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FOGGIA, LYLA. *Reel Women: The World of Women Who Fish*. Hillsboro, OR Beyond Words Publishing, Inc., 1995. Pp. X, 294. Notes, illustrations, selected bibliography, resource directory, index. \$24.95 cb.

Frequently cultural historians and sport historians will encounter books written for general appeal that have the ability to prompt significant new issues and scholarly exploration in their fields. This is certainly the case with Lyla Foggia's *Reel Women: The World of Women Who Fish*, a collection of short biographies of women involved in just practically every dimension of sport fishing. Foggia's approach is both historical and ethnographic; indeed, her desire to accentuate this women's spots legacy is established immediately in her acknowledgement of Dame Juliana Berner's 1496 "Treatyse of Fyshynge wyth an Angle." But as with most nature-oriented leisure activities, sport fishing achieved popularity as a response to industrialization, and, as such, is very much a pursuit of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This time frame is Foggia's focus—a combination of past and present figures whose portraits begin to reveal how much is missing in the cultural and social documentation of sport fisherwomen.

In light of the current enthusiasm enjoyed by sport fishing generally, Foggia is careful not to present her topic's historical significance as an overly zealous reaction to contemporary events. Instead, through her selected historical portraits, she challenges the reader to consider the diversity and complexity of women's participation in sport fishing. Mary Orvis Marbury, whose very name evokes a family's legendary fly-fishing status, started supervising the Orvis Company's fly-tying department in 1876 and eventually wrote *Favorite Flies and Their Histories* in 1892. Suffering from tuberculosis, Maine's Cornelia "Fly Rod" Crosby retreated to the wilderness becoming an accomplished fly-fisherwoman and by the 1890's was a nationally syndicated writer on the topic. In each case, Foggia makes these personal contexts—whether it is World War II background that launched the well-known salt-water fly-fishing guide work of the Laidlaw sisters in the Florida Keys or Joan Salvato Wulff's translation of acrobatic and ballet training into championship fly-fishing form—resonate so loudly that sport historians will begin to seriously probe the social, cultural, and economic depth of this leisure activity. Foggia's personal histories will require all historians to look beyond the pastiche,

staged, or cryptic appearance of fisherwomen in late nineteenth/early twentieth century photographs and newspaper articles.

Foggia's portraits of contemporary fly-fishing women offer a number of important anthropological and social bearings for sport historians to consider. This line of investigation sheds significant light on issues that are shaping women's sport fishing culture. The women's sport fishing movement has enabled women to become much greater agents in designing equipment that meets their preferences. By documenting the lives of contemporary fly fisherwomen, Foggia not only creates a historical record of these sportswomen, but unravels a number of initiatives that motivate women to participate in the sport. Not surprisingly, the fishing careers of Maggie Merriman and Cathy Beck illustrate how readily women advance as fly-fishing instructors. By the 1980's, female fly-fishing guides such as Jennifer Olsson, Christy Ball, and Lori-Ann Murphy tailored such sporting activity to issues that transcended the immediate fishing scene. Through their work as guides, they use fly-fishing to explore the more general issue of pioneering women, female athleticism, and the complimentary nature of various outdoor sports. Foggia is able to show female fishing guides and fishing instructors as facilitators of a cultural process that pursues and values discovery; this is a particularly significant cultural exercise in an age seeking to lift certain formal and informal prohibitions on women's sporting activity.

In considering women's involvement in big-game saltwater fishing (billfish and bluefin tuna), Foggia presents a legacy that goes far beyond the dexterity and endurance required to catch fish ranging from 300 to 1,000 pounds on test lines that could easily break if mishandled. No less than such well-noted outdoorsmen as Zane Grey and Ernest Hemingway had to confront the sportfishing skills of Mrs. Keith Spalding (1920s) and Chisie Farrington (1930s) respectively. More important however, Foggia uses this backdrop to show how big-game saltwater fishing—owing to the boats, equipment, and support crew it requires—has shaped an historically significant partnership/teamwork relationship between men and women. In big-game saltwater fishing, line-handling skill and environmental perception served as equalizers over sporting brawn and fostered respect male/female and husband/wife teams whose efforts ultimately empowered women well beyond just the exhilaration of catching large fish. Starting with Helen Lerner in the 1930s to Eugenie Marron and Anne Kunkel in the 1950s to the most recent efforts of Marsha Bierman and Deborah Dunaway, big-game saltwater fishing women have contributed their sporting activity to marine research and conservation policies. Foggia's profiles of these women, particularly their early advocacy of catch-and-release policies, suggests compelling new avenues for scholars interested in the relationships between women's sport, nature, and ecological consciousness.

Foggia's concluding remarks on the substantial effort required by women to gain participation in bass fishing tournaments over the past thirty years aptly summarizes the striking collective force that has characterized women's sport fishing since the late nineteenth century. Her description of Bass'n Gal—"one of the largest angling organizations in the world" (p. 196)—vividly documents the

emergence of a women's sport fishing culture in recent times. As a contemporary development, Foggia ably portrays the collective expression of the women's sport fishing movement in far greater detail than the earlier efforts she briefly mentions, The Woman Flyfishers Club (1930s) and the International Women's Fishing Association (1950s). This approach should provide assistance in future attempts to more fully contextualize early women's sport fishing organizations. Sport historians will undoubtedly find Foggia's abbreviated treatment of most of her subjects problematic. But her book does stir issues. With women being directly involved in most aspects of sport fishing (industry, marine research, tournaments, back-to-nature excursions) since the late nineteenth century, Foggia has issued a call for more research. In short, she has identified an area that will increasingly consume the future energies of sport historians.

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