### Peter Bates

### Knowing caribou: Inuit, ecological science and traditional ecological knowledge in the Canadian Arctic (2006)

I document the knowledge forms of three distinct constituencies operating in the community of Cambridge Bay in the Canadian Arctic: its Inuit inhabitants, visiting ecological scientists and researchers documenting 'traditional ecological knowledge' (TEK). I explore the relationships that develop between them during attempts to understand the Dolphin-Union caribou herd, which inhabits Victoria Island and the adjacent mainland. I argue that there are fundamental differences between what ecologists, TEK researchers and Inuit understand to constitute knowledge and that these currently impair efforts at collaboration. I show what these differences are and go on to suggest how, in practice, they might be transcended.

I pursue these themes through an ethnographic study of the ways in which relationships between risk and knowledge are played out in practice among Inuit hunters, scientific ecologists and TEK researchers. F ollowing the work of Beck (1986), I argue that modern conceptions of risk fundamentally underpin the structure and focus of western science, giving priority to knowledge that will aid prediction, control and management. This in turn often dictates the objectives of the TEK research process. Meanwhile Inuit hunters, operating largely outside of modernity's preoccupation with risk, find these concerns rather unnecessary.

I move on to address the underlying epistemological similarity between Inuit knowledge and scientific ecological knowledge. This similarity is often obscured by representations of scientific knowledge as comprising an accumulation of discrete, prepositional, impersonal products. An ethnographic account of the processes that contribute to the formation of ecological science and Inuit knowledge shows that in practice, both rest on learning by experience within a process of engaged activity. Focusing on the similarities at this fundamental level I suggest how scientific and Inuit knowledge may be integrated in a way that remains faithful to Inuit understandings of what it is to know caribou.