



# Tigers in the Snow

*Peter Matthiessen , Maurice Hornocker (Photographer)*

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No more than a few thousand tigers survive in pockets of Asia, a continent they once roamed far and wide. The largest of them, the Siberian tiger, is today almost entirely confined to the little-populated Russian Far East, a region that may offer the species' best hope for survival. But the implosion of the Soviet Union intensified poaching and habitat depredation, prompting a group of Russian researchers and U.S. wildlife biologists led by Maurice Hornocker to join forces to stave off extinction.

Peter Matthiessen brings to the Siberian tiger the deep knowledge of and feeling for the natural world that have made classics of his previous books. Accompanying researchers into the field, he allows the reader to participate vicariously in the battle for the tiger's future. Along the way, he tells how the species evolved and evokes its crucial, often totemic role in human cultures and mythologies. He has made of the tiger's dilemma a drama-underscored by Hornocker's one-of-a-kind photographs-that conveys powerfully what a loss to our collective imagination the disappearance of these great cats would be.

## Tigers in the Snow Details

Date : Published October 10th 2001 by North Point Press (first published February 29th 2000)

ISBN : 9780865475960

Author : Peter Matthiessen , Maurice Hornocker (Photographer)

Format : Paperback 208 pages

Genre : Environment, Nature, Nonfiction, Animals, Science, Natural History, Cultural, Asia

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# **From Reader Review Tigers in the Snow for online ebook**

## **Nathaniel says**

This is a book that's not quite sure if it wants to be a travelogue, a scientific nature documentary, or a collection of quasi-poetic adjectives about mundane experiences, and ultimately settles for being an airy and disjointed collection of flowery prose held together by some gorgeous photography and the author's own overbearing self-satisfaction. Attempts at describing the day to day experience of being on a tiger research expedition are mingled with history of the various species of tiger and more than a few snap judgments about people who happen to disagree with the author, yet none are particularly complete and the entire book feels unfinished and kind of vapid. Ironically, Matthiessen's observations about everyday backwoods Russians circa 2000 (and their disdain for democratic government, among other things) are probably more telling from a modern, "eternal reign of Putin"-era perspective than anything he has to say about tigers; of course, this book being so dated also makes anything he has to say about tigers, most of it taking place up to 25 years ago and all in the present-tense, all the more depressing today.

With that said, Maurice Hornocker's tiger photographs truly deserve praise, and anyone who likes nature photography might want to pick this book up for the right price just for the photos. As an actual reading experience, however, it's fairly marginal, and not for anyone who isn't already a smug, self-satisfied "haute environmentalist" in Matthiessen's mold.

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## **Alene says**

Introduced me to a world I'd love to be part of--animal conservation. I'd especially love to visit that rugged and inhospitable countryside in eastern Siberia and see one of these magnificent animals or enjoy at least trying to spot one.

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## **Jeanette "Astute Crabbist" says**

I have great respect for Peter Matthiessen's work and integrity. His writing is quite scholarly and often a little dry, so sometimes it reads like a textbook. Hence my middling rating. Still worth the read, though, especially if you like big cats.

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## **Ellie Dynek says**

A delightful combination of beautiful photographs and detailed descriptions that provide tremendous insight into the plight of one of the most beautiful creatures on this Earth.

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## **Toffana says**

I had expected this to be more like *The Snow Leopard*, Matthiessen's master work: a travel journal full of adventure, culture, and philosophical world view. Alas, this describes only the last third of the book. The rest is introductory material and the state of tiger conservation at the time of writing, but still very interesting stuff.

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### **Erin says**

An ethnography of the Amur tiger, that reads more like an adventure novel. Yes, the data are now outmoded (which was irrelevant as far as my reasons for reading it), but the book still does a good job of conveying the general habitat and behavior of the tiger, as well as detailing the conservation goals and challenges unique to that region of Siberia.

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### **Nancy says**

*When you see a tiger, it is always like a dream.* Beautiful photographs, magnificent animal, surprisingly dull book.

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### **John Fredrickson says**

This book is more about the people and parks involved in the preservation of tigers and their habitats than it is about tigers themselves. One definitely gets a sense for some of the magnificence of the animal along the way, but this appears to be incidental to the purpose of the book, which I take to be to incite interest or action in saving these animals and their habitats.

The difficulties involved in maintaining a tiger habitat in proximity to humans is explored, which is exacerbated by the amount of land and prey that are required to sustain a tiger population. The book also delves into the dangers of poaching that arises when a strong marketplace for tiger parts (bone, penis, ...) exists.

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### **LibraryCin says**

In 1992 in Russia, some American and Russian scientists started a project to study and hopefully save endangered tigers. Many species of tiger have already gone extinct. There wasn't very much known about tigers because they are so secretive, so studies previously were done by studying their tracks in the snow, which only accounts for part of the year. These scientists started by fitting collars on a few of the remaining tigers in Eastern Russia. They also hoped to work with the local populations to teach them more about tigers and to hopefully bring them onboard to help save the tigers.

I will admit that I skimmed a little bit over sections of the book that described the locations, but when Matthiessen focused on the tigers, I found it very interesting. He also looks at some species of tiger that have already gone extinct and some of the reasons why. This was my first book by him, and I do hope to read more by him focusing on different animals.

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### Mike says

Not only is the photography beautiful, but Matthiessen really makes you feel like your in Siberian wilderness with him, tracking these majestic creatures. You feel the anticipation and excitement as you track them down in below freezing temperatures, the dread when you discover the poachers have killed yet another one, and just sheer awe when you're finally able to see one.

Besides being a gifted storyteller, Matthiessen also gives the hard facts about the species. You come away from from this with conflicting emotions, feeling inspired and defeated. Inspired because you got to see one awesome picture after another, and defeated because its all too likely they'll become extinct in our lifetime.

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### Nate says

This book would have benefited greatly from an editor at a publishing firm. It's mostly a collage of random bits of information on tigers, with the author's story loosely spruced in. The author is a researcher, not a writer, and that is quite obvious to the reader since the story lacks any sort of flow.

The book also relies heavily on statistics and estimates that are now dated (mostly coming from the late 1990s). It's not that big of a deal, but it felt wasteful to read about a situation that uses obsolete data. The pictures overall are nice, but it would have been better if there were more of them, and if they always fit the timeline of what was the author was discussing.

I love Siberian tigers, but this book is not worth the purchase or rental other than to briefly flip through the photos included. I'd recommend a recently produced documentary on them instead.

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### Hunter Johnson says

*Tigers in the Snow* by Peter Matthiessen. A too-short look at tiger conservationism.

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### Mark Hundley says

Tigers in the wild face likely extinction in all parts of the world, India, Sumatra, Amur. Their territory is disappearing and fragmenting reducing their range and ability to breed. A melancholy book but with beautiful pictures. I love reading Matthiessen.

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### Susan says

I gave this book only four stars because it did not serve the intended purpose for me. I was searching for facts about the Amur tiger in in Russian far East but sadly did not really learn anything that I didn't already

know. The writing however is absolutely breathtaking! Peter Matthiessen is easily one of the most intuitive nature writers of our time and his message comes across loud and clear: if we want to, we can save the tiger in the wild.

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## **David Ward says**

Tigers In the Snow by Peter Matthiessen (North Point Press 2000) (\$99.75). The Amur (Siberian) tiger is the largest of the world's big cats. It is seriously endangered. Peter Matthiessen brings his special eye to the Russian region where the remaining wild tigers live in an attempt to demonstrate how great the loss would be to our collective imaginations if these cats were to become extinct in the wild. My rating: 7/10, finished 2001.

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