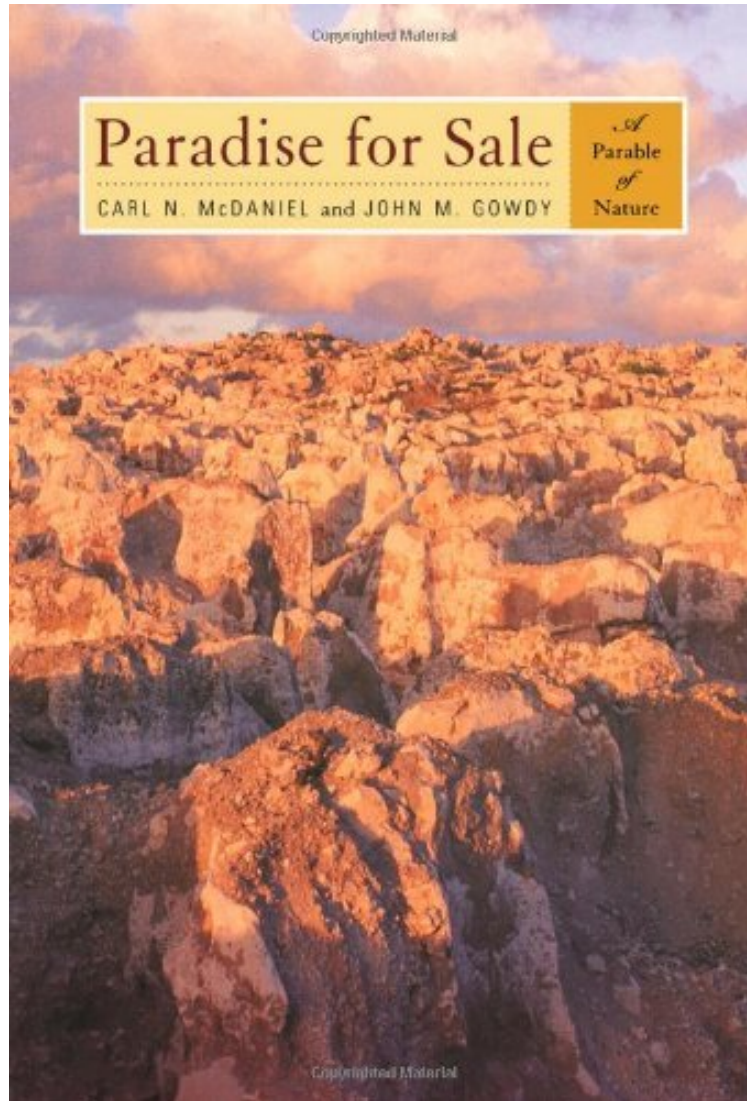


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## Paradise for Sale: A Parable of Nature

*Carl N. McDaniel, John M. Gowdy*  
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**Carl N. McDaniel, John M. Gowdy : Paradise for Sale: A Parable of Nature** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Paradise for Sale: A Parable of Nature:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. It's not that humanity doesn't know that it's doomed, it's that it doesn't care enough. By Arturo Paradise for Sale delivers, and delivers hard. I found this book while making an informal research on the island of Nauru (for reasons), and while the book fulfilled its mission into informing me about this tiny, historically curious island in the equatorial Pacific; it gave me much more than just a solution to my geographical curiosity. It made me realize that human societies can, and HAVE crumbled out of ecological disasters, which may seem like an obvious idea said out loud, but its full weight and ramifications are not fully grasped but until you read this book from cover to cover. It is a grim book, yes, but it tells what I think it is a very important and essential topic to

