

Jon Dahlem

# The Good, Green Gold of Spring

*A Conservation Sociology of the Island Marble Butterfly*

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL SCIENCE

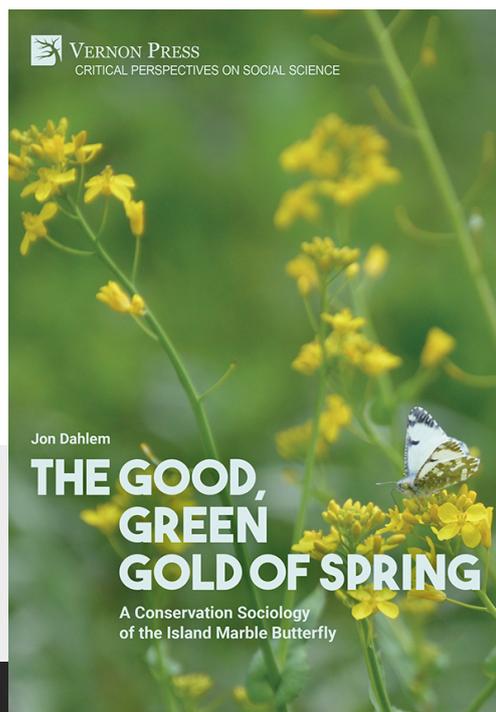
## About the author

**Jon Dahlem** is an environmental sociologist with a Ph.D. in sociology from Washington State University who specializes in the sociologies of biodiversity loss and species conservation. In particular, his work applies qualitative research methods to case studies in conservation in order to explicate the underlying social causes of sociopolitical inertia toward solving urgent environmental problems. He has produced work exploring the analogous phenomenon of inaction toward abating climate change. Having recently completed a case study of the conservation of Island Marble Butterflies on San Juan Island, WA, Jon is currently developing an extensive case study of Nebraskan Sandhill Crane conservation practices. He currently works as Assistant Professor and Program Director of Sociology at Bellevue University, in Bellevue, NE.

## Summary

This book presents a case study of Island Marble Butterfly (IMB) conservation from an environmental sociological perspective. Using qualitative methods, the study explicates various social components of a collaboration of stakeholders working together to protect the species from extinction. Rediscovered in 1998 after being presumed extinct for nearly a century, the IMB persists exclusively among the San Juan Islands, WA, where the efforts of scientists, local conservationists, government employees, and non-profit organizations have sustained the species, even achieving a listing under the Endangered Species Act. For these reasons and many others, the IMB presents a case in some ways fascinating for its idiosyncrasies and in other ways indicative of broader trends in conservation work in an era of rapid global biodiversity loss. From the study emerges a call for increased sociological research that contributes knowledge beneficial to conservation practice, or what the book calls “conservation sociology.” The book reviews existing literature in this space and provides a framework for constructing research, theory, and application in conservation sociology. As the social components of IMB conservation are explored, so too are components of conservation sociology. The book describes competing norms and beliefs among IMB stakeholders, demonstrating the capacity of conservation sociology to describe and interpret social phenomena in conservation work; explores power dynamics in the collaboration, using sociological theory to interpret significant events in IMB conservation; and analyzes the significance of time in IMB conservation while providing suggestions for applied conservation work based in sociological perspectives.

The book accomplishes three main goals. First, it provides an account of details and events in Island Marble Butterfly conservation. Second, it defines, positions, and develops conservation sociology. Third, it demonstrates original research in conservation sociology, resulting in a deep look at the complexities of the social components of species conservation.



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