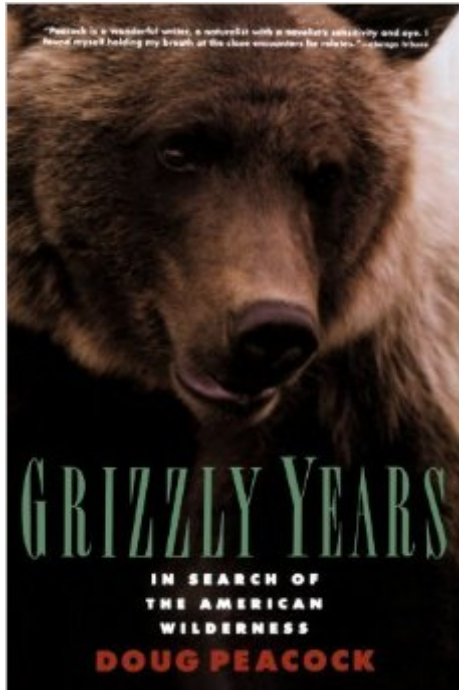


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Grizzly Years: In Search Of The American Wilderness



Synopsis

For nearly twenty years, alone and unarmed, author Doug Peacock traversed the rugged mountains of Montana and Wyoming tracking the magnificent grizzly. His thrilling narrative takes us into the bear's habitat, where we observe directly this majestic animal's behavior, from hunting strategies, mating patterns, and denning habits to social hierarchy and methods of communication. As Peacock tracks the bears, his story turns into a thrilling narrative about the breaking down of suspicion between man and beast in the wild.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

My interest was piqued by Jack Turner's "Abstract Wild" which stands alone as the most intense and vital book written on the experience of wildness. From Turner's comments I ventured to buy a copy of Peacock's book "Grizzly Years" even after having read some of the negative comments I found in the reviews given. There is some truth to these comments but they are far outweighed by honesty and boldness of the experiences of Doug Peacock throughout his 'Grizzly Years' which of course are not simply the years Peacock spent studying and living near Grizzlies but rather the years of his own transformation from out of the nightmare that was the Vietnam War. I don't think it is an accident that as one proceeds through the book, which is interspersed with Vietnam war experiences, these experiences no longer command the full attention of Peacock as his healing takes place. More and more he assumes the life of a person living in the moment and can pass by the old nightmares for the realness of his life now. No doubt writing this book itself was a part of his cleaning out process and the leaving behind of past lives because they are no longer necessary.

Rather than being excerpts to attract or hold the attention they are an integral part of the story, first the very real and immensely powerful experience of combat and the ever present horror of suffering which is always there confronting him, making his life moments which are full of life or death and nothing in between.

This is an outstanding book written by a man who is extraordinarily comfortable in his own skin, yet extraordinarily uncomfortable in modern society. Peacock is a man who can write lyrically and genuinely about the wilderness, who can stand tall while staring a grizzly in the eyes, and yet who can't attend a party, or walk through a city, or even meet an innocuous stranger who has expressed an interest in chatting with him. I've read a few other books by people who share Peacock's gruff no-compromise attitude when it comes to environmental protection, and have been really bothered by the sense that they seem to have formed a "we understand nature and you don't" club that excludes most of the environmental movement. Authors Gary Ferguson and Rick Bass (who spent some wilderness time with Peacock) have managed to make this model of environmental conservation seem childish and churlish. But Peacock, who is basically writing the same argument, gives this idea wings on which we soar. Peacock is brutally honest about himself, and about how his war experiences in Vietnam shattered his soul and left him thrashing about the country in a state of spiritual agony. When he relates a story about becoming frustrated with a payphone operator, and then taking out a shotgun and blowing the telephone to bits, we know that he's not billing himself as a healthy individual. This honesty lets us see the genuine love that Peacock has for nature in general and grizzly bears in particular. He is well-versed in the scientific side of environmental preservation, and gives us plenty to chew on as far as the good and bad of the institutions that are involved with grizzly bear issues.

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