



BAD NATURALIST

BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

- 1 Is the author really a “bad” naturalist? How do you interpret that title, after reading the book?
- 2 What notions about nature and conservation did you bring to your reading of this story?
- 3 What in the story surprised you about nature or the process of conservation? What confirmed what you already thought or suspected?
- 4 How do you think about nature and conservation now, after reading?
- 5 At several points throughout the book, the author could have made different decisions about courses of action in response to the various challenges and obstacles she encountered. At times, a different decision might have led to a different (sometimes more desirable) outcome. What might you have done differently under the circumstances, and why?
- 6 How did the author change in the course of her journey of discovery?
- 7 The author implies that her family of origin and some of the experiences she had growing up that shaped her outlook eventually led her to this point—to her curiosity about nature on the mountaintop and the desire to do something about it. Often authors are not aware of every layer of meaning in what they write and readers may take away something different from what the author thought she was conveying about herself or the story she tells. What influences do you detect or what layer of meaning occur to you that the author herself might not be aware of?

- 8** What kind of influence did your formative experiences have on your attitudes toward nature? On how you approach conservation in your day to day life?
- 9** What expectations did you have when you started reading this book? What surprised you about the author's story?
- 10** How do nature or conservation figure in your own life? What conservation practices do you do as a matter of course (e.g., recycling)? What practices do you wish you could do? What would you do if you could try anything?
- 11** Has this book inspired you to rethink your approach to nature or conservation in large or small ways? If so, how?
- 12** Before reading this book, how did you think individual conservation efforts on one's own property fit into the larger effort to save wildlife and plants and support biodiversity and ecosystems? Can such efforts make an impact? How do you feel after reading this book?
- 13** The author decided to embark on this project somewhat impulsively, without knowing exactly what would be involved. Have you ever made a similar decision to take on a big responsibility without being fully informed, and if so, what were the circumstances, and how did it go?
- 14** If you were to set an ambitious goal in your life right now—e.g., to learn something entirely new to you, to attempt something outside of your comfort zone, to take a risk on a project that might fail—what would it be, and how would you go about it?
- 15** Are you wondering what will happen next on the mountain? What questions remain for you at the end of this book?

