

Scintillating Read Aloud Books Keep Children's Natural Curiosity Alive

By Terrence E. Young, Jr., and Coleen Salley

"One hundred years from now it will not matter: What kind of car you drove, What kind of house you lived in, How much you had in your bank account, Nor what your clothes looked like, But the world may be a little better because you read to your child. "

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

CHILDREN ENJOY SCIENCE - both emergent and sophisticated readers often choose science and nature as their favorite genre of literature. The picture books for the youngest readers (and nonreaders) provide a wonderful opportunity for shared learning experiences. Children naturally enjoy listening to, and discussing stories. Sharing books frequently with young children is one of the most effective ways to develop literacy at an early age. Reading to a child is the most important thing that helps children become good readers. Reading a beautifully illustrated and accurate science book to a child opens up a world of wonder to them. Having children listen to and respond to science stories and science poems appears to be one of the most beneficial means of extending and developing their scientific literacy. Reading good science books to children challenges their thinking on many different topics. As they grow, it is important to provide children with interesting books that they can read and enjoy on their own, for this is the habit that leads to lifelong learning.

Many early childhood and elementary teachers are uncomfortable teaching science because they feel that science is different from everything else they know and teach. They often feel a sense of insecurity about science content as well as process. They know that science instruction should be something other than teaching the textbook or setting up an experiment. What is an effective alternative? Reading aloud science trade books complements science teaching. Science trade books can be used to help students make a direct connection to science. Misconceptions about specific science concepts can change when books containing accurate information about these concepts are read. When used in the classroom, science read aloud books can increase science vocabulary, lower the abstract nature of science principles and explanations presented in textbooks, and enrich the students' science experiences.

Science trade books are a great source of information and enjoyment. They are fun to read, and often the colorful illustrations or stunning photographs present a story in themselves. Numerous trade books provide nuances beyond textbook information, such as fascinating tidbits like the fact that butterflies have taste buds in their feet or that female Emperor penguins lay one egg which the father looks after for 65 days, and during this time the male may lose forty-five percent of his body weight before the female returns. Students who discover such interesting facts will have more questions and read more. Why do children and teachers enjoy science read aloud books? In addition to telling a story, good science read aloud books are interesting, often amusing, and spark enthusiasm. They are less intimidating to some teachers and students than textbooks, and they convey the fun of science. Good science read aloud books may even inspire a child to become a scientist!

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In selecting good science read aloud books it is important to remember that not all children are able to separate fact from fiction. Therefore the primary emphasis is to select books that present the most accurate information and science concepts.

What characteristics makes a good science read aloud book? Look for the following:

1. The language flows well when read aloud.
2. One or more facts are remembered long after the book is finished.
3. The book gives pleasure even after repeated readings.
4. Hearing the book read aloud motivates students to continue more reading on their own
5. The illustrations and photographs are eye-catching and dynamic, strengthening and extending the story.
6. The contents encourage curiosity and enhance the curriculum.

By connecting science and literacy, both students and teachers can gain a better understanding of the role that science plays in our everyday lives.

Recommended Titles for Science Read Aloud Books

While many of the titles seem to be geared to young children, all of these titles can serve as a springboard to extension activities, projects, and further readings, reference, and research. For example, after reading Ryan's *A Pinky Is a Baby Mouse*, each member of a class could choose a "baby" to research interesting facts about that species, write a report, and deliver it orally to the class. All the language arts are covered by such an assignment. Since something is to be learned from each book, no age grouping is assigned.

The following titles are some exemplary science read aloud books that will be a hit in any classroom.

Alderson, Sue Ann. Pond Seasons. (Pictures by Ann Blades.) Greenwood, 1997. 32p. 0-88899-283-1. \$15.95.

Fourteen joyful poems celebrate animal life in and around a pond in spring, summer, fall, and winter. Soft watercolors depict the mothers and new babies: mammals, birds, insects, and marine life.

Spring. "Hidden by rushes, hidden by reeds, brown mother mallard blends in." *Summer.* "Today is a day for staying close, belly to earth. Today is a day for giving birth - and when she's done, twenty new snakes . . ." *Fall.* "Out for an evening scavenge, four tumble-young raccoons twitter in a line-dance behind mother. . .," *Winter.* "Under the ice, under the water at pond's bottom, the turtle pauses in hibernation . . ."

