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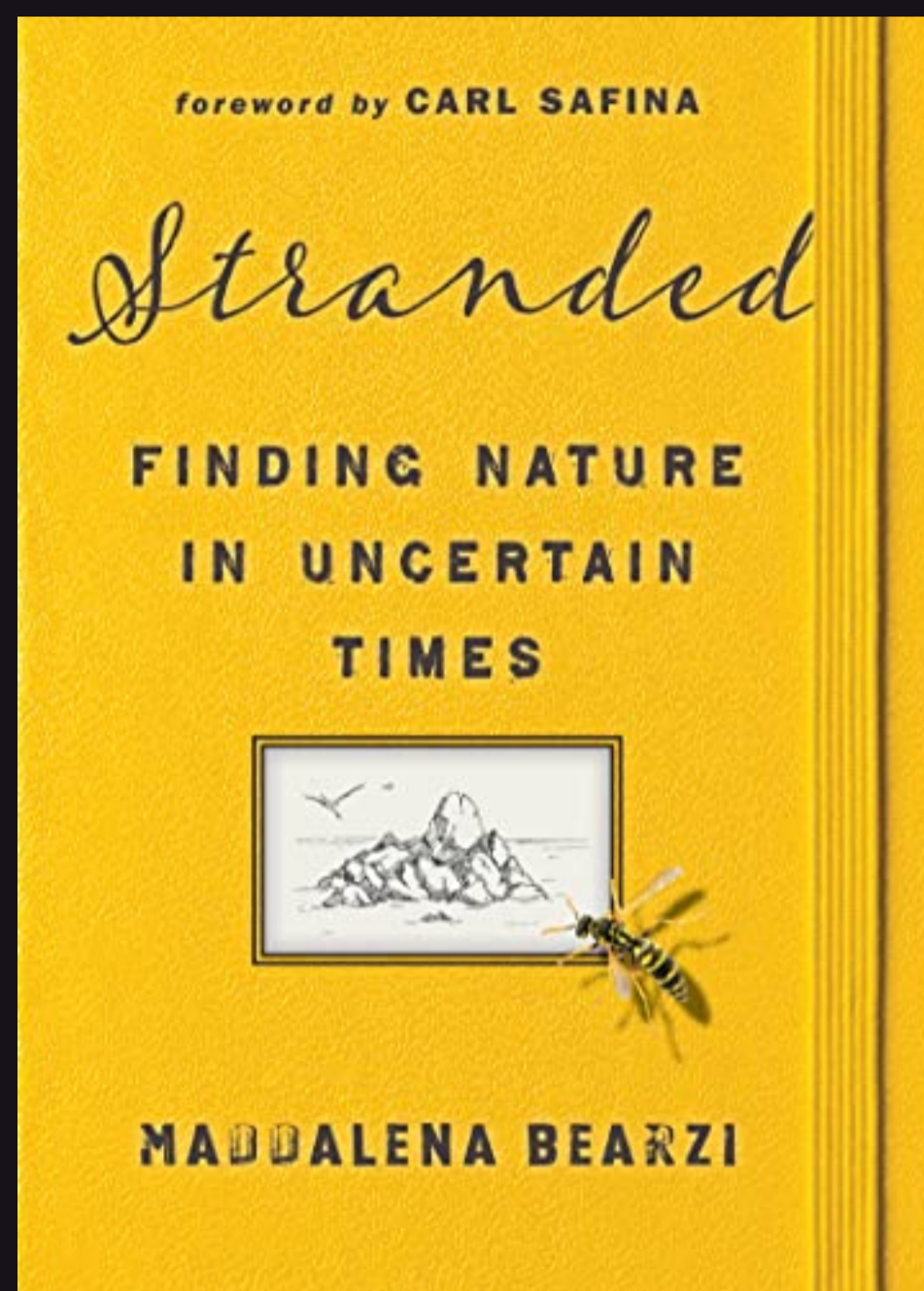
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Stranded: Finding Nature in Uncertain Times

Maddalena Bearzi. Heyday, \$25 trade paper (224p) ISBN 978-1-59714-604-3

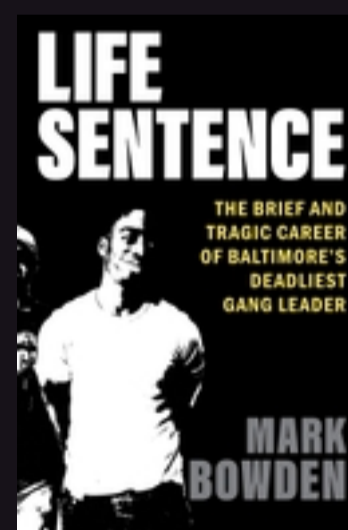
Marine biologist Bearzi (*Dolphin Confidential*) celebrates the marvels of ordinary wildlife in these charming meditations. Collecting vignettes about the animals she observed while confined to her Los Angeles home during Covid-19 lockdown, she serves up thoughtful commentary on humanity's place in nature and the value of all creatures. Bearzi reports on the goings-on in her backyard, including Opus the opossum's nightly raids on her vegetable garden, paper wasps building a nest in her unused lounge chair, and the turf war between native western gray squirrels and invasive eastern fox squirrels. The author's mutt, Genghis, features prominently, from his hunts for lizards to his skirmishes with squirrels. Considering what Genghis might make of her wearing a mask, Bearzi dives into the conflicting scientific literature on whether dogs can read human facial expressions and reflects on how much "we still don't know about our best friends." The deliberate pace and mundane observations capture the unhurried rhythms of lockdown, and Bearzi makes a convincing case that by slowing down to "look at the creatures around us... we understand and respect that they have their own purposes on Earth, which have just as much value as ours." These tranquil reflections delight. Illus. (Apr.)

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