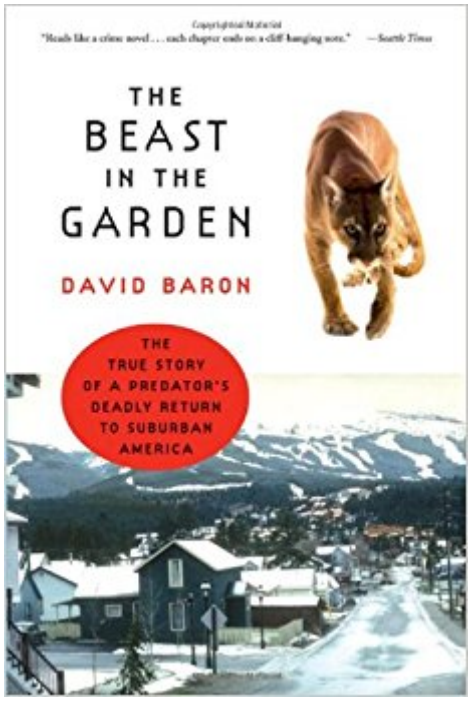
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The Beast In The Garden: The True Story Of A Predator's Deadly Return To Suburban America



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Synopsis

"Reads like a crime novel . . . each chapter ends on a cliff-hanging note."Ã¢â ¬â ¢Seattle Times When residents of Boulder, Colorado, suddenly began to see mountain lions in their backyards, it became clear that the cats had returned after decades of bounty hunting had driven them far from human settlement. In a riveting environmental tale that has received huge national attention, journalist David Baron traces the history of the mountain lion and chronicles one town's tragic effort to coexist with its new neighbors. As thought-provoking as it is harrowing, The Beast in the Garden is a tale of nature corrupted, the clash between civilization and wildness, and the artificiality of the modern American landscape. It is, ultimately, a book about the future of our nation, where suburban sprawl and wildlife-protection laws are pushing people and wild animals into uncomfortable, sometimes deadly proximity.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In 1991, in Idaho Springs, Colo., a small town not far from Boulder, a young jogger was killed and partially eaten by a mountain lion. Although people were horrified, biologist Michael Sanders and naturalist Jim Halfpenny were not surprised. Since 1988 they had been studying the mountain lions that were invading backyards in the Boulder area in increasing numbers and had concluded that, contrary to the accepted wisdom that these lions don't attack people, the big cats were indeed stalking humans in search of a good meal. In an engrossing book that reads like a true crime thriller, Baron, a science and environmental writer, follows the advance of mountain lions around Boulder as

if they were serial killers, building tension as he leads up to the killing. There were plenty of warnings. Numerous homeowners saw lions in their yards, dogs were maimed or eaten and a girl was attacked but survived. Sanders and Halfpenny tried to convince the wildlife-loving Boulderites that a tragedy was about to occur, but people believed they could coexist peacefully with the lions, and the Colorado Division of Wildlife was also determined to leave the animals alone. Even after Scott Lancaster, the Idaho Springs jogger, was killed, area residents refused to endorse killing the big cats that moved into their neighborhoods. Baron is not in favor of killing unwanted lions, but in this timely book he warns that as people continue to displace wild animals from their habitats, they have to change the way they interact with them and be more realistic about romantic notions of wilderness. Illus. not seen by PW.Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

An award-winning science journalist for National Public Radio, Baron examines the complex relationship between humans and cougars, both in the past, when the predators were nearly hunted into extinction, and in the present, as more homes are built in wilderness areas and more people find themselves face-to-face with predators who not only have no fear of humans but also have discovered in human habitats new sources of food. Baron uses the environmentally sensitive city of Boulder, Colorado, as a microcosm of the cougar-human conflict, which came to a head during the 1980s when mountain lions were killing house pets and threatening children and adults. Although Baron can’t resist playing up the sensational aspects of cougar attacks, he does perceptively dissect both sides of the impassioned debate these terrifying confrontations engender, revealing how naive and unrealistic the live-and-let-live approach can be, and how easy it is to take the kill-the-miserable-beasts response to unreasonable extremes. For more on man-eaters, see David Quammen’s Monster of God [BKL Jl 03] and Phillip Caputo’s Ghosts of Tsavo (2002). Donna SeamanCopyright Ã Â© American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

