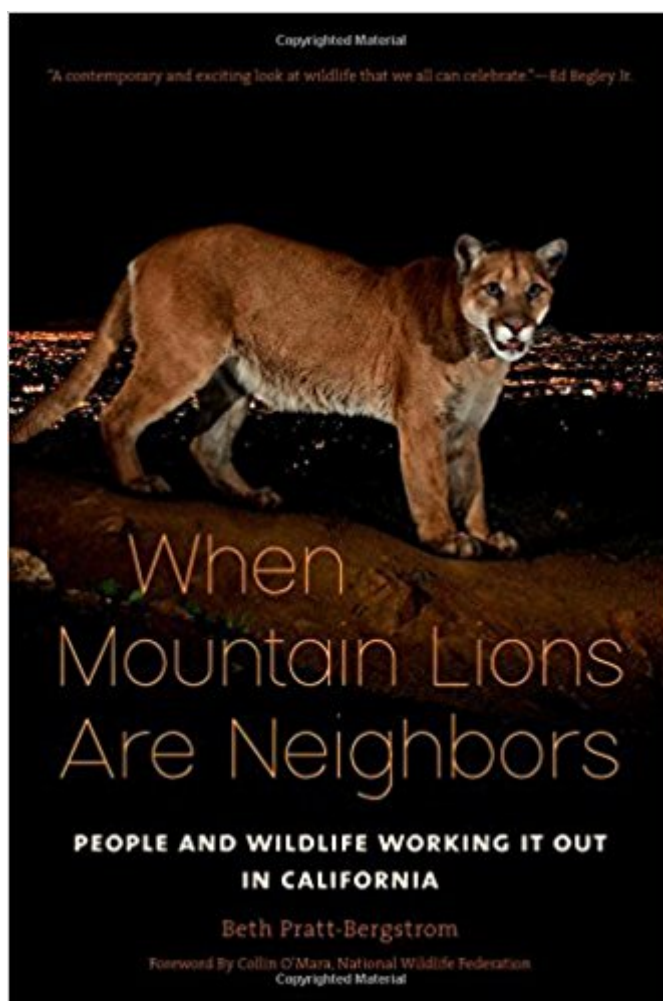


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# When Mountain Lions Are Neighbors: People And Wildlife Working It Out In California



## Synopsis

Honorable Mention, 2016 Foreword INDIES Book Awards  
Wildness beats in the heart of California's urban areas. In Los Angeles, residents are rallying to build one of the largest wildlife crossings in the world because of the plight of one lonely mountain lion named P-22. Porpoises cavort in San Francisco Bay again because of a grassroots effort to clean up a waterway that was once a toxic mess. And on the Facebook campus in Silicon Valley, Mark Zuckerberg and his staff have provided a home for an endearing family of wild gray foxes. Through actions as sweeping as citizen science initiatives and as instantaneous as social media posts, a movement of diverse individuals and communities is taking action to recast nature as an integral part of our everyday lives. When *Mountain Lions Are Neighbors* explores this evolving dynamic between humans and animals, including remarkable stories like the journey of the wolf OR-7 and how Californians are welcoming wolves back to the state after a ninety-year absence, how park staff and millions of visitors rallied to keep Yosemite's famed bears wild, and many more tales from across the state. Written by Beth Pratt-Bergstrom of the National Wildlife Federation, these inspiring stories celebrate a new paradigm for wildlife conservation: coexistence.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A contemporary and exciting view of conservation that we all can celebrate." --Ed Begley Jr.  
"When *Mountain Lions Are Neighbors* focuses on a serious problem by presenting meaningful solutions, and is as enjoyable to read as it is informative." --Jeff Fleischer,

Foreword Reviews

“Here is a book full of essential wisdom.” --Lyanda Lynn Haupt, author of *The Urban Bestiary: Encountering the Everyday Wild*

“This delightful book details our ever-evolving relationship with Earth’s wildest creatures, promising that peaceful coexistence is possible.” --Jennifer Holland, author of the best-selling *Unlikely Friendships* series

“Filled with unforgettable stories that will spark the desire to help, this is the wildlife book that everyone needs to read. Bravo!” --Amy Lignor, *Feathered Quill Book Reviews*

“Interweaves hope and examples of ongoing, broad solution approaches by focusing on the importance of relationship/education, connectivity, and finally citizen science on the parts of people just like us gardeners, nature lovers, thinkers.” --Jennifer Jewell, *Cultivating Place*

“An inherently fascinating and exceptionally informative read from beginning to end.” --Helen Dumont, *Midwest Book Review*