Simplicity of verse and art make this a soothing and informative read-aloud for young children.

Arnold, Caroline. South American Animals. Morrow, 1999. 46p. 0-688-15564-2. \$16.00.

A big continent is divided into natural areas and the animals that live within those boundaries are highlighted with spectacular color photos and some interesting facts about each. The Forest: Birds, Snakes, Frogs, Tapirs, Tarantulas, Armadillos, Sloths, Jaguars, Monkeys ("South American monkeys also use their tails as another hand to hold on to branches when they climb. Monkeys that live in Africa and Asia can't do this."); Mountains Spectacled Bears, Guanacos ("Guanacos are like camels when they fight each other, they spit."); Grasslands Deer, Foxes, Maras ("... as they leap across the grasslands, they bounce on all four legs at once. In this way, maras can jump more than six feet high."); At the Water's Edge: Flamingos, Penguins, Sea Turtles ("These large reptiles can be three feet across and weight more than two hundred pounds."). This book is a good companion to Arnold's *African Animals*.

Arnosky, Jim. Big Jim and the White-Legged Moose. Lothrop, 1999. np. 0-688-10864-4. \$16.00.

As Arnosky notes, "It's a good example of how sometimes even the tallest tale can have at its heart an actual event." He has written a ballad to accompany his delightful almost rhyming story of a nature artist being chased up a tree by a gigantic, nine foot tall, charging moose. He himself followed the tracks of a giant moose for several days, but unlike his song, he was able to quietly observe and make sketches of the moose. Music included.

Brown, Philippa-Alys. A Gaggle of Geese: The Collective Names of the Animal Kingdom. Atheneum, 1996. 32p. 0-689-80761-9. \$15.00.

A rhythmic text introduces the collective names of twenty six animals. Extravagant art; brilliant colors, bold outlines illustrate each group.

"A gaggle of geese gathering, A set of badgers blathering, A murder of crows scheming, A charm of finches flirting."

In the notes at the end is a bit of information about each animal and the collective name. Most can be classed into four groups: appearance: A "pride" - regal bearing of lion; characteristic. distinct behavior - a "leap" - leopard jumping on prey; habitat. a "rookery" - a nesting ground for penguins; onomatopoeic. sound describes behavior: a "gaggle" - the sound geese make. The first written records for collective names for animals is 1,450. This book is rich with vocabulary.

Butterfeld, Moira. Fierce, Strong, and Snappy. (Illus. by Wayne Ford; from: What Am I? Series.) Raintree SteckVaughn, 1998. 32p. 0-8172-4588-X. \$19.97.

"My tail is long. My skin is rough. It's scaly, thick, and very rough What am I?"

Colorful, detailed art introduces a part of the animal's body. "Here is my eye ...nose...back..." and finally "I am an alligator. Point to my ...pointed teeth. long tail. sharp claws. yellow eyes. two nostrils. rough skin. I am called an American alligator." Each title in this series has these features at the end of the narrative: "Here are my babies my home... a map of the world ...questions about me...words to help you learn about me."

This series, in the form of a riddle, is a lot of fun for young children and beginning readers. Really good illustrations add to the fun. Other titles in this series: Bright, Lively, and Loud (parrot) 0-8172-4590-1; Big, Rough, and Wrinkly (elephant) 0-8172-4584-7; Bouncy, Big, and Furry (kangaroo) 0-8172-4589-8; Brown, Fierce, and Furry (bear) 0-8172-45863; Fast, Strong, and Snappy (tiger) 0-8172-4583-9; Jumpy, Green, and Croaky (frog) 0-8172-4591-4; Quick, Quiet, and Feathered (barn owl) 0-8172-4585-5.

Cowcher, Helen. Jaguar. Scholastic, 1997. 32p. 0-590-29937-9. \$15.95.

Fabulous art supports a mystical mood in this fifth title promoting preservation of our world. A distinguished addition to her award winning stories about environmental causes, Cowcher offers a message of hope that there is room in the forest for both man and animal.

A cattle ranger who fears for his herd notes a jaguar's tracks. The man sets out to track the jaguar and kill it. Various other creatures that live on the Venezuelan flood plains are pictured and further information about them and the jaguar is included in the appendix. When the hunter finally has the beast in his sights, he is overwhelmed by the vision of a mystical jaguar and is unable to kill the one he stalked.

