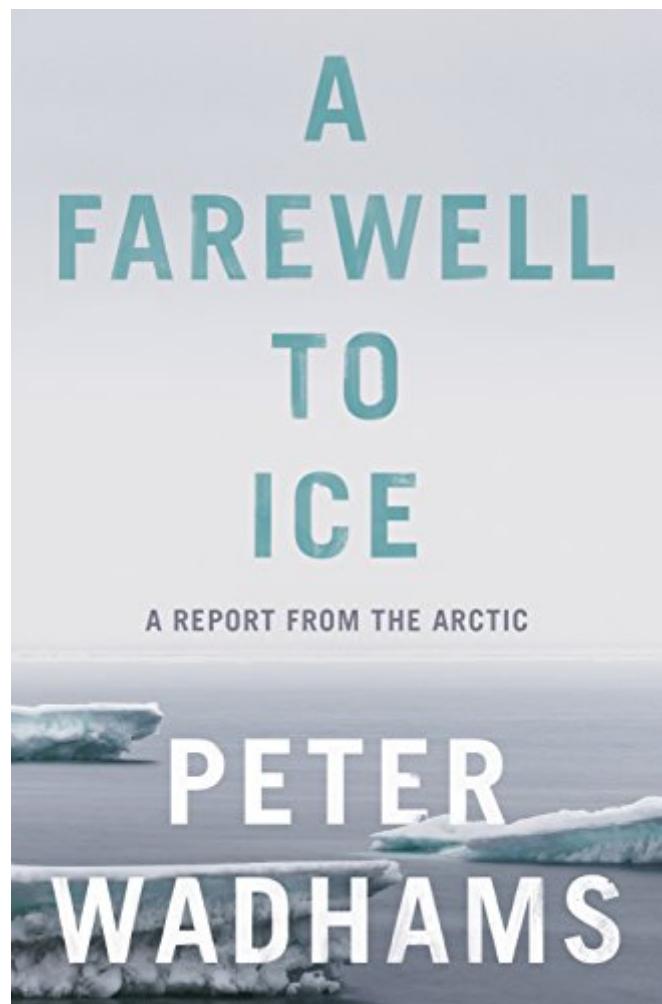


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A Farewell To Ice: A Report From The Arctic



Synopsis

Most of the scientific establishment predict that the North Pole will be free of ice around the middle of this century. As Peter Wadhams, the world's leading expert on sea ice, demonstrates in this book, even this assessment of the future is optimistic. Wadhams has visited the Polar Regions more often than any other living scientist - 50 times since he was on the first ship to circumnavigate the Americas in 1970 - and has a uniquely authoritative perspective on the changes they have undergone and where those changes will lead. From his observations and the latest scientific research, he describes how dramatically sea ice has diminished over the past three decades, to the point at which, by the time this book is published, the Arctic may be free of ice for the first time in 10,000 years. Wadhams shows how sea ice is the 'canary in the mine' of planetary climate change. He describes how it forms and the vital role it plays in reflecting solar heat back into space and providing an 'air conditioning' system for the planet. He shows how a series of rapid feedbacks in the Arctic region are accelerating change there more rapidly than almost all scientists - and political authorities - have previously realised, and the dangers of further acceleration are very real. A Farewell to Ice is a report from the frontline of planetary change in the Arctic and Antarctic by a leading authority, presenting incontrovertible scientific data, but always in clear language which the layman can easily understand. It is one of the most important books published in recent years about the existential challenge which human civilization now faces.

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Customer Reviews

I waited for this book's publication before writing my own book on the ecological crisis, and I'm glad I did. Peter Wadhams, an ocean scientist from Cambridge University, provides extraordinary insight into the perilous state of Arctic ice. He describes how the ice has shrunk in extent and thickness over the last few decades, and the baleful implications this has for global warming and thus humankind's survival. The real value of this book lies in the fact that Wadhams, like climate scientist David Wasdell, is an independent thinker and commentator. Although he is tied to a major university, he is not afraid to blast the IPCC for its "shameful" and "misleading" analysis, which massively understates the threat faced by our species and the biosphere. In particular, he decries the IPCC's adoption of a "consensus" view on the disappearance of Arctic ice. This disappearance could well result in a catastrophic burst of methane from the hydrates lying under the region's shallow and rapidly warming seas. He notes that, "This consensus involves consciously ignoring the observational data in favour of accepting models that have already shown themselves to be false. This is a serious charge to make against a body for which most scientists have great respect, but it is justified." (p. 88) Wadhams repeatedly states that the fundamental requirement for human survival is to rapidly reduce the stock of CO₂ in the atmosphere. He therefore proposes a "Manhattan Project" to develop the technology for direct air capture (DAC) of CO₂. For those who bristle at the mention of such techniques, he offers the following balanced perspective: "We have destroyed our planet's life support system by mindless development and misuse of technology.

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