

The New York Times Magazine

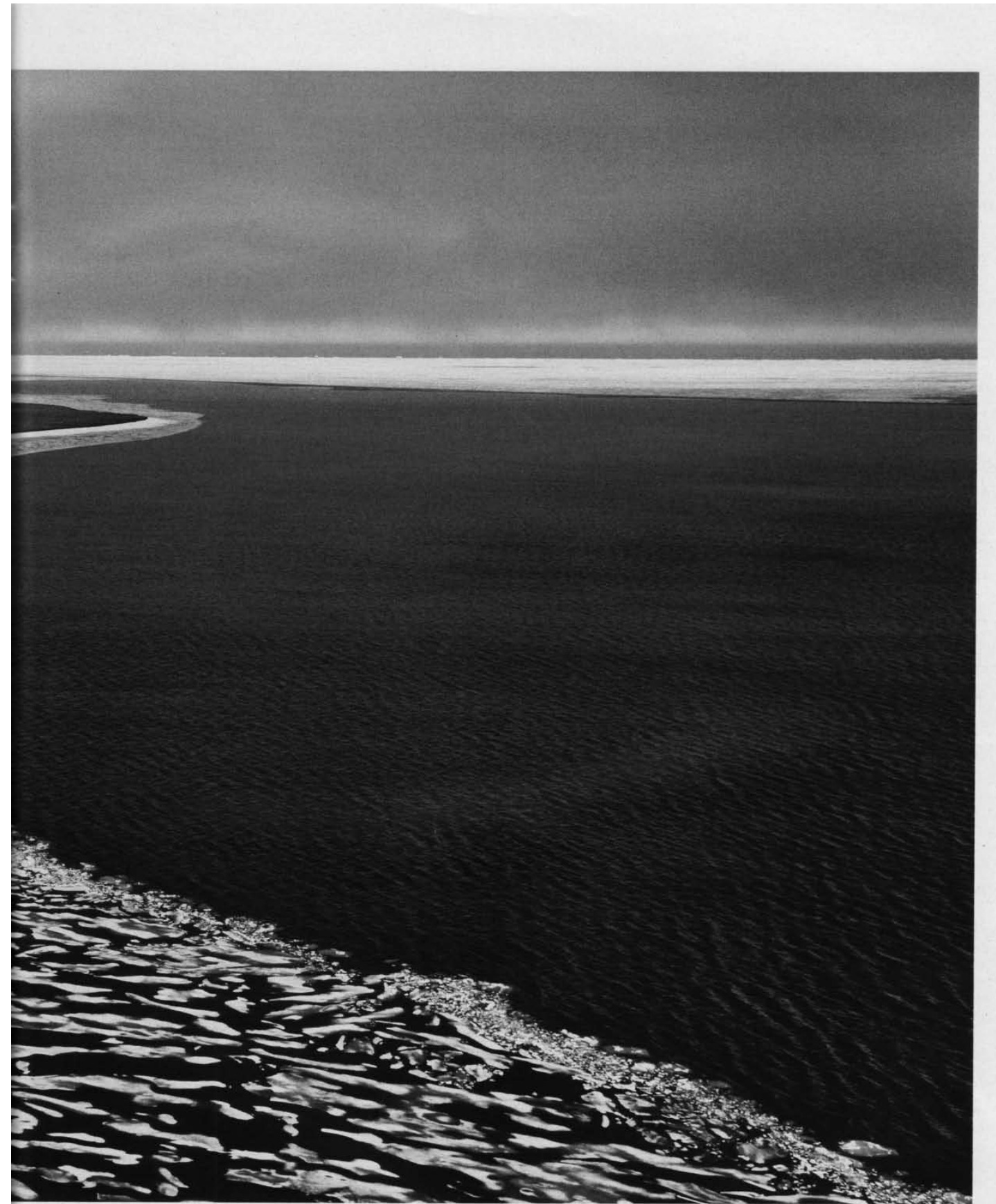
June 12, 2011



VOYAGES IN AMERICA *A special issue.*

ON
EARTH
AS
IT IS
IN
HEAVEN

What Sebastião
Salgado sees
in places untouched by
humanity.