Davies, Nicola. Big Blue Whale. (Illus. by Nick Maland) Candlewick, 1997. 29p. 1-56402-895-X. \$15.99.

Details about the biggest creature that has ever lived written in a flowing style with beautiful illustrations. Examines the physical characteristics, habits, and habitats of the blue whale.

"The blue whale is big. Bigger than a giraffe. Bigger than an elephant. Bigger than a dinosaur! The blue whale is the biggest creature that has ever lived on Earth!"

The author speaks directly to the reader, which is always an effective device. "Reach out and touch the blue whale's skin. It's springy and smooth like a hard-boiled egg, and it's slippery as wet soap." A lovely book to look at and to hear read aloud.

Esbensen, Barbara Juster. Words with Wrinkled Knees: Animal Poems. (Illus. by John Stadler.) Boyds Mills Press, 1997. 1-56397-682-X. 44p. \$15.95.

First published in 1986 by Crowell, this commemorative edition was reissued in 1998 by Boyds Mills Press. We loved these poems in 1986 and they have held up very well indeed. The sounds of the animals' names inspired the poems.

"Every night a short word covered with fur mouth open ...flies out of dark libraries."

Twenty-one delightful, whimsical poems attractively illustrated with black and white drawings express the essence of the animals they identify.

Fraser, Mary Ann. Where Are the Night Animals? (Let's Read-And-Find-Out Series.) HarperCollins, 1999. 32p. 0-06027718-1. \$15.95.

Describes various nocturnal animals and their nighttime activities, including the opossum, brown bat, and tree frog.

A lovely book that reads aloud so pleasantly it almost could be a bedtime story. But unlike most bedtime stories, the illustrations and text educate the child about real animals in their natural habitat. The art is colorful and accurately detailed, both of the animals and the settings.

George, Jean Craighead. Giraffe Trouble. (Illus. by Anna Vojtech.) Disney Press, 1998. 32p. 0-7868-3167-7. \$12.95.

A masterful writer creates a new series: "Animal Kingdom" for younger readers. Disney has wisely commissioned a renowned storyteller and scientist to tell a dramatic story of a young giraffe that learns wisdom through a life threatening experience. The colorful, detailed illustrations of the savanna and the wildlife that lives there add to the distinction of this series.

A "cast of characters" at the end gives a few interesting facts about the animals featured.

Although this series is intended as a promotion for Disney's Animal Kingdom in Florida, it nevertheless is a contribution to children's literature. Other titles in the series include Elephant Walk (0-7868-5067-1) and Rhino Romp (0-78683164-2).

George, Jean Craighead. Look To the North: A Wolf Puppy Diary. (Illus. by Lucia Washburn.) HarperCollins, 1997. 32p. 0-06-023641-8. \$14.95.

A beautiful book in all respects, stunning art and lyrical text, that will entrance all listeners. George explains in her introduction "I love wolf pups... Why do I love them so? In these nursing, tumbling, fighting, and growing children of the wild I see all children. And they are wonderful. Look to the north and love them, too." Brief diary entries that mark the passage of the seasons introduce the events in the lives of three wolves as they grow from helpless pups to members of the pack.

George, Lindsay Barrett George. Around the World: Who's Been Here? Greenwillow, 1999. np. 0-688-15268-6. \$16.00.

A colorful, imaginative approach to science and geography that could be adapted to classroom studies of maps, nature, geography, journal, and letter writing. A teacher travels aboard a ship, sailing around the globe in search of wildlife in all its forms. She sends letters and pictures back to her class from all the places she explores: Peru, Antarctica, Kenya, China, Japan, Australia, Alaska, California, and finally home. At the end of each letter is a hint about one animal and the question "Who's been here?" Turn the page and a big, brilliant two-page illustration answers the question. In Denali National Park in Alaska "I faintly heard the sound of clicking ...the clicking grew louder and louder. Soon I heard thousands of clicks. Who's been here?" Turn the page to "A herd of barren-ground caribou."

George, Twig. C. A Dolphin Named Bob. (Illus. by Christine HermanMerrill.) HarperCollins, 1996. 72p. 0-06-0253622. \$13.95.

