

# NATURE

BOOK GUIDE  
THE VOLUNTEER ISSUE



VOL. 2 ISSUE 1  
AUTUMN 2023  
[WWW.NATUREBOOKGUIDE.COM](http://WWW.NATUREBOOKGUIDE.COM)

## READING FOR FUN

Fiction, memoir, adventure, mysteries, classics, non-fiction  
New and backlist titles

## READING FOR INSIGHT

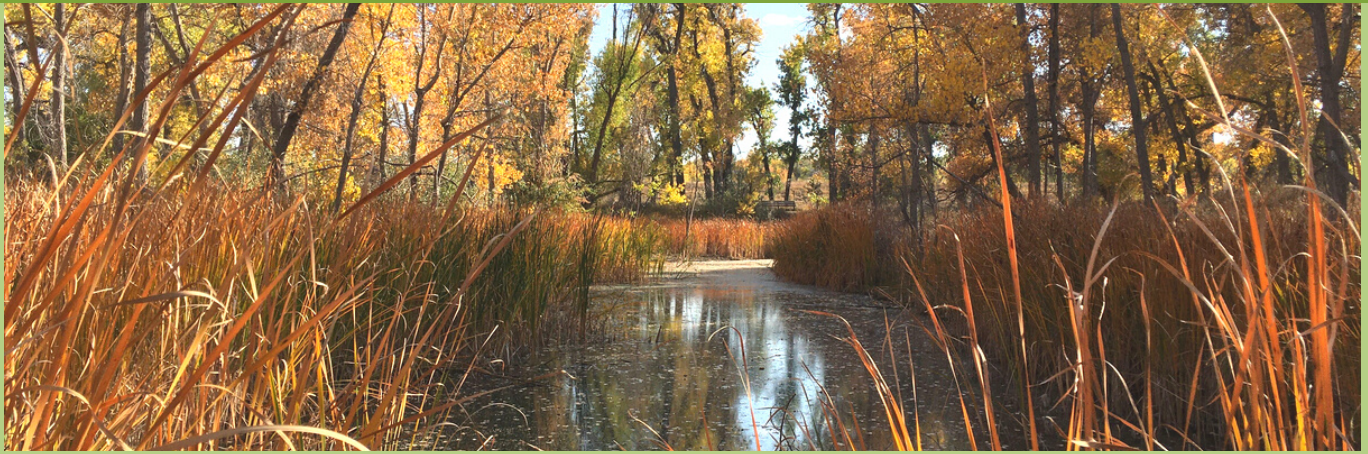
Recommended by naturalists and scientists with local, national, and international perspectives

## READING FOR CHANGE

Books to illuminate, inform, challenge, and inspire care for our natural resources



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# Welcome to our Volunteer Issue

*Nature Book Guide* has turned ONE! We've met so many lovely people in the past year--readers, authors, illustrators, publishers, booksellers, and librarians--and it has been our honor to connect you with some truly extraordinary books celebrating climate and nature. We've our selections to include vintage reads, graphic novels, memoirs, poetry, and essays. We're grateful that so many readers report they LOVE the books we've included in the Guide.

**"Sometimes we forget that as individuals fighting for change, something as simple as recommending a book you loved that gives someone a connection to the natural world can be as powerful as being out on the streets marching with others."**

**--Roisin Taylor, Co-Director for UK Youth for Nature**

With rising urgency for our planet's future, we are called to action. In this special issue, we're honoring the volunteers who contribute their time and energy to support the natural world. For example, see page 12 for a biography of Louise de Kiriline Lawrence, *Woman, Watching* by Marilyn Simonds. Despite a lack of formal training, de Kiriline Lawrence's contributions to Canadian ornithology have been monumental.

In my years working with public lands, volunteer workdays were among my favorites on the job. There's nothing more satisfying than seeing strangers working together on a common goal: planting trees, removing invasive species, or raising funds to sustain a much-needed organization. My time as a volunteer working in a post-wildfire bee study and as a butterfly monitor was equally rewarding as it helped me understand the vulnerability of these species, and I knew my labor was contributing to scientific knowledge.

While we certainly need volunteers for fun (and gritty) outdoor work such as river cleanup days, we also need thoughtful and caring leaders to serve on boards of directors for our environmental organizations. That's why our guest panelist in this issue is a leader on a nonprofit board--the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation--a critically needed land trust in the state with the U.S.'s most altered landscape which is actively working to preserve and restore Iowa's remaining wild places. In these pages, you'll hear from INHF's board member, Susan Shullaw, and Book Recommendation Panel members on the importance and impact of volunteer work. We hope this issue inspires you to find books and volunteer opportunities that are a good fit for you and your community.

If you find something you love in the *Nature Book Guide*, will you help spread the word by posting on your social media channels or dropping me a line? Feel free to contact me at [naturebookguide@gmail.com](mailto:naturebookguide@gmail.com). Thank you for making this a great first year!

Beth Nobles

FOUNDER/EDITOR

As a high school student in the Youth Conservation Corps, Beth built trails and trail bridges in two Illinois state parks. Mid-career, she led the Texas Mountain Trail as Executive Director for a decade, and through a partnership with Texas Parks and Wildlife, developed the Far West Texas Wildlife Trail and map. Before she retired in 2021, she led the Sand Creek Regional Greenway Partnership, an organization supporting an urban trail along a riparian corridor in the Denver metro area. She's organized countless volunteer opportunities to connect others to science and the outdoors; founding *Nature Book Guide* was another effort to do the same.



# Book Recommendation Panel Members

## Autumn 2023 Contributors

**Monique "Mo" Fair**, Executive Director of the Sand Creek Regional Greenway Partnership, a nonprofit organization supporting an urban trail and riparian habitat in metro Denver, Colorado.



**Adrianna Weickhardt**, Fire Prevention Technician with the US Forest Service in the Cascade Mountains of central Oregon. Previously worked 10 years in outdoor education/interpretation and natural resource management in State and National Parks. She recently graduated from Oregon State University with a Master of Natural Resources (June 2023). Her studies examined the social factors that shape a fire adapted community and those that impact the development of effective community wildfire protection plans.



**Efrain Leal Escalera** is a proud bilingual, multicultural immigrant scientist/artist from Durango, Mexico. He is an interdisciplinary photographer, activist, entomologist, visual storyteller and educator living in the Denver metro area.



**Bill Davison**, Value Chain Development Manager for the Savanna Institute, which works to support resilient, scalable agroforestry. Bill has worked for The Nature Conservancy as a Land Steward and spent seven years as an organic vegetable farmer in central Illinois. He transitioned from farming to working as a Local Food System Educator with University of Illinois Extension where he developed programs to support staple crops and agroforestry. He is a board member for the John Wesley Powell Audubon Society and an accomplished birder. Bill writes a gardening and re-wilding newsletter on Substack.



**Courtney Lyons-Garcia**, Executive Director, Partnership for the National Trails System. Previously served as Executive Director, Public Lands Foundation, Mission Heritage Partners, and Big Bend Conservancy in Texas. Courtney is also the Parks and Trail specialist for the Great Springs Project, a network of spring-to-spring trails and protected natural areas over the Edwards Aquifer between San Antonio and Austin.





**Rachel Hutchens**, Executive Director of Bluff Lake Nature Center, a nonprofit agency that owns and manages a 123-acre urban wildlife refuge and outdoor classroom in Denver. Bluff Lake educates individuals to be engaged, resilient, and curious; conserves a natural area in the city; furthers equity in outdoor access; and nurtures the health and well-being of communities and ecosystems.



**Kristin Memmott**, Natural Resources Specialist for the City of Aurora, Colorado. She is passionate about human-wildlife conflict resolution, conserving habitat for wildlife species in densely populated areas, and creating accessible nature play spaces. She is currently focusing her interest and research on the American beaver.



**Lisa Fargason Gordon**, Executive Director at the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute (CDRI), also known as the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center and Botanical Gardens, Fort Davis, Texas. Sharing her background as an educator, Lisa has helped to create CDRI's acclaimed educational programs, free for youth in the Texas Education Agency Region 18 service area.



**Shelly Plante**, Nature Tourism Manager for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. She manages the Great Texas Wildlife Trail program, coordinates the Texas Paddling Trails Program, and has been a coordinator for the annual Great Texas Birding Classic for more than 20 years. She promotes state parks and works with private landowners and communities on nature tourism development and is an adjunct professor at Texas State University.



**Susan Futrell**, freelance writer, essayist, and consultant, and the author of *Good Apples: Behind Every Bite* (University of Iowa, 2017). For the past 15 years she has worked with a network of orchards in the northeastern US to develop the Eco Apple® program, a nonprofit collaboration among fruit growers, marketers, and scientists to support ecological orchard practices and local fruit production in the US.



