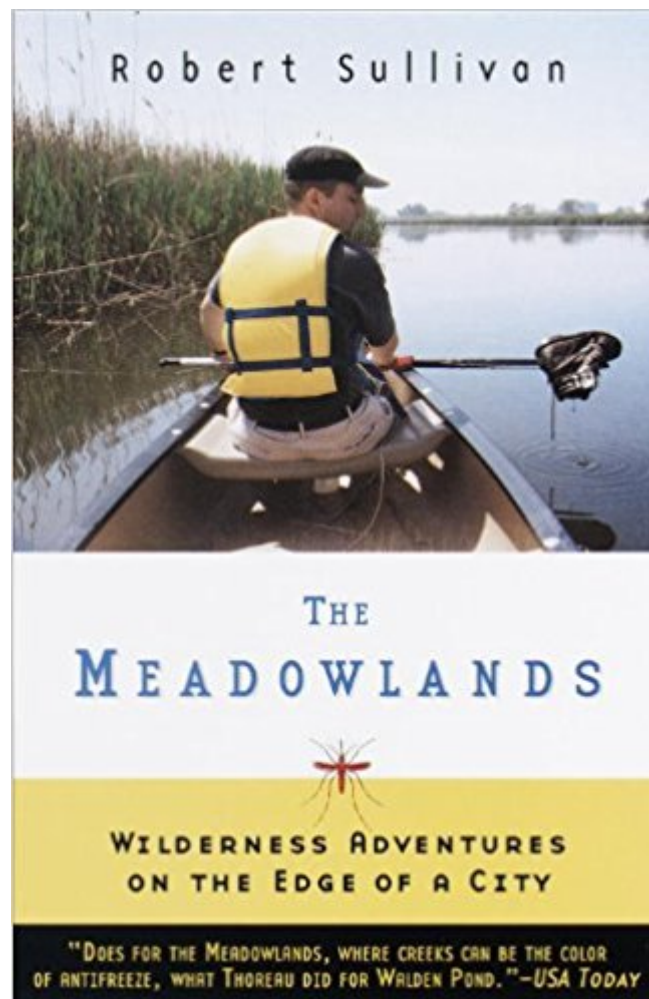




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# The Meadowlands: Wilderness Adventures At The Edge Of A City



## Synopsis

Imagine a grunge north Jersey version of John McPhee's classic *The Pine Barrens* and you'll get some idea of the idiosyncratic, fact-filled, and highly original work that is Robert Sullivan's *The Meadowlands*. Just five miles west of New York City, this vilified, half-developed, half-untamed, much dumped-on, and sometimes odiferous tract of swampland is home to rare birds and missing bodies, tranquil marshes and a major sports arena, burning garbage dumps and corporate headquarters, the remains of the original Penn Station--and maybe, just maybe, of the late Jimmy Hoffa. Robert Sullivan proves himself to be this fragile yet amazingly resilient region's perfect explorer, historian, archaeologist, and comic bard.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"I like to think of the Meadowlands as an undesignated national park," writes Robert Sullivan in his end-of-the-millennium take on Thoreau. In *The Meadowlands*, Sullivan does his Thoreauvian bean-counting in one of America's most infamous dumping grounds, the huge tract of marshy land just outside New York City that has withstood any and all attempts to subdue it with agriculture, industry, development, and an ever-shifting deluge of flotsam and jetsam. He may just be the first person in a century to willingly explore this fascinating but abused piece of real estate, and his investigation gives new meaning to intrepid reporting. By foot he tramps through the muck, and by canoe he navigates polluted rivers and marshes, noting the variegated species of trash and industrial cast-offs with as much zeal as he observes the surprisingly rich diversity of wildlife. Revealed in these stories is a landscape bursting with nature amid the curious man-made detritus of

