

‘I’ll get this feeling that there’s a fungus around. I feel, no, I know, that there’s something — no, somebody — who wants to see me. You get a call-out from them.’”⁴

Macfarlane’s illumination of his and Cosmo’s first-hand experiences watching her “sense” new species she cannot see confirms that there are senses we don’t yet understand. Denigrating these senses because we currently lack tools to measure them and cannot construct mechanistic models of them really limits our understanding of the world in which we live.

Ecuador is the first country to enshrine the rights of nature in its constitution. Mcfarlane’s account of this event and the people involved moved me deeply. His account of kayaking the untamed Mutehekau Shipu in Canada at flood stage was suspenseful and totally mind-boggling. Both narratives explore Indigenous People’s world views and illuminate the need for our wider public to gain better access to these perspectives, which are new to the majority of our US population. The perspective of respect for species other than ourselves has always been a hallmark of Indigenous Peoples. This respect doesn’t mean you can’t eat plants or kill animals to eat them — it simply means you must use plants and animals with respect and reciprocity. We must care for them rather than exploit them.

I urge all readers who love nature and respect it to spend some time with this deeply moving book. I highly recommend listening to the audio version since Macfarlane reads it, and his voice expands the poetry of his language. However, reading a hard copy will no doubt give the same experience to others.

— Barbara Bates

I’d love to hear your reactions — you can contact me at BLBates@newtonconservators.org

*NOTE: In Jungian psychology, a daemon is an inner, guiding spirit or force that is deeply connected to one’s life purpose and creativity. In ancient Greek philosophy, it refers to a guiding spirit or lesser deity, not to be confused with a “demon” or evil spirit. ♦

References

1. *Is a River Alive?* p. 121 Kindle Edition
2. *Is a River Alive?* p. 122 Kindle Edition
3. *Is a River Alive?* pp. 123–4 Kindle Edition
4. *Is a River Alive?* p.80 Kindle Edition

Did You Miss the Webinar “Coexisting with Coyotes in Suburban Communities”?

You Can Watch it Online at Any Time.



Since September 2020, Newton Conservators has presented a free webinar series on conservation topics that are important for our community. Many of our speakers have allowed us to record their presentations, and you can watch them on our YouTube page.

In each newsletter, we plan to highlight one of these past webinar gems. This time we focus on Dr. Dave Wattles informative presentation on **“Coexisting with Coyotes in Suburban Communities”** from April of 2024: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aweDzpfYzDE>.

Eastern coyotes are found in nearly every town and city in Massachusetts and they can thrive close to humans in a variety of habitats. Dr. Wattles presents excellent information about the behavior of coyotes, how coyotes came to be part of our neighborhoods over the decades, how they have adapted to our communities, and how to discourage them from coexisting too closely with us. What is the main takeaway—other than what beautiful creatures they are? That the best way to coexist well with coyotes is not to provide food for them, intentionally or unintentionally. And to supervise our pets.

Dave Wattles has been studying and working with large mammals in Massachusetts since 2006, when he began collaring and studying moose for his graduate work at UMass Amherst. He has 15 years of experience conducting black bear research and has been the Black Bear and Furbearer Biologist with the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) since 2016.

Information about upcoming webinars can be found under the “Events” tab on Newton Conservators’ website, where you can register for them: <https://newtonconservators.org/events/>. Our webinars are free and available to all. ♦

— Beth Wilkinson and Barbara Bates