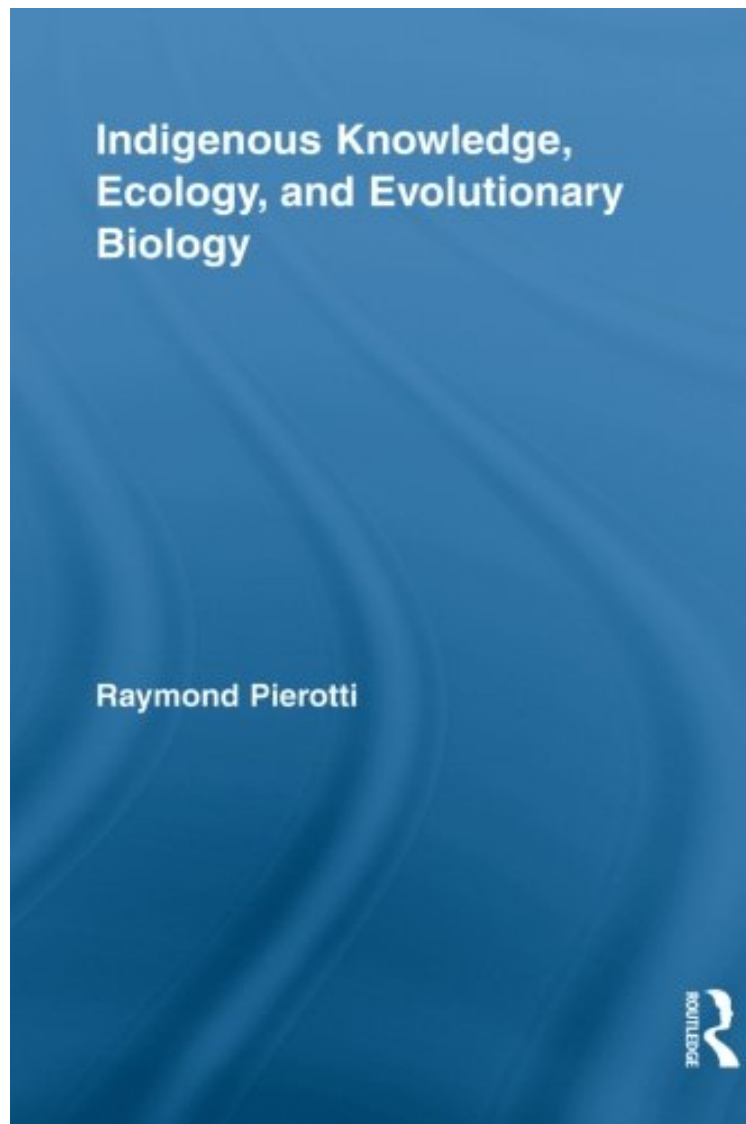


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# Indigenous Knowledge, Ecology, and Evolutionary Biology (Indigenous Peoples and Politics)

*Raymond Pierotti*

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**Raymond Pierotti : Indigenous Knowledge, Ecology, and Evolutionary Biology (Indigenous Peoples and Politics)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Indigenous Knowledge, Ecology, and Evolutionary Biology (Indigenous Peoples and Politics):

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question yourself and your beliefs while giving an unbiased look at facts of ecology and evolution. I think every biology and humanities undergraduate should read this book! 7 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Native American biology By E. N. Anderson Raymond Pierotti is a Native American biologist, who combines traditional Native American animal knowledge with modern evolutionary biology in his research and writing. Pierotti shows how Native American knowledge of animals fits with modern biology. In particular, Native Americans were aware of complex relationships, dynamic and highly fluctuating systems, and involved ecological webs, where Euro-American biologists tended to see only simple, isolated, organisms, or balanced "climax" systems, until recently. Recent research by psychologist Douglas Medin and cognitive scientist Norbert Ross confirm that this is a real difference in worldview, quite general, not confined to scientists. The more holistic and dynamic Indigenous view leads to respect for all life, including (perhaps especially) large predators; the identification of Native Americans with the wolf, bear and eagle is not just a postcard cliché. Indigenous people are aware that humans and wolves are both social predators, both share food, both know their landscapes intimately, and both have to kill while yet caring for life. Complex and nuanced understandings of this sort run through Indigenous worldviews. Pierotti trains an analytic eye not only on Euro-American scientists, but also on Native American writers and thinkers. A particularly interesting essay concerns portrayals of the other-than-human world in leading Native American novels. Also notably interesting are Pierotti's stories of how his Indigenous background helped him to see and understand mammal and bird behavior in the field, and to realize the importance of traits previously downplayed by biologists. Overall, this is quite an amazing book. Many works have interpreted Native American worldviews, with varying degrees of sensitivity and accuracy, but this is the first to go into detail on how deeply scientific (in the broadest and deepest sense) are the views on which Native American worldviews are based. The Indigenous tales may be full of talking coyotes and bears, and other mythic creatures, but the stories are always based on an intimate knowledge of more ordinary coyotes and bears. Pierotti may be a bit too quick to dismiss the more unlikely ideas as "metaphors," but that is certainly better than writing all Native American knowledge off as obsolete fantasy. The fact is that we can and should all learn a tremendous amount from Indigenous science, even if we discount the animals' human-like deeds in mythic time. This book began life as a series of essays, and has a good deal of repetition, so readers might take it one chapter at a time, pausing to think for a few days before pressing on. The book should disabuse us all of any ideas of the Native Americans as romantic beings of a vanished past. They were and are hard-headed users of the environment, and they have knowledge we all need.

Indigenous ways of understanding and interacting with the natural world are characterized as Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), which derives from emphasizing relationships and connections among species. This book examines TEK and its strengths in relation to Western ecological knowledge and evolutionary philosophy. Pierotti takes a look at the scientific basis of this approach, focusing on different concepts of communities and connections among living entities, the importance of understanding the meaning of relatedness in both spiritual and biological creation, and a careful comparison with evolutionary ecology. The text examines the themes and principles informing this knowledge, and offers a look at the complexities of conducting research from an indigenous perspective.

About the Author Raymond Pierotti is Associate Professor, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and Global Indigenous Nations Studies at the University of Kansas.