I just bought a brand new cabin 45 min SW of Denver in a remote subdivision of homes (on 5 ac. lots) abutting virgin forest and newly acquired state land. I put up a game cam, almost immediately I had bears, raccoons, gray foxes swarming near the camera. But 1 week ago I got video of a long, non-bushy tail with a black tip. The neighbors have warned me about "the cats". Someone recommended this book to me. HOLY COW! My little subdivision is a carbon copy of 1980’s Boulder! Deer stroll the roads from house to house eating corn off the raised porches. New houses

slowly encroach on virgin wild land filled with boulders and cliffs, ponderosa pines. Lots of athletic people, lots of dogs with flimsy little fences.Now for the book. I have not finished it yet, but it is honestly one of the best books I've ever read! In the first 3 pages of the book, you see exactly where the story is headed. The character development is amazing. The coverage of all the complex angles of the story is awesome. The author even makes ho-hum Santa Ana winds feel like a key character. Bravo Mr. Baron for a story told exquisitely! But....now I'm having a hard time sleeping at night! Anyone who even likes an occasional vacation in Colorado should read the book.Ok...just finished the book. In the epilogue an attack is described near Carpenter Peak in Roxborough Park. I solo hike this peak a couple times a year (midweek, when no one is around!). About a year ago I discovered light-colored scat in the middle of the high trail, looked it up online, and id'd it as lion scat. I didn't really take it seriously, but I sure will now. Great book. 11/2015 update: here's video of my lion visitor. 12/15, 3 weeks later here's another lion video

This is a wonderful book, a lesson in human ignorance and arrogance. The world is not as big as we think, especially when you are an animal whose world is made or destroyed by the whims of others. There has to be some way to try and balance life for both humans and animals, but the answer will not be easy. More national parks and animal preserves need to be created to protect what little wilderness there is left in this world. The information in this book is very eye opening, sad and scary, speaking as someone with mountain lions living in backyards less than a mile away from my house. Several years ago there was one hunting around the building where I work, which isn't remote by any means, with the cat seen clearly in one of my coworker's horse pastures. I don't have a good solution to the troubles that are being created by humans intruding on wildlife habitat, but we can learn ways to try and improve the survival and happiness of both humans and animals; we just have to be willing to try. This is a good book; it makes you think.

Fascinating real life stories of mountain lions in the edge of a nearby town...I live less than an hour away. I am reminded about the qualities of lions, cunning, quiet, fast and self-preserving...even when it is necessary to come into town to eat. I will not run alone on Colorado trails!

Tragic story, but Mr. Baron does a beautiful job telling the story and providing some potential causes for how and why this tragedy occurred. I hihly recommend this book for anyone who is either interested in this story generally, or specifically interested in the history of cougars in Colorado and the West.

This book brings out a stark contrast between humans and their notions of the environment, and the animals who actually inhabit it. Boulder, CO had embraced a benevolent view of nature that, in the face of the reality of large carnivorous ambush predators like mountain lions, proved itself to be at odds with reality. The writer doesn't try to bring the reader to any conclusions about the problem and solutions of human habituated wildlife (an issue that is hardly unique to Boulder...another prime example could be found in the resurgence, after being hunted into scarcity, of large salt-water crocodiles in Northern Australia, and the threat they pose to unwary humans). He does an excellent job of presenting the facts of the animals behavior, the mindset of the populace of Boulder and of the people involved, and of the facts of the unfortunate events that unfolded in late winter 1991.....and letting the reader draw their own conclusions. This is a great read, on an issue that nearly everyone living outside of the cities of north America should be informed about.

I live in the San Jacinto Mountains of Southern California, so I read this book with more than passing interest.David Baron does everything very well. It's a great primer on the wildland interface with a great history of predation and it's an exciting piece of literature that keeps the reader interested culminating in an incredibly exciting conclusion. And as an added bonus David tracks all the major players forward to 2003.And the thing I really like about this book, the level of detail and the research it must have entailed.It reminded me of another incredibly interesting book I read, The Perfect Storm.Good job Mr. Baron.

Excellent work. A heartbreaking and poignant examination of a complex and confusing paradox on how to manage "wild" life. Highly recommend this to all nature lovers, outdoor enthusiasts, and public lands managers/employees.

A neighbor recommended we read this and educate ourselves about our new surroundings when we moved to the mountains about 45 minutes southwest of Denver. Carefully researched, clearly written and told in a meticulous, chronological almost clinical style, this book will leave you questioning the arguments of man and our interactions with nature. And you'll watch your kids more carefully the next time you picnic in the Rockies.

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