



PRESS RELEASE

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BEAVERLAND

How One Weird Rodent Made America

Leila Philip

An intimate and revelatory dive into the world of the beaver -- the wonderfully weird rodent that has surprisingly shaped American history and may save its ecological future.

ADVANCE PRAISE

“Lyrically written, meticulously observed, and exhaustively researched, *Beaverland* is going to break your heart—and then heal it with compassion, beauty, and wonder.” —**Sy Montgomery**, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Soul of an Octopus*

“We can’t have enough books about this wonderful creature—and this one is particularly strong on the remarkable history of the animal in our continent’s history and imagination. A loud slap of the tail in approval!”
—**Bill McKibben**, bestselling author of *The End of Nature*

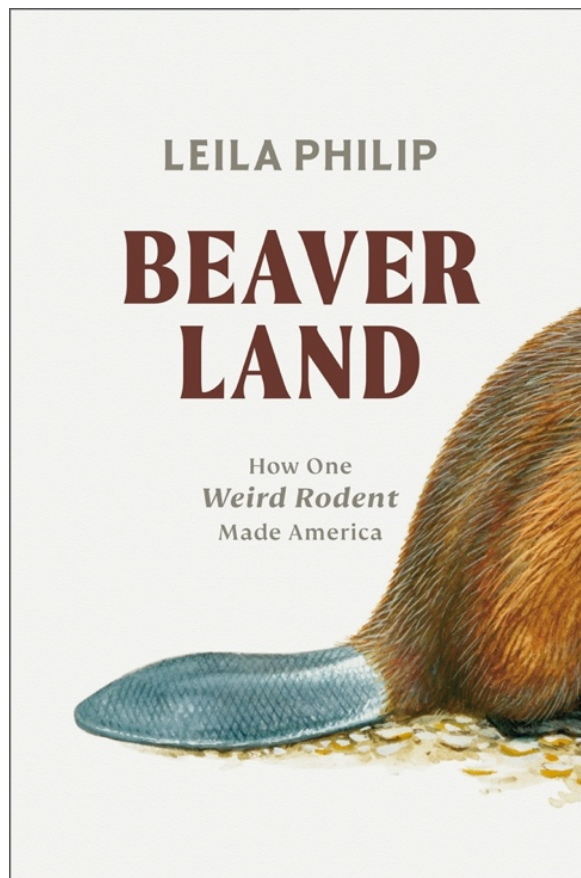
“*Beaverland* is wonderful, captivating, and illuminating. I learned so much—about natural history, business history, the world of today’s fur trappers, and the role of a large, strange rodent in America’s ecological future.”
—**James Fallows**, bestselling co-author of *Our Towns: A 100,000-Mile Journey into the Heart of America*

“In *Beaverland*, Leila Philip takes us on a fascinating tour of the beaver’s effect on human history, and how, after its near extinction, we need to bring this rodent back for the sake of our ecosystems.”
—**Frans de Waal**, author of *Different: Gender Through the Eyes of a Primatologist*

“*Beaverland* may be the best-realized book about an American animal in years. A work of open-hearted discovery. Can returning beavers and their works

save our future? However you answer that, this fine book is going to re-arrange the furniture in your head.”

—**Dan Flores**, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Coyote America*



“*Beaverland* is poignant, impeccably researched, and artfully put together with an eye toward the beaver's role in the anthropogenic disaster of our changing climate and damaged ecosystems.”

—Gretel Ehrlich, author of *Unsolaced: Along the Way to All That Is*

“Leila Philip’s *Beaverland* is an engaging story centered on a nerdy anti-hero, the beaver. While she states that beavers are weird, she makes a strong case that people in the beaver world are even weirder. This book weaves humor and storytelling with profound thoughts about nature. Don’t miss the beavers parachuting into the Idaho wilderness.”

—Mark Kurlansky, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Cod and Salt*

About the Book

From award-winning writer Leila Philip, **BEAVERLAND: How One Weird Rodent Made America (On sale: December 6, 2022 / 9781538755198 / Twelve)** is a masterful work of narrative science writing, a book that highlights, through history and contemporary storytelling, how this weird rodent plays an oversized role in American history and its future. She follows fur trappers who lead her through waist high water, fur traders and fur auctioneers, as well as wildlife managers, PETA activists, Native American environmental vigilantes, scientists, engineers, and the colorful group of activists known as *beaver believers*.

