

BC SPCA-recommended books

How we assess for humane content

There is a wide range of children and young adult books that deal with animals. Animals take different roles in books. Books that show the human-animal bond and the intrinsic value of animals are the types of books we would like to recommend.

In order to promote animal welfare we ask ourselves these questions when assessing books to recommend:

1. Are the animals anthropomorphized, or are they realistic?
2. Does the book promote positive or negative attitudes towards animals?
3. Are the animals well cared for?
4. Are animals stereotyped?
5. Are the facts about the animals correct?
6. What lessons can be learned from the book to improve animal welfare?

PICTURE BOOKS



It's a Mitig! by Bridget George

Reading level: Grades K-2

When giizis – the sun – rises, do you wonder what could be hiding within the trees? *It's a Mitig!* takes young readers on a fun and colourful journey through the forest to observe nature and the animals that live there. Written in a rhyming combination of Ojibwe and English, this picture book guides readers through the beautiful forest and introduces them to the Ojibwe language, encouraging them to identify plants and animals in Ojibwe along the way. With a helpful, illustrated, Ojibwe-to-English glossary, this story is a beautiful introduction to the Ojibwe language for young readers. Anishinaabe author-illustrator, Bridget George was raised on the Kettle and Stony Point First Nation in Ontario. They created this story for their son so they could reconnect with their culture, learning the Ojibwe language together.

To continue learning, classes might research together to learn more about Indigenous Communities in their area. A nature scavenger hunt can encourage discovery about plants and animals of the area; see if students can apply the Ojibwe words that they have learned from *It's a Mitig!* in a real-world setting.



Do Frogs Drink Hot Chocolate?: How Animals Keep Warm by Etta Kaner, illustrated by John Martz

Reading Level: K-2

How do animals keep warm in cold weather? Wild animals cannot turn up the heat or add an extra layer as humans might. So, what things do animals do to stay warm instead? Learning about the features and behaviours that wild animals have adapted to survive frigid temperatures can help students to better understand animal behaviour. This understanding can also help students begin to recognize the impact that humans can have on wild animals' survival.

Written by former classroom teacher Etta Kaner, *Do Frogs Drink Hot Chocolate?* uses a fun question-and-answer format to introduce students to cold-weather adaptations for animals around the world. Allow students to shout out the answers to witty questions about possible animal adaptations. Then, read through the answers as a class to discover how wild animals stay warm.



Junebug: No Life Too Small by Nicole Daniels, illustrated by Addy Rivera Sonda

Reading Level: Pre-K-Grade 1

Insects make up about 80 per cent of the Earth's animal species. Though they are an essential part of any ecosystem, insects are often unloved and unappreciated. Teaching youth the foundation of respecting even the smallest and arguably most vulnerable creatures will help them develop compassion for all creatures – big or small.

In *Junebug: No Life Too Small*, the main character, June, helps her friends to realize how amazing and important insects are. June teaches her friends about the secret lives of bugs and

compares the insects' needs to her friends' needs. By showing her friends to save insects, rather than squish them, June shares a lesson in compassion.

Empowering youth with the knowledge of insects' roles as pollinators and plant defenders can help them to see these creatures as the crucial parts of our ecosystem that they are.

Different ways to incorporate this book in the classroom include:

- Take your students on a bug nature walk and challenge them to see how many bugs they can find!
- Have your class learn about all of the different jobs that bugs do (e.g., pollinate, protect plants, decompose materials, etc.).
- Do an insect art project with your class, and fill your classroom windows with colourful construction paper bugs! Take this opportunity to support inquiry with your students and talk about insects' different features and **how they help each insect**



Fur, Feather, Fin: All of Us are Kin by Diane Lang, illustrated by Stephanie Laberis

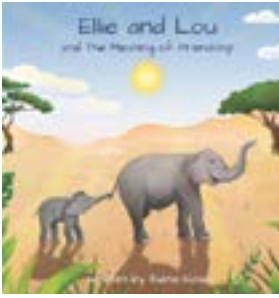
Reading Level: Preschool-Grade 3

In *Fur, Feather, Fin: All of Us are Kin*, readers are taken on a journey through the different species that inhabit the Earth, celebrating what is unique about the diverse taxonomic classes all through fun rhyme. Starting with the big idea that "All animals on Earth are kin, while not the same outside or in," readers learn about the interconnectedness of humans and animals. The

book introduces the idea that some animals depend on us to meet their needs, while others thrive when we leave them alone.

This book's colourful and detailed illustrations are thoughtfully paired with the text to build on and reinforce ideas introduced. An excellent example is the double-page spread where humans are grouped as mammals. Although the text is simple, it is paired with images of humans which show diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, and the many ways that human families are defined, and makes for a great discussion point with students.

