

**Saving the Earth One Kid at a Time: Eco-Themed Books for All Ages**

**Introduction**

The theme of my bibliography is ecology. The books I chose to highlight cover a diverse array of topics within this subject, from the dangers of pollutants to respecting animal life to the conservation of resources. The books are all meant to appeal to a variety of ages, from picture books for younger readers to chapter books for children just below the young adult age group. Most of the books I focused on are fictional, but a few are non-fiction books that illustrate how different ecosystems work and what people can do to help the planet. By presenting a selection of topics within this broad subject and appealing to different age groups, I am hoping that this bibliography can present ecological themes to a large audience of children and their caregivers.

I have also included illustrators in my annotations.

**Bibliography**

Hooper, M. & Coady, C. (1998). *The drop in my drink: The story of water on our planet*. United States: Viking. (Original work published in United Kingdom by Frances Lincoln Ltd. 1998).\*

**Number of pages:** 36 p.

**Where you learned about the book / Awards:** Database of Award-Winning Children's Literature (<http://www.dawcl.com>)

**Country where author lives:** United Kingdom

**Country/language first published in:** United Kingdom, Europe / English

From prehistoric dinosaurs to modern children around the world, all life forms depend on clean water to live. Using colorful pictures and informative descriptions, the author describes the many forms that water takes and how it ends up in our drinking glasses. The dangers of pollutants are discussed in a special section labeled “Looking After Water” and a water cycle diagram is used to illustrate the importance water plays on the planet.

Hughes, M. (1994). *The golden aquarians*. United States: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers. (Original work published in Canada by HarperCollins Publishers 1995).\*

**Number of pages:** 182 p.

**Where you learned about the book / Awards:** *Children's Books from Other Countries* p.240

**Country where author lives:** Canada (posthumous)

**Country/language first published in:** Canada, North America / English

When Walt leaves his home in Canada to join his father on the planet Aqua, he thinks he will finally have a chance to understand the parent he never knew. Walt’s father is a “terraformer,” a specialist who shapes planets to meet the ever-growing needs of humans, no matter what the physical cost is to the environment. But when Walt discovers that the seemingly-deserted Aqua is actually home to a race of intelligent amphibious beings, he must race against time and defy his father’s will to protect their habitat and save the entire expedition.

Le Rochais, M. (2001). *Desert trek: An eye-opening journey through the world's driest places*. (G.L. Newman, Trans.). United States: Walker & Company. (Original work published in France by l'ecole des loisirs 1999).\*

**Number of pages:** 38 p.

**Where you learned about the book / Awards:** *Crossing Boundaries with Children's Books*  
p.229

**Country where author lives:** Not Available

**Country/language first published in:** France, Europe / French

From the arid regions of the Kalahari to the icy wastelands of Antarctica, the author guides the reader through many different types of desert ecosystems. Each page illustrates and describes a different aspect of the desert, from the creatures and people that call it home to the many roles it plays in civilizations around the world. Special attention is given to environmental topics such as the misuse of irrigation to hydrate modern communities, the damage caused by herd overpopulation in some regions, and the dangers posed by a heavy reliance on oil from desert reserves.

Love, A. & Drake, J. (1993). *Take action: An environmental book for kids*. (P. Cupples, Illus.). United States: Tambourine Books. (Original work published in Canada by Kids Can Press Ltd. 1992).\*

**Number of pages:** 96 p.

**Where you learned about the book / Awards:** *Children's Books from Other Countries* p.259

**Country where author lives:** Canada

**Country/language first published in:** Canada, North America / English

Using case studies, scientific facts, and activities, this non-fiction book teaches children it is never too early to start protecting the environment. Each chapter discusses how human actions affect the environment, from the products we use to the choices we make for waste disposal. Stories about extinct creatures such as the passenger pigeon and the great auk are balanced with success stories of creatures that have made a comeback with help from humans, and case studies illustrate how students have helped change the planet for the better. Activities also provide hands-on learning of environmental topics, from rainforest ecosystems to acid rain. Black-and-white illustrations depict both realistic drawings of animals, fish, birds and plants, as well as cartoons demonstrating the many ways people can help protect the environment.

McNaughton, J.E. (2005). *The secret under my skin*. United States: HarperCollins. (Original work published in Canada by HarperCollins Publishers 2000).\*

**Number of pages:** 237 p.

**Where you learned about the book / Awards:** *Crossing Boundaries with Children's Books* p.89 / 2001 Ann Connor Brimer Award, 2001 Ruth and Sylvia Schwartz Children's Book Award, 2002 Bruneau Family Children's/YA Award

**Country where author lives:** Canada

**Country/language first published in:** Canada, North America / English

Blay is an orphan growing up in post-apocalyptic Canada, where the environment is blighted and the sun's rays are so harsh that those that venture outside without protection are severely injured. When she is asked to help a "bio-indicator," a special person who uses his or her sensitive body to detect pollutants for the community, Blay must rely on her intelligence and appreciation of a slowly-returning natural world to help the girl pass a test. But even after Blay

has won a place in a new family, she must fight against a powerful totalitarian government if the Earth will ever resume any of its former beauty.

Mohorkar, A. (1996). *A wild elephant at camp*. (E. Scanziani, Illus.). India: Tara Books.