As Nature Book Guide develops, we'll widen our circle of voices by inviting additional scientists, naturalists and stewards to join the Book Recommendation Panel. Learn more about our panel members at [www.naturebookguide.com/about](http://www.naturebookguide.com/about)

# Guest Contributor

## Focus on Volunteer Leadership



**Susan Shullaw** is a retired nonprofit executive who spent most of her career in higher education, providing strategic communications and marketing support for major fundraising campaigns. She grew up in Burlington, Iowa, a Mississippi River town known as the birthplace of Aldo Leopold, and she enjoyed summer vacations in northern Minnesota. These experiences instilled a passion for the outdoors and a deep love of nature and its wild places. Since 2011 she has served on the board of the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, enabling her to play an active role in protecting and restoring the natural resources of Iowa, the most biologically altered landscape in the U.S.



Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation's project, the 1,182-acre Heritage Valley property outside Decorah

## Protecting and Restoring Endangered Ecosystems

The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF) is a statewide nonprofit conservation organization that works with private landowners and public agencies to protect and restore Iowa's land, water, and wildlife. Since its founding in 1979, INHF has protected more than 190,000 acres of Iowa's natural resources. At the center of INHF's mission are the people who are passionate about saving Iowa's wild places — for wildlife, for the health of Iowa's natural resources, and for the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts. From establishing Iowa's multi-use trails to protecting untouched prairie, the work INHF donors, volunteers, community partners, and staff do together is far-reaching. INHF is among the nation's most respected land trusts and is actively involved in the Land Trust Alliance and other nationwide conservation efforts. [www.inhf.org](http://www.inhf.org)



# For the Child in All of Us



*The Hike*, Alison Farrell,  
Chronicle Books, 2019,  
56 pages  
**Reading Age: 2-5**

**"*The Hike* has fantastic illustrations and fun surprises on each page making this book delightful for readers of all ages!"**  
—Kristin Memmott



Recommended by Kristin Memmott,  
Natural Resources Specialist, City of Aurora, Colorado

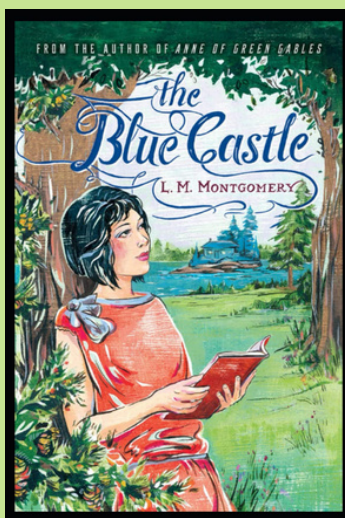
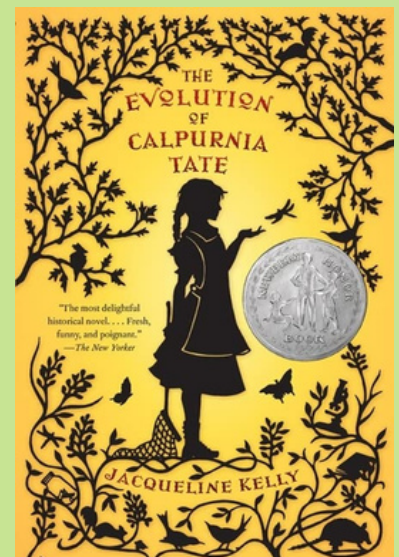
**2010 Newberry Honor Award; Chicago Public Library Best of the Best; Texas Lone Star Reading List**

*The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate*,  
Jacqueline Kelly, Henry Holt and  
Company (hardcover), 368 pages  
**Reading Age: 9-12**

"While I don't think you need to have lived in Central Texas to enjoy this book, I admit that living here, coupled with my love of stories set in the late 1800s, made this book a delight from beginning to end. Jacqueline Kelly's descriptions of the natural world in Calpurnia's life were familiar to me. The whole book is fascinating, and I loved watching Calpurnia's evolution as a naturalist. Kelly interweaves the growth of Calpurnia's relationship with her Granddaddy with an awareness of what it was like to be a girl growing up in that time."



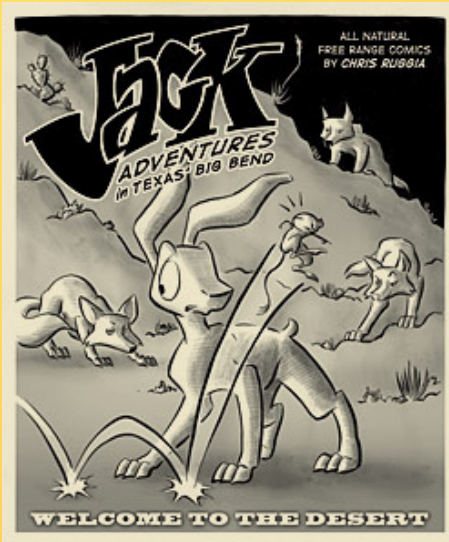
Recommended by Shelly Plante,  
Nature Tourism Manager for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department



*The Blue Castle*,  
L. M. Montgomery,  
first published 1926,  
Sourcebook Fire  
(paperback),  
2014, 256 pages  
**Reading Age: 10 and up  
Young Adult Fiction**

Fans of *Anne of Green Gables* will enjoy knowing *The Blue Castle* is one of author L.M. Montgomery's few works of fiction intended for adults. Today, it reads like a cozy YA romantic novel. Valancy Stirling is 29 and unmarried, and is in service to her overbearing and meddlesome family in rural Ontario in the early 1900s. A fateful visit to her doctor leads her to upend her staid life for one steeped in nature, adventure, independence, and love.

# Jack Comics in Big Bend



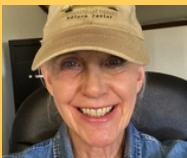
*Jack, Adventures in Texas' Big Bend, Welcome to the Desert, Chris Ruggia, Vast Graphics 2012, 24 pages*  
**Reading Age: 8 and up**



*Jack, Adventures in Texas' Big Bend, Part 2: Alone and Adrift, Chris Ruggia, Vast Graphics 2012, 24 pages*  
**Reading Age: 8 and up**



*Jack, Adventures in Texas' Big Bend, Part 3: Losing Game, Chris Ruggia, Vast Graphics 2014, 32 pages*  
**Reading Age: 8 and up**



Recommended by Lisa Fargason Gordon,  
Executive Director, Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute

"Jack, a Black-tailed jackrabbit, is the main character in a 3-part comic book collection that details his misadventures, near scrapes, and survival in the desert of the Big Bend Region of Texas. His best friend is a kangaroo rat named Mel, who literally leaps onto Jack and into his life. Together, they go from one adventure to the next, one time nearly becoming the meal of a kit fox, only to escape and be cornered by two coyotes, followed by a badger. Jack and Mel are lovable creatures whom you want badly to help survive. Mel suffers from a slight paranoia streak that everything wants to eat him, and after a while, you realize that he's right in his belief that, ultimately, he will be someone's dinner. The books are fun to read, and they provide a narrative about animal survival in the desert."

--Lisa Faragason Gordon

**Jack Comics is an artist-published series by Chris Ruggia of Alpine, Texas. Apart from purchasing copies from local retailers in the Big Bend Region of Texas, they're available for sale through [jackcomics.com](http://jackcomics.com)**



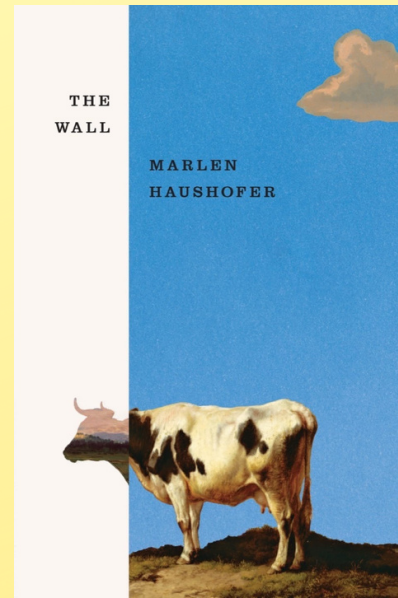


# Fiction

*The Wall*, Marlen Haushofer,  
first published 1963, New Directions,  
2022, 248 pages

This book touched me deeply and I have found myself continuing to think about it frequently in the years since first reading it. I envy the new reader who gets to read this for the first time!"

--Rachel Hutchens



"*The Wall*, written by Austrian novelist Marlen Haushofer in 1963, tells the story of a nameless woman who finds herself isolated from the rest of humanity after a mysterious invisible "wall" appears in the woods outside of the hunting lodge where she is vacationing.

What follows is a beautifully written story, eloquently and convincingly told, of her new life which centers on her relationship with nature in the Alpine valley where she now lives, the weather which dictates her daily and seasonal activities, and the animals who become her companions. Unlike other survivalist stories, the animals were not just a source of food or danger, but actually the thing that pushes her to choose to survive, in her new role as caretaker to a dog, cat, and cow. The animals have distinct personalities and bring unique comforts and pains to the woman through their play, understanding, adventure, and basic animal tendencies.

