

Review of *Biodiversity Conservation in Canada: From Theory to Practice*

By Keith Claymore, Feb. 2020

Thank you once again for sending me a copy of your book on biodiversity conservation. I spent a wet cold week in September on Vancouver Island reading it, and then went back through and re-read several chapters; some more than twice. I must say that I am very impressed with the book. Given my interest, and the inordinate amount of time thinking about biodiversity conservation over decades, I thought I'd give you some feedback.

You've done an incredible job managing to get a massive amount of material packed into a single publication from such a broad theme. It is very tightly written and covers an impressive range in topics. There's a logical flow and sequencing of chapters, where each chapter builds on the ones preceding. Importantly, the book just doesn't focus on understanding the science behind addressing biodiversity conservation issues but also emphasises socio-political aspects. It's quite unique in that regard.

In my opinion, it's an essential introductory book but it is equally applicable to anyone involved in biodiversity conservation irrespective of level of experience and knowledge, and where they might sit in an organisation or role that they perform. One thing that struck me in reading was the pearls of wisdom and practicality threaded through the entire book. That sets it apart from most books or indeed papers on this subject. Many remarks in the book resonated with my experiences, and I liked how it debunked a few myths and articulated many pitfalls. There's a sobering note about managing expectations and (slow) pace of change; and how it can be undone very quickly. This point cannot be overstated.

The case-studies were thoroughly absorbing and enjoyable to read – twists and turns that didn't always turn out to be what was optimally desired. A lesson in itself. They might be about Canada, but in general terms the essence of them is very similar to what happens here in Australia. The science and conservation theory outlined in the preceding chapters nicely formed the backbone of the case-studies, with great synopses tying up everything at the end.

A lot of thought had gone into the structure of the book. It was also refreshing not to just read about how well things went or presenting overly rosy stories. I really liked the inclusion of the chapter on decision making; often overlooked but essential to know something about.

If you're ever going to do a second edition, I would like to hear a bit more on the makeup of Canada's federal system. In my past work life understanding the political and institutional systems – the laws, policies, roles and responsibilities and these dynamics, especially between national and sub-national jurisdictions, were critical but weren't understood by many people especially at a State level. Even senior officials, including government ministers, unfortunately generally lack understanding here.

The other area that might be useful for some readers is resilience theory and panarchy (Holling et al) and how it can be applied to planning and management approaches.

Anyway, fantastic book and I hope that it is resounding success and is picked up widely.  
Congratulations!!