An appealing easy reading novel based on the stories of injured dolphins nursed back to the health at the Maryland State Aquarium. This title is a good companion to *Back to the Sea*. Aster was swept ashore during a storm and injured when she was only ten months old. Because of her injuries she could never be returned to the sea. But with nurturing care and loving patience she became one of the major performers at the aquarium. She was feisty, unpredictable, and talented. When she was eleven she gave birth to a male calf, Bob, who was very much like his mother: physically impaired, ornery, and very talented! We learn a lot about dolphins and their individuality in this well-told story.

Hobbs, Will. Howling Hill. (Illus. by Jill Kastner.) Morrow, 1998. 32p. 0-688-15430-1. \$16.00.

Hanni, a wolf cub, is separated from her family and is swept down the river on a log. Hanni saves herself from drowning by swimming to shore, although she didn't know that she could swim. But fear and desperation fueled her courage. With the help of a bear who's attempting to hibernate but can't get to sleep, she is led back to Howling Hill, where he had seen her pack earlier. By uncovering the snow blocking the entrance to his den, Hanni is able to help the bear when he slows down to the point of sleeping on his feet. The wolf cub, who has never been able to join her family when they howl together, being only able to yelp, is so overcome by loneliness that from "deep inside her, her howl came out, pure and loud, long and lonely." And far away where they had bedded for the night, her family heard her cry.

Howler, Janni. Walk with a Wolf. (Illus. by Sarah FoxDavies.) Candlewick, 1997. 29p. 0-7636-0319-8. \$15.99. Index

After a lone hungry wolf finds companions whose combined strength drags down an old moose, the entire pack sleeps through a blizzard and dreams of the return of spring. A lyrical text and stunning art follows a female wolf as she hunts alone before rejoining the pack.

"Walk with a wolf in the cold air before sunrise.

She moves, quiet as mist, ... a silent gray shadow."

Wolves have been hunted to the edge of extinction after having roamed nearly all of the Northern Hemisphere for centuries. The author takes us into the world of the wolf up in the Yukon Territory.

Fascinating facts about the packs illustrated in soft shades of gray and blue with luminous watercolors. Photographically accurate in detail.

Jenkins, Martin. Chameleons Are Cool. (Illus. by Sue Shields.) Candlewick, 1997. 29p. 0-7636-0144-6. \$15.99.

The appealing colorful art and amusing text support the author's contention that chameleons make "cool" subjects to study. "How could you possibly resist a pocket-sized, bad tempered, color-changing, swivel-eyed, snail-paced, long-tongued-sharpshooter?" challenges the publisher of this colorful, delightfully written book, which reads like a kid telling you about something he really likes. "I suppose it wouldn't be fair to call them lazy, but they certainly don't move any more than they have to. And when they do, it's almost always incredibly slowly." And contrary to popular belief chameleons change color because they're angry or sick, too cold or too hot, not to match their surroundings. Small print adds details to the regular text.

King, Deborah. The Flight of the Snow Geese. Orchard, 1997. 32p. 0-531-30088-9. \$15.95.

This lyrical narrative follows a flock of snow geese as they fly from their Arctic nesting ground to the New Mexico desert, where they spend the winter.

"While the city sleeps in the still of the night, the white birds of winter make their flight... Where do they come from? Where do they go? These travelers of the night."

Even the tragedy of the loss of a fifth of the geese to hunters is addressed. "Then a crack fills the air. Geese fall to the gun, twisting and tumbling one by one." The accompanying illustration is hauntingly beautiful - two white feathers against a blue sky floating earthward. All the art is superb.

Lehn, Barbara. What Is a Scientist? (Photos by Carol Krauss.) Millbrook, 1998. 32p. 0-7613-1272-2. \$19.90.

Simple text and photographs depict children engaged in various activities that make up the scientific process.

A wonderful book that introduces with clear photos and simple, easy-reading text the profession of a scientist. The book begins with a significant statement: "A scientist is a person who asks questions and tries different ways to answer them." The book is arranged with a statement in big, bold print on the left page with key words in another color. On the facing page is a photo illustrating that fact. At the end, each major point and its companion picture is repeated: "A scientist is a person who...asks questions... learns from her senses . . . notices details . . . draws . . . writes . . . measures... counts ...sorts...tests predictions . . . experiments . . . thinks logically... keeps trying . . . and has fun. That's what a scientist is!"

Lesser, Carolyn. Dig Hole, Soft Mole. (Illus. by Laurie Regan.) Harcourt, 1996. 32p. 0-15-223491-8. \$15.00.