The dynamic narrative style (told through several timelines at once as the narrator fleshes out the daily diary she started writing many years before), the simplicity of her daily life (plowing a hay field, planting potatoes, milking a cow, sitting in the sun), and the lack of the traditional and often forced high intensity action found in so many survivalist stories, made this book feel believable and honest. The multilayered themes of loneliness, human innovation and destruction, choice and mercy, and perseverance weave through the novel and leave each reader with something different."

--Rachel Hutchens

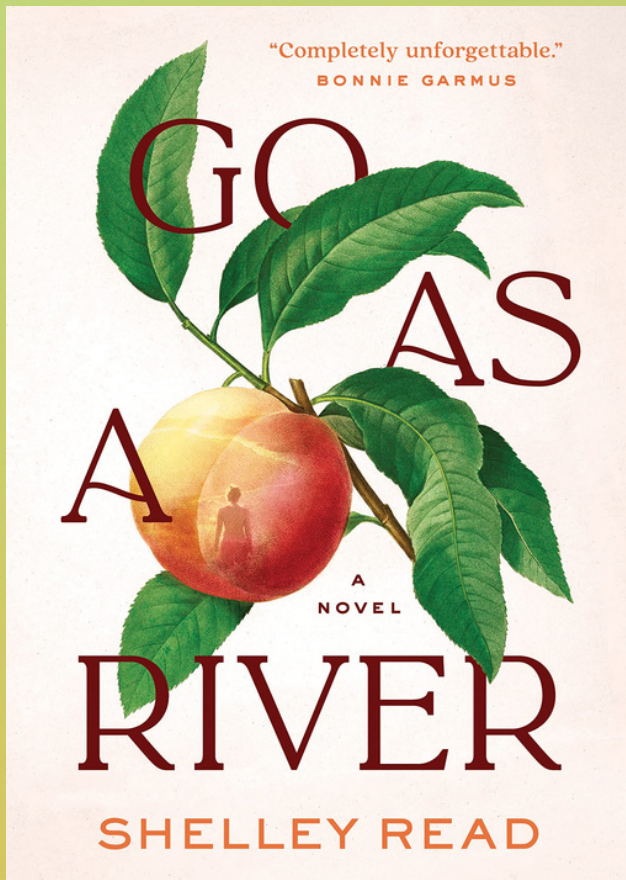
**A haunting feminist sci-fi masterpiece and international bestseller that is "as absorbing as Robinson Crusoe" --Doris Lessing**



Recommended by Rachel Hutchens,  
Executive Director, Bluff Lake Nature Center



*Go As A River: A Novel,*  
Shelley Read, Spiegel & Grau  
2023, 320 pages



**"Just as a single rainstorm can erode the bank and change the course of a river, so can a single circumstance of a girl's life erase who she was before."**

Published earlier this year, Shelley Read's debut novel is already an international bestseller. Readers will be forgiven if they get through the first third of *Go As A River*, and wonder, "Is this a nature book?" And then, in two twists, the reason this novel is included in our *Guide* is clear. Shelley Read has created a powerful, engaging story of forbidden love, racism, and violence, of a young woman living in family of troubled men yet finding her own strength and proving her resilience.

**"An auspicious debut"** --Kirkus Reviews

**"Shelley Read's lyrical voice is a force of nature, and when she lends it to a woman leading a hardscrabble life in rural Colorado, the result is tragic, uplifting—and completely unforgettable."**

—Bonnie Garmus, international bestselling author of *Lessons in Chemistry*

Set in Western Colorado, Read understands the landscape and brings an authenticity to her story of environmental restoration. She was a Senior Lecturer at Western Colorado University for nearly three decades, where she taught writing, literature, and environmental studies. She was also a founding team member of the University's Environment and Sustainability major.

## Volunteering for Habitat Restoration

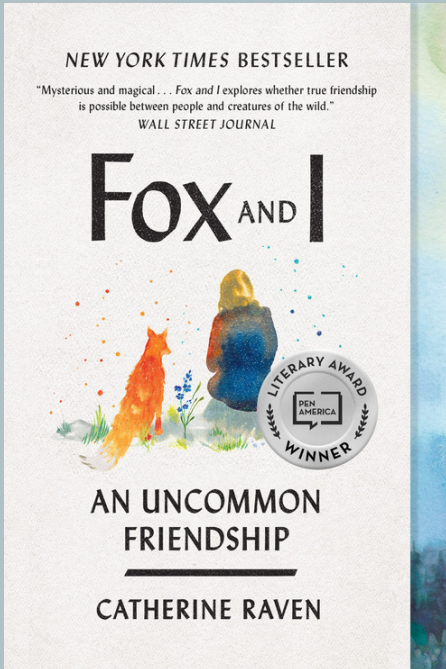


"Whether engaged in habitat restoration, environmental education, community engagement, or service on our board of directors, we could not accomplish all we do without our volunteers' energy, enthusiasm, and expertise. Native seed-sowing, trash pickup, and other restoration projects with volunteers help Bluff Lake be a clean and blossoming ecosystem full of life and biodiversity. Every volunteer has an impact, whether it's a one-time corporate workday volunteer or a weekly volunteer who has been with Bluff Lake for over 20 years!"

—Rachel Hutchens, Executive Director,  
Bluff Lake Nature Center, Denver, CO



# Memoir and Biography



*Fox and I:*  
*An Uncommon Friendship,*  
Catherine Raven, Spiegel & Grau,  
2021, 304 pages



Recommended by Kristin Memmott,  
Natural Resources Specialist, City of Aurora, Colorado

"This book reminded me of the power of observation. Anyone can be a naturalist, if they are willing to sit and watch what is happening in the natural world around them. Sit long enough, and your patience may pay off as the natural world begins to unfold in unique or unbelievable ways. I will note that I had some hesitations with the first few chapters, the author seemed overly critical of her interest in the fox and anthropomorphizing, which led to some interesting thought processing on my own. Worth the read, especially as the changes of Fall start to unravel."  
--Kristin Memmott

**Winner of the PEN/E.O. Wilson Literary Science Writing Award, 2022 Nautilus Book Awards Gold Winner, Shortlisted for the John Burroughs Medal, Finalist for the Stubbendieck Great Plains Distinguished Book Prize, Shortlisted for a Reading the West Book Award**

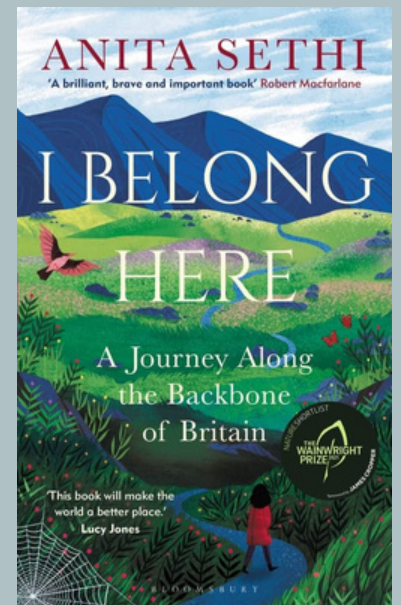


**"I knew in every bone in my body, in every fibre of my being that I had to speak up. I knew I could not stay silent or still. I knew I had to keep walking through the world."**

*I Belong Here: A Journey Along the Backbone of Britain,*  
Anita Sethi, Bloomsbury Wildlife,  
2021, 320 pages

"Go back to where you're from." While on a train journey in Northern England in 2019, Anita Sethi, a native of Manchester, was racially abused by a fellow passenger. Though grateful for the support she received from other passengers and the train's staff (and relieved by news that her attacker pled guilty to his crime), Sethi was still left with persistent anxiety and depression. A walking journey through the Pennines helped her work through questions of home, identity, race, and belonging. In this new approach to nature writing, Sethi reclaims her home landscape with strength and courage.