never forget: Societies have died out of poor understanding and use of their environments, and they have survived for millennia when they DO understand and use their environment properly. Such simple facts cannot be shrugged off, and "should" not be shrugged off by modern society and specially by the Earth as a whole. You could say the book remarks an obvious idea, and that's true, but the way it relates it to the small example of Nauru is perfectly adequate. The island is, in more ways that you can guess at first, a scale-model of the world as a whole. Knowingly headed for environment disaster yet doing nothing to advert it. Chills down your back are recurrent, but normal responses while thinking about it. I think that the importance of ecosystems for human's life should be placed along death, taste for pizza, or taxes as one of those things we cannot ignore or escape: Humans live thanks to the ecosystems. Period. In a word, it's a book with a strong but important topic to read. Perhaps you don't care about Nauru enough or you already know a great deal about this topic. So I would just say: keep reading and remembering it. If not with this one, with any other. But keep reading.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Missed wake-up call  
By Marcel Dupasquier  
Good book. The only problem thereby, in the last 12 years since its publication, not much has changed. On the contrary, we are more than ever committed on our path to harness the last natural reserves and exploit the last natural resource. For example, even though there are clear signs that we will soon run out of petroleum, with oil prices staying constantly over 100\$, nothing is too sacred to us not to be used as energy source, be it tar sands or fracked shale gas, which have an absolute devastating energy balances. It seems thus clear that we will still destroy the last bit of nature, before we will change our behavior. We will consequently go down the path of Rapa Nui. What concerns Nauru, they just run out of phosphate when the book was written. In the last 12 years, their situation has then also accordingly exacerbated tremendously. They have arrived in the meantime at the state of being a true underdeveloped country, that has to take up Australians refugees in order to generate some cash. Another more recent French book illustrates the latest developments of Nauru in more detail: Nauru, l'icirc;le deacute;vasteacute;e. And accordingly, we will end up in such a fashion as well. I remain wishing that more people would read books like this one.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great read for a concise history of the island (but not much else)  
By John Erik Anderson  
Having studied Nauru extensively and visiting the island myself, I found Paradise for Sale an interesting read. I would recommend this book for a concise history of Nauru, summarized well in the first few chapters. Unfortunately the authors go a bit off the deep end with their examination of other societies around the world, amounting to little more than now outdated speculation. Still, a good addition to anyone's library who is interested in Nauru or environmental degradation.

The grim history of Nauru Island, a small speck in the Pacific Ocean halfway between Hawaii and Australia, represents a larger story of environmental degradation and economic dysfunction. For more than 2,000 years traditional Nauruans, isolated from the rest of the world, lived in social and ecological stability. But in 1900 the discovery of phosphate, an absolute requirement for agriculture, catapulted Nauru into the world market. Colonial imperialists who occupied Nauru and mined it for its lucrative phosphate resources devastated the island, which forever changed its native people. In 1968 Nauruans regained rule of their island and immediately faced a conundrum: to pursue a sustainable future that would protect their truly valuable natural resources—the biological and physical integrity of their island—or to mine and sell the remaining forty-year supply of phosphate and in the process make most of their home useless. They did the latter. In a captivating and moving style, the authors describe how the island became one of the richest nations in the world and how its citizens acquired all the ills of modern life: obesity, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension. At the same time, Nauru became 80 percent mined-out ruins that contain severely impoverished biological communities of little value in supporting human habitation. This sad tale highlights the dire consequences of a free-market economy, a system in direct conflict with sustaining the environment. In presenting evidence for the current mass extinction, the authors argue that we cannot expect to preserve biodiversity or support sustainable habitation, because our economic operating principles are incompatible with these activities.

"A compelling study of an island and a culture. . . . The larger question, of course, is not the fate of a small island, where quick profits led to long-term crisis, but whether Nauru's experience is an indicator for the future of a small planet. This is an exquisite tale with significance for our time."--"Choice  
About the Author  
Carl N. McDaniel is Professor of Biology and Director of Undergraduate Environmental Science at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. John M. Gowdy is Professor of Economics and Director of the Ph.D. program in Ecological Economics at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. He is editor of Limited Wants, Limited Means (1997).