



Animals as Neighbors: The Past and Present of Commensal Animals (The Animal Turn)

Terry O'Connor

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In this fascinating book, Terry O'Connor explores a distinction that is deeply ingrained in much of the language that we use in zoology, human-animal studies, and archaeology—the difference between wild and domestic. For thousands of years, humans have categorized animals in simple terms, often according to the degree of control that we have over them, and have tended to see the long story of human-animal relations as one of increasing control and management for human benefit. And yet, around the world, species have adapted to our homes, our towns, and our artificial landscapes, finding ways to gain benefit from our activities and so becoming an important part of our everyday lives. These commensal animals remind us that other species are not passive elements in the world around us but intelligent and adaptable creatures. *Animals as Neighbors* shows how a blend of adaptation and opportunism has enabled many species to benefit from our often destructive footprint on the world. O'Connor investigates the history of this relationship, working back through archaeological records. By requiring us to take a multifaceted view of human-animal relations, commensal animals encourage a more nuanced understanding of those relations, both today and throughout the prehistory of our species.

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