

Caribou Rising: Defending the Porcupine Herd, Gwich-'in Culture, and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

By Rick Bass

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The eloquent voice of Rick Bass has been raised often in celebration and defense of America's wilderness and wildlife. In *Caribou Rising*, Bass journeys to one of the sole remaining landscapes on Earth where the wild is entirely untrammeled—Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, where great caribou herds gather, calve, and migrate, and where the ancient bond between animals and human hunters still informs daily life.

As the Bush administration was pressuring Congress to open the Refuge to oil drilling, Bass traveled to Arctic Village to join the native Gwich-'in in their annual caribou hunt. He wanted to witness and report on what we all stand to lose if that comes to pass.

Caribou Rising details Bass's time hunting as well as talking with the Gwich-'in and their leaders, and offers his reflections on the profound differences between that culture and our own, and on the ancient physical and spiritual connection between the Gwich-'in and the caribou.

Those who read this extraordinary testament to the Refuge, the caribou, and the Gwich-'in will come to appreciate the interconnectedness of all three, and cannot help but be inspired to make a stand in their defense.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
In this poetic cri de coeur, Bass (*The Book of the Yaak*) turns his focus to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. He visited there to join the Gwich-'in tribe in its annual hunt for the life-sustaining caribou—as the Bush administration pressured Congress to open the herd's traditional calving grounds to oil drilling. This bittersweet account of his stay conveys a profound appreciation for the immense, unblemished majesty of one of the few almost untouched landscapes on Earth; an eye-opening understanding of the intimate spiritual and physical connection, stretching back as much as 10,000 years, between the scattered Gwich-'in tribes and the migrant caribou; and an unexpected respect for how tribal elders and a young generation of activists in Arctic Village (pop. 150) have developed a media-savvy offense against "predatory" Alaskan politicians desperate to drill for a few months' worth of petroleum. Bass is no starry-eyed optimist arguing abstractly for the environment; he concludes his emotional defense of the Gwich-'in uncertain that the preservation of a precious, ancient way of life is possible. But this eloquent narrative holds out hope.
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From Booklist
The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, where corporate and governmental interests want to drill for oil, is the homeland of the Gwich'in, "people of the caribou," a group that has lived on this harsh land and hunted its animals for 20,000 years, making the ongoing debate over the preservation of the refuge as much a human rights issue as an environmental concern. Bass, a well-known, profoundly expressive writer, traveled to Arctic Village to get a sense of what's at stake. He couldn't be a better emissary. Not only is Bass a hunter and a lover of pristine terrains, he has also worked as an oil and gas geologist. In his knowledgeable, impassioned, and involving inquiry, he describes the stark beauty of the tundra (home to numerous animal species), profiles savvy and resilient individuals determined to protect the Gwich'in way of life, and explains the damage done by oil-drilling operations. Ultimately, Bass asks, which is worth more to humankind, an insignificant amount of oil (more could be conserved with improved fuel economy standards) or an ancient culture and a glorious ecosystem? *Donna Seaman*
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From the Inside Flap
"Rick Bass says we must not destroy an ancient culture and another ecosystem for petroleum. Simple as that. Caribou Rising is a great read and utterly compelling in its reasoning. Bravo!"--William Kittredge, author of *The Nature of Generosity* and *The Best Short Stories of William Kittredge*

"Rick Bass, the gifted novelist and our most prolific western conservation writer, turns his keen hunter's eye to the besieged caribou land of the Gwich-'in--the Brooks Range and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. As an ex-gas and oil geologist, Bass argues with logic and passion, blasting away at the ignorance and greed of the Bush Administration's misled campaign to open the refuge to drilling."--Doug Peacock, author of *Grizzly Years* and inspiration for the rabble-rousing Hayduke in *The Monkey Wrench Gang*

Users Review

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Jetta Butler:

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Sheila Donovan:

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Gwen Anderson:

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