All of these authors describe their learning processes in terms that may feel comfortable to scientists. In Settling Down, Scott Russell Sanders also questions one reason why scientists may nevertheless undervalue place-based knowledge: "If you stay put, won’t you be narrow, backward, dull? You might. I have met ignorant people who never moved; and I have also met ignorant people who never stood still. Committing yourself to a place does not guarantee that you will become wise, but neither does it guarantee that you will become parochial. Who knows better the limitations of a province or a culture than the person who has bumped into them time and again?" (p 87).

At Home on the Earth suggests that too-sharp boundaries between work and home, or between literature and science, can make each side into a refuge from the other, a way of not "bumping into" the other's limitations. When that happens, the only way forward may lie in challenging the boundaries themselves.

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A team of scientists from the World Wildlife Fund has produced a comprehensive assessment of the current status of biodiversity in North America excluding Mexico. The book has the completeness and attention to detail reminiscent of a catalog, an encyclopedia, or an almanac. The majority of the book is comprised of five appendices that provide a description of each ecoregion. Conservation contact information and addresses, a comprehensive glossary, an index, and extensive references are also provided.

Terrestrial Ecoregions is information-rich, and includes 19 special essays. These sidebars are enticing, and make the book an attractive read, even if they break up the flow of the main story. The sidebars discuss a wide array of subjects, including freshwater ecoregions, marine and coastal ecoregions, movement rules and corridors, species endemicism and richness, and range maps by taxonomic group.

Ecoregion delineations are based on Omernik in the U.S., Ecological Stratification Working Group (ESWG) in Canada, and Galland et al. in Alaska. The three regionalizations were altered to become seamlessly integrated. The authors state that the plethora of alternative ecoregion versions "show more similarity than differences when scrutinized carefully" (p 12), but this point is arguable. Nevertheless, their fused ecoregion map for North America contains 116 ecoregions, grouped into ten Major Habitat Types (MHTs), roughly equivalent to biomes.

Out of necessity, Ricketts et al. relied heavily on expert assessment, convening a workshop of 35 ecologists to collectively assess each ecoregion for a number of criteria into rough categorical rankings, shifting their boundaries if necessary. The authors describe the approach as "subjective, but quantified" (p 3). There is, however, an undertone of guilt for this subjectivity, as heroic effort is made to construct a veneer of objectivity for what remains an inherently subjective process. Minute details of decision rules and methods are described in Appendices.

Assessment of each region was based on two main factors: a Biological Distinctiveness Index (BDI) and an estimate of a Conservation Status Index (CSI). The assessment of the BDI takes a scale-based approach, using four levels of distinctiveness: globally, regionally, bioregionally, or nationally. It is interesting that "national" distinctiveness represents the lowest possible scale here. Species distribution data for over 20,000 North American species were combined to produce an integrated total, and then categorized into the four levels. The CSI was assessed in five levels: critical, endangered, vulnerable, relatively stable, and relatively intact, then tempered with the expected degree of future threat. Conservation status and biological distinctiveness were integrated using a five by four matrix approach, resulting in assignment of each ecoregion into five final classes of Conservation Action.

Thirty-two ecoregions in North America (excluding Mexico) were ranked globally outstanding, the highest category of BDI. In the CSI, most of the eastern U.S. was deemed critical, and almost all of the U.S. except the southwest is included when endangered ecoregions are added. Most of the Class I priorities are distributed along the west coast, the Chihuahuan desert, the tallgrass prairie, and the Appalachians/coastal plain complex.

In the chapter, Recommendations, the authors argue for an organized and coordinated approach to conservation, rather than a piecemeal, reactionary one. The assessment found 13 ecoregions that match the Everglades in biological distinctiveness, yet face even greater threats. These include the Sierra Nevada forests, Appalachian forests, southeastern mixed and conifer forests, and tallgrass prairie. At the other end of the spectrum, the study found 11 ecoregions with relatively intact landscapes.

The abundant color maps are beautiful, but the
ắted discussion, and I found it inconvenient to sort through the footnotes to identify the references. The North American Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) is used in the book as the primary source of information on bird populations, even though the BBS is a recent innovation (post-1966), and is also quite controversial for many species and regions.

The emphasis on habitat and landscape influences on populations makes this book an important and useful contribution to the bird conservation literature. In essence, it provides a series of conceptual models for predicting the effects of land management activities on bird populations. This way of thinking about bird populations is critical for rational management, and the discussion in this book can be a starting point for developing more formal approaches for management. The final chapter discusses applications of landscape-sensitive management, but it would be useful to also direct readers to topics such as adaptive management, in which models and monitoring are directly used to assess the value of alternative management actions.

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**Environmental Economics.**


**Restoring North America’s Birds: Lessons from Landscape Ecology.**


This enjoyable and informative book places current thinking on bird ecology and conservation into themes of particular relevance to land managers and birders. Loosely organized to present conservation issues by regions and habitats, the book ranges over many temporal and geographic scales. Replete with natural history commentary, it documents how birds are influenced by their habitats and landscapes through both review of historic changes in North American landscapes and summary of current research. The presentations of research results are well suited for anyone impatient with details, as they generally retain some information content at a high level of abstraction.

Readers should be aware that the book is strongly focused on landbirds (primarily passerine birds) and their habitats during the breeding season. Although case studies target a few nonpasserine species, there is little discussion of habitat and landscape associations of waterfowl, marsh birds, shorebirds, or colonial waterbirds. Even with this (somewhat) limited scope, the combination of topics leads to a compli-