urban consumption. With only a touch of irony, the author refers to his stomping ground as "Big Sky Country, east," imagining he's "in a National Geographic special and visiting little tribes of people unknown to everyone else." He pursues the history of the Meadowlands with equal enthusiasm. Eccentric characters, tall tales, and scuttlebutt haunt the area, from the rumor that the land serves as the final resting place for Jimmy Hoffa (as well as a number of other Mafia hits) to the pitiable stories of the many dreamers who have sunk a fortune in the squelching mud. And throughout this smart, thoroughly researched adventure, Sullivan maintains a witty and lyrical voice that transforms his trip inside a nationally maligned place into a fun, informative romp. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Just five short, swampy miles from Manhattan, the New Jersey Meadowlands are awash in refuse of all sorts, from toxic waste and landfill to tangled heaps of abortive real-estate development?and perhaps even Jimmy Hoffa's remains. A freelance journalist and unapologetic enthusiast for his chosen tract, Sullivan in his first book marvels at the Meadowlands' history and that of the people who continue to explore it, fish it and even swim it. The author hikes, boats and drives through environs that have over the years offered refuge to pig farms, eccentrics, schemers and even pirates. He marvels at the volume of refuse and sheer toxicity of some of the land, explaining that when one notorious landfill caught fire, it burned for 15 years because the local fire department, fearing for its health in the face of toxic fumes, refused to put out the smoldering heap. Today, under the care of the EPA and other environmental groups, the area is showing signs of rebounding. But such reports, even coupled with Sullivan's zeal, cannot fully brighten this sad if intriguing tale of industrial carnage. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Perhaps it was the aggressive marketing, but I found myself disappointed with the book. There is much of interest and entertainment to be found here, but a number of vignettes (including the search for the ruins of Penn Station) came off oddly anti-climactic (perhaps because so little of the station still remains to be found) and the technique of the book (intro of a Meadowlands feature/area and a quirky personality to go with it) grows repetitive, so that by the end of the book one starts to know what to expect. There are a number of gaps in coverage, including construction of the Meadowlands complex, and there is nary a word about the extensive network of rail lines criss-crossing the marshes. The book would benefit enormously from some maps and photographs. Nice read if somebody lends you the book, but The Meadowlands may not be worth

the price of a new hardcover.

I enjoyed this light set of anecdotes about urban North Jersey's backyard. As a child I'd often make similar explorations in the 'meadows', so Sullivan's stories remind me of wonderful times. (Of course, his explorations are like that of Sir Hillary's compared to my own forays.) The writing is easily digestible, with each anecdote standing alone - if you prefer to read in smaller sessions. I was quite happy to read all his adventures at once. Anyone with an interest in the outdoors, and even an urban local like myself can learn a lot from this book - including an interesting mystery or two. I may dig out my waders and start my explorations again, just to find some of the treasures he writes about.

Excellent story about a wilderness most pass, disregard, or curse. Absolutely a fascinating tale of the Meadowlands and I am not a NY or NJ'er. So glad I picked this up, from the history of the area to the natural flora and fauna information. Well done Robert, I enjoy picking up your other titles after this. If you enjoy Bryson, The Meadowlands is for you.

A really wonderful tour of a place nearly every New Yorker has passed over through or around, but never really looked at. A very nostalgic trip thru the reeds of a world where the very mention of Paris Hilton is unlikely, even though the tops of HER world can be glimpsed over the verdant hills that were once garbage dumps. For a brief moment we are able to see the old Secaucus and vicinity before it became a neighborhood of New York City.

This book is so fascinating--especially for New Jersey and New York 'regionites.' The language is beautifully poetic and direct at once. I feel like I am on the adventure with the author. There is much little known startling information. I give this book as gift often, and reread.

Interesting trivia about the Meadowlands, specially since I grew up in Hudson County, it was my "backyard". Fun reading about all those places I knew: "the good, the bad and the ugly!"

Really nice book in much better condition than listed!!! Would buy again from this company in a second!!!!

I really enjoyed this book. I've long been fascinated by the view of the Meadowlands from the New

Jersey Turnpike. The book is a nice mix of historical tidbits and accounts of the author's explorations.

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