Wildness beats in the heart of California’s urban areas. In Los Angeles, residents are rallying to build one of the largest wildlife crossings in the world because of the plight of one lonely mountain lion named P-22. Porpoises cavort in San Francisco Bay again because of a grassroots effort to clean up a waterway that was once a toxic mess. And on the Facebook campus in Silicon Valley, Mark Zuckerberg and his staff have provided a home for an endearing family of wild gray foxes. Through actions as sweeping as citizen science initiatives and as instantaneous as social media posts, a movement of diverse individuals and communities is taking action to recast nature as an integral part of our everyday lives. *When Mountain Lions Are Neighbors* explores this evolving dynamic between humans and animals, including remarkable stories like the journey of the wolf OR-7 and how Californians are welcoming wolves back to the state after a ninety-year absence, how park staff and millions of visitors rallied to keep Yosemite’s famed bears wild, and many more tales from across the state. Written by Beth Pratt-Bergstrom of the National Wildlife Federation, these inspiring stories celebrate a new paradigm for wildlife conservation: coexistence.

What a great book! I live in an area where there are people who are pretty negative about wildlife; it was great to read a book with so many uplifting stories of times when people decided to help out or work with wildlife. Who knew there were so many successes just in one state? I enjoyed the author’s style of writing - it was easy to read, and she’s pretty funny. And the organization of the book is nice - longer chapters interspersed with short blubs. I recommend this for everyone! And I’m in awe of Beth and people like her who do so much to ensure our wild friends can not just survive, but thrive.

I so enjoyed this book! So hopeful and full of information about various "wild" animals that live among us. The author's flow of words include first hand experiences and interactions of so many, including the collective Facebook "campus" where visitors are told to make sure a fox isn't sleeping under their car before they back out from their parking space. It's so readable -- told with a sense of humor and uplifting spirit. Not the doom and gloom one often hears (and there's lots to be gloomy about when we consider how we've mistreated non-humanoids on this planet). Pratt-Bergstrom suggests how it "could" be and illustrates how people and places and animals are already making it happen by adapting to each other. I could relate to some of the described experiences having spent 10 years living in Yosemite Valley where a bear once entered my house after smelling the "goodies" I'd been working on all day for the elementary school bake sale. Shocked to see a bear in my dining area, eyeing my sweets, I simply said in a loud voice "What in the world do you think you're doing?" The bear looked up at me, turned around and sauntered out the back door (which is how he had entered). Outside (in Yosemite) I literally walked along side of bobcats, bears, deer, coyotes, and lots of little critters, plus I'm sure some I was not aware of. So when I read this book, which I absolutely loved, I knew the incidents the author described were real. I've given my copy away already, but will be buying several more to give out to friends, because THIS IS AN IMPORTANT BOOK for everyone to read.

Makes me want to work for the WWF

Several years ago, many Los Angeles residents were thrilled to learn that their newest neighbor was a young mountain lion. Labeled P-22 by researchers, the cougar was prowling around Griffith Park at night hunting for deer. Griffith Park is where, perched high on a hillside, sits the iconic HOLLYWOOD sign, the symbol for all the world of countless fantasies created by the film industry based in Southern California for the last century. P-22, just two years old when he first appeared, had somehow managed to survive the harrowing crossing of two of Southern California's most immense and intense freeways -- Interstate 405 and U.S. 101 -- in his journey across the Santa Monica Mountains. Freeways like these of course are death zones for wildlife. They are clogged almost 24-7 by cavalries of cars and trucks traveling at 60 mph (or more): hundreds of thousands of two-ton, insensate, hurtling metal and hard rubber that will crush the bones and deliver death swiftly to any living creature hapless enough to get caught in the volley of vehicles. P-22's amazing story is recounted with genuine affection and awe by Beth Pratt-Bergstrom in her new book *When Mountain Lions Are*