**Winner, Books Are My Bag Award; Shortlisted - Wainwright Prize for Nature Writing; Nominated Great Outdoors Award; Royal Society of Literature Ondaatje Prize**





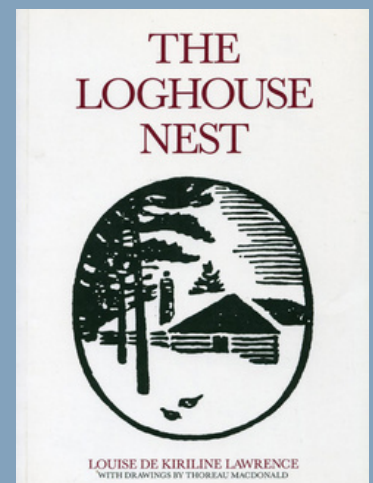
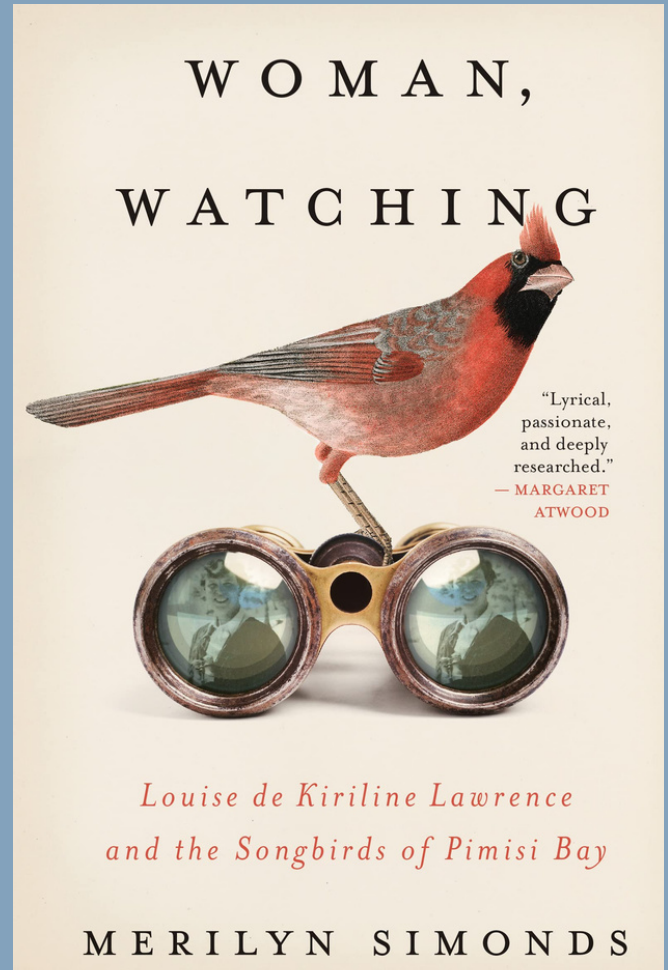
*Woman, Watching:*  
Louise de Kiriline Lawrence  
and the Songbirds of  
Pimisi Bay, Marilyn Simonds,  
ECW Press, 2022, 416 pages

**Can a self-taught, later-in-life amateur ornithologist working in relative isolation contribute to our understanding of the natural world? YES.**

"The title of this remarkable and engaging book, *Woman, Watching*, is deceptive. It implies a passive observer, when Louise de Kiriline Lawrence was anything but. You'll learn plenty about her career as an ornithologist, but the book also touches on Swedish royalty, Russian revolution, romance, heartbreak, and - big surprise! - the world's most famous quintuplets. As a bonus, you'll be introduced to bird books by many other outstanding women authors, which you're likely to begin tracking down as fervently as Louise tracked her beloved songbirds. Highly recommended!"



--Susan Shullaw,  
volunteer board member,  
Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation



*The Loghouse Nest,*  
Louise de Kiriline  
Lawrence,  
first published  
1945/Natural  
Heritage 1988,  
176 pages

By the end of her life, Louise de Kiriline had written nearly 20 scientific papers, more than 40 articles for Audubon and other popular magazines, and won numerous awards including the Burroughs Medal, recognition from the Society of Canadian Ornithologists for lifetime achievement. *The Loghouse Nest* was Louise de Kiriline Lawrence's first book about birds. Published in 1945, it is a charming work about the birds near her home in northern Ontario.

Photo of Louise de Kiriline Lawrence birding near her cabin east of North Bay, Ontario, (Photo: Library and Archives Canada, e011443243)



# Poetry and Practice of Birding

*Sparrow Envy: Field Guide to Birds and Lesser Beasts*, J. Drew Lanham  
Hub City Press, 2021, 104 pages



"J. Drew Lanham is well known in the birding world as not only a wonderful birder, professor, naturalist, and hunter, but also as an engaging poet and author. *Sparrow Envy* gives us a front-row seat to his eye-opening and raw poetic side, sharing his perspective and lived experience as a black birder and outdoorsman. Lanham weaves the story of birds in almost all of his writing, even those pieces he labels as focusing on 'lesser beasts' (i.e., not birds), and he shares the beauty of the brown, tawny, and black birds specifically in many pieces, while adding a splash of vermilion or blue here and there. From seasons and solstices to changes in nature and migration, he vividly shares the beauty in the common and notices all nature, big and small. Lanham paints pictures of natural experiences, including the harsh and hard. I loved the writing in this series of poems and musings about the world outside. I highly recommend you take some time, cozy up with *Sparrow Envy*, and see nature from Lanham's point of view. I guarantee you'll reminisce about your own nature explorations, and you might just learn something new about the world around you as well."  
--Shelly Plante



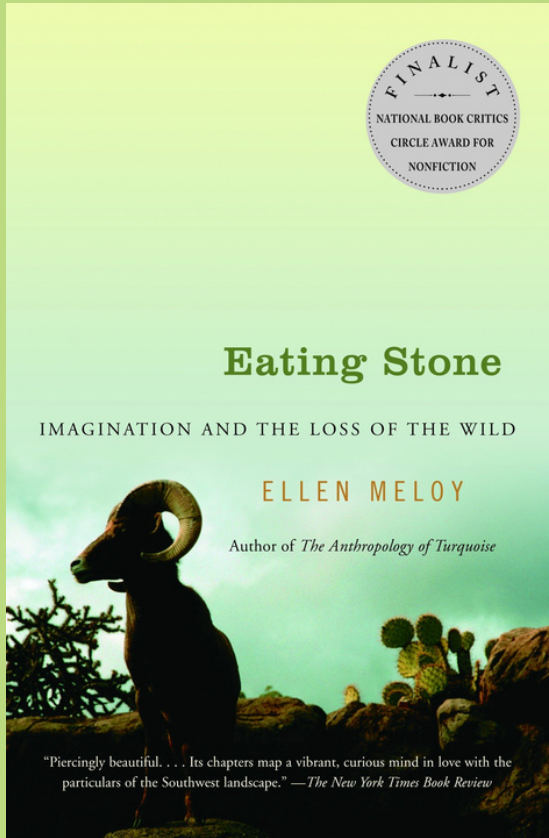
Recommended by Shelly Plante,  
Nature Tourism Manager for Texas Parks  
and Wildlife Department and Coordinator  
of the Texas Birding Classic

*Find More Birds* is an engaging and reassuring guide, whether you're learning birding or you've spent many years behind field glasses. Short chapters like, "Don't lose hope if it flies away," "Check for open patches of ground after snowfall," and "Visit berry buffets," will inspire new birding excursions and is a reason to keep this book on your coffee table all year long.

*Find More Birds: 111 Surprising  
Ways to Spot Birds  
Wherever You Are*,  
Heather Wolf,  
The Experiment,  
2023, 273 pages



# Nonfiction



*Eating Stone: Imagination and the Loss of the Wild*,  
Ellen Meloy, Vintage (Paperback) 2006  
352 pages

## Winner, 2007 John Burroughs Medal

"Ellen Meloy writes about place, loss and wildness with a voice that is wry, intimate and steeped in knowledge of the history, geology, cultures, biomes and lives of her subject, whether the desert southwest, the allure of turquoise, the loss of desert mountain sheep habitat, or her own journey. Everything she wrote is a gem worth reading and re-reading, only growing in urgency as time passes. Her last book, *Eating Stone: Imagination and the Loss of the Wild*--(published by Pantheon in 2005; she died in 2004, before it was in print)--is a deeply felt account of the desert mountain sheep surviving against the odds near her home in southern Utah. It is full of gorgeous prose, humor and loss as well as hope. It's a good introduction to a voice that left the earth too soon."  
--Susan Futrell



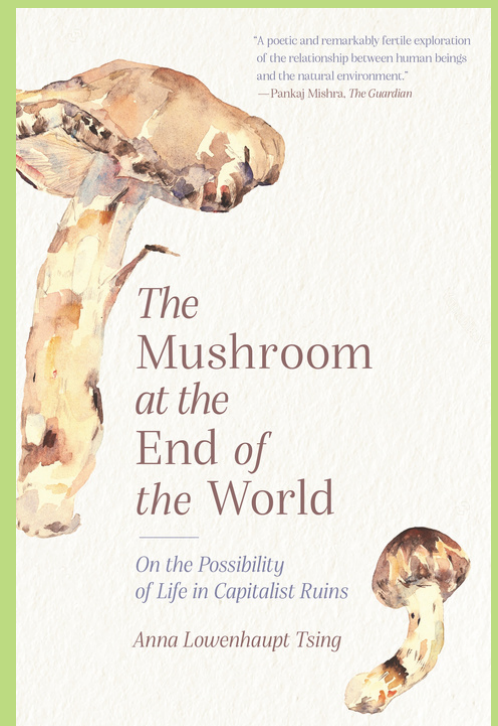
Recommended by Susan Futrell,  
Author, essayist, and sustainable agriculture consultant

*The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*,  
Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, Princeton University Press,  
2015, 352 pages

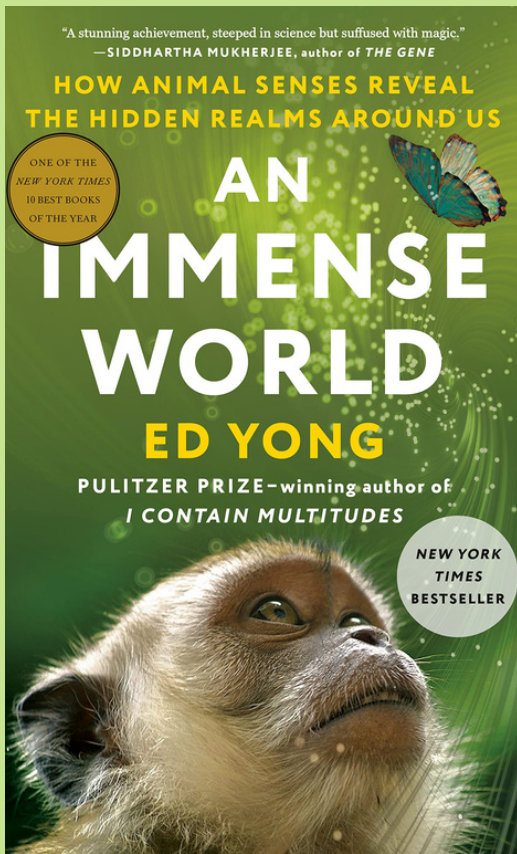
**2016 Victor Turner Prize in Ethnographic Writing**  
**2016 Gregory Bateson Book Prize**  
**2015 Best Book: Kirkus Review and Times Higher Education**

"In this captivating story, displaced and disenfranchised cultural minorities forage for mushrooms and live outside the bounds of industrial capitalism. Their complex entangled lives are beautifully described in this brilliant scholarly work. Opening ourselves to these stories and the possibility of a more collaborative way of being helps us to see that we can live by a more relevant notion of progress and what it means to be human."  
--Bill Davison

Recommended by Bill Davison,  
Value Chain Development Manager for Savanna Institute  
working on resilient scalable agroforestry







**“We underestimate what animals are capable of to our own detriment, missing out on the chance to understand how expansive and wondrous nature truly is...”**

*An Immense World: How Animal Senses Reveal the Hidden Realms Around Us,*  
Ed Yong, Random House, 2022, 464 pages

Reading *An Immense World* is an astonishing experience, for it reveals only experience a fraction of the world with our human capabilities. “Throughout this book, we’ll encounter animal abilities that others thought impossible and absurd,” Yong declares in the opening pages. And he’s right. With his brilliantly accessible science writing, Ed Yong takes readers through senses experienced by the animal world: smell, taste, light, color, pain, heat, vibration, contact and flow, sound, echos, and electric and magnetic fields. Yong’s clear-eyed analysis and thorough research (the book ends with 75 pages of notes and bibliography) will absolutely change the reader’s view of the world.

**Winner, Andrew Carnegie Medal; Finalist, Kirkus Prize, National Book Critics Circle Award; Longlisted PEN/E.O. Wilson Award; New York Times 10 Best Books of the Year**

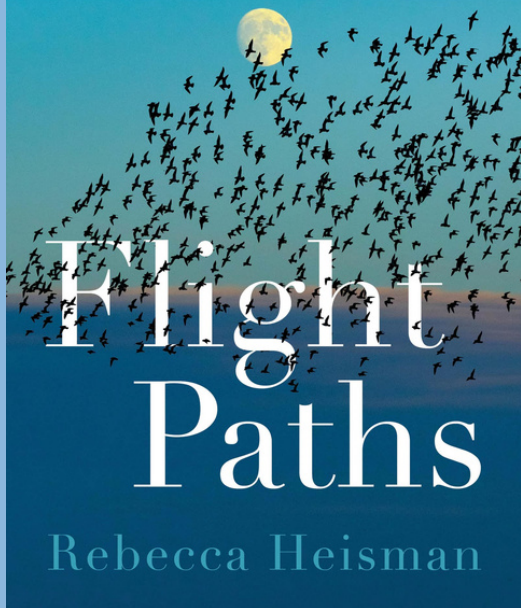
## Volunteering to Expand Capacity

"Volunteers extend the capacity of our small staff and help create a valuable visitor experience to CDRI. We rely on certified interpretive guide volunteers to lead groups along our Modesta Canyon trail up to the Geology Exhibit at Clayton's Overlook, or through the Botanical Gardens and Cactus Greenhouse. Visitor Center volunteers personally greet visitors and provide information to enhance their time with us. Volunteers also help with gardening, special events, and trail maintenance."

--Lisa Fargasan Gordon, Executive Director, Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute



How a Passionate and Quirky Group  
of Pioneering Scientists Solved the  
Mystery of Bird Migration



**"In the Anthropocene, even birds capable of the most extreme physiological feats will need human help to survive in the future. And if we don't know where birds are going, we don't have information we need to save them. Luckily, we have eyes in the sky."**

*Flight Paths: How a Passionate and Quirky Group of Pioneering Scientists Solved the Mystery of Bird Migration*, Rebecca Heisman, Harper, 2023, 288 pages

Wildly engaging, always surprising, and meticulously researched, Rebecca Heisman's *Flight Paths* is filled with stories of innovative research in the pursuit of understanding bird migration. Heisman--who has written for Audubon Society, the American Bird Conservancy, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the Wilson Ornithological Society, and the American Ornithological Society--captures the joy and wonder of bird science as she takes readers behind the scenes where volunteers, amateur ornithologists, and research scientists are applying new technologies.

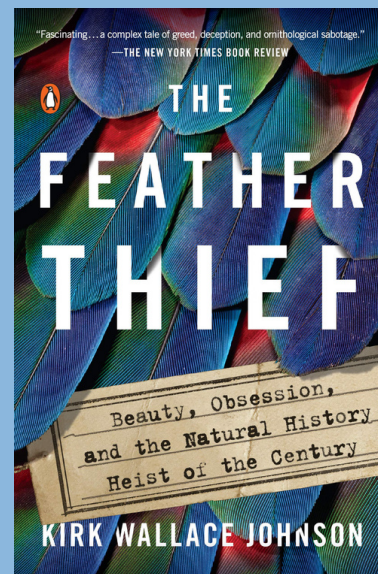
*The Feather Thief: Beauty, Obsession, and the Natural History Heist of the Century*,  
Kirk Wallace Johnson, Viking (Hardback) 2018, 320 pages

"The Feather Thief is a fascinating, and surprisingly true tale chronologizing the exploits of Edwin Rist, a master fly-tier, who stole hundreds of rare bird skins from the British Natural History Museums in 2009. This thrilling account offers readers with a unique opportunity for self-reflection on their impact on the earth's natural resources, prompting contemplation on past, present, and future conservation efforts, and shedding light on the unfortunate lack of justice experienced by many of these invaluable resources."

--Monique "Mo" Fair



Recommended by Monique "Mo" Fair,  
Executive Director, Sand Creek Regional Greenway Partnership



Amazon Best Book of May 2018



## Volunteering and Conservation Efforts

"With the time and work of Sand Creek Greenway's volunteers, the Greenway can be kept beautiful, safe, and healthy for our trail users as well as the flora and fauna that live there. We value volunteers from those who provide leadership on our nonprofit board of directors, to those who clean trash and control noxious weeds on the trail."



## “A British Year Through Japan’s 72 Seasons”

*Light Rains Sometimes Fall: A British Year Through Japan's 72 Seasons*,  
Lev Parikian, Elliott & Thompson, 2021, 352 pages

In this most delightful of mind-benders, UK writer, composer, and birdwatcher Lev Parikian provides an alternative look at the seasons to discover “new ways to pay attention, and to give the natural world the respect it deserves.” His witty and joyous nature diary takes note of subtle changes in the natural world, and he uses ancient Japanese seasons—roughly five-day segments named around the natural cycles—to create new seasonal names. Suddenly, ancient Japan’s season in July, “Hawks Learn to Fly” becomes the season Parikian names “Acorns Fall to the Earth,” and January’s “Springs Thaw” becomes his “Rain Revives Mosses.”

*Light Rains Sometimes Fall* is a charming reminder that careful observation of the natural world can be an illuminating creative endeavor, as well as a scientific pursuit.

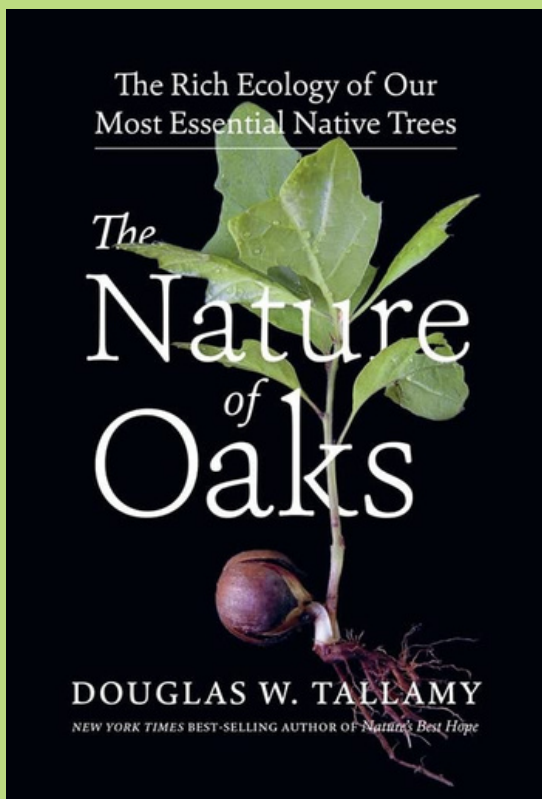


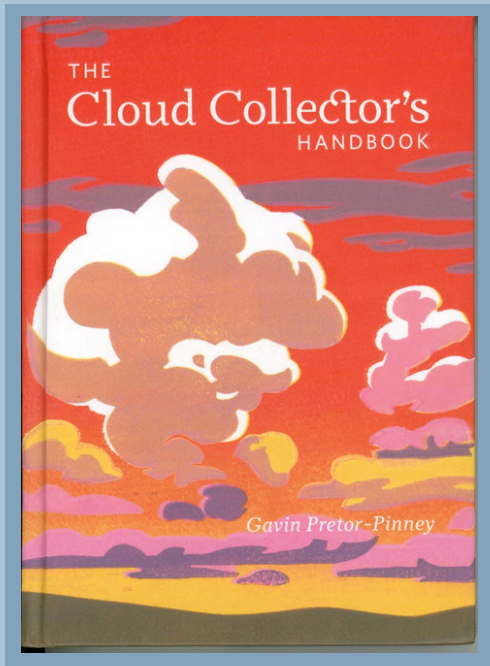
## “A yard without oaks is a yard meeting only a fraction of its life-support potential.”

*The Nature of Oaks: The Rich Ecology of Our Most Essential Native Trees*, Douglas W. Tallamy,  
Timber Press, 2021, 200 pages

Month by month, Doug Tallamy brings us the science behind the rich ecosystem of the oaks. He begins *The Nature of Oaks* in October with a discovery that bluejays are bringing white oaks back to his property “one acorn at a time.” Tallamy describes this mutualism and moves on to introduce masting, an adaptation against acorn predation, and an evolutionary development connected with energy allocation and improved pollination. In November he discusses weevils, ants, and acorn moths.

Tallamy, who wrote the brilliant *Nature’s Best Hope* (featured in the Winter 2022–2023 and Summer 2023 issues of *Nature Book Guide*) and *Bringing Nature Home*, once again inspires readers with practical advice to transform their own properties into healthier ecosystems.





**“Cloudgazing is the preferred pastime of daydreamers, wonderers and poetic souls the world over.”**

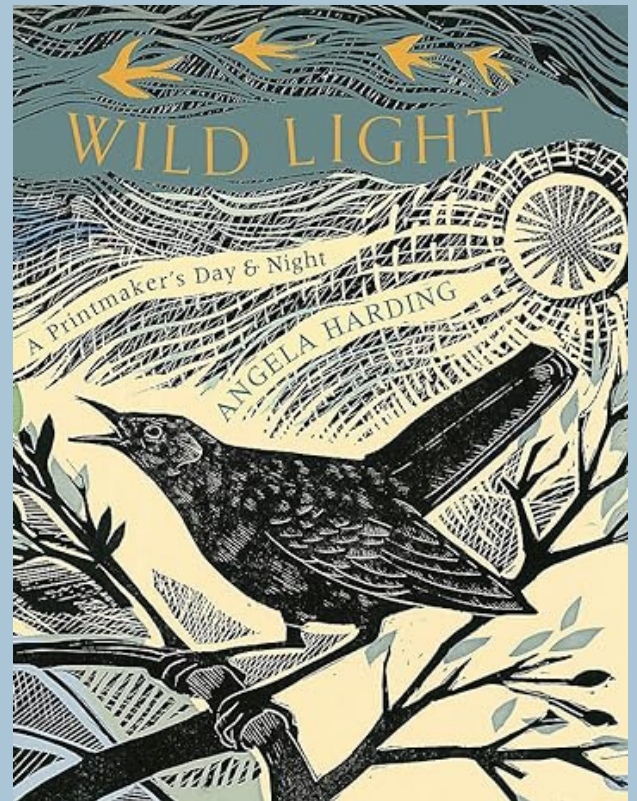
*The Cloud Collector's Handbook,*  
Gavin Pretor-Pinney, Chronicle Books,  
2011, 144 pages

Of all the nature field guides on the market, this is one of our favorites. The sky offers “nature” wherever you are—including the middle of a city—since observers can experience wonder and beauty by merely looking up. Stunning photographs, accessible and easy-to-understand text, and instructions on “collecting” clouds makes this an engaging and amiable companion for the nature lover.

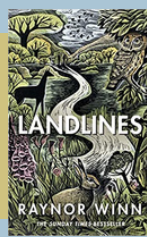
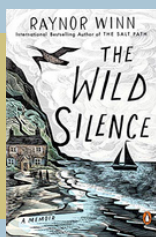
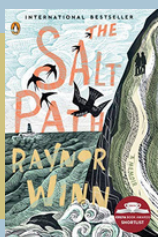
*Wild Light: A Printmaker's Day, a Printmaker's Night,*  
Angela Harding, Sphere, 2023, 192 pages

**“Waking in our bedroom in Rutland on a bright summer’s morning is a very different experience to waking on our boat to damp autumnal daybreak, which is different again to the gradual dawn of a winter’s first light at home, with its rosy hues that hold the promise of a day less grey than the one before. All are equally enjoyable and as a printmaker I find them all equally inspiring.”**

In *Wild Light*, one of Britain’s most celebrated illustrators and printmakers, Angela Harding, shares the backstories of 97 of her works inspired by light. An explanation of Harding’s process—often a combination of block and silkscreen printing, coupled with photography and poetry—makes this a beautiful and satisfying volume for artists as well as nature enthusiasts.



**Harding crafted the cover art for three books in our Spring 2023 issue, two are included in *Wild Light***



*The Salt Path: A Memoir*, Raynor Winn, Penguin Books, 2019, 288 pages  
*The Wild Silence: A Memoir*, Raynor Winn, Penguin Books, 2021, 288 pages  
*Landlines: The Remarkable Story of a Thousand-Mile Journey*, Raynor Winn,  
Pegasus Books, 2023, 320 pages

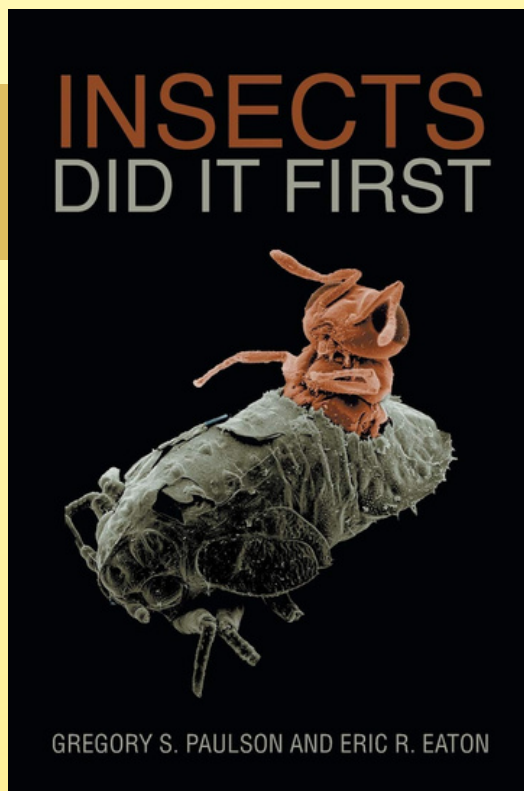


## A Brief Conversation with Author Eric Eaton

*Insects Did it First*,  
Gregory S. Paulson and Eric R. Eaton,  
XLibris US, 2018, 156 pages



**“The most astonishing example of surfing insects are ants. In Venezuela, several species of ants have been observed body surfing on small (to us, huge to them) shore breaking waves. Instead of being swept out to sea when struck by a wave the ants assume a characteristic body position and ride the wave to shore, and safety.”**



*Insects Did It First* is a charmer. Who wouldn't want to dig into chapters like "Blinking Neon Sign," "Tunnel Builders," and "Glue" with explanations on insect behavior from two professional entomologists? Illustrated with humorous anthropomorphized insects, this is a perfect addition to a classroom library or a gift for the curious of all ages.