A poetic text describes the underground and the watery journey of a captivating little-known star-nosed mole.

"Starry nose feels and goes, Hidden ears hear wood frog toes. Pebbly paws, left, right. Underground is dark as night."

Beautiful realistic art in soft, earth tones records the mole's adventures and the creatures he encounters- cranes, muskrats, fish, and woodchucks.

Lesser, Carolyn. Storm on the Desert. Illustrated by Ted Rand. Harcourt, 1997. 32p. 0-15-272198-3. \$15.00.

The epitome of a great read-aloud: stunning art captivates the eyes: poetic narrative pleases the ears; and dramatic mood affects the emotions! The "story" opens with the "pale light of dawn ...A shadow slinks from a thicket of mesquite. The coyote stretches, and howls to the wisp of a moon." Our main character thus is introduced and reappears in pictures and stanzas of unrhymed verse. The story of the flora/fauna of a Southwest desert is described in poetic languages and devices such as metaphors, alliteration, onomatopoeia. Visual literacy is promoted through the art on every page. This book has a broad base of appeal for kindergarten through sixth grade.

Lewin, Betsy. Booby Hatch. Clarion, 1995. 32p. 0-39568703-9. \$14.95.

"On a tiny island in a vast blue sea, in a circle of stones, sits a white egg." The island is one of the Galapagos Islands off the coast of Ecuador, the blue water is the Pacific, and the egg contains Pepe, a blue-footed booby. Lovely watercolors follow Pepe from his hatching as a naked little chick to a downy cloud of white feathers to a fledgling with big bright blue feet. All the predators that threaten a chick are vividly illustrated.

London, Jonathan. HoneyPawandLightfoot. (Illus. by Jon Van Zyle.) Chronicle, 1995. 36p. 0-8118-0533-6. \$14.95.

After giving birth in her winter den, Honey Paw, a brown bear, cares for her cub and teaches him to survive in the wild. "Finally, in the heart of winter Lightfoot was born. Helpless, almost hairless, blind, no bigger than a hamster." Since a grizzly mother must teach her cub all it needs to know for survival, it stays with her for 2-3 years. One of Alaska's premier nature artists captures the wilderness and majesty of the bears with spectacular paintings.

This book is part of a continuing series dealing with endangered species, a special interest of the author.

Mason, Cherie. Wild Fox: A True Story. (Illus. by Jo Ellen McAllister Stammen.) Down East, 1993. 32p. 0-89272-319X. \$15.95.

The author relates her special relationship with an injured fox that came into her yard one winter morning. A true nature story of kindness, sensitivity, and respect gives this beautifully written and illustrated book an appeal for all ages.

The setting is the author's home on Deer Isle, off the coast of Maine, where red foxes live but are rarely seen. This story is a true one about a young fox cruelly wounded by a trap that nearly severed the right front leg above the small back foot. "Inch by inch, hour after hour, this poor young fox must have struggled to wrench his leg from the powerful grip of the trap." Without attempting to tame him, to make him a pet, the author establishes a bond with the fox, leaving him food and even naming him Vicky. From winter until the next autumn Vicky stays close, healing and enjoying the food given him. He even becomes a local celebrity - a wild fox hanging so close to man's world. But finally the day comes when he returns to the wild.

McFarlane, Sheryl. Eagle Dreams. (Illus. by Ron Lightburn.) Philomel, 1994. 32p. 0-399-22695-8. \$15.95.

The son of a hardworking farmer is a dreamer, a dreamer of flying and soaring in the sky like an eagle. He finds a wounded eagle that his father reluctantly agrees that the boy can try to nurse back to health. It proves to be a long, drawn out process. But during the winter Robin matures, caring for the eagle but not neglecting his farm duties. The art is beautiful, very graphic. This story should be a companion to Bald Eagle (0-395-87328-2) by Gordon Morrison.

McKenna, Virginia. Back To The Blue. (Illus. by Ian Andrew.) Millbrook, 1997. 36p. 0-7613-0409-6. \$21.40.

Fiction and fact are combined in this story of three dolphins in the United Kingdom that are returned to the wild. Includes a section with facts and photographs about the real rescue effort on which the story was based.

