



# Concrete Jungle: New York City and Our Last Best Hope for a Sustainable Future

*Niles Eldredge, Sidney Horenstein*

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If they are to survive, cities need healthy chunks of the world's ecosystems to persist; yet cities, like parasites, grow and prosper by local destruction of these very ecosystems. In this absorbing and wide-ranging book, Eldredge and Horenstein use New York City as a microcosm to explore both the positive and the negative sides of the relationship between cities, the environment, and the future of global biodiversity. They illuminate the mass of contradictions that cities present in embodying the best and the worst of human existence. The authors demonstrate that, though cities have voracious appetites for resources such as food and water, they also represent the last hope for conserving healthy remnants of the world's ecosystems and species. With their concentration of human beings, cities bring together centers of learning, research, government, finance, and media—institutions that increasingly play active roles in solving environmental problems.

Some of the topics covered in *Concrete Jungle*:

- The geological history of the New York region, including remnant glacial features visible today
- The early days of urbanization on Manhattan Island, focusing on the history of Central Park, Collect Pond, and Manhattan Square
- The history of early railway lines and the development of New York's iconic subway system
- The problem of producing enough safe drinking water for an ever-expanding population
- Prominent civic institutions, including universities, museums, and zoos

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