Neighbors: People and Wildlife Working It Out in California. Pratt-Bergstrom is the California Director of the National Wildlife Federation (NWF). *When Mountain Lions are Neighbors* is a heartwarming look at Californians' continuing love affair with their wildlife. NWF has long promoted wildlife-friendly yards, gardens and neighborhoods. The enthusiasm for these topics extends to the community wildlife habitat certification program NWF created. NWF, headquartered in Reston, Virginia, where I now live, is the very first conservation organization I joined as an eager young conservationist, some 45 years ago. For decades I subscribed to, read religiously and enjoyed the beautiful photography of its flagship publications *National Wildlife* and *International Wildlife*. I only stopped supporting NWF, like I stopped supporting virtually every major national environmental group, because they would not actively endorse U.S. population stabilization, which for me and other environmental scientists is an absolute conservation imperative, the sine qua non of ecological sustainability. With my limited stock of donor dollars, I began to support only those few smaller organizations that did back U.S. population stabilization. *When Mountain Lions are Neighbors* is a book filled with compassion and hope. It acknowledges that California's massive human population boom and associated development and pollution have been terrible for wildlife. But appropriately, I think, it focuses on the fact that some wild critters have managed not just to linger, but to recover or even thrive in California's sprawling suburbs, congested waterways and bustling IT campuses. As for myself, I will never forget the sight of a coyote trotting nonchalantly through our neighborhood within a hundred yards of my Yorba Linda townhouse, in California's densely populated Orange County. Nearby Chino Hills State Park served as sanctuary not just for coyotes but even cougars. And stumbling across the occasional remains of cats they preyed upon was additional proof of these predators' presence. These denizens of the wild do much better when they have the active support and engagement of their human neighbors. And for these selfsame human neighbors their presence is tonic for the soul. It is truly inspirational and sometimes life-changing to have wild animals in our midst, surviving by their own wits and time-tested evolutionary adaptations and strategies. That wildlife can survive at all in heavily human-dominated, artificial settings seems paradoxical to us. In a chapter on the return of the harbor porpoise to San Francisco Bay after a 65-year absence, Pratt-Bergstrom gets to the heart of this paradox when she writes that: "Like Los Angeles' Griffith Park, the bay seems more an extension of the city than an ecosystem, merely a scenic vista to photograph or a place for recreational activities. Since we are taught to think of nature as existing only in pristine settings, a shipping barge the size of a house suggests not-nature to us. "But if

it's good enough for harbor porpoises, it's not the only animals giving the bay their stamp of approval. Despite being surrounded by seven million residents and ringed by an almost circular cityscape that hosts two major shipping ports and is traversed by eight bridges, this sixteen-hundred [square] mile estuary supports a diverse variety of life and boasts one of the most productive marine habitats on earth.

Back in 2007, the California Department of Fish and Game released the comprehensive report, *California Wildlife: Conservation Challenges*. While it noted proudly that California is the "wildlife state" with more species of wild animals than any other, as well as the greatest number of endemics (those found in no other state), *Conservation Challenges* likewise emphasized that this extraordinary biodiversity is stressed by the ever-expanding infrastructure and facilities needed to accommodate the state's large human population and further imperiled by continuing rapid population growth and associated development. More than 800 species of wildlife in California are now at risk including half of all mammals and one-third of all birds. Of these, 134 species are listed as threatened or endangered, that is, facing a real possibility of extirpation from the state or extinction altogether. These are grim realities that cannot be obscured by feel-good, warm-and-fuzzy stories about Mark Zuckerberg's tweets concerning the adorable gray foxes that have found a home at Facebook's Menlo Park campus or rice farmers who share their fields with sandhill cranes. Yet *When Mountain Lions are Neighbors* makes an exceedingly important point again and again, with example after example that much can and is being done to act as good neighbors to our wild brethren. Pratt-Bergstrom also shows that we can contribute to a better future for at least some wildlife in a number of different ways. Where I live, for example, as part of an organized statewide effort, every nesting season I monitor and keep records on the nest boxes of cavity-nesting birds such as bluebirds, swallows, house wrens and chickadees. This overpopulated state still contains a surprisingly large and diverse array of wildlife. And while the challenge is daunting to say the least, it is vital to remain hopeful and do what we can to make a difference. With an engaged citizenry, prospects will undoubtedly be better for wildlife. It may actually be a sign of better times ahead when we read that a pack of wolves returned to northern California after a 90-year absence, and that some folks are at least discussing the possible reintroduction of the grizzly bear to at least a few of the state's wilder haunts. Back in the 19th century, naturalist and author Henry David Thoreau wrote that "in Wildness is the preservation of the world." The truth this visionary foresaw is borne out in contemporary California. There are important vestiges of wildness

even in California's human-mobbed cities and suburbs, and we need to preserve them. When Mountain Lions are Neighbors is a resounding call to do so.

If you live in California this is a must read! Well written, entertaining and very informative.

A fantastic book for anyone in California who loves wildlife.

Mountain Lions. I'll bet it is exciting to see one in the wild, or in the city.

Purchased this as a gift for Gail and she is elated with the publication.

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