

A Wild Bird and a Cultured Man. The Common Eider and Homo Sapiens: Fourteen Centuries Together. By Alexandra Goryashko. Saint Petersburg, 2020. 496 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Available at https://www.alexandra-goryashko.net/en_book.htm. US\$176.00.

The heroes of Alexandra Goryashko's *A Wild Bird and a Cultured Man* are two species: the common eider (*Somateria mollissima*) and the human (*Homo sapiens*). The book's action unfolds over fourteen centuries, plunging the reader into the world of complex interspecies relationships. The book is composed of five sections, each divided into chapters. The first part contains a detailed and comprehensive description of the species itself, including its distribution, biology, and behavioral traits. The second takes the reader into the depths of time, as far back as the seventh century and into the world of myths and legends. One such legend, about St. Cuthbert's protection of eiders, is masterfully debunked by the author in the style of a good detective novel—an effort that required thorough historical investigation. The information presented in subsequent chapters is also thoroughly researched.

The fourteen chapters of the third part (the book's largest) trace the development of a relationship between eiders and humans from the first evidence in archaeological excavations to modern luxury stores. Goryashko digs into the relevant literature to follow the evolution of scientific ideas and concepts of eider taxonomy and biology beginning from Ole Worm's *Anas plumis mollissimis* (1655). Undoubtedly, it was the bird's soft and light down with its exceptional insulating characteristics that made eiders famous, but its specific features remained unstudied until the early twentieth century. One of the chapters tells the story of research into the structure and properties of eider down that was pioneered by Soviet scientists and therefore practically unknown to the global scientific community. The book also comprehensively reviews a host of studies of eider biology previously published only in Russian. It might be thought that eider down had already been studied from A to Z, but surprisingly, its uniqueness is still in question and requires further investigation. Goryashko argues that for centuries eider meat and eggs were valued much higher than down, and that down harvesting was never a tradition of indigenous people. A few chapters in part 3 address conservation issues, sustainable population management, and the coexistence of birds and humans. They explore the origin

and successful development of eider farming as a mutually beneficial relationship between wild birds and humans in Scandinavian countries and Canada and its achievements and failures in Russia.

Part 4 portrays “eider patrons” not as saints but as people whose efforts facilitated progress in studies of eider biology and contributed to their protection. The fifth and final part considers the place of these ducks in human culture and provides numerous examples of depiction of eiders in painting, sculpture, prose, and poetry. The section takes readers to museums devoted exclusively to this bird in Iceland and Norway and discusses and exposes various misconceptions associated with eiders.

The book reflects well the author’s personal experience in forty years of field study of eiders in the Russian North and her acquaintance with modern world practices in eider management and conservation. The fluent and accessible prose makes the book all the more compelling.

The book is based on numerous published and archival sources in different, including rare, languages. All quotations are translated into English, which makes it possible to introduce these many documents and manuscripts previously inaccessible to scholars. An evident strength of the book is that the author provides lists of references (a total of about five hundred published and unpublished sources) after every chapter rather than at the end of the volume. This makes the search for cited sources much easier. The text is richly illustrated with more than seven hundred colorful and archival black-and-white photographs of birds, landscapes, people, and artifacts. Exquisite drawings by Maria Sergunina introducing every chapter, maps, and copies of unpublished documents add to the volume’s perfect design.

One cannot help but admire the author’s enormous effort in collecting materials from dozens of museums all over the world, eider farms, art galleries, private collections, libraries, and archives, and, finally, in publishing the book. Goryashko brought together an array of people from different countries—expert ornithologists, conservationists, philologists, photographers, cartographers, translators, artists, farmers, hunters, and just passionate and responsive people who made this audacious project possible. The text was polished and proofread by five scientific editors, a literary editor, and a bibliographer.

For a better understanding of all the nuances of the long-standing and sometimes conflicting relationship between wild birds and humans, I would highly recommend reading this five-hundred-page book from

the first page to the last. However, as in any encyclopedic volume, each part can be considered self-sufficient, and anyone can choose chapters of particular interest. Goryashko's *A Wild Bird and a Cultured Man* is a must-read for biologists and historians, conservationists and nature managers, eider-down harvesters, farmers, producers, and consumers. It will undoubtedly be in demand by more than one generation of students and bird lovers. Ultimately, it is a fascinating read for anybody interested in the complex interactions between humans and nature. It is a unique edition that makes invaluable contributions to environmental history and many other humanitarian and natural disciplines.

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Three Sisters Wilderness: A History. By Les Joslin. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2021. 192 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. US\$21.99 (paper).

Les Joslin is a long-time advocate for Oregon's Three Sisters Wilderness and teacher of courses for multiple Oregon colleges on wilderness management. He has taken his passion for this beautiful part of the country and turned it into a useful and effective overview of the wilderness. There are not a lot of surprises in here for the professional historian. But for the general public, this book has a good bit of value. Moreover, it is a useful reminder of the details of wilderness management, which scholars can sometimes glaze over when discussing environmental histories of these spaces.

Joslin takes us through the Three Sisters Wilderness in a straightforward and useful way. First, he provides a general overview of wilderness, one that few historians will take exception to, even if it is a fairly standard narrative now. Bob Marshall, Howard Zahniser, Aldo Leopold, and Arthur Carhart all make their appearance. While Joslin might be just hitting his marks here, he also does a good job of integrating the beginnings of the push to save the Three Sisters from development in the necessary context for readers. This story may be known to environmental historians but quite probably is not to the lay public readers of this book. Connecting environmental history to the places people love is one of