

# Rebecca Renner

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About this Person

**Nationality:** American

**Occupation:** Writer

Full Text:

## PERSONAL INFORMATION

**Education:** Earned an M.F.A.

## CAREER

Writer. Contributor to *National Geographic*. Previously, worked as a high school English teacher.

## WORKS

### WRITINGS:

*Gator Country: Deception, Danger, and Alligators in the Everglades*, Flatiron Books (New York, NY), 2023.

Contributor to periodicals, including the *New York Times*, *Outside*, *Sierra*, *Tin House*, and the *Paris Review*.

## SIDELIGHTS

Rebecca Renner is a writer whose work often focuses on nature. She is a regular contributor to *National Geographic* and has also written pieces that have appeared in other publications, including the *New York Times*, *Outside*, *Sierra*, *Tin House*, and the *Paris Review*.

In 2023 Renner released her first book, *Gator Country: Deception, Danger, and Alligators in the Everglades*. In this volume, she examines both sides of an ongoing debate about the treatment of alligators in Florida. On one side is Jeff Babauta, who was an officer for the Florida Fish and Wildlife department. When he is beginning to think of retiring, Babauta is lured into heading up an investigation of alligator poachers operating in the state. Babauta creates a new identity for himself, becoming known as Curtis Blackledge, founder of Sunshine Alligator Farm in Arcadia, Florida. As Blackledge, Babauta begins interacting with poachers and collecting information on how they operate. Meanwhile, Renner offers information on the poachers, profiling Peg Brown, a renowned poacher from the area and discussing the poaching economy and its history. Renner also comments on her own connection to the topic of alligators, noting that she grew up in central Florida and had a memorable first glance at an alligator when she was seven years old.

Critics offered favorable assessments of *Gator Country*. A *Kirkus Reviews* contributor suggested, "Renner's passion for her home state, compassion for those less fortunate, and gift of storytelling make this book difficult to put down." The same contributor described the volume as "enlightening and full of suspense." "This tale of power, politics, and tradition is a triumph," asserted a writer in *Publishers Weekly*. Kathleen Gerard, reviewer on the *Shelf Awareness* website, remarked: "Her propulsive narrative reads as suspensefully as a well-wrought mystery novel as she uncovers an exciting true story rife with shocking twists and turns that will educate, enlighten, and enthrall her audience."

## FURTHER READINGS

### BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL SOURCES:

## PERIODICALS

*Kirkus Reviews*, September 15, 2023, review of *Gator Country: Deception, Danger, and Alligators in the Everglades*, p. 409.

*Publishers Weekly*, September 11, 2023, review of *Gator Country*, p. 40.

## ONLINE

Rebecca Renner website, <https://rebecca-renner.com/> (October 16, 2023).

*Shelf Awareness*, <https://www.shelf-awareness.com/> (October 2, 2023), Kathleen Gerard, review of *Gator Country*.\*

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