Beginning with the early trans-Atlantic trade in North America, Leila Philip traces the beaver’s profound influence on our nation’s early economy and feverish western expansion, its first corporations and multi-millionaires. In her pursuit of this weird and wonderful animal, she introduces us to people whose lives are devoted to the beaver, including a Harvard scientist from the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana, who uses drones to create 3-dimensional images of beaver dams; and an environmental restoration consultant in the Chesapeake whose nickname is the “beaver whisperer”.

What emerges is a poignant personal narrative, a startling portrait of the secretive world of the contemporary fur trade, and an engrossing ecological and historical investigation of these heroic animals who, once trapped to the point of extinction, have returned to the landscape as one of the greatest conservation stories of the 20th century. Beautifully written and impeccably researched, *Beaverland* reveals the profound ways in which one odd creature and the trade surrounding it has shaped history, culture, and our environment.

We also recently got a [starred review](#), along with a [Q&A piece](#) in *Publisher’s Weekly*, which both delve into the importance of this animal, not just historically, but as we face more and more environmental problems today.

The Book was named one of Barnes and Noble’s [Best Nature Books of the Year!](#)

About the Author

Leila Philip is the author of award-winning books of literary nonfiction that have received starred reviews and have been reviewed by the *New York Times* and elsewhere. A Guggenheim Fellow, she has also been awarded fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Philip was a contributing columnist at the *Boston Globe* from 2016-2020 and teaches in the Environmental Studies Program at the College of the Holy Cross where she is a professor in the English Department.



Additional Praise for *Beaverland*

“Offers an enthralling history of beavers and their impact on the United States... The result is a triumph of popular nature writing.”

– ***Publisher’s Starred Weekly***

“Most interesting is what Philip learned about beavers’ contribution to environmental restoration... A spirited, informative historical and environmental investigation.”

– ***Kirkus Reviews***

“*Beaverland* is a model for 21st-century environmental writing—a beautifully told story with lodes of well-researched history and ecology, and a lyrical ode to natural wonders that steers clear of romanticism and questions cherished environmental ideas. This book will surprise the hell out of you on nearly every page.”

– ***Jenny Price, author of *Stop Saving the Planet!: An Environmentalist Manifesto****

“Ranging across a continent and five centuries, *Beaverland* explores our strange relationship with an odd creature capable of inexplicable engineering. In lyrical words and with deep insights, Leila Philip reveals how beavers shaped our environment - and how humans have unraveled their creation.” – ***Alan Taylor, Pulitzer-prize winning author of *American Republics: A Continental History of the United States, 1783-1850****

“Are beavers smart, asks Leila Philip in this captivating personal journey through history and streams that brings secretive creatures to life—beavers and those who trap them. The other animals that engineer their world -- beavers -- create complex, biodiverse landscapes while we do the opposite. This engaging tale of how beavers shaped America’s rivers and streams for millennia, and how their comeback is now helping restore waterways, invites us to wonder who, really, is the smart one?” – ***David R. Montgomery, McArthur Fellow, author of *Dirt The Erosion of Civilizations****

“In this engaging and informative book, Leila Philip tells the tale of North American beavers as seen through human eyes. Philip uses diverse vignettes, from Native American creation stories to visits with contemporary trappers, beaver believers, and scientists, to gradually build a story of beavers and humans through time. Plenty of basic information about beavers is presented in digestible bites along the way as Philip deftly evokes place, mood, people, and beavers.” – ***Dr Ellen Wohl, author of *Saving the Dammed****

“Leila Philip brings intelligence, enthusiasm, and an open mind to her inquiry into the lives and histories of beavers, offering her reader a many-angled vision of her subject as she investigates the overlapping and often-competing interests of the trapper, the developer, the naturalist, the merchant. In doing so, she tracks the beaver’s essential place in our history and our lives. But *Beaverland* is also a plea -- beyond our history, our markets, and our desires -- for the pure appreciation of this mammal and its capacity to remake the world. Perhaps this is the greatest achievement of Philip’s clear-eyed and beautifully written book.” – ***Jane Brox, author of *Silence: A Social History of One of the Least Understood Elements of Our Lives****

For more information or to schedule an interview with Leila Philip please contact Estefania Acquaviva; Estefania.acquaviva@hbgusa.com

BEAVERLAND: How One Weird Rodent Made America

By Leila Philip

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