



# Becoming Salmon: Aquaculture and the Domestication of a Fish (California Studies in Food and Culture)

By Marianne Elisabeth Lien

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*Becoming Salmon* is the first ethnographic account of salmon aquaculture, the most recent turn in the human history of animal domestication. In this careful and nuanced study, Marianne Elisabeth Lien explores how the growth of marine domestication has blurred traditional distinctions between fish and animals, recasting farmed fish as sentient beings, capable of feeling pain and subject to animal-welfare legislation.

Drawing on fieldwork on and off salmon farms, Lien follows farmed Atlantic salmon through contemporary industrial husbandry, exposing how salmon are bred to be hungry, globally mobile, and “alien” in their watersheds of origin. Attentive to both the economic context of industrial food production and the materiality of human-animal relations, this book highlights the fragile and contingent relational practices that constitute salmon aquaculture and the multiple ways of “becoming salmon” that emerge as a result.

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## **Editorial Review**

### Review

"The book is both a keenly insightful exploration of the mutual effect of salmon and the people who raise them, and an engaging love letter to ethnography, which illuminates the ways in which such work can expand the boundaries of how we think about vexing issues of science and society... Here is anthropology that speaks to all of us about our food systems and the animals caught up in them, and about the inevitability of uncertainty, offered with no closure and with a masterly voice."

*(Times Literary Supplement)*

"A timely contribution. . . Overall, *Becoming Salmon* is a detailed and illuminating study of a rapidly growing industry, offering key insights into the practices of care that literally bring fish as food animals to, and through, life."

*(Anthropology of Work Review)*

### From the Inside Flap

"*Becoming Salmon* takes banal aspects of life and reveals their shocking strangeness. Marianne Elisabeth Lien traces this strangeness—navigating across theory, history, ethnography, and poignant personal accounts—to illustrate how the relation of human to nonhuman lies at the core of our lives." —Ben Orlove, Professor at the Earth Institute, Columbia University, and coeditor of *Darkening Peaks: Glacier Retreat, Science, and Society*

"Through meticulous attention to the multiple practices of salmon farming in Norway and beyond, Lien convincingly shows how human and animal worlds are co-constituted in a mutual process of becoming." —Kirsten Hastrup, Professor of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen

"Traveling with Lien, we learn that salmon domestication was always more lively, uncertain, and multiple than we had realized: salmon can come to have rights, they can be escapees, they can be biomass. Out of this multiplicity, Lien reveals a rich political and imaginative field." —Andrew S. Mathews, Associate Professor of Anthropology, University of California, Santa Cruz, and author of *Instituting Nature: Authority, Expertise, and Power in Mexican Forests*

"Lien beckons us into the mysterious trading zone where species as different as humans and fish touch—and shape each other's fates." —Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, author of *The Mushroom at the End of the World*

### About the Author

**Marianne Elisabeth Lien** is Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Oslo, Norway.

## **Users Review**

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**Carmen Annunziata:**

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**Ronda Powers:**

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