



NATURE

BOOK GUIDE

VOL. 1 ISSUE 2
WINTER 2022-2023
WWW.NATUREBOOKGUIDE.COM

READING FOR FUN

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

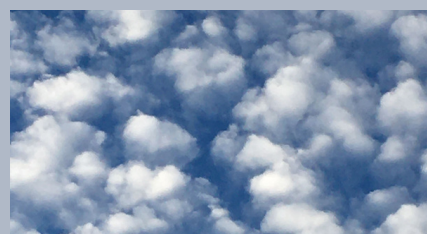
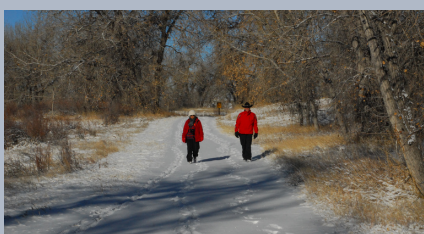
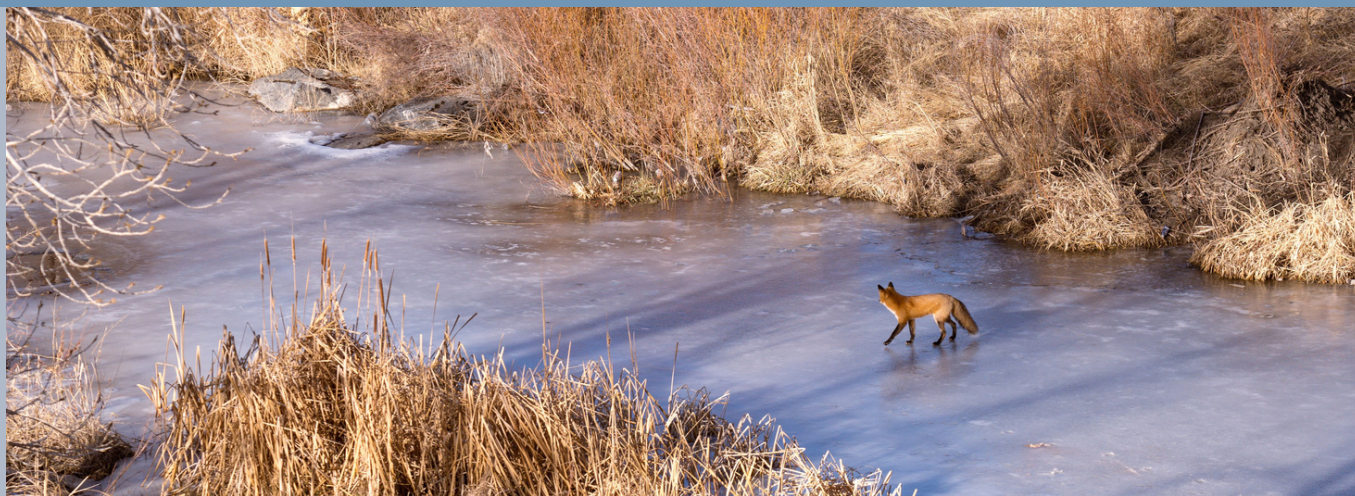
READING FOR INSIGHT

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

Contents



3 WELCOME

**4 BOOK
RECOMMENDATION
PANEL**

6 FICTION

**8 POETRY AND
ESSAYS, MEMOIRS
AND BIOGRAPHIES,
CLASSICS, AND
NONFICTION**

**18 AUTHOR INTERVIEW:
ERICH HOYT,
PLANKTONIA: THE
NIGHTLY MIGRATION
OF THE OCEAN'S
SMALLEST
CREATURES**

**19 INSPIRATION FOR
CHANGE**

**20 TBR LIST, RESOURCES,
THANKS, AND
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Welcome to Nature Book Guide

Hello there, readers. We are thrilled to present the second issue of the *Nature Book Guide*!

Once again, we planned this *Guide* to offer something for everyone--novels, fables, inspiring memoirs and adventure stories, well-researched nonfiction, and thoughtful approaches to the challenges we all face in defending nature.

Plus, we've uncovered some fun surprises for you to discover!

Can slime mold find the most efficient route through IKEA?

(Answer: yes, read more in *Entangled Life* by Merlin Sheldrake, reviewed by Bill Davison on page 13.)

How can we view the largest natural migration on the planet?

(Answer: leaf through a copy of *Planktonia* by Erich Hoyt to see the beauty of the massive global vertical migration of creatures that occurs each night in the ocean. Check out our interview with Erich on page 17 and download the extended version from our website.)

What nature writing classic languished in a drawer for thirty years before it was published?

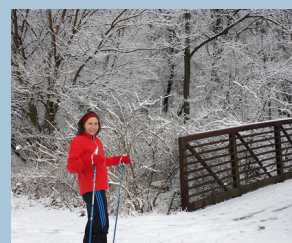
(Answer: *The Living Mountain* by Nan Shepherd, considered "the finest book ever written on nature and landscape in Britain" by The Guardian. Check our review on page 12.)

The *Guide* couldn't exist without the book recommendations from our panel of scientists, naturalists and stewards of the earth--their words are the heart and soul of this endeavor. This issue, we were thrilled to welcome a new member, Dennis Vásquez, who had a distinguished career with the National Park Service and hasn't stopped since he "retired." We're eager to add more voices to the panel in the future.

If you find something you love in *Nature Book Guide*, will you help spread the word? Our *Guide* will always be free to download from our website (www.naturebookguide.com) along with extra features, bookmarks, and posters. I'd value your thoughts as we plan our upcoming quarterly issues; feel free to contact me at naturebookguide@gmail.com.

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, where she promoted the desert/mountain region's natural and historical assets, including state and national parks. Through a partnership with Texas Parks and Wildlife, Beth 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.



Book Recommendation Panel

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, US Forest Service hydrologic technician working to conserve and restore watershed resiliency on the western slopes of Colorado and a former wildland firefighter on USFS helitack and hand crews in California, with extensive experience working in outdoor education/interpretation and natural resource management in state and national parks. Adrianna is studying Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and geospatial analysis to support wildfire mitigation/restoration planning in her graduate studies at Oregon State University.



Rich Reading, Ph.D. is the Vice President of Science and Conservation at Butterfly Pavilion. Rich has a long record of wildlife research around the world; in 2020, he was recognized by the country of Mongolia with the highest award bestowed upon a non-citizen for his contribution to wildlife conservation. His current work includes research on the ecology and population dynamics of threatened species of native Mongolian Parnassius butterflies.



Kate Vannelli, Leader of the 'Living with Big Cats' Initiative at World Wildlife Fund, focusing specifically on human - big cat conflict and enabling coexistence between people and lions, jaguars and snow leopards. Kate is based in Arusha, Tanzania.



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.



Katie Smither, an Opto-mechanical Technician, who helps to maintain large telescope mirrors, instrument optics, and laser beams. She's working just south of the Atacama Desert in Chile for an organization that manages telescopes all over the world, particularly Arizona, Hawai'i, and Chile.



Bill Davison, Tree Crop Commercialization Lead for the Savanna Institute. 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.



Courtney Lyons-Garcia, Executive Director of the Public Lands Foundation; previously served as Executive Director of the 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.



Warren B. Sconiers, Associate Teaching Professor, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of Colorado at Boulder. Dr. Sconiers teaches introductory biology and education courses and researches curriculum development and educational approaches for large classroom settings. During the summers, he researches how changes in plant communities in response to climate change impact arthropod communities in alpine systems.

