



American Bison: A Natural History (Organisms and Environments)

Dale F. Lott

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American Bison combines the latest scientific information and one man's personal experience in an homage to one of the most magnificent animals to have roamed America's vast, vanished grasslands. Dale F. Lott, a distinguished behavioral ecologist who was born on the National Bison Range and has studied the buffalo for many years, relates what is known about this iconic animal's life in the wild and its troubled history with humans. Written with unusual grace and verve, *American Bison* takes us on a journey into the bison's past and shares a compelling vision for its future, offering along the way a valuable introduction to North American prairie ecology.

We become Lott's companions in the field as he acquaints us with the social life and physiology of the bison, sharing stories about its impressive physical prowess and fascinating relationships. Describing the entire grassland community in which the bison live, he writes about the wolves, pronghorn, prairie dogs, grizzly bears, and other animals and plants, detailing the interdependent relationships among these inhabitants of a lost landscape. Lott also traces the long and dramatic relationship between the bison and Native Americans, and gives a surprising look at the history of the hide hunts that delivered the coup de grâce to the already dwindling bison population in a few short years.

This book gives us a peek at the rich and unique ways of life that evolved in the heart of America. Lott also dismantles many of the myths we have created about these ways of life, and about the bison in particular, to reveal the animal itself: ruminating, reproducing, and rutting in its full glory. His portrait of the bison ultimately becomes a plea to conserve its wildness and an eloquent meditation on the importance of the wild in our lives.

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