### **How do insect or invertebrates' innovations lead you to find inspiration?**

I don't know that any insect or arthropod innovations inspire me as much as the incredible durability of insects. We tend to assume insects are fragile because they are small, and many of them have membranous wings that appear to thin and flimsy to let them get very far very fast. Such is not the case. The exoskeleton, the built-in armor of insects and their kin, is shockingly strong. Insects can bounce off most objects they collide with and continue going their merry way. An insect can lose a leg, or large areas of its wings, and barely be slowed down. I find that kind of physical resilience to be highly inspiring. Insects could be fabulously inspirational in settings like hospitals and clinics, as examples of triumph over "handicaps."

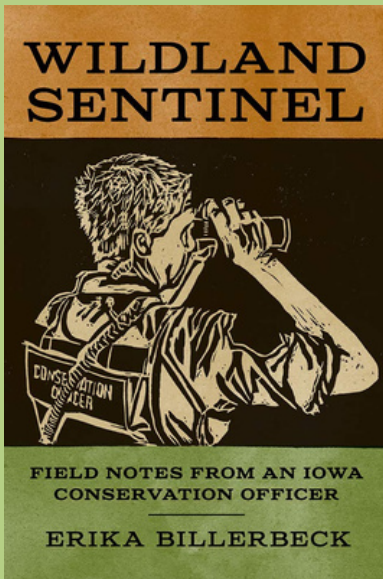
### **What is your favorite "insects did it first" example? Why?**

What is my favorite insect "invention?" I think it might be the "gear" that propels the hind legs of many jumping planthoppers, because that seems so improbable! The example we use in our book is *Issus coleoptratus*, but the nymphs of many planthoppers have a similar, if not identical, mechanism that permits them to jump far with great efficiency. How does such a thing evolve? It looks exactly like a cogged, wheel-like gear you would find in an old wristwatch. Crazy.



Interview conducted by Book Recommendation Panelist,  
scientist, and artist, Efrain Leal Escalera

# Park Ranger Careers

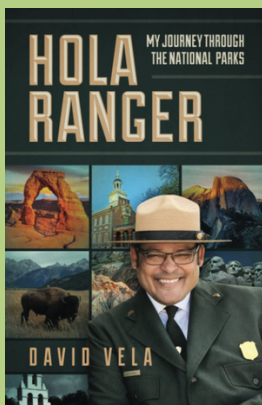
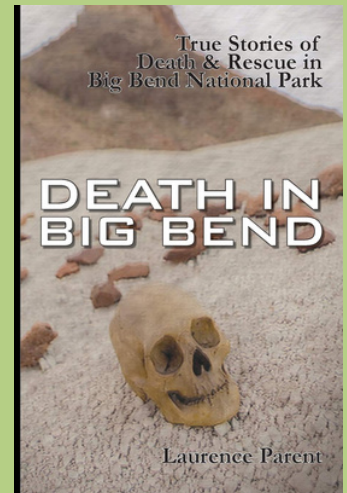


*Wildland Sentinel: Field Notes from an Iowa Conservation Officer*, Erika Billerbeck, University of Iowa Press 2020, 230 pages

Erika Billerbeck--wife, mother, and fish and game law enforcement officer--writes about the mundane, the frustrating, the gruesome, and the gratifying parts of her job patrolling through Iowa's gravel roads, wildlife areas, and waterways. "Nobody warned me that the hardest part of being a female conservation officer wasn't going to be fulfilling the job duties, but, rather, finding my way through a labyrinth of self-doubt." An engaging and hopeful work, *Wildlife Sentinel* offers an all-too-rare perspective of day-to-day challenges defending Iowa's vanishing wild areas, making it a must-read for park users and aspiring park rangers.

Sadly, several deaths in U.S. National Parks made the headlines this year--deaths due to drownings, car accidents, falls, excessive heat--and yet little was shared about the role of rangers and parks staff in rescue, recovery, and investigation. Laurence Parent's *Death in Big Bend* takes the readers inside stories from the 1980s to 2010 in Big Bend National Park while providing life-saving reminders to visitors to limit alcohol consumption, drive the speed limit, take enough water, dress appropriately, avoid activity during the hot times of the day and year, and know the limits of modern technology.

*Death in Big Bend: True Stories of Death and Rescue in Big Bend National Park*, Laurence Parent, Iron Mountain Press, 2010, 202 pages



Young people considering a career with the National Parks Service will find *Hola Ranger* a helpful resource. David Vela, the first Latino director of the National Parks Service outlines his long career in this self-published volume and "provides a roadmap for how a Latino country boy from Southeast Texas realized his dream."

Recommended by Courtney Lyons-Garcia, Executive Director, Partnership for the National Trails System

*Hola Ranger: My Journey Through the National Parks*, David Vela, 2022, 236 pages



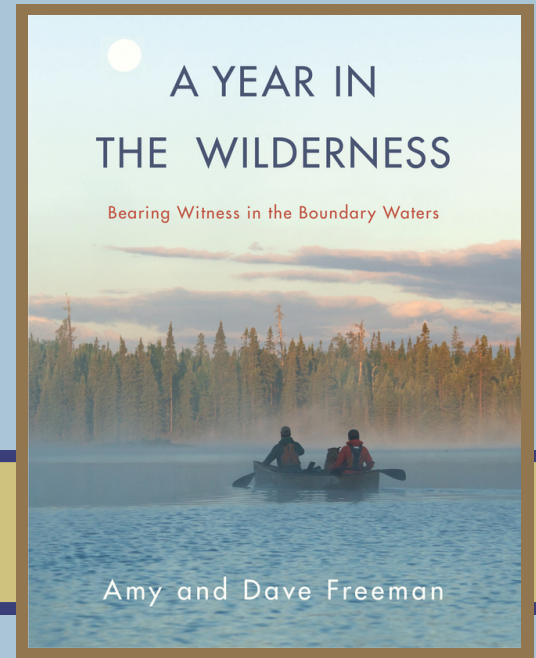


# Adventure and Advocacy

*A Year in the Wilderness: Bearing Witness in the Boundary Waters*,  
Amy and Dave Freeman, Milkweed Editions, 2017, 320 pages

## **“We entered the wilderness to listen to it”**

In 2015, “National Geographic Adventurers of the Year” Amy and Dave Freeman, began a year’s expedition to help build a national movement to protect the Boundary Waters of northern Minnesota. Canoeing, skijoring (their toboggan pulled by sled dogs and the Freemans on skis), and snowshoeing, they recorded the abundance and beauty for followers on social media. Their *A Year in the Wilderness*--told with stunning photography and compelling text-- is an inspiring record of that journey.



## A Brief Conversation with Libby London Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters

***A Year in the Wilderness* showed the beauty of the Boundary Waters and the need for its preservation.**

### **What can you tell us about its importance?**

The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, located in Northeastern Minnesota, is the most visited Wilderness in the United States. Animals like moose, beaver, bears, deer, bobcats, distinctive fish, and aquatic animals rely on the undisturbed ecosystems of the Wilderness for survival. Not to mention, it’s a shelter for endangered species. The Canada lynx, gray wolf, and northern long-eared bat all rely on the thriving forests of the Wilderness for refuge.

### **Can you give us an update on the status of The Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters?**

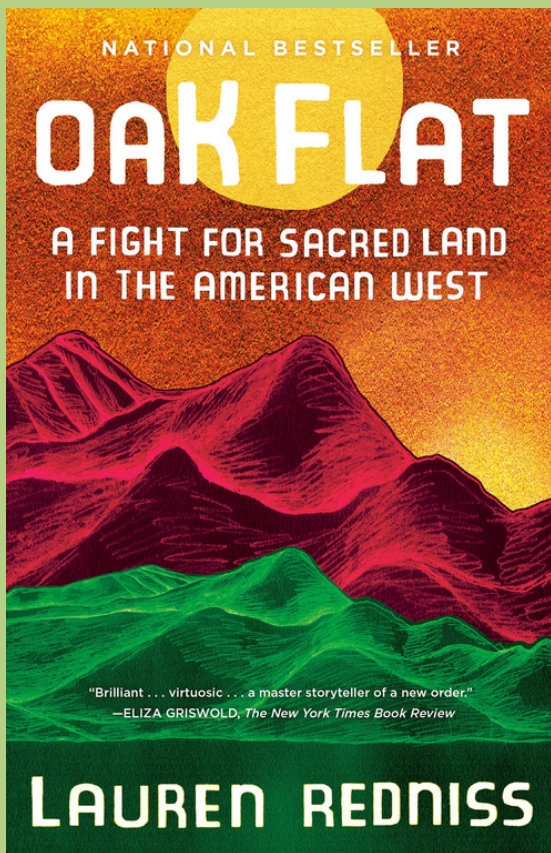
We’re a national coalition of 400+ conservation, hunting & fishing organizations & businesses united to achieve a permanent ban on sulfide-ore copper mining in the headwaters of the Boundary Waters. This kind of risky mining threatens Minnesota’s environment, local economy, and way of life.