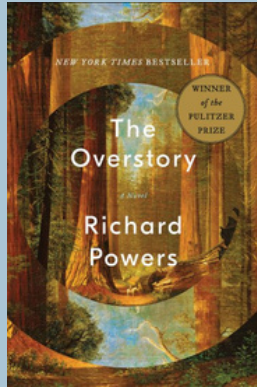


Dennis Vásquez, Deputy Director of the City of Albuquerque's Parks and Recreation Department. Before retiring from the National Park Service, Dennis served as superintendent for a number of parks including White Sands National Park, Bandelier National Monument, Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site, Guadalupe Mountains National Park, and Petroglyph National Monument.



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

Four Novels



The Overstory: A Novel,
Richard Powers,
W.W. Norton,
2018, 502 pages

“What conveys a right, and why should humans, alone on all the planet, have them?” —Richard Powers

Powers leads readers through *The Overstory's* structure, from *Roots*--a collection of seemingly standalone stories about unrelated individuals--to *Trunk*, and *Crown*, and *Seeds*. In time, the intertwining of characters and story is as profound as the ecosystem of a forest. A sweeping epic of humanity and heartbreak, protest, and resistance; the interdependence of life shines through *The Overstory's* unforgettable characters.

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize in Fiction, Shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize, Over One Year on the *New York Times* Bestseller List



Two Old Women: An Alaska Legend of Betrayal, Courage and Survival (20th Anniversary Edition), Velma Wallis,
Harper Perennial, 2013,
127pages

“Within each individual on this large and complicated world there lives an astounding potential of greatness. Yet it is rare that these hidden gifts are brought to live except by fate.” —Velma Wallis

Set in the upper Yukon Valley in Alaska, this Athabascan Indian legend was passed from generation to generation. A story of two women abandoned by their community--Ch'idzigyakk (age 80) and Sa' (age 75)--*Two Old Women* is a suspenseful story of resilience and strength, betrayal, forgiveness, and survival.

Winner, 1993 Western States Book Award and the 1994 Pacific Northwest Booksellers Award



Migrations: A Novel,
Charlotte
McConaghy,
Flatiron, 2020, 278
pages

“But the rhythms of the sea's tides are the only things we humans have not yet destroyed.” —Charlotte McConaghy

Following Arctic terns on what might be their last migration from Greenland to Antarctica, Franny Stone hides dark secrets. *Migrations: A Novel* offers an unvarnished vision of what may result from climate change in this page-turning--and shocking--journey of a book.

A Best Book of the Year (*TIME*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Library Journal*, Goodreads, and more), Longlisted for the Dublin Literary Award

The Island of Missing Trees, Elif Shafak,
Bloomsbury Publishing,
2021,
368 pages



“Then again, if it's love you're after, or love you have lost, come to the fig, always the fig.” —Elif Shafak

Narrated in part by a fig tree witnessing the forbidden love two teenagers on the island of Cyprus, *The Island of Missing Trees* is a tender story of culture, faith, and identity. When war breaks out the teens--a Greek Cypriot and a Turkish Cypriot--vanish. Years later, another teen in London has just one connection to her family's homeland, a *Ficus carica* growing in her backyard. Shafak's beautiful and surprising tale of intergenerational (and inter-species) trauma sticks with you.

Shortlisted for the Women's Prize for Fiction, Winner of the 2022 BookTube Silver Medal in Fiction, A Reese's Book Club Pick

MOONSHOT: The Indigenous Comics Collection

"The first MOONSHOT volume was a revelation when I read it. Here were stories I knew or could recognize. Some of them I knew from my own childhood, but others were glimpses of other people's stories, families and lives. In MOONSHOT, I saw our pasts, and also indigeno-futurism of the way things could be. But most importantly, I also saw how we exist now. That's what is missing from so many of the things I've read and watched in my life, and there it was, plain as day. MOONSHOT was maybe the first comic I read that I saw myself in."

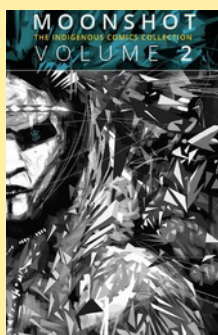
--James Leask, Métis Comic Critic and Commentator, ComicsAlliance,
from the forward of the second volume of MOONSHOT: The Indigenous Comics Collection



Moonshot: The Indigenous Comics Collection (Vol. 1)
Hope Nicholson (editor),
Inhabit Education Books,
Inc., 2021,
176 pages

Reading Age: 13-17

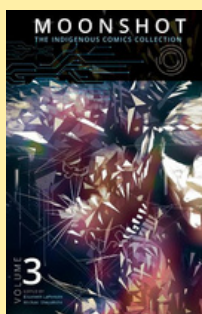
Volume 1 offers a wide range of stories including an excerpt from the Daredevil Vision Quest series (told in Indian Sign Language), stories associated with the constellations, the creatures of the night, and futuristic takes on Muscogee Creek and Caddo stories. Also included are stories based in Inuit, Tlicho, and Anishnabe cultures.



Moonshot: The Indigenous Comics Collection (Vol. 2)
Hope Nicholson (editor),
Inhabit Education Books,
Inc., 2022,
165 pages

Reading Age: 13-17

Volume 2 focuses on "our peoples as they are now," according to James Leask, and is "bursting with stories, is an act of love and also of resistance." It includes a Thunderbird story from the Anishinaabeg, a tale of cultural appropriation from the Lipan Apache people, a story of the importance of ritual and belief inspired by Ojibway Elder Arthur Solomon, reverence for the wolverine in a story from Canada's Tlicho Dene First Nations, a story of sacred medicine from the Cherokee, and more.



Moonshot: The Indigenous Comics Collection (Vol. 3)
Elizabeth LaPensée and
Michael Sheyahshe
(editors),
Inhabit Education Books,
Inc., 2020,
144 pages

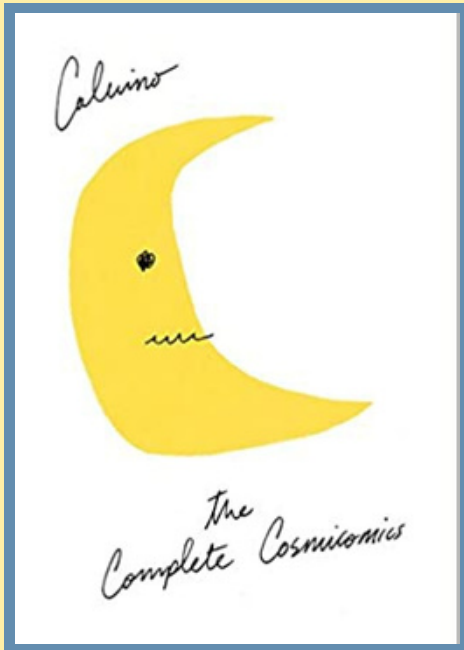
Reading Age: 13-17

Volume 3 focuses on Indigenous Futurisms. "The illustrations and stories capture our Native slipstream moments and events, tunnelling into spacetime dimensions, revealing the fluidity of past, present, and future in innovative ways visually and connected to not just parallel universes, alternate realities, and nigh-possible futures by joyfully, even questioning and playing around with time itself."

--Grace L. Dillon, Ph.D.

A collection of enchanting and wildly inventive stories with a most unconventional narrator--"Qfwfq"--who speaks as mammoth, a dinosaur, and a single cell.