Photographs by Sebastião Salgado *The Arctic Ocean around the Inupiat village of Kaktovik, Alaska.*

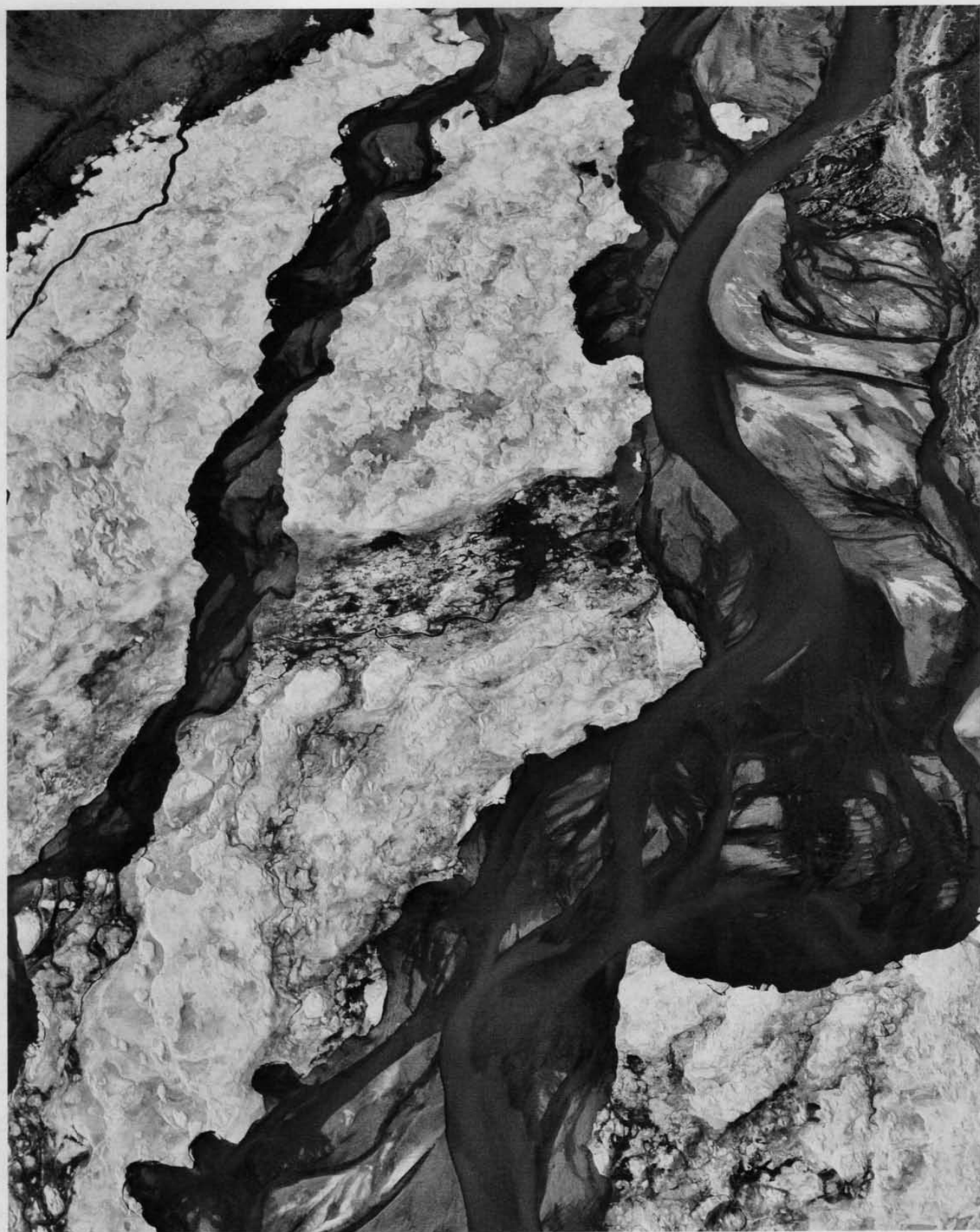


The end of the flatlands near the Arctic Ocean and the distant Brooks Range.



Sebastião Salgado began working on "Genesis," his most recent project, seven years ago. His idea was to photograph 20 places where the landscape was still pristine, relatively untouched by humans. He traveled to southern Africa and to the Amazon rain forests, to the South Sandwich Islands in the southern Atlantic and to Patagonia. The pictures in this portfolio document his journey to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in northeastern Alaska. A friend of his, who worked for the Unesco World Heritage Center, had spent a lot of time in Alaska and spoke to him often about the refuge. "He gave me a book about it," Salgado says. "For me, it became a big dream to go there."

