



Return to Wild America: A Yearlong Search for the Continent's Natural Soul

Scott Weidensaul

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In 1953, birding guru Roger Tory Peterson and noted British naturalist James Fisher set out on what became a legendary journey—a one hundred day trek over 30,000 miles around North America. They traveled from Newfoundland to Florida, deep into the heart of Mexico, through the Southwest, the Pacific Northwest, and into Alaska's Pribilof Islands. Two years later, *Wild America*, their classic account of the trip, was published.

On the eve of that book's fiftieth anniversary, naturalist Scott Weidensaul retraces Peterson and Fisher's steps to tell the story of wild America today. How has the continent's natural landscape changed over the past fifty years? How have the wildlife, the rivers, and the rugged, untouched terrain fared? The journey takes Weidensaul to the coastal communities of Newfoundland, where he examines the devastating impact of the Atlantic cod fishery's collapse on the ecosystem; to Florida, where he charts the virtual extinction of the great wading bird colonies that Peterson and Fisher once documented; to the Mexican tropics of Xilitla, which have become a growing center of ecotourism since Fisher and Peterson's exposition. And perhaps most surprising of all, Weidensaul finds that much of what Peterson and Fisher discovered remains untouched by the industrial developments of the last fifty years. Poised to become a classic in its own right, *Return to Wild America* is a sweeping survey of the natural soul of North America today.

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