The Complete Cosmicomics, Italo Calvino, Mariner Books (paperback), 2015, (Original publication 1965), 432 pages



"The profound and whimsical stories from Italo Calvino's *Cosmicomics* combine the light and dark qualities of being human in a vast cosmos. The stories are wonderfully poetic and gestural, loosely informed by scientific understanding of the universe, while exploring elusive, emotional experiences. I first came to the book through Liev Schreiber's reading of "The Distance of the Moon." I stumbled on this short story, "Without Colors," and other favorites from the collection in a time of transition out of art school and city life, into a life of far-flung locations, stargazing, astronomical research, and discovering the large, mechanical telescopes that I would later create a career caretaking. *Cosmicomics* captures experiences lived between poetic and scientific truths with a perspective that felt deeply personal to me at the time, and I hope connects with readers now."

-Katie Smither

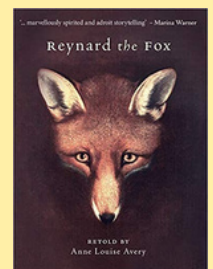


Recommended by Katie Smither, an Opto-mechanical Technician, who helps to maintain large telescope mirrors, instrument optics, and laser beams used in contemporary ground-based astronomy. She is currently working in Chile.

Katie also suggests readers enjoy listening to an episode of Radiolab in which actor Liev Schreiber reads "The Distance to the Moon" from *The Complete Cosmicomics*. A link to this reading is on our website's blog.

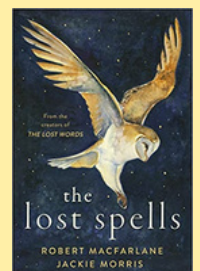
Anne Louise Avery's inventive and charming retelling of Reynard's stories--the fox being most popular and beloved character in European folklore--is based on William Caxton's bestselling 1481 English translation. Fresh and entertaining, it is a perfect comfort book for long winter nights.

Reynard the Fox, Anne Louise Avery, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, 2020, 480 pages
Reading age: 13-17

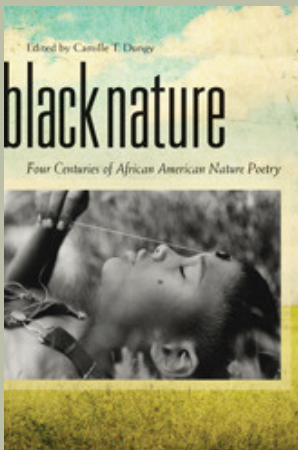


The Lost Spells begins, "This is a book of spells to be spoken aloud. It tells stories in paint and word." The second collaboration between writer Robert Macfarlane and artist Jackie Morris, it is a noble and more intimate companion to their cultural phenomenon, *The Lost Words*. Morris' illustrations are lush and vivid. A glorious gift for the bedside any nature lover would be happy to own.

The Lost Spells, Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris, Hamish Hamilton, 2020, 240 pages
Reading age: 5 years and up



Poetry and Essays



Black Nature: Four Centuries of African American Nature Poetry,
Camille T. Dungy, ed.,
University of Georgia Press, 2009, 432 pages

In *Black Nature*, poet and Guggenheim fellow Camille T. Dungy compiled the first and most comprehensive collection of African American nature poetry featuring the work of 93 poets from the time of slavery to the start of this century. *Black Nature* is a sampling of every major movement in black American poetry. As Dungy notes, it "encourages readers to divert their gaze into new directions, demanding they notice new aspects of the world and accept alternative modes of description," including traditional pastoral works and those of conflicts and struggle.



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

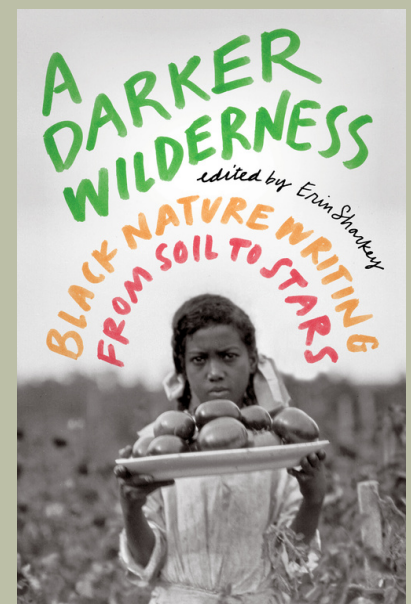
Winner: Northern California Book Awards, Northern California Book Reviewers, Short-listed: Outstanding Literary Work, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

"Black Nature: Four Centuries of African American Nature Poetry, edited by Camille Dungy, is a gorgeous anthology that makes the case that Black poets push the boundaries of nature writing beyond the agrarian and the wild to the political, the historical, and the radical. This project would not be possible without such footsteps to follow."

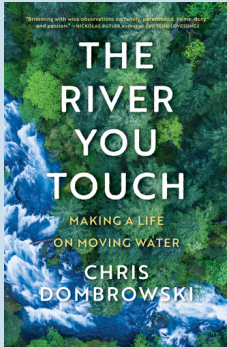
--Erin Sharkey, editor of *A Darker Wilderness*, from the introductory essay

A Darker Wilderness: Black Nature Writing from Soil to Stars,
Erin Sharkey, ed.,
Milkweed Editions, 2023,
312 pages
Publication Date:
2/14/23
Preorders available

Insightful, heartbreaking, and significant, the essays in *A Darker Wilderness: Black Nature Writing from Soil to Stars* pair archival objects with stories and meditations, each addressing the writer's relationship to the natural world. Objects examined include Benjamin Banneker's 1795 almanac, a photo of a young woman during a civil rights demonstration in Alabama, and a statue of a Haitian revolutionary. The essays connect them with issues such as land ownership and migration, the history of naming places, protest and freedom, and the inevitability of change and transformation. We found *A Darker Wilderness* moving on its own; paired with *Black Nature* a profoundly illuminating reading experience.



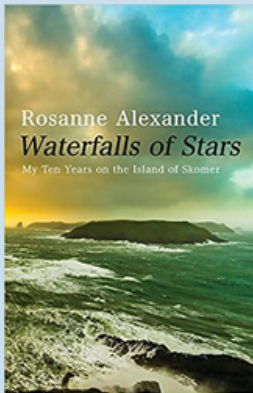
Memoirs and Biographies



"In a life properly lived, wrote a friend, you're a river. I take this to mean that headlong shots through roaring box canyons are inevitable; along with meanders, wanderings in which the main channel finds itself far from the original course; tepid, drought-drained summers in which trout flag will be endured; as well as winters when water flows black and sinewy against the snow; eddies too, the hypnotic, elliptical movement of water running back on itself, around, and then around again."

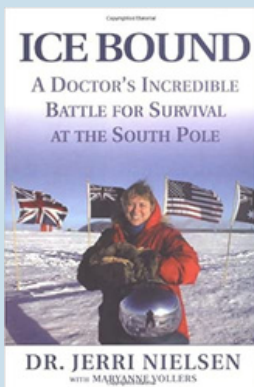
Wise and heartfelt, this beautiful memoir by Chris Dombrowski, a poet-fishing guide in Montana, covers the years in which he marries, becomes a father, struggles with balance, tries teaching to pay the bills, but thankfully for us, continues writing.

The River You Touch: Making a Life on Moving Water, Chris Dombrowski, Milkweed Editions, 2022, 336 pages



When Rosanne Alexander's boyfriend gets a job as caretaker of Skomer Island (a small uninhabited remote nature reserve off the coast of Wales), they have ten days to leave college, put everything in storage, get married (a requirement of the job), and purchase all the food and supplies they'll need for three months. Skomer's abundant wildlife--seals, shearwaters, puffins and kittiwakes--are not only the subject of their fieldwork and study but provide a buffer against the isolation of island life. Alexander's beautiful memoir recounts her decade on Skomer--the changing of seasons, the tragedy in the aftermath of an oil spill, and the resourcefulness required when bad weather limits access to the mainland for food and supplies.