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge covers more than 30,000 square miles from the coast of the Arctic Ocean across the Brooks Range mountains and into interior Alaska, covering several ecological zones that include barrier islands, coastal lagoons, salt marshes and rivers. Salgado visited the region in the spring and summer of 2009, when the caribou



Above: The Hulahula River. Opposite: A herd of caribou.

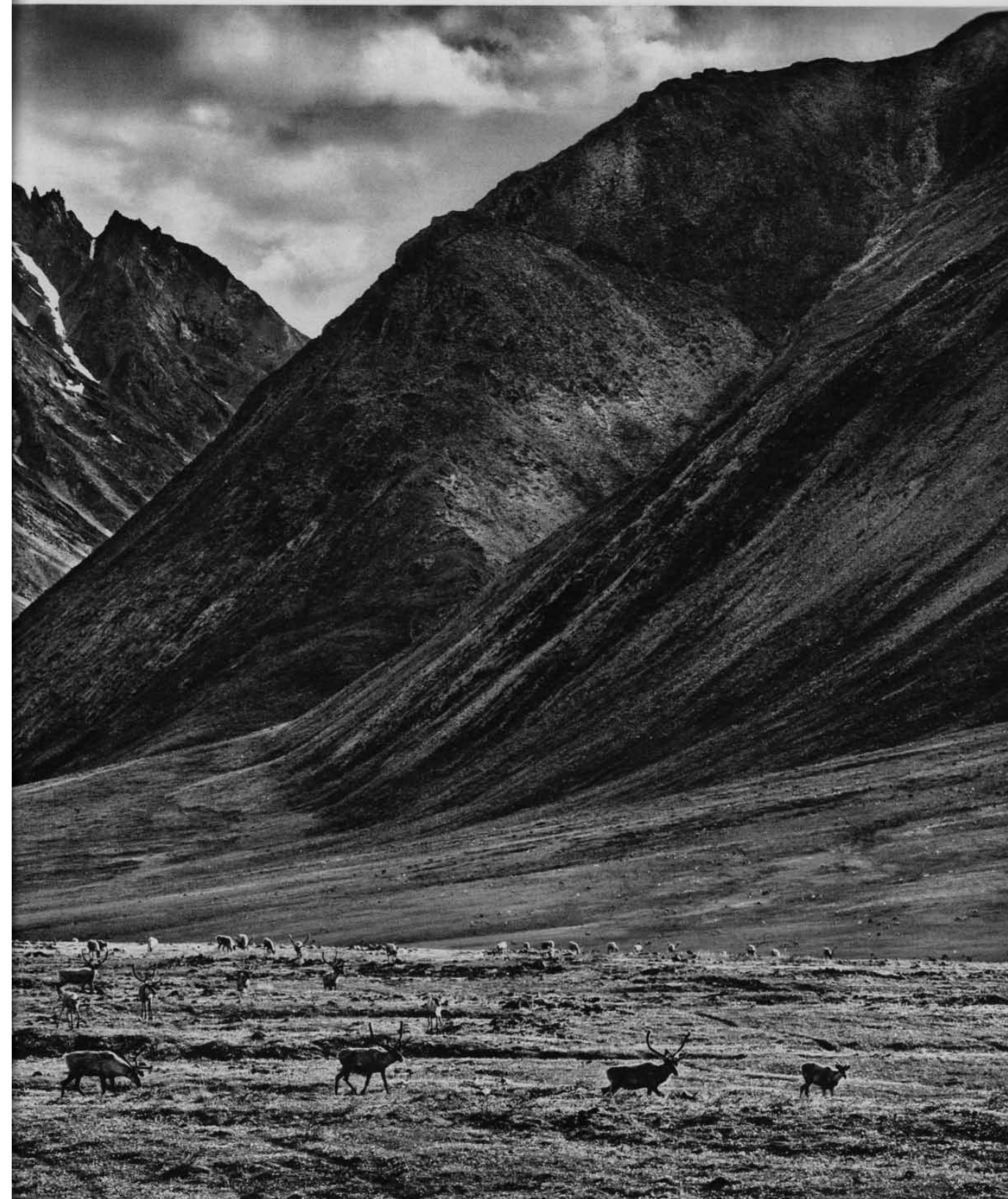
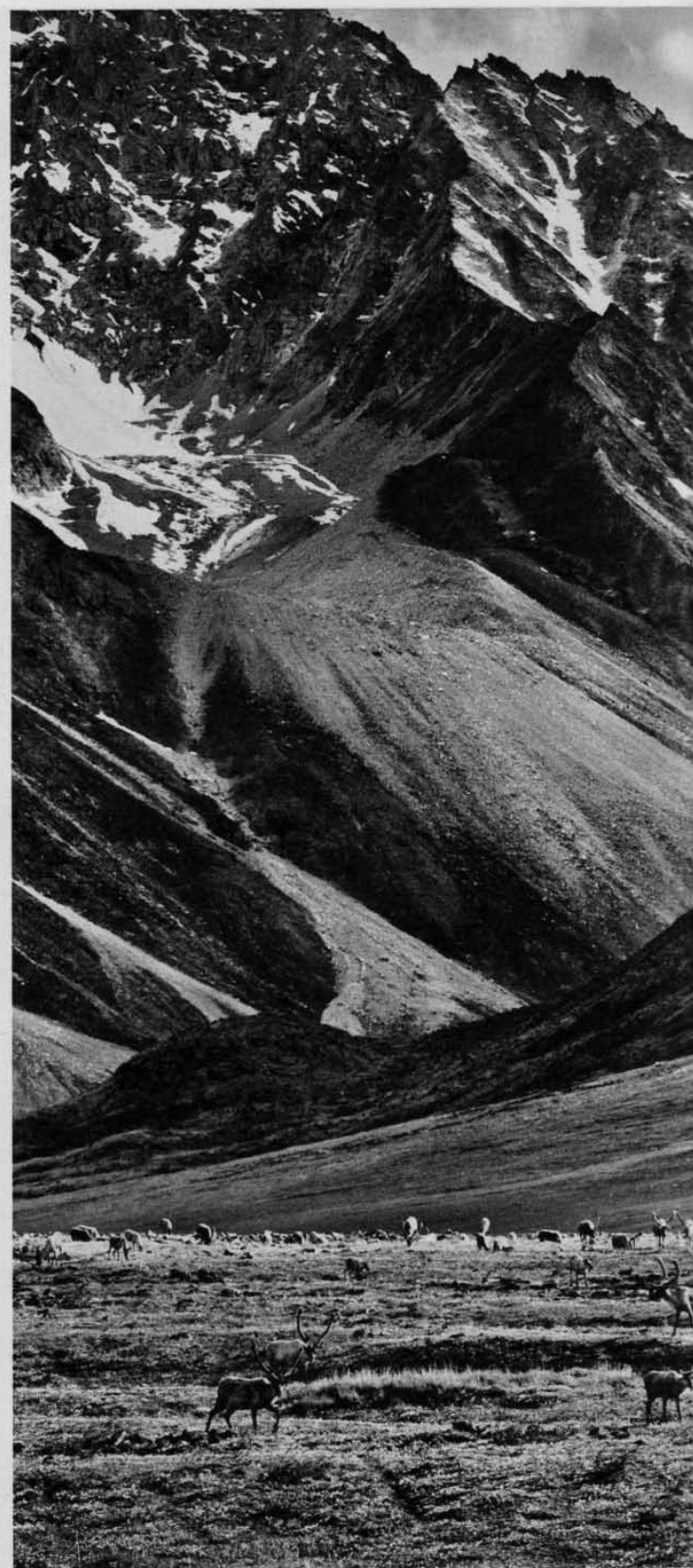
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travel to the coastal plain to give birth and raise their young. He set up base camp in the village of Kaktovik and traveled by small plane, boat and on foot to capture the migrating herd.

"You must have a big latitude of time," Salgado says. "You cannot say, 'O.K., I have one week to go,' and then they don't come in a week." The pilot would drop Salgado — sometimes alone, sometimes with the Inupiat Eskimo who served as his guide (and caught fish for their meals) — in an area where the animals were said to be headed, and he would wait. "You know, you can't make an appointment with them."

Salgado shot only in black and white, which sharpened the contrasts in an already-dramatic landscape. As cold fronts collided with warm fronts, "you had the most daring battle, with half-snow, half-rain, half-sunshine, all this light," Salgado says. "It brought me great luck. I was in a photographer's paradise." ♦

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Porcupine caribou, named for the Porcupine River, in the Jago area of the Brooks Range.