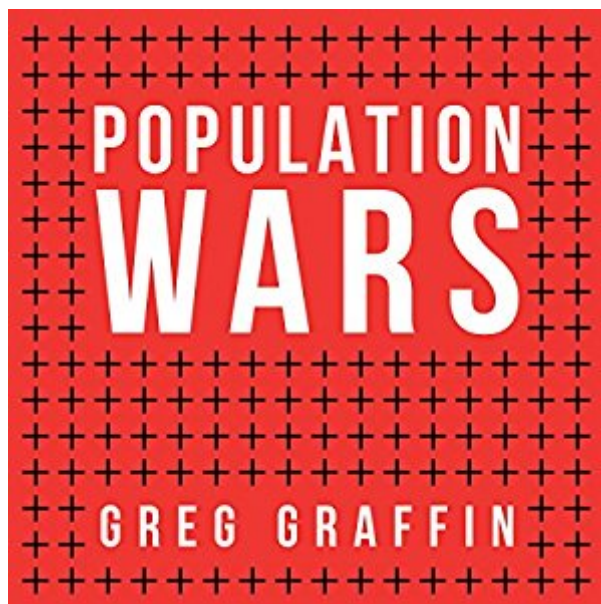


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Population Wars: A New Perspective On Competition And Coexistence



Synopsis

From the very beginning, life on Earth has been defined by war. Today, those first wars continue to be fought around and literally inside us, influencing our individual behavior and that of civilization as a whole. War between populations - whether between different species or between rival groups of humans - is seen as an inevitable part of the evolutionary process. The popular concept of "the survival of the fittest" explains and often excuses these actions. In *Population Wars*, Greg Graffin points to where the mainstream view of evolutionary theory has led us astray. That misunderstanding has allowed us to justify wars on every level, whether against bacterial colonies or human societies, even when other, less violent solutions may be available. Through tales of mass extinctions, developing immune systems, human warfare, the American industrial heartland, and our degrading modern environment, Graffin demonstrates how an oversimplified idea of war, with its victorious winners and vanquished losers, prevents us from responding to the real problems we face. Along the way, Graffin reveals a paradox: When we challenge conventional definitions of war, we are left with a new problem - how to define ourselves.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In *Population Wars*, Dr. Greg Graffin explores interactions among populations of all varieties, from the microscopic to the human, from the beginning of life on Earth to the present day. One of the book's central arguments is that it is equilibrium and symbiosis, not "survival of the fittest," that ultimately settles conflicts between species in nature. Accordingly, the author explains,

social Darwinism and far-right American libertarianism are flawed and misguided extensions of evolutionary theory. Instead of engaging in cutthroat competition, modern human societies should strive for greater empathy and populational and environmental balance. This argument is persuasive and well-presented, and it offers hope that humanity can have a long and peaceful future. Graffin's writing style is casual and easy-going, and easy to read as well. He draws from his own life experiences to illustrate some of the points he makes, drawing the reader into a somewhat intimate conversation. There is some repetition here and there, and some sections could have been condensed a bit, but generally, the writing is well-paced. Chapters 4-6 delve into scientific topics, mainly biology and geology, the author's areas of scientific expertise. Given the nature of the subject matter, it is extremely well-presented, and simplified where necessary. An engaged reader should find these chapters fairly easy to follow, as long as s/he can keep up with the terminology. The material is actually basic, one could argue, and if you don't know it already, you should. Chapter 7 discusses the Revolutionary War history of the Finger Lakes region, where Graffin usually resides.

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