



## Being Salmon, Being Human

Encountering the Wild in Us  
and Us in the Wild

Martin Lee Mueller

foreword by Stephan Harding

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“This eloquent, impassioned, and often poetic book offers something remarkable: a coherent philosophical and spiritual vision for this era of ecological fragility. Marked by clarity and compassion, *Being Salmon, Being Human* is a beautiful, important work—and a necessary one.”

—**JUDITH D. SCHWARTZ**, author of *Cows Save the Planet*  
and *Water in Plain Sight*

*What are the implications of letting a species go extinct?*

That's the question Martin Lee Mueller was urgently asking after reading an opinion piece on the future of salmon in his native Norway. The article, written by a celebrated expert on fisheries, suggested that if wild salmon get in the way of the fish farming industry, maybe it was time to “sacrifice wild salmon.” But what would it mean if we lose the salmon? What worldview are we advocating?

In the pages of *Being Salmon, Being Human*, Martin Lee Mueller embarks on a journey seeking answers to these questions, weaving together key narratives about the Norwegian salmon industry as well as wild salmon in indigenous cultures of the Pacific Northwest. On the way, by focusing on the relationship between people and salmon, he confronts Western culture's tragic alienation from nature and articulates a clear critique of human exceptionalism.

“For as long as humans and salmon have encountered one another,” Mueller writes, “their nations have been engaged in a long, enduring, and reciprocal conversation on life. For millennia, humans and salmon have struggled to fine-tune their lives in the presence of the other, to flourish, side by side, indefinitely.”

Drawing on relevant discoveries by ecologists, biologists, and even geologists and placing this research next to insightful interpretations of major philosophers—Descartes, Heidegger, David Abram, and many more—*Being Salmon, Being Human* rewards the reader with a deeper understanding of the human–Earth relationship and articulates a powerful vision of a new Copernican revolution—one placing humans alongside, rather than above, those with whom we share the Earth. As the current human-centered story is causing the ecological web to come undone, Mueller urges us all to participate in the “reciprocal conversation” with the world around us.



**Martin Lee Mueller**, PhD, received his doctorate in philosophy from the University of Oslo in 2016. He has previously helped build teaching centers in rural Mongolia, and has led a wilderness school in the Norwegian forest. Recently he has also been touring as a storyteller to festivals in the U.K. and Scandinavia, with a stage performance inspired by this book. He lives in Oslo.

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