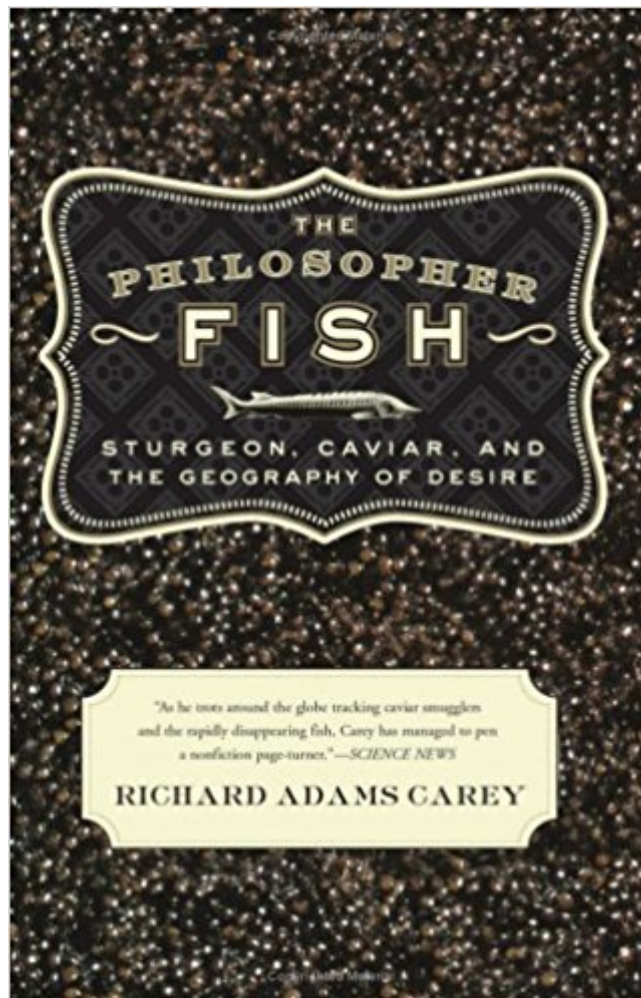




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The Philosopher Fish: Sturgeon, Caviar, And The Geography Of Desire



Synopsis

Since the days of the Persian empire, caviar has trumpeted status, wealth, prestige, and sex appeal. Today it goes for up to one hundred dollars an ounce, and aficionados will go to extraordinary lengths to get their fill of it. According to acclaimed writer Richard Adams Carey, that's just the problem. In this spectacular jaunt, Carey immerses himself in the world of sturgeon, the fish that lays these golden eggs. What he finds is disturbing. Sturgeon population worldwide have declined 70 percent in the last twenty years, most drastically in the Caspian Sea. The beluga sturgeon, producer of the most coveted caviar, has climbed to number four on the World Wildlife Fund's most-endangered species list. Armed with a novelist's eye for human eccentricity and an investigator's nose for trouble Carey takes us on an illuminating journey across the globe to uncover the secrets of the sturgeon. On that trek we meet the fascinating real-life characters both profiting from its scarcity and fighting to save it. A high-stakes cocktail of business, diplomacy, technology, and espionage, *The Philosopher Fish* is, at its heart, the epic story of a 250-million year-old fish struggling to survive.

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Customer Reviews

In *THE PHILOSOPHER FISH*, Richard Adams Carey has written an epic chronicle of the sturgeon--a fish species rapidly approaching extinction wherever it swims--as well as of its precious product, caviar. Selling for as much as one hundred dollars an ounce, caviar has become an icon of status and success, and as such, it has led to the inevitable decline of that curious and prehistoric

fish: the sturgeon. Carey exams both the fish as a species as well as the industry that seeks to exploit it. The fascinating and ancient phylogeny of the sturgeon notwithstanding, this fish is clearly in trouble. In the last two decades, sturgeon populations have shrunk to less than one third of what they were. Much of U.S. trade in caviar, as elsewhere, is illegal, but up until now, those who are working to save the sturgeon are largely ineffective. As in the drug trade, the potential rewards to be reaped by the caviar industry have led to energetic smuggling operations, the mislabeling of sturgeon species on caviar tins, as well as other shenanigans. Among the many storylines covered in THE PHILOSOPHER FISH, Carey follows the efforts of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to stymie the illegal trade in caviar, though as a result of 9/11, their resources have largely been diverted elsewhere. Carey also follows several of the sturgeons' champions in this world as they seek to improve the fish's plight. There is some slight hope in the efforts of those that hatchery-spawn sturgeon species for aquacultural purposes and possibly for future restocking projects.

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