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Mark D. Duda, Martin F. Jones, and Andrea Criscione *The Sportsman's Voice: Hunting and Fishing in America*

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Book Review

Mark D. Duda, Martin F. Jones, and Andrea Criscione. (2010). *The Sportsman's Voice: Hunting and Fishing in America*. State College, PA: Venture Publishing. 259 pp. ISBN-10: 1-892132-90-7, ISBN-13: 978-1-892132-90-1.

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As stated in its preface, the purpose of *The Sportsman's Voice* is to “provide federal and state legislators, policy makers, fish and wildlife professionals and students, conservation organizations, and individual hunters and anglers with vital information on hunting and fishing, including statistical findings on trends, participation, and the economic importance of hunting and fishing” (p. xxi) A further goal was to include information from many sources in one book as a single reference for complete, accurate, and up-to-date information regarding hunting and fishing in the United States.

Chapter 1 of *The Sportsman's Voice* outlines the history of hunting, fishing, and fish and wildlife management in the United States. It begins in North America prior to European settlement, and ends with an explanation of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation and the evolution of values represented in wildlife policy.

The next two chapters focus on attitudes toward the environment, natural resources, wildlife, hunting, and fishing. The authors include an explanation of wildlife values typologies and their prevalence. Comparisons of the public's attitudes related to the environment, natural resources, and wildlife are made with those of sportspersons. Percentages of respondents who chose specific answers to survey items constitute the bulk of the information presented.

Chapter 4 focuses on hunting and fishing participation in the United States. It opens with the various explanations as to what constitutes a hunting “participant.” The authors do a nice job of explaining the data sources used for the chapter and the potential bias of some sources. Data for hunting and fishing include numbers of participants, participation trends, and factors that affect those trends, species hunted or fished, equipment used, hunting or fishing initiation, motivations, and satisfaction. Also included is a discussion of the demographics of these two groups of participants.

The next two chapters focus on wildlife and fishing policy, including law enforcement, firearms and safety issues, and the structure of fish and wildlife agencies and commissions, government acts, and conservation organizations. Chapter 5 includes information about how credible residents find their fish and wildlife officers, public attitudes toward law enforcement issues, national rates of firearms ownership and use, hunter and angler safety, and safety education and outreach. It also contains U.S. accidental firearm fatality data.

Chapter 6 presents an overview of the federal agencies involved with fish and wildlife and outdoor recreation, state fish and wildlife agencies, and state fisheries and wildlife commissions. Next, the authors present data on public awareness and satisfaction with state agencies, importance of agency efforts, ratings of agency performance in carrying out such

efforts, and agency credibility. Before closing the chapter out with a listing of various non-governmental, conservation, and sporting organizations, the authors summarize the policy programs and acts important to hunting and fishing in the United States.

Chapters 7 and 8 focus on the economics of hunting and fishing, including the funding for hunting and fishing, fish and wildlife management, and the economic significance of hunting and fishing. The authors outline the historical and current funding used for U.S. fish and wildlife management and discuss each funding source, including trend data when available. Public and sportspersons' awareness and attitudes toward fish and wildlife agency funding and sportspersons' opinions on license costs and Federal aid follow. They close the chapter with a discussion of the potential effects of increased hunting and fishing license fees on fish and wildlife agency funding.

Chapter 8 contains details of the economic importance of fishing and hunting. Types of direct expenditures made by anglers and hunters, and the secondary impact of these expenditures through the economy are presented, including fishing and hunting expenditures by state, broken down by the various types of included expenditures.

Chapter 9 includes ballot initiatives, referenda, and sportspersons' issues. The authors include helpful explanations of the initiative and referendum processes and present the national structure for each by state. A chronology of all such issue ballots and referenda 1908–2008 is presented in tabular form with accompanying text, followed by a discussion on the most common ballot issue measures. Next, the authors present insights and strategies for initiating, controlling, and countering ballot initiatives and referenda with the aim to benefit the interest of sportsmen. Perhaps of most interest is the concluding section on emerging issues related to hunting of interest to policy makers and sportspersons. This includes public opinions on each issue at the national and state levels.

The Sportsman's Voice concludes with a consideration of the future of hunting and fishing in the United States. The authors discuss declines in hunting and fishing participation and the factors associated with these declines, as well as information pertaining to recruitment and retention of sportspersons, with an emphasis on the social dimensions of these activities. Current hunter and angler recruitment and retention programs at the national and state levels are summarized; the last section of this chapter focuses on the elements of successful hunter and angler recruitment and retention programs. The authors conclude that diligent planning and effort can reverse the decline in hunting and fishing participation.

What this volume offers to the human dimensions discipline is a chronology of the various studies, some theories, and a perhaps otherwise unknown body of work to stimulate further research and investigation into U.S. fishing, hunting, and fish and wildlife management. Although many of the studies referenced can be obtained directly from authors, they may not be easily found by perusing electronic journal sources.

I know of no other volume that has attempted to pull together so many studies over such a long time span and present the findings in a coherent way. *A Sportsman's Voice* provides both an historical and forward look at fishing and hunting in the United States, as well as a review of current participation in hunting and fishing, and attitudes and opinions of hunters and anglers. This volume's strengths are its organization, the variety of states in which the work was conducted, and the reference list at the back of the volume. *The Sportsman's Voice* represents quite an ambitious feat, and the information presented in the volume will be useful for many of its intended audiences. Duda, Bissell, and Young's (1998) *Wildlife and the American mind: Public opinion and attitudes toward fish and wildlife management* represents the only other "like" volume that I have on my shelf, although I also have many peer-reviewed journal articles that provide information regarding hunting and angling participation rates, as well as attitudes of hunters and anglers and non-participants.

The authors do not provide their readers with as complete a picture of hunting and fishing in America as they had intended, however. I found it troubling that 120 of 328 citations used by the authors were the work of the individual authors or of Responsive Management. Although the authors cite some other companies that work with natural resource agencies on these issues, such as Southwick & Associates, others, such as D. J. Case and Associates, were not included. It is also noteworthy that the methodologies used in most of the studies cited, particularly the 30% conducted by Responsive Management, were not discussed. Thus, a human dimensions researcher who reads this volume has no idea of the scientific rigor or validity of the cited studies without reviewing each of the listed citations. In addition, it is misleading to discuss presenting statistical findings, when for the majority of the work cited only percentages are available. Absence of statistical tests or of response rates for any of the cited work leaves the reader wondering how many calls were made or surveys sent to get the desired number of respondents, and how well these respondents represent the populations of interest. A brief summary of the methodologies used, and at least a range of response rates would have been helpful.

Despite these shortcomings, this volume is essential to anyone who works for or with natural resource agencies at the state and federal level, conservation organizations, and various angling and hunting stakeholders. The information contained in this volume can serve to better inform communications efforts among these individuals and entities, as well as with individuals who appreciate having fish and wildlife, but may not participate in angling or hunting, and may not understand the funding mechanisms for fish and wildlife management.

Reference

Duda, M. D., Bissell, S. J., & Young, K. C. (1998). *Wildlife and the American mind: Public opinion on and attitudes toward fish and wildlife management*. Harrisonburg, VA: Responsive Management.