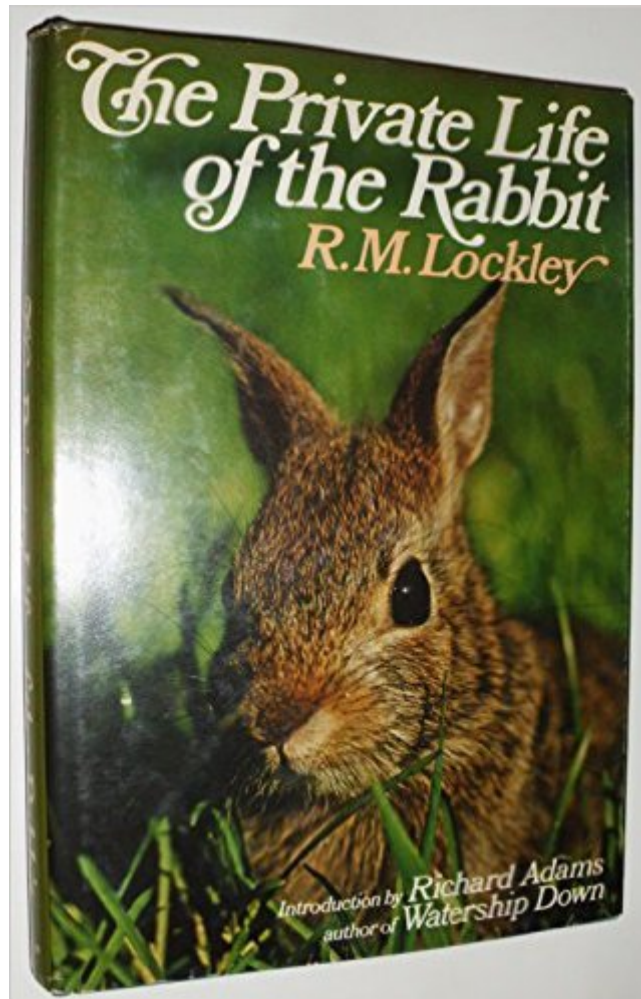


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The Private Life Of The Rabbit: An Account Of The Life History And Social Behavior Of The Wild Rabbit



Synopsis

Written with an evident love of animals and nature, 'The Private Life of the Rabbit' presents a completely new picture of the wild rabbit and its way of life. Mt. Lockley, who observed rabbits in Wales over a 5 year period, shows that they have a complex community life little understood by the world in general. These vegetarian creatures possess both dignity and 'animality'; psychological factors play as large a part in shaping their lives as they do in ours. One finds, too, that their reputation for promiscuity and wanton reproduction is really undeserved. Lockley built an artificial warren with glass sides and several tracts of natural habitat—an open plain, a woodlot, a lushly vegetated savannah were enclosed and arranged for maximum ease of observation with minimum interference. This controlled rabbit colony was observed every day and night in every season and in all kinds of weather. In Lockley's account, rabbits emerge with characteristics and personalities of their own. The nicknames he gives them (Weary Willie, Timid Timothy, Bold Benjamin, for example) in no way lessen the objective and scientific accuracy of his findings. In fact, this touch of individuality reinforces the observation that rabbits are creatures with interests, wills, and preferences of their own. Female conservatism, scent setting or 'chinning' by dominant males, the ability of the female to absorb her fertilized embryo, the stress of subordinate status...and more, are revealed here. CONTENTS: Intro by Richard Adams * the Mind of the Rabbit * The Coney Garth * The Nucleus * The Dynasty in Plain * The Kings of Wood * Over-populated World * Hard Times * The Idyll in Savanna * Life Underground * Reingestion * Population and Birth Control * Myxomatosis * The Rabbit Wild and Free

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I was told this book was good, if perhaps a bit "unscientific." After reading it I would firmly state this book is neither good nor scientific. I found so many errors in the first twenty pages that I almost put the book down in disgust-- ranging from significant typos resulting in gross misidentification of animals, to blatant contradictions. For example, in one section, Lockley describes the joy of observing a dominant male mount a female in his warren and copulate with her, but then in the next paragraph maintains that this male only ever was seen to copulate with his mate (a different female rabbit). When the person writing this can't even keep the rabbits straight, how are we supposed to even take his observations as fact? All anality aside, the pathos of the book is off, to me. This guy starts off with an introduction about how much he loved rabbits growing up, and wanted to breed Angoras. Then he describes in great detail, in the introduction, buying an island and trying every method known to man of eradicating the existing rabbits, including gassing the warrens and even introducing myxomatosis! But of course, this man loves rabbits, right? It makes me wince to see the incredibly stressful situations he set up "for science" (including isolating a dominant male from his home base and then, after another male took over, introducing him back in to be harried by his former subjects). You could argue that these are "wild" rabbits and that he had to observe nature taking its course-- however, I'm of the belief that once a scientist fiddles with a situation he/she has a responsibility to at least be humane to his/her subjects, wild or not. But I suppose his proceedings were the norm in that day and age, and I suppose someone had to be the first(?)

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