**Number of pages:** 48 p.

**Where you learned about the book / Awards:** The South Asian Women's NETwork  
(<http://www.sawnet.org>)

**Country where author lives:** India

**Country/language first published in:** India, Asia / English

Kutti is a child growing up in a wildlife sanctuary for elephants in the forest reserves of south India. Coming from a long line of elephant trainers, he is responsible for the care and training of the wild Tulasi. The two get along well until an abandoned baby elephant shows up, and it takes a crisis to show that they must all work together to survive. An appendix of facts provides information about the real-life elephant camp (Christiansen, 1997).

Mullins, P. (1994). *V for vanishing: An alphabet of endangered animals*. United States: HarperCollins Publishers. (Original work published in Australia by Margaret Hamilton Books 1993).\*

**Number of pages:** 32 p.

**Where you learned about the book / Awards:** Database of Award-Winning Children's Literature (<http://www.dawcl.com>)

**Country where author lives:** Australia

**Country/language first published in:** Australia / English

From “Armadillo” to “Zebra,” the author displays with collage-like pictures the many animal, bird, insect, and fish species that are in danger of becoming extinct. A note at the front of the book explains the many causes of extinction and how each species is being threatened. Each picture is accompanied by the creature’s common name, scientific name, and habitat location.

Peet, M. (2005). *Keeper*. United States: Candlewick Press. (Original work published in United Kingdom by Walker Books 2003).\*

**Number of pages:** 225 p.

**Where you learned about the book / Awards:** CCBC Recommended Books List (<http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/books/>) / Branford Boase Award, Nestle Smarties Book Prize

**Country where author lives:** United Kingdom

**Country/language first published in:** United Kingdom, Europe / English

Journalist Paul Faustino gets more than he bargained for when world-famous goalie El Gato decides to tell him his life story. Growing up in a poor community in South America, El Gato is just another awkward boy destined to join his father at the logging company that is slowly destroying the surrounding rainforest. But when he encounters an otherworldly figure in the wilderness who teaches him how to be a “keeper,” El Gato must choose between the life his family wants for him and the life he truly desires. He eventually leads his team to a World Cup win, where he uncovers a mystery and realizes the importance of his rainforest home and why it must be protected.

Stanley, E. (2003). *The deliverance of dancing bears*. United States: Kane/Miller Book Publishers. (Original work published in Australia by the University of Western Australia Press 1994).\*

**Number of pages:** 40 p.

**Where you learned about the book / Awards:** *Crossing Boundaries with Children's Books*

p.198 / 1995 Australian Children's Picture Book of the Year Award, 2003 ASPCA Henry Bergh Children's Book Award for writing and illustration

**Country where author lives:** Australia

**Country/language first published in:** Australia / English

Every day a captive bear with her teeth filed down and claws blunted must earn money for her vicious master Haluk by dancing in the marketplace. Every night she dreams of freedom in the wild. When Yusuf gives up his savings to first set the bear and then a cub free, the villagers finally realize the importance of respecting animal life and defy Haluk's cruelty. The author concludes the picture book with an endnote about the struggle and liberation of similar performing bears in Turkey and Greece.

Valgardson, W.D. (1997). *Garbage creek and other stories*. (M. Bisson, Illus.). Canada: Douglas & McIntyre.\*

**Number of pages:** 132 p.

**Where you learned about the book / Awards:** *World Through Children's Books* p.118

**Country where author lives:** Canada

**Country/language first published in:** Canada, North America / English

A girl wins a promise from her taciturn father not to sell a piece of land once she shows him the beauty and bounty it holds. Two lonely children band together to clean up a polluted creek so salmon can return to it. A brother and sister care for a wounded wolf and eventually release it back into the wild. These short stories with an environmental theme are joined by eight more in a collection that focuses on children dealing with challenges in modern-day Canada.

Zak, M. (1992). *Save my rainforest*. (B. Runnerstrom, Illus.). (N. Schimmel, Trans.). United States: Volcano Press. (Original work published in Sweden by Bokforlaget Opal 1987).\*

**Number of pages:** 32 p.

**Where you learned about the book / Awards:** *Children's Books from Other Countries* p.103 / CCBC Choices

**Country where author lives:** Not Available

**Country/language first published in:** Sweden, Europe / Swedish

Omar is just an ordinary boy in Mexico City when he learns about the destruction of the rainforest in his country. He sets out on an 870 mile-voyage with his father to tell the governor of the rainforest region how important the ecosystem is. They face many physical and spiritual challenges, and almost give up their quest. But with the help of villagers along the way, Omar completes his journey, and finally wins an audience with the governor, and eventually the President. Although he doesn't get the resolution he wants, Omar spreads the message that children must make their voices heard in order to preserve the rainforest for years to come.

## References

Christiansen, A. (1997). [Review of the book *A wild elephant at camp*]. Retrieved from <http://www.sawnet.org/kidsbooks/reviews.php?A+Wild+Elephant+at+Camp>

Gebel, D. (2006). *Crossing boundaries with children's books*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow.

Stan, S. (2002). *The world through children's books*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow.

Tomlinson, C. (1998). *Children's books from other countries*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow.