



## BUILT FOR SPEED

*John A. Byers*

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North America's fastest mammal, the pronghorn can accelerate explosively from a standing start to a top speed of 60 miles per hour--but it can also cruise at 45 miles per hour for many miles. What accounts for the speed of this extraordinary animal, a denizen of the American outback, and what can be observed of this creature's way of life? And what is it like to be a field biologist dedicating twenty years to studying this species? In *Built for Speed*, John A. Byers answers these questions as he draws an intimate portrait of the most charismatic resident of the American Great Plains.

The National Bison Range in western Montana, established in 1908 to snatch bison from the brink of extinction, also inadvertently rescued the largest known remnant of Palouse Prairie. It is within this grassland habitat--home to meadowlarks, rattlesnakes, bighorn sheep, coyotes, elk, snipe, and a panoply of wildflowers--that Byers observes the pronghorn's life from birth to death (a life often as brief as four days, sometimes as long as fifteen years) and from season to season. Readers will also experience the vicarious pleasures of a biologist who is eager to race a pronghorn in his truck, scrutinize bison dung through binoculars, and peer through the gathering dusk of a rainy evening to count the display dives of snipe.

A vivid and memorable tale of a first-rate scientist's twenty-year encounter with a magnificent animal, the story of the pronghorn is also a reminder of the crucial role we can play in preserving the fleeting life of the native American grassland.

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Reviews of this book:

Byers, a biologist, has studied pronghorns on a refuge in western Montana for more than 20 years, and this firsthand account of fieldwork in the high-plains grasslands evokes the wonder and beauty of the region as well as the mechanics of how to study such an alert and speedy animal.

--Nancy Bent, Booklist

John A. Byers is a field biologist who has spent almost a quarter of a century chasing pronghorn antelopes in Montana's National Bison Range. Byers observes his subjects with such patience that he can recognize individual faces the way most people recognize friends and family. He's read John James Audubon and John Muir, and, as he proves with stirring accounts of his experiences in big-sky country, he can spin a phrase with a skill worthy of those master wordsmiths.

--Laurence A. Marschall, Natural History

Reviews of this book:

This is a swift, short take on a fascinating animal.

--National Geographic Adventure

Byers at all times writes with lucidity and warmth for the animal he has spent literally decades studying...Byers has called our attention to an often overlooked corner of creation: the shortgrass prairie. He urges us--through the strength of his prose and the sincerity of his passion--to conserve that very thing whose absence will be our confounding.

--John A. Murray, Bloomsbury Review

*A Year in the Life of Pronghorn* is...

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