Waterfalls of Stars: My Ten Years on the Island of Skomer, Rosanne Alexander, Seren, 2017, 352 pages



"For me, this book was about more than a story of survival. So many of us imagine what Antarctica must be like, as we envision sweeping landscapes of snow and ice with blustery winds. We rarely think about what the daily grind of life on a research station must be like, or of the isolation one must feel. Then to be forced to perform your own biopsy, administer yourself chemotherapy and come face to face with your own mortality without the support of your family and closest friends - that is more than just surviving. It's about facing fear, facing yourself at your lowest point and choosing to move forward in a positive way. As I grow older and see more friends and family fight this disease, I return to this book for inspiration and to remind myself that even if you face your battle alone, you can win the fight."

--Courtney Lyons-Garcia

Ice Bound: A Doctor's Incredible Battle for Survival at the South Pole, Dr. Jerri Nielsen and Maryanne Vollers, Miramax, 2001, 384 pages



Recommended by Courtney Lyons-Garcia, Executive Director, Public Lands Foundation

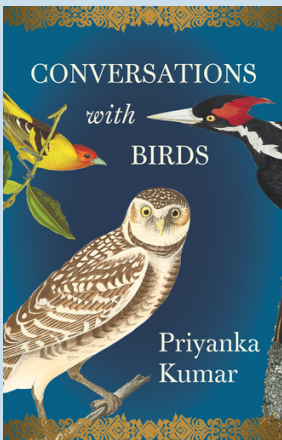


"My favorite season is spring—until fall arrives, and then my favorite season is fall: the seasons of change, the seasons that tell me to wake up, to remember that every passing moment of every careening day is always the last moment, always the very last time, always the only instant I will ever take that precise breath or watch that exact cloud scud across that particular blue of the sky."

—Margaret Renkl

Tiny and jewel-like, Margaret Renkl's meditative and insightful essays cover nature, family, memory and grief. Renkl's thoughtful text, combined with her brother's illustrations, make this lovely volume one to savor a page at a time.

Late Migrations: A Natural History of Love and Loss, Margaret Renkl, Milkweed Editions, 2021, 248 pages

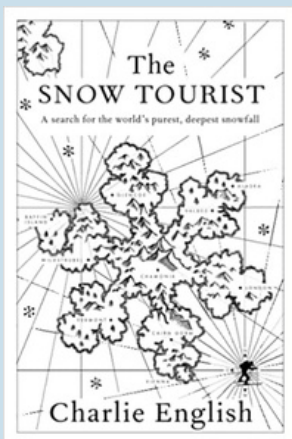


"The natural world, its Western incarnation, swung open its doors to me, and I entered an animated, even kaleidoscopic experience. Whereas before I had seen American landscapes in shades of greens and browns, on vague aesthetic terms, now my senses began to truly engage with the life that was before me."

—Priyanka Kumar

Kumar's memories of her childhood in northern India are more likely to include snakes rather than birds, but her time in the American Southwest unlocked a love of birds and birding. *Conversations with Birds'* essays bring her backyard birds in Santa Fe to life as vividly as the sandhill crane migration at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. Meet the tanagers, the nuthatches, the owls, the curlews, even the roadrunners and bobcats in this graceful memoir.

Conversations with Birds, Priyanka Kumar, Milkweed Editions, 2022, 296 pages



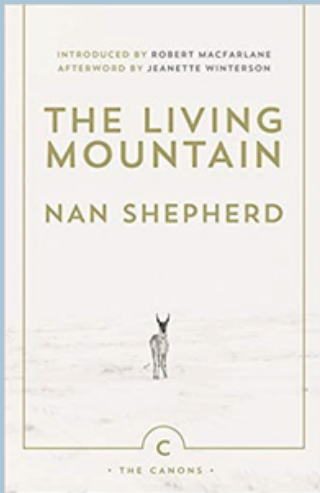
"In the nineteenth century, Fritjof Nansen wrote that skiing washes civilization clean from our minds by dint of its exhilarating physicality. By extension, I believe that snow helps strip away the things that don't matter. It leaves us thinking of little else but the greatness of nature, the place of our souls within it, and the dazzling whiteness that lies ahead."

—Charlie English

The Arctic Circle, Buffalo, Scotland, Glacier, London. Charlie English takes on a journey to experience the world's best snow. *The Snow Tourist* is part nature writing, part travelogue, part history, part memoir. And great fun. There's even a handy "Snow Handbook" with an explanation of the science of snow and instructions on building an igloo.

The Snow Tourist: A Search for the World's Purest, Deepest Snowfall, Charlie English, Counterpoint, 2009, 272 pages

Classics to Discover



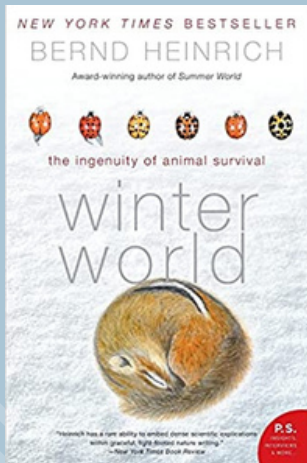
The Living Mountain: A Celebration of the Cairngorm Mountains of Scotland, Nan Shepherd, Canongate Canons, 2014 (originally published in 1977), 122 pages

"Most works of mountain literature are written by men and most of them focus on the goal of the summit. Nan Shepherd's aimless, sensual exploration of the Cairngorms is bracingly different."
--Robert Macfarlane

An avid hill walker, Nan Shepherd chronicled her experiences in her beloved Scottish Cairngorms in *The Living Mountain*, which serves as both a memoir and collection of field notes. Considered a masterpiece and the "finest book ever written on nature and landscape in Britain," it remained unknown for thirty years, but was published in 1977 just a few years before Nan Shepherd's death.

"Sometimes a smooth portion of stream is covered with a thin coat of ice that, not quite meeting in the middle, shows the level of the water several inches below; since the freezing began, the water upstream has frozen, and less water is flowing. When a level surface has frozen hard from bank to bank, one may hear at times a loud knocking as the stream, rushing below the ice, flings a stone up against its roof."

--Nan Shepherd in *The Living Mountain*



Winter World: The Ingenuity of Animal Survival, Bernd Heinrich, Ecco, 2009, 400 pages

"Heinrich is a scientist and naturalist of the first rank, champion ultramarathoner, woodsman of skills seldom seen in modern times, and...a nature writer of uncommon talent."

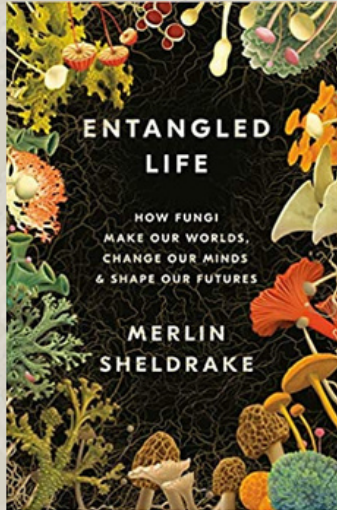
--Edward O. Wilson

Engagingly written, Heinrich explores the science of survival during the cold months of winter. Providing detailed sections on squirrels, kinglets, chickadees, turtles, beavers, insects, and more, *Winter World* answers questions about "super cooling," hibernation, shelter, and nutritional needs of animals during winter.

"All kinds of creatures form tight-knit societies in winter, even those that don't crash a cozy cabin and even those that don't need to seek warmth. One November day some years ago I squatted down on freshly fallen but already matted leaves in the woods. Within seconds I detected the unmistakable odor of stinkbug. Digging under the leaves, I found dozens of them massed together, presumably settling in for hibernation. I'd disturbed them in their bivouac, and they were giving off their foul-smelling defense secretions. I did not need to taste them--I knew they tasted as bad as monarchs.."

--Bernd Heinrich in *Winter World*

**"If you could place your olfactory epithelium into the soil, it would feel like the performance of a jazz group, with the players listening, interacting, responding to one another in real time."
 --Merlin Sheldrake in *Entangled Life***



Entangled Life: How Fungi Make Our Worlds, Change Our Minds & Shape Our Futures, Merlin Sheldrake, Random House, 2020, 368 pages

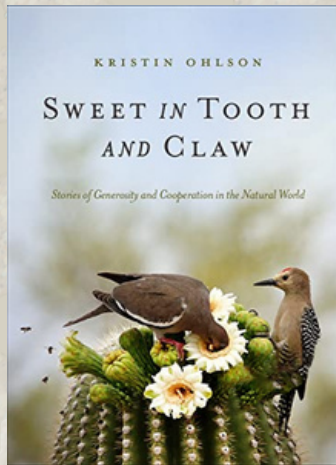
New York Times Best Seller, One of the Best Books of the Year---Time, BBC Science Focus, The Daily Mail, Geographical, The Times, Science Friday

"*Entangled Life* pulls us into a brilliant and precise fungi-centric view of the world. Merlin Sheldrake's writing is scholarly, visionary, and deeply engaging. He describes the complex symbiotic relationships that exist between fungi, plants, and people. His remarkable insights highlight the role of cooperation in nature and show the value of combining an active imagination with scientific exploration. His deep curiosity helps us to see that every fungus has a life of its own and the myriad ways they are active participants that shape our world." --Bill Davison

What if Nature is more cooperative, and less competitive, than we think?

"*Sweet in Tooth and Claw* is a new release from Patagonia and it pairs well with *Entangled Life*. Kristin Ohlson illuminates new research in a wide variety of fields that reveal the subtle ways cooperation operates in nature. She shows us that life runs on mutualism at its core. I found her exploration of regenerative agriculture to be particularly insightful and engaging. She highlights creative farmers that are harnessing mutualism to grow food in ways that benefit people and the planet."

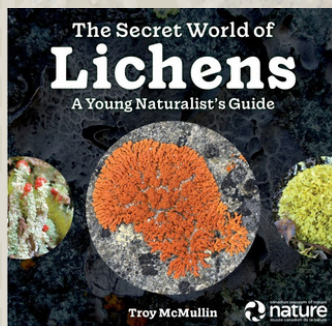
--Bill Davison



Sweet in Tooth and Claw: Stories of Generosity and Cooperation in the Natural World, Kristin Ohlson, Patagonia, 2022, 392 pages



Entangled Life and *Sweet in Tooth and Claw* were recommended by Bill Davison, Tree Crop Commercialization Lead for the Savanna Institute



The Secret World of Lichens: A Young Naturalist's Guide, Troy McMullin, Firefly Books, 2022, 48 pages
Ages 8-12

The Secret World of Lichens is a beginner naturalist's guide inspiring exploration of these symbiotic organisms. Written in collaboration with the Canadian Museum of Nature by the Museum's chief lichenologist Troy McMullin, there are beautiful photographs and clear, well-written text.

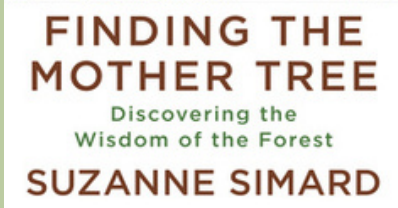
"We can continue pushing our earth out of balance, with greenhouse gases accelerating each year, or we can regain balance by acknowledging that if we harm one species, one forest, one lake, this ripples through the entire complex web. Mistreatment of one species is mistreatment of all.

"The rest of the planet has been waiting patiently for us to figure that out."

—Susan Simard



*Finding the Mother Tree:
Discovering the Wisdom of
the Forest, Susan Simard,
Knopf,
2021, 337 pages*



"Suzanne Simard is my hero, and I think she'll be yours, too, after you read *"Finding the Mother Tree"* – she's a champion for old growth and mother tree conservation; forest biodiversity above and below ground; and for females in leadership and science. I can't praise this book enough. It's both an education in science and the telling of Suzanne's incredible life story, from her family roots in the logging industry to her years making breakthrough discoveries, challenging conventional western science, and the triumphs, losses, and adventures in between."

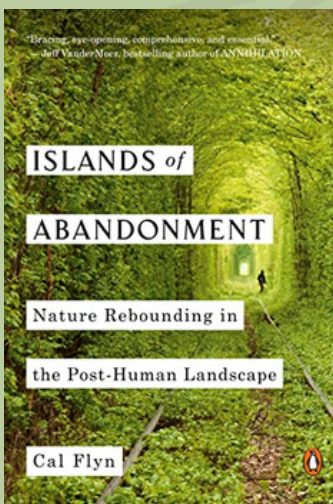
—Adrianna Weickhardt

Recommended by Adrianna Weickhardt,
US Forest Service hydrologic technician

Nationwide Bestseller—New York Times, TIME, The Washington Post. One of the Wall Street Journal's Ten Best Books of the Year

"...when a place has been altered beyond recognition and all hope seems lost, it might still hold the potential for life of another kind."

—Cal Flynn

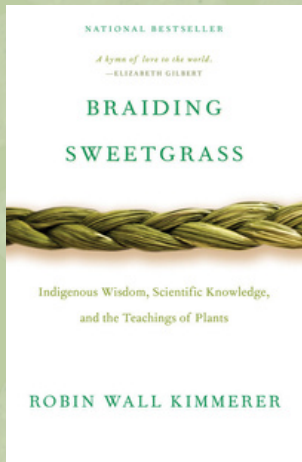


*Islands of Abandonment:
Nature Rebounding in the
Post-Human Landscape,
Cal Flynn, Penguin Books, 2021,
384 pages*

Of Chernobyl, Detroit, the oil fields of Estonia, and other "ruined" places in the world, Cal Flynn writes: "I have spent two years traveling to places where the worst has already happened. These are landscapes wracked by war, nuclear meltdown, natural disaster, desertification, toxification, irradiation, and economic collapse. This should be a book of darkness, a litany of the worst places in the world. In fact, it is a story of redemption: how the most polluted spots on Earth—suffocated by oil spills, blasted by bombs, contaminated by nuclear fallout, or scraped clean of their natural resources—can be rehabilitated through ecological processes."

Finalist for the Baillie Gifford Prize, the Wainwright Conservation Award, the British Academy Book Prize, and the Scottish Nonfiction Book of the Year. Longlisted for the Highland Book Prize 2021, Best Travel Book of the Year: Smithsonian Magazine, Newsweek, The Washington Post.

**"Braiding Sweetgrass is a powerful book filled with indigenous wisdom relating to science, gratitude, and connecting with the land."
--Rachel Hutchens**

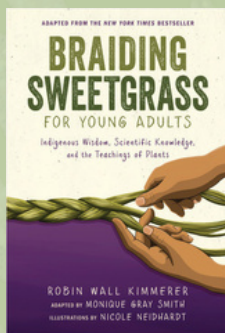


Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teaching of Plants, Robin Wall Kimmerer, Milkweed Editions, 2015, 408 pages



"*Braiding Sweetgrass* is a powerful book filled with indigenous wisdom relating to science, gratitude, and connecting with the land. Just like the title suggests, Kimmerer "braids" together different stories, topics, and ponderings, as well as elements of her own journey. She incorporates themes such as reciprocity and communalism, indigeneous wisdom and scientific knowledge, gifts and gratitude, and motherhood. The short essay format makes it fun to keep reading. Highlights include an entire essay dedicated to going "shopping" in a cattail marsh!" --Rachel Hutchens

Recommended by Rachel Hutchens, Executive Director Bluff Lake Nature Center



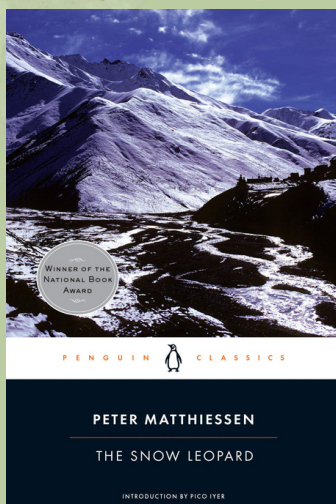
Braiding Sweetgrass for Young Adults: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants, Robin Wall Kimmerer (adapted by Monique Gray Smith), Lerner Publishing Group/Zest Books, 2022, 304 pages

Interest Level: Grades 7-12
Reading Level: Grade 8

Nationwide Bestseller--New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times; Named a "Best Essay Collection of the Decade" by Literary Hub; 2020 Holiday Gift Guide Recommendation--Washington Post, Minneapolis Star Tribune

This year, a new version of *Braiding Sweetgrass* for younger readers was published by Lerner Publishing Group.

**"I read this book while I was researching snow leopards in Ladakh. It paints a beautiful picture of the landscapes and species which all hang in the balance, dependent on one enigmatic species: the snow leopard. It also is a reminder that just because you can't see something, doesn't mean it isn't vitally important."
--Kate Vannelli**



1979 National Book Award Winner for Contemporary Thought and 1980 National Book Award for Nonfiction (paperback); Washington Post's Travel Books That Will Take You Far, and National Geographic Traveler's Around the World in 80+ Books.

The Snow Leopard, Peter Matthiessen, Penguin Classics, 2008 (originally published 1978), 368 pages



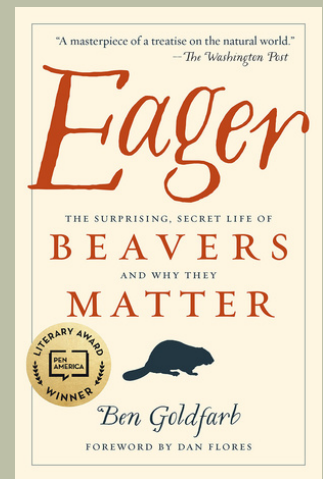
In 1973, author Peter Matthiessen and naturalist George Schaller hiked for two months on the Tibetan Plateau in the Himalaya. For Schaller, the journey was to study Himalayan blue sheep; for Matthiessen, it was more of a spiritual journey. *The Snow Leopard* is a masterpiece of nature and travel writing with meditations on Zen Buddhism and inner peace, death, suffering, loss, and memory.

Recommended by Kate Vannelli, Leader of the 'Living with Big Cats' Initiative at World Wildlife Fund

Kate also recommends a podcast episode from the New York Times, *The Sunday Read: 'Why We Take Animal Voyages.'* Check out the "Podcast Feature" on our website's blog for a link.

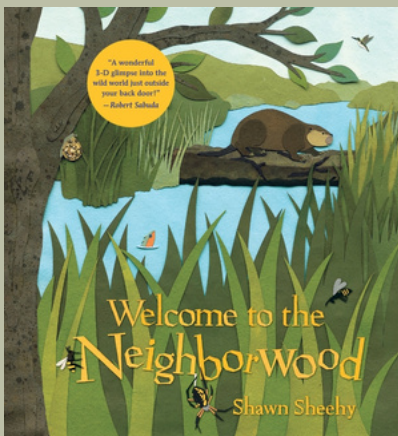
"If trapping out beavers ranked among humanity's earliest crimes against nature, bringing them back is a way to pay reparations. Beavers, the animal that doubles as an ecosystem, are ecological and hydrological Swiss Army knives, capable, in the right circumstances, of tackling just about any landscape-scale problem you might confront. Trying to mitigate floods or improve water quality? There's a beaver for that. Hoping to capture more water for agriculture in the face of climate change? Add a beaver. Concerned about sedimentation, salmon populations, wildfire? Take two families of beaver and check back in a year.

If that all sounds hyperbolic to you, well, I'm going to spend this book trying to change your mind."
 --Ben Goldfarb



2019 PEN/E.O. Wilson Literary Science Writing Award, Washington Post "50 Notable Works of Nonfiction", Science News "Favorite Science Books of 2018," Booklist "Top Ten Science/Technology Book of 2018"

Eager: The Surprising, Secret Life of Beavers and Why They Matter, Ben Goldfarb, Chelsea Green Publishing, 2019, 304 pages



Welcome to the Neighborwood, (Pop up Hardcover) Shawn Sheehy, Candlewick, 2015, 18 pages
Reading Age 4-8



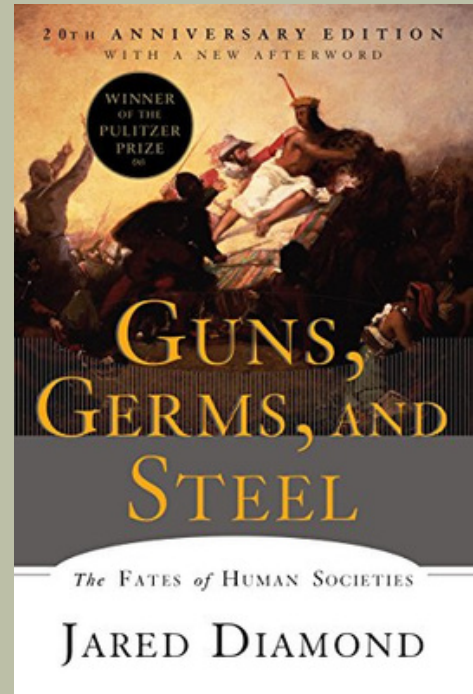
Recommended by Efrain Leal Escalera, a proud bilingual, multicultural immigrant scientist/artist from Durango, Mexico

"Does your mom know you well, I mean, really well? Mine does. She knows that I nurture my inner little Efraín, as he is the one that guides me as an educator and an advocate for Nature. My family are big thrifters, and this book is one she saw at a local thrift shop and instantly knew was for me (as opposed to my very handsy nibblings). As an educator I fell in love with the encompassing message; the multidimensionality of its content; its ability to spark wonder, curiosity and awe towards our environments; and the synthesis of art with science. The ecological and phenotypical specifics, both observable and extended to their environment, like the spider's web and the dam designed by beavers, provide insight into our spatial recognition abilities and awareness, and how those parallels into the three-dimensional book and into our neighborhoods. Kids like me will love it!"

–Efrain Leal Escalera

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Nonfiction, Aventis Prize for Best Science Book,
Subject of Documentary Film Produced by National Geographic Society

"History followed different courses for different peoples because of differences in people's environments, not because of biological differences among peoples themselves."
--Jared Diamond



Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies,
Jared Diamond, WW Norton, 1999, 480 pages



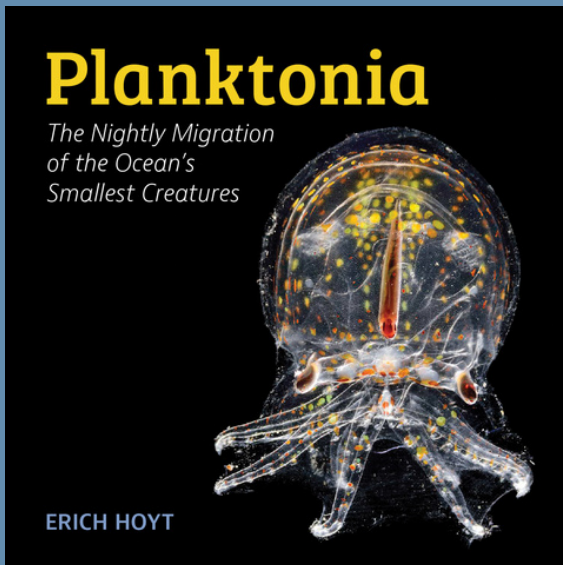
Recommended by Warren Sconiers, Associate Teaching Professor, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of Colorado at Boulder

"Guns, Germs, and Steel provides a highly informative account of how cultures reached their historical states prior to colonialism. Diamond goes into detail about why there were technological differences between cultures around the world, using personal interviews and accounts from members of those cultures. One of my favorite parts involved the evolution of cultures based on the types of plants and animals native to those areas, and how those organisms helped the respective culture flourish at a faster or slower rate. Diamond provides many keen insights into how cultures were shaped by geographical location, not innate differences between the humans residing there."

"This ground-breaking book explores the biogeographical reasons behind why European cultures have had such a huge influence on the world, in terms of politics, the environment, and culture. While some critics have questioned his hypothesis, the work remains an important contribution to the old discipline of Geography. It really transformed the way I think about the world."

Recommended by Richard Reading, Vice President of Science and Conservation at Butterfly Pavilion





"When people hear the word 'migration,' they think of animals that move from a feeding area to a breeding area and back each year. But the greatest migration on Earth happens twice every night."



Planktonia: The Nightly Migration of the Ocean's Smallest Creatures,
Erich Hoyt, Firefly Books, 2022, 176 pages

You're an esteemed researcher, conservationist, and author best known for your work in marine life. How did a native of Ohio come to spend much of his life devoted to whales, dolphins, and life in the ocean?

Growing up in Ohio, and later in Virginia and Ontario, our family made annual trips to the ocean. It was the highlight of the year. I loved the waves, the salty smell, the wide-open possibility of the ocean. I resolved that when I left home I would always live on or beside the sea. Except for two years in the mountains of British Columbia, I have kept to my resolution. These days I run along the sea in the early mornings and do some of my best thinking. The ocean inspires and it also sustains me. Which is funny because that's literally true that the ocean through the magic of plankton is responsible for more than 50% of the air we breathe.

How did *Planktonia* come about?

Planktonia would have been impossible to research and write in the pre-internet, or even pre-zoom era. During the lockdowns, I spent many hours talking and corresponding with the plankton scientists and photographers who take these macrophotographs of tiny plankton at night often far out to sea, and I am filled with admiration for them.

How has our knowledge of plankton grown as a result of black water photography? Has this knowledge contributed to our efforts to preserve the health of our oceans?

Scientists are beginning to connect more of the larval and juvenile forms with the adult forms, that is, to identify species that the plankton specialists couldn't identify in the past. At the same time, we are learning that this massive global vertical migration is contributing hugely to biodiversity by the recycling of nutrients through the water column. So, we can look at the creatures in *Planktonia* and enjoy hearing the stories about how they behave and what their lives are like and why they have evolved to look as strange as they do. But they are also for us humans a matter of life and death. These zooplankton are the fundamental part of the system without which there is no life in the sea.

What else do you find is most surprising to readers who are just discovering the world of plankton?

Plankton are full of surprises. First, they are not species from the same family or order but the word plankton simply refers to living organisms that can't swim and make headway against currents or tides. They are drifters. Secondly, in fact, many of them can swim—they have to have some locomotion to move up and down the water column every night. They flail their appendages. But they're no good against a strong current. When we dip into the lifestyles of zooplankton, we learn that many of them are the larvae or juvenile forms of adult fishes, crustaceans and so on, and just like a caterpillar becoming a butterfly, they look dramatically different than their adult forms when they're developing. The evolution of these larval stages is separate and different from the evolution of adult forms. As a planktonic juvenile, a flounder has eyes on both sides of its head and feathery fins which look like stinging jellyfish tentacles which evolved to keep predators away, or at least keep them guessing.

What does *Planktonia* present the reader that had been difficult to share in the past?

Planktonia tells the stories of overlooked groups of species under the catch-all heading of 'plankton' through diverse images brought together from eight places around the ocean. Of course, there are textbooks on plankton, but *Planktonia* is a celebration of the great vertical migration with unlikely stories of how these animals evolved and how they get along, and painterly images that reveal their beauty as never before to a popular audience. I've written the book for teens and adults but even young kids aged 4-5 are amazed and full of questions when they turn the pages.

Erich Hoyt is a whale and dolphin researcher, conservationist, lecturer and award-winning author of 26 books, including children's books and scholarly works. He wrote the first book on whale watching and is currently Research Fellow with WDC, Whale and Dolphin Conservation and Director of Marine Mammals for marinebio.org. He lives in Dorset, UK.

Inspiration for Change



New York Times Bestseller

Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard, Douglas W. Tallamy, Timber Press, 2020, 256 pages

"Equal parts visionary, scientific, and practical, Tallamy's message that effective conservation is within each individual's reach is elucidating and motivating." --Dennis Vásquez

Nature's Best Hope shows readers learn how to transform their own yards into more vibrant and environmentally healthy urban and suburban places--creating our own "Homegrown National Park." Tallamy offers guidance on invasive species, rebuilding the carrying capacity of our land, and restoring places for insects and other pollinators, including urban and suburban spaces. The last two chapters, "What Each of Us Can Do," and "Frequently Asked Questions," offer valuable and practical advice. Widely praised by some of our best nature writers and environmentalists, *Nature's Best Hope* is a thoughtful blueprint for action.

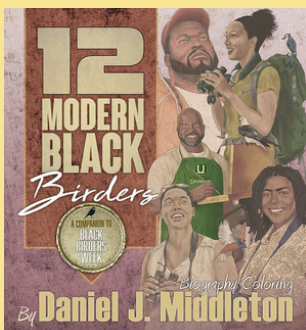


Recommended by Dennis Vasquez, Deputy Director of the City of Albuquerque's Parks and Recreation Department, and retired Park Superintendent with National Park Service



The Backyard Adventurer, Beau Miles, Brio Books, 2021, 290 pages

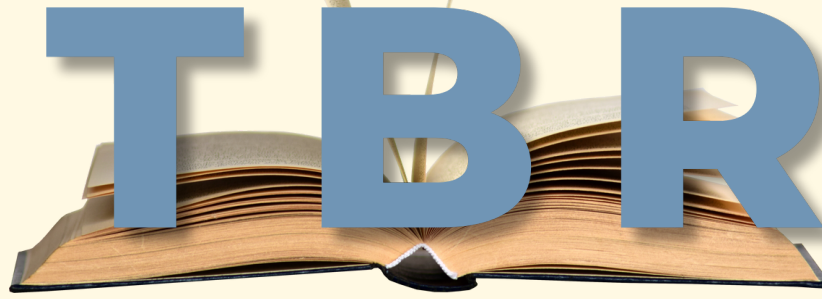
Beau Miles has done the big adventures (kayaking around Africa, running the Australian Alps), but with *The Backyard Adventurer*, the popular YouTube filmmaker brings his "conscious experimentation with adventures" to the reader. His mind-bending expeditions--walking (and then kayaking) 90k to work without support, running 43k through an abandoned overgrown rail line, a 24-hour marathon close to home--reveal often-hidden damage by humans to the land. He's fun and inventive and insightful. You'll see your own neighborhood with fresh eyes and may be inspired to improve it, after reading *The Backyard Adventurer*. The audio version, with Miles' Australian accent, is a treat.



