

Minnesota Storytime
Reading Guide

Title: *If You Want to See a Caribou*

Author: Phyllis Root

Illustrator: Jim Meyer

**Publisher and
Copyright Date:** Houghton Mifflin, 2004

**Connection to
Minnesota:** Minnesota author, Minnesota illustrator

Summary: This is a story of what readers might see and hear while looking for caribou on an island in Lake Superior.

Suggested ages: 4-6, 7-10

Tips for Reading:

- Point to the shadow of the caribou on the cover and ask the children to look for the caribou throughout the book.
- Read slowly. The compact text does not rhyme, but it sounds like music.
- Pause after each page to give the children a little extra time to see the illustrations before going on.

**Questions
before reading:**

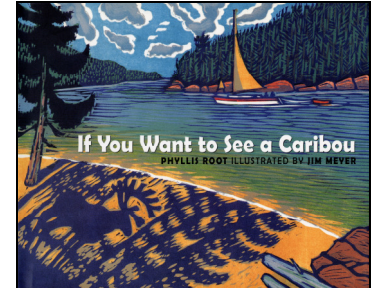
- Do you know what a caribou is or what it looks like?
- Have you ever seen deer in the woods or by the road? What surprised you about them?
- Have you been on a sailboat? If yes, what was it like? If no, what do you think it would be like?
- Have you been to Lake Superior? If so, what do you remember about it?

**To Introduce
this story say:**

Do you see the shadow of the caribou on the cover of this book? This is a story about being in the woods on an island in Lake Superior, looking for caribou and seeing a lot of other things along the way. Let's see what those things might be. Keep your eyes open for the caribou!

**Questions
After Reading:**

- Were you surprised to see the caribou at the end?
- List as many things as you can remember seeing in the woods.
- Can you think of something else we wait to see when we're in the woods? Possible answers: birds, full moon, northern lights. What do these things have in common?
- What season do you think the book is set in? What clues can you find?



RELATED ACTIVITIES

- Art:**
- Make a collage of things you can see around Lake Superior. Use magazines to cut out photos or draw pictures for the collage.
- Music:**
- Listen to a recording of Carla Sciaky's "Under the Quarter Moon"—a song about Lake Superior. How does it remind you of this book?
- Science:**
- Read the note about woodland caribou at the back of the book. What do you think "loss of habitat" means?
 - Read the note about woodland caribou at the back of the book. It lists what a caribou eats. Research what an animal with this diet is called. List some other animals who eat similarly.
 - Research other endangered animals.
- Writing:**
- Make a list of words you remember from the book then write a poem using as many of those words as you can.
 - Write a story (or poem) about finding something hard to see.
- Suggestions for English Language Learners:**
- Bring in props to share while reading the book. Show a photo, drawing, toy, or real item before, during, and after reading to help children follow the story. For example, an anchor, loon, hooves, and pine needles are mentioned in the story, and props could be shared for each
 - Together with learners, make a list of action verbs for how one might search for a caribou. Include verbs and phrases from the story. For example, walk, follow, look, stoop under bushes, etc. Match words/phrases on your list to words/phrases in the book.
 - Are there caribou in your native country? Tell about similar animals or other birds and animals that people there like to see.
- Related Books:**
- ***A Caribou Alphabet*** by Mary Beth Owens (The Dog Ear Press, 1988)
 - ***Meeting Trees*** by Scott Russell Sanders (National Geographic Society, 1997)
 - ***At the Edge of the Woods: A Counting Book*** by Cynthia Cotton, illustrated by Reg Cartwright (Henry Holt, 2002)
 - ***I Took a Walk*** by Henry Cole (Greenwillow Books, 1998)

