relations fusionnelles qui glissent dans l'inceste, interdit en Occident tant par la morale chrétienne que par les lois nationales.

Bien entendu, le format du livre est parfois frustrant puisque l'on passe à toute vitesse d'un sujet à un autre, sans approfondir aucune question. On le referme sans être totalement satisfait. Mais n'est-ce pas là justement la mission de ce genre de livre que de susciter des questionnements et de donner envie aux lecteurs d'aller plus loin et surtout plus en profondeur? À mon sens, Didier Lett a réussi sa mission.

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Loo, Tina – *States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Wildlife in the Twentieth Century*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006. Pp. 280.

In *States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Wildlife in the Twentieth Century*, Tina Loo makes a valuable contribution to a subject that has for some time needed revisiting. To date, historians have relied on Janet Foster's still useful but dated 1978 national history of federal initiatives to save wildlife. That work took a top-down approach that focused on middle-level Ottawa bureaucrats who advanced preservationism in Canada's national parks. More recent work has focused on regional and provincial game conservation, game warden work, and parks initiatives. *States of Nature* works on a broader canvass and provides new theoretical understandings of a very complex topic. Loo identifies the contest over authority in wildlife conservation and, intriguingly, the accommodations reached between rural game users and turn-of-century Progressive Conservationists, later administrators, and biological scientists, who began monopolizing conservation in centralized government game agencies.

Contending that federal and provincial departments began to dominate the "commons" of wildlife, Loo suggests that new agencies established their regulatory authority at the expense of groups who had developed and managed local game resources through "local knowledges": "almost from the beginnings in the early twentieth century, conservation had the effect of marginalizing local customary uses of wildlife, and in that sense was part of the colonization of rural Canada" (p. 6). "Colonization" led to resistance (seen in local settings and ongoing poaching violations) as well as co-option (local authorities finding new roles and outlets in guiding services and venues where they could sell popular "woodcraft"). However, since game conservation touched on ethical issues, the question of human relations with nature, and "creating ethical human communities" (p. 7), conservation was never really restricted to more influential government authorities. There is, in that sense, valuable light thrown on often overlooked representatives of "rural" areas and their alternative uses and management of wild animals. There were the unconventional figures such as Jack Miner (pp. 63–85) and Grey Owl (pp. 111–117), marginalized

Aboriginal hunters and rural guides like Yukon Johnnie Johns (pp. 55–56), and, later, unique promoters of wildlife "places": British Columbia's Tommy Walker (pp. 192–200) and Alberta's Andy Russell (pp. 201–208). Loo's work highlights the tensions growing between such influential local authorities and government conservationists who advanced a new state authority, the "hegemony of scientific management" (p. 6), and a new relationship between humans and their natural world.

Given that much game protection occurred within provincial jurisdictions, any national treatment of this topic would be challenging: understandably, Loo has had to be at times selective and thematic. Chapter 1 takes up the rise of Progressive Conservation and the new mandate of governments by the end of World War I to better conserve wildlife. The often contradictory aims of conservation are well examined, from the limited means of "scientific" attempts to increase game "productivity", to that of the new "morality, of creating a principled relationship between human beings and the natural world" (p. 26), to government responses to influential currents of anti-modernism in increasingly urban and industrial Canada. With value rising on game resources, federal and provincial regulators and ordinance enforcers made their presence felt. Local conservation was "reconfigured" (p. 36). As Chapter 2 argues, centralized game departments colonized rural Canada, bringing about resistance to new ways and reinvention of local woodcraft, knowledge, and conservation techniques. Because conservation itself drew from changing ideas of natural history, ecological theory, and emerging environmentalism, differences between rural authorities and government conservationists were often negotiated and for long periods simply left unsettled.

The curious case of Ontario's bird man, Jack Miner, who figures prominently in Chapter 3, is particularly valuable as an example. Miner's fame and popularity far surpassed government ornithologists working for the same ends. While he promoted bird protection, Miner continued to package conservation according to a "gospel of biology" — a mixture of Christian natural theology and the idea of biblical "Dominion" — that more than irritated his more "scientific" government contemporaries. Miner is presented here not really as the helping hand of government but as a colonized representative of older, rural traditions who often worked at odds with the will of state ornithologist conservationists. Miner's bird bands, for instance, stamped with Bible verses, were clearly out of step with government-sponsored numbered banding systems. Meanwhile, Miner continued to raise popularity in conservation, and, ironically, the hand of government, with a vast, grassroots following across North America attracted to the charms of his public speaking and common-sense relationship with nature.

Chapter 4 draws attention to another example of practical conservation measures, those pioneered, for commercial reasons, by the Hudson's Bay Company. Its long series of fur returns and archival records allowed for the path-breaking ecological work of Charles Elton and the company's innovative experiments in beaver conservation. Greater monopolized government authority, however, occurred after World War II. Chapters 5 and 6 examine the impacts of

post-war initiatives in rural areas and Canada's north. These programmes were developed by a cadre of more professional wildlife biologists and, in the case of the federal government, the organized staff of the newly created Canadian Wildlife Service. In the north, the government's caribou conservation directly intervened in hunting traditions and supervised participants, particularly First Nations harvesters who lost autonomy and local hunting decision-making in the process. In the territories and provinces, governments organized ambitious, if scientifically unfounded, predator control programmes both to protect valued game species and to impose further control on Native hunting. However, even in this era of think-tank conservation, government agencies now supported by scientists continued to be affected by popular pressures and competing understandings of wildlife, ideas on the balance of nature, and new ecological models that could as easily favour or condemn predator control. In the final chapter, Loo resists suggesting that scientific management has triumphed. She instead directs attention to more recent promoters of "wild places" rather than "wildlife" conservation. These conservationists have broken through older utilitarian understandings and gone beyond even ecological theory to promote wildlife habitat as the positive meeting place between humans and animals.

Well-researched and written, and thorough in its citation of secondary literature, Loo's work will appeal to both general readers and specialists in environmental history. Its theoretical base is particularly attractive, although some terms might have required greater clarity and definition, for instance, "colonization" used in a rural context. Identifiers like "backcountry" (p. 152), "countryside" (p. 41), "local knowledges" (p. 50), and the term "rural" itself (which in both regional and national studies always presents conceptual problems) would have benefited from clearer definition. That said, *States of Nature* illuminates the many social, environmental, and ethical questions arising in game conservation. For that reason, it will undoubtedly open numerous new routes of research and inquiry.

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MONTBARBUT DU PLESSIS, Jean-Marie — *Histoire de l'Amérique française.* Montréal, Éditions Typo, 2004, 392 p.

Selon le site Web des éditions Typo, la collection de ce nom a été créée en 1984 à l'Hexagone pour « assurer la pérennité et la diffusion d'œuvres marquantes du fonds littéraire ». Sous un titre quelque peu différent, l'ouvrage qui fait l'objet du présent compte rendu fut d'abord publié aux Éditions de l'Hexagone en 1990. Mais il ne s'agit nullement d'une « œuvre marquante ».

Au contraire, ce livre me paraît d'un intérêt médiocre parce que l'auteur, Jean-Marie Montbarbut Du Plessis ne s'est servi pour bâtir son récit divisé en 23 chapitres que d'ouvrages anciens et dépassés. Il les cite beaucoup et ne