12 Modern Black Birders: Biography Coloring Book, Unique Coloring, 2022, 52 pages

For older youth and adults who find coloring books a calming, meditative tool, *12 Modern Black Birders* offers an extra bonus--inspiration from new role models. Each birder's profile is presented next to full color and grayscale illustrations, so the reader can experiment with their own color palettes. *12 Modern Black Birders* shows the richness and depth of this community. The profiles introduce the good work of organizations and individuals who are nurturing birding and black birders.

"TO BE READ" BOOKS IN THE WINTER 2022-2023 ISSUE



- Page 6: *The Overstory: A Novel*, Richard Powers, W.W. Norton, 2018, 502 pages
Two Old Women: An Alaska Legend of Betrayal, Courage and Survival (20th Anniversary Edition), Velma Wallis, Harper Perennial, 2013, 127 pages
Migrations: A Novel, Charlotte McConaghy, Flatiron, 2020, 278 pages
The Island of Missing Trees, Elif Shafak, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021, 368 pages
- Page 7: *Moonshot: The Indigenous Comics Collection (Vol. 1)*, Hope Nicholson (editor), Inhabit Education Books, Inc., 2021, 176 pages
Moonshot: The Indigenous Comics Collection (Vol. 2), Hope Nicholson (editor), Inhabit Education Books, Inc., 2022, 165 pages
Moonshot: The Indigenous Comics Collection (Vol. 3), Elizabeth LaPensée and Michael Sheyahshe (editors), Inhabit Education Books, Inc., 2020, 144 pages
- Page 8: *The Complete Cosmicomics*, Italo Calvino, Mariner Books (paperback), 2015, (Original publication 1965), 432 pages
Reynard the Fox, Anne Louise Avery, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, 2020, 480 pages
The Lost Spells, Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris, Hamish Hamilton, 2020, 240 pages
- Page 9: *Black Nature: Four Centuries of African American Nature Poetry*, Camille T. Dungy, ed., University of Georgia Press, 2009, 432 pages
A Darker Wilderness: Black Nature Writing from Soil to Stars, Erin Sharkey, ed., Milkweed Editions, 2023, 312 pages
- Page 10: *The River You Touch: Making a Life on Moving Water*, Chris Dombrowski, Milkweed Editions, 2022, 336 pages
Waterfalls of Stars: My Ten Years on the Island of Skomer, Rosanne Alexander, Seren, 2017, 352 pages
Ice Bound: A Doctor's Incredible Battle for Survival at the South Pole, Dr. Jerri Nielsen and Maryanne Vollers, Miramax, 2001, 384 pages
- Page 11: *Late Migrations: A Natural History of Love and Loss*, Margaret Renkl, Milkweed Editions, 2021, 248 pages
Conversations with Birds, Priyanka Kumar, Milkweed Editions, 2022, 296 pages
The Snow Tourist: A Search for the World's Purest, Deepest Snowfall, Charlie English, Counterpoint, 2009, 272 pages
- Page 12: *The Living Mountain: A Celebration of the Cairngorm Mountains of Scotland*, Nan Shepherd, Canongate Canons, 2014 (originally pub. 1977), 122 pages
Winter World: The Ingenuity of Animal Survival, Bernd Heinrich, Ecco, 2009, 400 pages
- Page 13: *Entangled Life: How Fungi Make Our Worlds, Change Our Minds & Shape Our Futures*, Merlin Sheldrake, Random House, 2020, 368 pages
Sweet in Tooth and Claw: Stories of Generosity and Cooperation in the Natural World, Kristin Ohlson, Patagonia, 2022, 392 pages
The Secret World of Lichens: A Young Naturalist's Guide, Troy McMullin, Firefly Books, 2022, 48 pages
- Page 14: *Finding the Mother Tree: Discovering the Wisdom of the Forest*, Susan Simard, Knopf, 2021, 337 pages
Islands of Abandonment: Nature Rebounding in the Post-Human Landscape, Cal Flynn, Penguin Books, 2021, 384 pages
- Page 15: *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teaching of Plants*, Robin Wall Kimmerer, Milkweed Editions, 2015, 408 pages
Braiding Sweetgrass for Young Adults: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants, Robin Wall Kimmerer (adapted by Monique Gray Smith), Lerner Publishing Group/Zest Books, 2022, 304 pages
The Snow Leopard, Peter Matthiessen, Penguin Classics, 2008 (originally published 1978), 368 pages
- Page 16: *Eager: The Surprising, Secret Life of Beavers and Why They Matter*, Ben Goldfarb, Chelsea Green Publishing, 2019, 304 pages
Welcome to the Neighborhood, (Pop up Hardcover), Shawn Sheehy, Candlewick, 2015, 18 pages
- Page 17: *Planktonia: The Nightly Migration of the Ocean's Smallest Creatures*, Erich Hoyt, Firefly Books, 2022, 176 pages
- Page 18: *Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard*, Douglas W. Tallamy, Timber Press, 2020, 256 pages
The Backyard Adventurer, Beau Miles, Brio Books, 2021, 290 pages
12 Modern Black Birders: Biography Coloring Book, Unique Coloring, 2022, 52 pages

Finding the Books Featured in the Guide

We consider our public library the primary resource for locating books. Many libraries offer interlibrary loan or can find an electronic copy when books are not in their physical collection. We also recommend readers patronize their local independent bookstores, or independent bookstores that are producing free events online. To locate an independent bookseller near you, [Indiebound](#) offers a "[bookstore finder](#)" feature on their website. Authors often suggest purchasing through Indiebound or directly through the publisher. Some of our selections, including vintage or backlist titles, might be more challenging. 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 Instagram: [@landlibrary](https://www.instagram.com/landlibrary)



Open Book is a cultural and artistic center dedicated to the book in Minneapolis, MN. It is the first such center in the nation to serve as a gathering place that celebrates the book community and offers programs to inspire participation in reading, writing, and book arts. Located in three renovated 100-year-old buildings at the eastern edge of downtown Minneapolis, tenants include The Loft Literary Center, Milkweed Editions, and Minnesota Center for Book Arts.

Website: www.openbookmn.org Instagram: [@openbookmn](https://www.instagram.com/openbookmn)



Iowa City, Iowa was the first U.S. city to be named by UNESCO as a City of Literature. The downtown Literary Walk celebrates works by 49 writers who have ties to Iowa, including those of special interest to the *Nature Book Guide* readers such as Wallace Stegner, Bill Bryson, Jaqueline Briggs-Martin, and Mary Swander. Website: www.iowacityofliterature.org/lit-walk

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.
- Erich Hoyt, for giving us his time and enthusiasm for our author interview, 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 enthusiasm and for supporting this project in every possible way.

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

Keeping in Touch

naturebookguide.com

We update our website's blog with new content regularly



On Instagram:
[@NatureBookGuide](https://www.instagram.com/NatureBookGuide)



On Twitter:
[@NatureBookGuide](https://www.twitter.com/NatureBookGuide)