A most wonderful true-life adventure told in two parts. Rocky, a dolphin that has been in captivity performing tricks for nineteen years, tells the first part of the story. His story is illustrated with soft luminous pastels. The second part is illustrated with photos and a chronological account of the actual rescue, rehabilitation, and release, followed by two pages of "fascinating facts" about dolphins. The book is inspiring to all who hope to save our wildlife.

Oppenheim, Joanne. Have You Seen Bug? (Illus. Ron Broda.) Scholastic, 1996. 31p. 0-590-05963-7 \$15.95.

This extraordinary book describes in rhyming verse a variety of bugs and how they look, behave, and improve our lives. "Have you seen bugs...Iridescent bugs that shimmer in the light, winking, blinking bugs that twinkle in the night...Hide-and-seek bugs -(camouflage)." Scores of bugs and their habits in rhyme are introduced. What distinguishes this book from others are the amazing pictures which are painted paper sculptures that we first thought were photos because of their detail and realism.

Rogers, Sally. Earth song. (Illus. by Melissa Bay Mathis.) Dutton, 1998. 32p. 0-525-45673-5. \$15.99.

Based on her popular song "Over in the Endangered Meadow" which in turn is based on the old counting folk rhyme. Verses about various animals, from one right whale calf to eleven gray wolf pups and on to fifty python eggs, present the plight of some threatened species. Climbing on grandpa's lap, the children begin singing with "In the North Atlantic Ocean 'neath the Arctic sun Lived a mom and papa right whale and their whale calf one. 'Blow!' said the mother. 'I blow!' said the one."

Ten other animals in their native habitat are described in verse. The final stanza is: "Fin, fur, and feather and the human race, Must share Mother Earth as she spins through space.

"Share! says my grandpa. "Please share this place!
And we'll care for Mother Earth as she spins through space."
Soft, warm colors are used for pictures and interesting notes about each animal end the text.

Sayre, April Pulley. Home At Last: A Song of Migration. (Illus. by Alix Berenzy). Holt, 1998. np. 8050-5154-6. \$15.95.

One of our favorite science books of this year, the subtitle is "a song of migration" and this truly is a song in text and art. A variety of species make miraculous journeys each year, the miracle of migration. Stunning paintings accompany the poetic text, opening and ending with the tiny warbler, which weights only about a half-ounce.

"In the dark of the night, a warbler finds her way by stars. Her wings flap a thousand miles. Will she reach her summer home? No one knows. But like the others, she's heading for home at last." The monarch butterfly flies hundreds of miles "to a mountain she's never seen. Yet somehow she knows she's ...home at last." At the end there are notes about each of the species.

Seibert, Patricia. Toad Overload: A True Tale of Nature Knocked off Balance in Australia. (Illus. by Jan Davey Ellis.) Millbrook, 1996. 32p. 1-56294-613-7. \$21.90.

"First there were 101. Now there are millions." About fifty years ago in Australia, toads from Central and South America were imported to Australia to attack the sugarcane beetle. Now another has displaced that problem: the proliferation of the toads! They are huge, ugly, and poisonous. Poison squirts out several feet into the air, and animals that try to eat the toxic toads die. Clear colorful pictures and an interesting, well-written story makes this book appealing to older students. Includes information on the physical characteristics and habits of this species of toad.

Sierra, Judy. Antarctic Antics: A Book of Penguin Poems. (Illus. by Jose Aruego & Ariane Dewey.) Harcourt, 1998. 32p. 0-15-201006-8. \$16.00.

In hilarious verse and illustrations, children really learn about the habitat (Antarctic), birthing (father nurtures the egg), feeding (parents regurgitate), identifying parents (by sounds), predators (killer whales, leopard seals, Skua birds) of the Emperor penguins.

"My Father's Feet
To keep myself up off the ice,
I find my father's feet are nice,
I snuggle in his belly fluff,
And that's how I stay warm enough."

Tokuda, Wendy. Samson The Hot Tub Bear: A True Story. (Illus. by Lokken Millis.) Robert Rinehart, 1998. 32p. 1-57098-090-X. \$15.95.

A true story that once again illustrates the power of love. In the summer of 1994, in Monrovia, CA, a four-hundred pound old bear started coming into town from the mountains northeast of Los Angeles. Samson loved the avocado and fruit trees, the garbage cans, and especially the pools and hot tubs. He also enjoyed peering in windows. One couple, the Potters, video taped him frolicking in their pool and hot tub. One night because Samson was writhing on the lawn in pain, the Potters phoned the game warden for help. The warden, having gotten calls of bear sightings, was delighted to locate the old fellow. But since the warden feared the bear eventually would hurt someone, the decision was made to put Samson to sleep the next day. What happens is a stirring example of a community uniting in a joint effort, the power of the media, and the clout of executive offices. Little guys can make a difference!

Wallace, Karen. Gentle Giant Octopus. (Illus. by Mike Bostock.) Candlewick, 1998. 30p. 0-7636-0318-X. \$15.99.

Describes the physical characteristics and behavior of a giant octopus and how she searches for a home at the bottom of the ocean, lays her eggs, and protects them from predators until they can hatch.

Iridescent watercolors follow a mother octopus as she searches the depths for a den, hidden and safe, to deposit her eggs. Only once in their lives do they lay eggs, and after the eggs hatch, the mothers die.

The Candlewick science books are beautifully illustrated and designed. Some have text arranged in stanzas like poetry. Some text is concrete in the shape or the movement of the subject. A smaller print adds details to the printed text which, in many of the titles, is written in a very literary, sometimes lyrical style. Index.

Wundrow, Deanna. Jungle Drum. (Cut-Paper Illustrations by Susan Swan.) Millbrook, 1999. np. 0-7613-1270-6. \$21.40.

Talk about "read-aloud!" The rain forest is filled with the sounds of the echoing jungle drum, dripping water, and the many animals talking.

"The jungle drum talks. It says, Ba-da doom. Ba-da doom doom, Ba-da doom. Ba-da doom doom..." And when the drum is silent the animals of the rain forest listen to the silence and "Then, a water drop drops into a pool of water. It says, "Blip!" and another one answers, "Blip!" One by one the animals become a chorus of sounds, insects (mantis, leafhopper, moths, mosquitoes) and animals (boars, parrots, monkey, tree frogs, jaguars).

Extraordinary, colorful cut-paper illustrations decorate the pages of the book. The paper is layered, creating a sense of depth in the pictures.

Other great read aloud books:

Aliki. My Visit to the Zoo. HarperCollins, 1997. 32p. 0-06-024943-9. \$14.95.

Asch, Frank. Cactus Poems. (Photos by Ted Levin.) Harcourt, 1998. 48p. 0-15-200676-1. \$18.00.

Asch, Frank. Song of the North. (Photos by Ted Levin.) Harcourt, 1999. np. 0-15-201258-3. \$16.00.

Cole, Henry. Jack's Garden. Greenwillow Books, 1995. 26p. 0-688-13501-3. \$15.00.

Collard, Sneed B. Animal Dads. (Illus. by Steve Jenkins.) Houghton, 1997. 32p. 0-395-83621-2. \$15.95.

Florian, Douglas. In the Swim: Poems and Paintings. Harcourt, 1997. 47p. 0-15-201307-5 \$15.00.

George, Jean Craighead. Dear Katie, The Volcano Is a Girl. (Illus. by Daniel Powers.) Hyperion, 1998. 32p. 0-7868-2254-6. \$15.95.

George, Kristine O'Connell. Old Elm Speaks: Tree Poems. (Illus. by Kate Keisler.) Clarion, 1998. 48p. 0-39587611-7. \$15.00.

George, Kristine O'Connell. The Great Frog Race and Other Poems. (Illus. by Kate Keisler with an introduction by Myra Cohn Livingston.) Clarion, 1997. 40p. 0-395-77607-4. \$14.95.

Gibbons, Gail. Gulls...Gulls... Gulls... Holiday House, 1997. 32p. 0-8234-1323-3. \$15.95.

Hall, Drew. The Surprise Garden. (Illus. by Shari Halpern.) Blue Sky/Scholastic, 1998. 32p. 0-590-10075-0. \$15.95.

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CORRECTIONS

The volume /issue for our January/February 1999 issue is Volume 35, Number 1 This information was omitted in our last issue.

Please note that in our review of Yellowstone (Vol. 34, No. 9 , page 272) , the photographs of Yellowstone National Park were taken in 1997.

The film Straight-up Life: HIV and Addiction (Vol. 34, No. 9, page 273) was also reviewed by LaRae Huycke, University of Oklahoma.