For readers and educators wanting to learn even more, the back of the book provides additional information on each class of animal, including tips on how we as humans can help these animals, and sources for further investigation for curious animal advocates.



Ellie and Lou and the Meaning of Friendship by Kiana Sosa

Reading level: Preschool - Grade 2

How do you show kindness? What does friendship mean to you? Author Kiana Sosa from Burnaby, British Columbia was 10 years old when she wrote the book *Ellie and Lou and the Meaning of Friendship*, a heartfelt story that shows how a small act of kindness can have a ripple effect on those around you and change someone else's life for the better.

This book follows Ellie and Lou, a mother-daughter pair of elephants who are experiencing difficulties finding food after becoming separated from their herd. Just when the pair is in on the verge of losing all hope, they're met by Sam, a gorilla who has a reputation of being "too strict and serious." After reflecting on his own past, Sam feels sympathy for Ellie and Lou and decides to offer them his help. Sam's small act of kindness inspires his jungle friends to do the same. Demonstrating the importance of teamwork, all of the jungle animals work together to gather enough food to completely change Ellie and Lou's situation.

Featuring a fun "meet the main characters" page, as well as an author's note detailing what it means to be a good friend, *Ellie and Lou and the Meaning of Friendship* reveals some of the many positive outcomes that can arise when we work together to help our friends.



Little Wolf by Teoni Spathelfer, illustrated by Natassia Davies

Reading level: Grades K-3

Little Wolf is a picture book about a young Indigenous girl's challenges as she adjusts to moving to the city. Little Wolf misses her wilderness home and her connections to family. To top it off, she is the only Indigenous student in her school and is teased by classmates. Her mother helps her build inner strength by connecting Little Wolf with her cultural heritage. Little Wolf also finds strength in discovering the urban wildlife no one else seems to notice and in her connection to her dog adopted from an animal shelter. This renewed confidence inspires Little Wolf and sets

her on a positive life course. *Little Wolf* can be used to help students better understand what it can be like to be from an Indigenous background and should inspire thoughtful discussion on celebrating each person's cultural heritage.



The Cats on my Block by Valerie Sicignano Illustrated by Jane Sayre Denny

Reading level: Grade 3+

The Cats on my Block teaches children about feral and stray cats, often referred to as "community cats." In New York City, main characters Luke and Willow notice cats wandering around their neighbourhood. When Luke asks if the cats are homeless, Willow responds with "no, the outdoors is their home." Luke and Willow learn all about community cats from their neighbor,

Keith, who cares for them including how to support them, trap-neuter-return programs and how, even though they have no guardians, they still need to be cared for. A glossary at the end of the book explains many of the terms used in the story to help readers build their vocabulary around community cats.



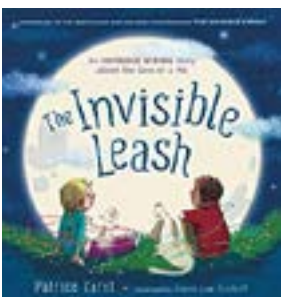
Lessons from Mother Earth by Elaine McLeod, illustrated by Colleen Wood

Reading level: Grades K-1

Five-year-old Tess has never explored her Grandmother's garden, but during one visit, her Grandmother invites her along to explore and learn about her “garden”, which is the natural world, and the lessons it can teach us. Following Tess and her Grandmother, as they make their way through colourful scenes of nature, we share in the wisdom that has been passed down through generations and we gain an appreciation for the gifts of Mother Earth, as well as an understanding of our responsibility to care for the natural world.

Through the knowledge that has been passed down by women in her family, Tess discovers that nature bears an abundance of gifts, each coming to us in their own time, and the responsibility she and her family share in taking care of these precious gifts. The blueberry bush, if trampled and over picked, will not grow again. However, the fruits it bears, if left unharvested, will slowly wither away. Tess learns that in this delicate balance we must be mindful and respectful of Mother Earth if we are to be nourished by her, and the presence of animals throughout the illustrations reminds us that we humans are not the only ones sustained by nature's generosity.

Lessons from Mother Earth is a delightfully illustrated picture book celebrating teaching and nurturing through the inter-generational relationships we share with both our family and with our natural world. The author is a member of the Na-Cho Nyak Dun First Nation and wrote the story so her children could understand their own history and roots, and in doing so shares with a wider audience a valuable message about how nature can sustain us and provide for us, but only when we respect it and care for it.



