiology of the deer, explaining how its unique digestive system and grazing habits have enabled it to thrive in the varied environments of the United States, whether wild, suburban, or urban. He investigates the different methods of controlling the deer's skyrocketing numbers, from the more "humane" methods of relocation and sterilization, to hunting--in all its forms. Nelson also explores the role of the deer in traditional Native American life, takes us with him on a hunt, and awes us as he witnesses the birth of a fawn--an event rarely seen by humans. By the end of this journey we understand the deep reverence in which the author holds this magnificent animal. For to know the deer is to glimpse the hidden heart of wildness itself. In *Heart and Blood*, Richard Nelson has produced a book of outstanding insight and intelligence that brings us closer to our natural world and, in the process, closer to our own true nature.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Cultural anthropologist Richard Nelson, who has worked among hunting peoples of the Arctic, offers a richly detailed account of North America's native deer species: *Odocoileus hemionus* and *Odocoileus virginianus*, or the mule deer and white-tailed deer. The latter, he writes, can be found across a range from the Canadian Arctic to Central America, and it figures in the folklore of countless native peoples. The white-tailed deer is also present in the lore of European America, lending it a talismanic quality. Nelson examines the role of the deer in several ecosystems, especially in some that are now disappearing, such as the Alaskan coastal forests, and he looks at deer's role in spreading Lyme disease. For hunters and natural-history enthusiasts alike, *Heart and Blood* is essential reading.

Cultural anthropologist Nelson explores the relationship between human and deer (white-tailed, black-tailed, and mule) in this well-researched, beautifully descriptive work. Using information gleaned from books and journal articles and interviews with scientists, farmers, ranchers, and homeowners (cited in an extensive bibliographic essay), Nelson first describes the life cycle of deer. The majority of the book explains the causes of deer overpopulation and its effects on the ecology of natural areas, agriculture, and urban and suburban homeowners. He discusses alternatives to culling the herds but concedes that hunting is the most humane, cost-effective method of reducing the deer population. He sensitively presents the views of both hunters and antihunter activists. Nelson lyrically describes his pleasure from observing and hunting deer; his obvious reverence for them will appeal to those who enjoy natural history as well as those who hunt. Sue O'Brien, Downers Grove P.L., Ill. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This is a very informative book. Sometimes a little too many statistics for my taste. Richard Nelson speaks from a vast experience with the subject. I am glad I bought it, and will probably keep it for reference.

I bought this book because it was highly recommended in another book, *THE BEAST IN THE GARDEN* (about cougars). It is elegantly written, thus, the Beautiful part....and it is well researched and shows empathy and understanding for the various and often opposing views of "living with deer in America." Adds to the national discussion about hunting, diet, managing wildlife, respecting the

mystery of the wild lives among, around (and within 'd say) us.

Excellent. Bought a copy for each instructor in my wildlife leadership academy.

This book looks at deer from the perspective of modern hunters, primitive subsistence hunters, anti-hunters and more and encompasses a range of life experiences the author has had. I read it years ago and had to own a copy for myself. If you love to hunt deer but have ever felt conflicted about the killing I think you will identify with this book. I would like to think that this book might help to open the eyes of the naïf & naïve on both sides of the hunting controversy. But will they be open-minded enough to read it?

The content of this book is really great and my husband (who is the hunter) and I (who just loves the out of doors) highly recommend it. However this particular print of the book is poor. There is faded ink on almost every page although not bad enough that it could not be read. I bought a cheaper version from A1 Books so I got what I paid for.

As a National Park Service Ranger and animal lover I've personally and professionally struggled with the issues surrounding deer management -- Bullets or starvation, which is more humane? Deer abundance or ecosystem biodiversity? Etc. etc. I've also read a great deal of literature spanning the entire HEART and BLOOD spectrum. This is the most accurate, fair, and comprehensive treatment on deer management I've ever seen. Richard Nelson is the epitome of the professional anthropologist. He walks with as much confidence in the scientific and statistical world of biology/wildlife mgmt. as he does in the socio-political world of mass media, voters, and taxpayers. The veteran scientist will regard the imagery in a few of his more vivid passages as "filler". These readers should be reminded that if the management of deer wasn't an emotional issue there would be far fewer researchers employed in such capacity. Hopefully they also realize that when Nelson describes tracking a food stressed doe in winter with "...at last I found her at the end of her tracks like a pencil resting in mid sentence," he didn't choose those words to impress an English teacher but to describe to the layperson exactly what it is like to pursue a starving animal. On the other extreme the animal rights activist may try to skip over all of Nelson's nuances regarding deer behavior, physiology, and biochemistry. However, Nelson goes to great lengths to interject such information at a gentle rate and in very accessible terms. With sincere unbiased reporting he describes opposing positions on classic bipolar debates. Then with his own arguments Nelson blurs

the dividing line so thoroughly that animal rights activist will find themselves whispering "I can see how a hunter could be an animal lover too." and wildlife managers will end up muttering "I suppose individual animal welfare is worth the millions being spent on finding viable management alternatives to the bullet." To say that this book has something for everybody would not only be cliche, it would be inaccurate. This book has everything for everybody. If you don't believe me, get a degree in Wildlife Management. Spend hundreds of hours tracking deer, thousands of hours pouring over scores of boring scientific research papers, EISs, lawsuits, and "blood-thirsty" calls-to-arms by animal rights organizations. Or save yourself a few thousand dollars tuition and buy and enjoy reading this book. Allow Nelson who has already done the "BLOOD" work to take you directly to the "HEART" of the dilemma in a mere 400 pages.

As a deer hunter, I found myself somewhat annoyed at this author in parts of "Heart and Blood". Even though he himself is a hunter, he seemed at times to be too sympathetic toward anti-hunting attitudes and people. Perhaps though, that is simply an indication that the author accomplished what he set out to do. That is, to examine the complicated relationship between the American people and the deer they live in close proximity to in almost every part of the country. This book provides an all around look at that relationship most particularly as it affects modern America. Various chapters approach different issues and the geographic settings vary widely. Recommended for deer hunters and those who question the need for deer hunting.

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