



DOG TRAINING

Helping you and your dog become best friends for life.

BOOK REVIEW – DOGS – A STARTLING NEW UNDERSTANDING OF CANINE ORIGIN, BEHAVIOR & EVOLUTION, BY RAYMOND AND LORNA COPPINGER

SUGGESTED AUDIENCE: Those who want to increase their knowledge of how the dog evolved and the dog's natural history, as a means of better understanding their dog's needs.

Like most of the other titles on the *Green Acres' List of Recommended Dog Books*, this book refutes a great number of the popular myths about the domestic dog with sound science. Dr. Coppinger is a professor at Hampshire College where he teaches evolutionary biology. He and his wife Lorna have over 40 years of experience living and working with all varieties of dogs.

The main premise of this book is that humans did not create the dog by taming and domesticating the wolf, but instead the dog self-evolved from the wolf. Tamer and less energetic wolves started hanging around human settlements for the discarded food and over time these wolves evolved into today's village dog. Only in the last couple of hundred years have humans become involved in consciously, and not always responsibly, engineering the village dog into the many breeds we see today. The Coppinger's have studied village dogs (feral dogs living in human communities) as they exist in the world today in places like Mexico City, and Pemba. What they have observed are the same traits we see in the dogs we share our lives with.

FAVORITE QUOTE: "Dogs as a species are most likely less than fifteen thousand years old, which is a barest instant of evolutionary time. Wolves as a species are maybe five million years old, and they need protection from extinction. ... [There are] four hundred million dogs in the world – that is a thousand times more dogs than there are wolves. If wolves are the ancient ancestors of dogs that means dogs have achieved a biological coup, successfully outpopulating their ancestors by *a lot*."

If you want a better understanding of your dog, or dogs in general, it is very helpful to know how they evolved to become the creatures that they are today. Reading the Coppinger's *Dogs* will help you attain that understanding.