The Invisible Leash: A Story Celebrating Love After the Loss of a Pet by Patrice Karst, illustrated by Joanne Lew-Vriethoff

Reading level: Grades K-3

When a child loses a beloved pet, it is hard to explain why their fur friend isn't there to snuggle with anymore. Stories can help open the door to talking about the emotions and day-to-day changes that come with loss. *The Invisible Leash* is a recent entry into the list of excellent picture books talking about pet loss. This book comes from the author of a series of books about how an invisible, magical string connects us to everyone we love, even if they move away or die.

When Zack loses his dog Jojo, he doesn't know how to handle his sadness. His friend Emily talks about losing her cat and how she is still connected heart-to-heart with her fur friend by an “invisible leash.” Knowing that others go through the same feelings can help, and if you are into the “rainbow bridge” idea of what happens to pets this can be a more connected way to talk about it. The only blunder with this book occurs when Zack's parents try to make him feel better by talking about getting another dog, when he clearly feels there is no replacement for Jojo. The overall story is lovely, however, with beautiful illustrations that are comforting in their depiction of pet “spirits.”



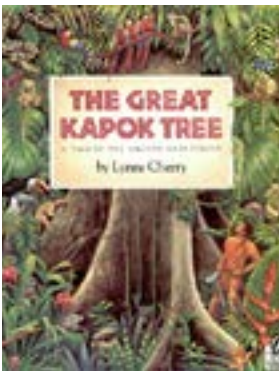
Friends in Fur Coats by Claire Buchwald and Sarah Buchlaw, illustrated by Rebecca Evans

Reading level: Grades K-3

This beautifully illustrated story highlights the importance of cherishing and protecting our fur-bearing animals. Looking at his various stuffed toys, Noah goes to bed wishing that he too could have a beautiful, soft coat like them. As he drifts off to sleep, Noah's bedroom begins to fill with trees and grass as we enter the world of his dreams. In his dreams, Noah's bear Bella and his other stuffed friends come alive, and alongside them, he explores their natural habitats, and how their unique fur coats allow each animal to thrive in the wild.

Noah awakens the following morning with an appreciation for these wild animals, their beautiful coats and how vital fur is for bears, seals, foxes and other wild animals. Arriving at the conclusion that unlike him, animals need a fur coat, Noah has a deeper understanding of what it means to cherish and respect fur-bearing animals.

This book is a gentle introduction for young readers to the importance of respecting and protecting fur-bearing animals. It handles a difficult topic at an age-appropriate level, engaging the reader with beautiful, vivid illustrations and facts about each animal. The publisher offers a classroom guide to complement the book, providing suggestions for group reading and prompts to deepen the discussion.



The Great Kapok Tree by Lynne Cherry

Reading level: Grade K+

When a man falls asleep in the Amazon rainforest after exhausting himself trying to chop down a Kapok tree, the residents of the forest see this as the perfect opportunity to enlighten him. One by one, the creatures come to whisper into the man's ear, asking him to spare their home. With each plea it becomes clear that the Kapok tree is central to the existence of many creatures in the rainforest, whether this is through its great branches and foliage providing a home or its extensive root system that holds the soil in place during heavy rainstorms. But it is also clear that the Kapok tree is dependent on the creatures of the forest, as "all living things depend on one another." When the man awakens, he understands this interconnectedness and his responsibility to help preserve this unique environment for future generations, for "what happens tomorrow depends upon what you do today."

Featuring beautiful illustrations by author Lynne Cherry, The Great Kapok Tree speaks to the importance of preserving the world's rainforests, through highlighting the unique complexity of these ecosystems. Readers are sure to feel its heartfelt message and respond to its call to action to save our rainforests.



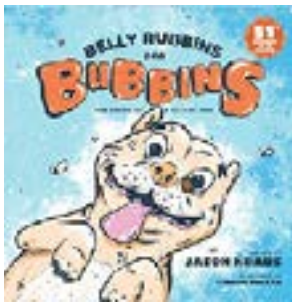
Hello Goodbye Dog by Maria Gianferrari, illustrated by Patrice Barton

Reading level: Preschool - Grade 2

We love our pets, but do they really love us? This book explores the special relationship between humans and animals, and introduces the topic of therapy animals as well as the benefits of reading to pets programs.

Zara, a young girl in a wheelchair, and her pet dog, Moose, are separated when she starts school for the first time. But Moose decides that he doesn't like "goodbye" and instead does whatever he can to be with Zara, causing a lot of mischief in the process. Zara also finds comfort in having Moose to help her with her reading. Finally, it's decided that Moose is not just a pet, so he is taken to become a "therapy" dog and now he can spend all day at school with his companion.