### **What are the current threats, and what can be done to protect the ecosystem?**

The Biden Administration recently signed a 20-year ban on mining next to the Boundary Waters, but unfortunately, this win was short-lived. Right now, there is dangerous federal legislation aimed at reversing the recent protections. The Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters is working tirelessly on the expert legal, scientific, and policy work required to truly protect this precious Wilderness permanently. Wilderness advocates and volunteers help to fuel this movement and are passionately fighting to protect this irreplaceable Wilderness.”

--Libby London, Communications Director, Save the Boundary Waters

Learn how you can volunteer and support the movement at: [savetheboundarywaters.org](https://www.savetheboundarywaters.org)



*Oak Flat: A Fight for Sacred Land in the American West*, Lauren Redniss, Random House, 2021, 288 pages

**National Bestseller,**  
**Kirkus: One of the Best Books of the Year,**  
**New York Times Book Review Editor's Choice**

Few works are as haunting, beautiful, powerful, or urgent as Lauren Redniss's *Oak Flat*. A holy place in Arizona, it is a high-elevation mesa, a burial ground, and a petroglyph site. It is where San Carlos Apache girls celebrate their coming-of-age ceremony. It is also the site of a planned copper mine, that will destroy everything natural and sacred in the ecosystem. It will leave a crater 1,000 feet deep and nearly two miles wide. *Oak Flat* is a true race-against-time story told through the voices of two families on either side of this ongoing struggle. A key character, Wendsler Nosie, remains active and visible in his advocacy against the destruction of Oak Flat. Through Lauren Redniss' colored pencil drawings and exquisite storytelling, the MacArthur "Genius" and National Book Award finalist has created a sublime work of visual nonfiction. Praise is also due to the publisher, Random House, for taking care to create a special volume that celebrates the reading experience--choosing thick luxurious paper to mirror the weight and importance of the story.

For current information on the ongoing struggle for Oak Flat: [apache-stronghold.com](http://apache-stronghold.com)

## Volunteers: The Heart and Soul of Conservation

"From National Forests to State and National Parks, I've had the privilege of getting to collaborate with volunteers and witness firsthand the genuine passion and dedication people have for conservation. Volunteering may connote 'working for free' to some, but the benefits to both the site and to the volunteer are reciprocal and mutually beneficial. Volunteers often became the face of many programs, and the park and community recognized how vital they were, and continue to be, to the parks!"

--Adrianna Weickhardt, Fire Prevention Technician, US Forest Service

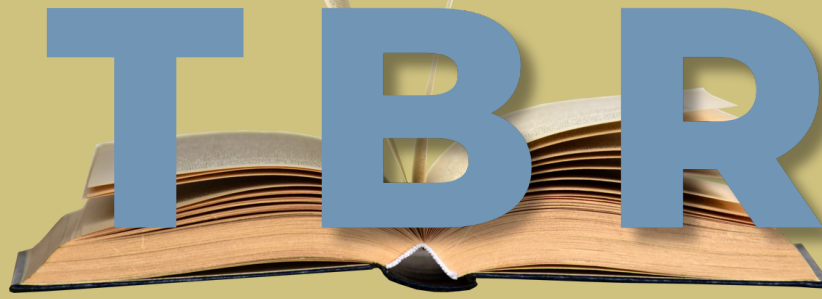
Adrianna has worked alongside volunteers serving as:

- trail guides
- staff for fire lookout towers
- leaders of interpretive and science programs for schools
- builders of bird blinds
- staff for booths at festivals
- ambassadors for the parks





## "TO BE READ" BOOKS IN THE AUTUMN 2023 ISSUE



- Page 7: *The Hike*, Alison Farrell, Chronicle Books, 2019, 56 pages  
*The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate*, Jacqueline Kelly, Henry Holt and Company (hardcover), 368 pages  
*The Blue Castle*, L. M. Montgomery, first published 1926, Sourcebook Fire (paperback), 2014, 256 pages
- Page 8: *Jack, Adventures in Texas' Big Bend, Welcome to the Desert*, Chris Ruggia, Vast Graphics 2012, 24 pages  
*Jack, Adventures in Texas' Big Bend, Part 2: Alone and Adrift*, Chris Ruggia, Vast Graphics 2012, 24 pages  
*Jack, Adventures in Texas' Big Bend, Part 3: Losing Game*, Chris Ruggia, Vast Graphics 2014, 32 pages
- Page 9: *The Wall*, Marlen Haushofer, first published 1963, New Directions, 2022, 248 pages
- Page 10: *Go As A River: A Novel*, Shelley Read, Spiegel & Grau, 2023, 320 pages
- Page 11: *Fox and I: An Uncommon Friendship*, Catherine Raven, Spiegel & Grau, 2021, 304 pages  
*I Belong Here: A Journey Along the Backbone of Britain*, Anita Sethi, Bloomsbury Wildlife, 2021, 320 pages
- Page 12: *Woman, Watching: Louise de Kiriline Lawrence and the Songbirds of Pimisi Bay*, Marilyn Simonds, ECW Press, 2022, 416 pages  
*The Loghouse Nest*, Louise de Kiriline Lawrence, first published 1945/Natural Heritage 1988, 176 pages
- Page 13: *Sparrow Envy: Field Guide to Birds and Lesser Beasts*, J. Drew Lanham Hub City Press, 2021, 104 pages  
*Find More Birds: 111 Surprising Ways to Spot Birds Wherever You Are*, Heather Wolf, The Experiment, 2023, 273 pages
- Page 14: *Eating Stone: Imagination and the Loss of the Wild*, Ellen Meloy, Vintage (Paperback) 2006, 352 pages  
*The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*, Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, Princeton University Press, 2015, 352 pages
- Page 15: *An Immense World: How Animal Senses Reveal the Hidden Realms Around Us*, Ed Yong, Random House, 2022, 464 pages
- Page 16: *Flight Paths: How a Passionate and Quirky Group of Pioneering Scientists Solved the Mystery of Bird Migration*, Rebecca Heisman, Harper, 2023, 288 pages
- Page 17: *Light Rains Sometimes Fall: A British Year Through Japan's 72 Seasons*, Lev Parikian, Elliott & Thompson, 2021, 352 pages  
*The Nature of Oaks: The Rich Ecology of Our Most Essential Native Trees*, Douglas W. Tallamy, Timber Press, 2021, 200 pages
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*Landlines: The Remarkable Story of a Thousand-Mile Journey*, Raynor Winn, Pegasus Books (North America hardcover), 2023, 320 pages
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- Page 22: *Oak Flat: A Fight for Sacred Land in the American West*, Lauren Redniss, Random House, 2021, 288 pages

## Finding the Books Featured in the Guide

We consider libraries and independent booksellers the primary resources for locating books. Many libraries offer interlibrary loan or can find an electronic copy when books are not in their physical collection. To locate an independent bookseller near you, [Indiebound](#) offers a "[bookstore finder](#)" feature on their website. Another resource is [bookshop.org](#), where every purchase on the site financially supports independent bookstores; readers can specify a favorite shop to receive support. Authors often suggest purchasing through Indiebound, [bookshop.org](#), directly through the publisher, or a local independent bookshop. Some of our selections, including vintage or backlist titles, might be more challenging to locate. We've had good luck finding older titles through [Alibris](#) or other online merchants.

## Discovering Inspiring Places



Rocky Mountain Land Library's mission is to help connect people to nature and the land. Their work and their generosity have inspired the *Nature Book Guide*.

Website: [landlibrary.wordpress.com](http://landlibrary.wordpress.com) Instagram: @landlibrary



Located in downtown Chicago, the American Writers Museum celebrates the enduring influence of American writers on our history, identity, culture, and daily lives. It connects visitors with their favorite authors and writings, while inspiring the discovery of new works of every type - poetry, lyrics, speeches, drama, fiction, nonfiction, journalism, and more. Website: [americanwritersmuseum.org](http://americanwritersmuseum.org)



Access Birding, a specialty online store on [bookshop.org](#) related to access, inclusion, disability, and birding. Presented by a disabled birder, an occupational therapist, and an advocate for improving access and inclusion for disabled birders.

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## Thanks and Acknowledgements

*Nature Book Guide* is the result of a community of exceptionally kind people:

- Book Recommendation Panel members are the heart of this project. Friends, your recommendations and your work inspire us, illuminate us, educate, and entertain us. We couldn't put the *Guide* together without you.
- Eric Eaton and Libby London, for giving us time and enthusiasm for your interviews, thank you.
- Friends who've left our bookmarks in Little Free Libraries, who put up posters in public libraries, who thank us for recommendations, and help spread the word about *Nature Book Guide*, thank you.
- Linda, your editorial talents make every page, every sentence better. Thank you.
- Monte, thank you for your thoughtful and insightful enthusiasm and for supporting this project in every possible way.

And to volunteers, who lend the energy, momentum, and imagination to nature and climate organizations. We hope we've inspired you with our book recommendations.

--Beth Nobles, Founder/Editor of *Nature Book Guide*

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