This touching story explains to young children the difference between pets and therapy animals, as well as that some animals can help us when we are nervous or in need of comforting.

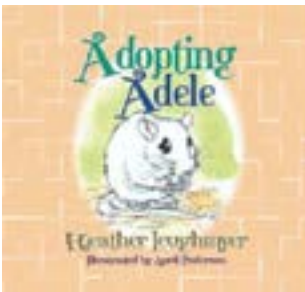


Belly Rubbins for Bubbins: The Story of a Rescue Dog by Jason Kraus, illustrated by Connor Dehaan

Reading level: Grades K-3

Belly Rubbins for Bubbins is the beautiful true story of a senior pit bull whose life was full of hardship and neglect. Bubbins spent nearly a year in the shelter after spending the previous 10 years of his life living outdoors with little human interaction. The scars all over his body tell the story of hardships he endured. Through all his struggles, Bubbins never gave up hope that he would one day find a loving family. This book highlights the true unconditional loving nature of dogs, and the resilience they have to put their past behind them.

This story is written by first time author, Jason Kraus based on the real life 'Bubbins' named Gibbson. Gibbson lives with Jason and his wife, Michelina and receives belly rubbins every single day. Jason donates 51% of all the proceeds of this book to various dog rescues. He wrote this book to educate youth about the true loving nature of rescue dogs and the value of a second chance. If you'd like to continue to follow Bubbins story, you can follow him on Instagram @the.real.bubbins.



Adopting Adele by Heather Leughmyer

Reading level: Grades K-2

Written from the perspective of a rat named Adele, this book will give children a unique insight into what it would feel like to be a shelter animal that is misunderstood and unable to find her forever home.

The book is infused with cute and quirky natural behaviours of rats, their unique personalities, and their need for a home environment, while following Adele's journey to find her perfect person and forever home.

This book will spark discussions with your class on how to choose the right pet for your family's lifestyle, how all animals deserve the opportunity to express their natural behaviour and to lead happy, healthy lives, and how sometimes our biases affect how we act towards something or someone. In order to cultivate empathy towards all animals we may need to pause and consider any biases we have, and educate ourselves on ways to overcome this, like in this story of sweet Adele.



Lost and Found Cat: The True Story of Kunkush's Incredible Journey by Doug Kuntz and Amy Shrodes

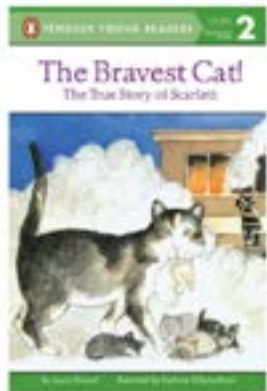
Reading level: Grade 3+

Forced to leave their home in Iraq, a family has to make a perilous journey to safety in Norway, bringing only basic possessions and their cat, Kunkush.

During the long journey, Kunkush escapes his carrier and spends days wondering the streets of Greece before he is picked up by a caring stranger. The stranger brings him to a vet clinic where he is brought back to health, and the search for his family begins. The vet realizes Kunkush must have had a loving family based off his temperament, so she uses social media to find them. After weeks of searching, the family sees the vet's post with the picture of their cat, and organizes their reunion.

Young animal lovers will read this powerful story of a family who undertakes great obstacles to ensure their cat comes with them as they have to leave their home. It also shows the power a compassionate stranger can have, and how each person can make a difference.

Discussion topics that may arise from this story are the obstacles that many people face when a natural or man-made disaster strikes and they are forced to leave their home. What considerations should we give to our pets during this transition to make them feel safe and protected? Additional topics may include how social media platforms can be used in a positive way to bring attention to situations and issues to benefit animals, and in this case reunite them with families. *Lost and Found Cat* ends with a collection of real life images from this incredible true story of courage, compassion and perseverance.

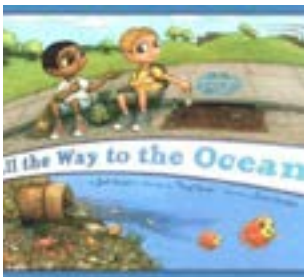


The Bravest Cat by Laura Driscoll, illustrated by DyAnne Disalvo-Ryan

Reading level: Grades 2-3

There's a fire in an abandoned building! The structure, however, isn't as empty as it initially seems. A mother cat runs out of the flames, holding her tiny kitten! To the surprise of the firemen, the cat then runs back into the fire. But why is this courageous mom braving the heat and danger?

Painted lovingly with gentle watercolours, this book tells the true story of how animals can be heroes—and how people, too, can be heroes to animals, by caring for them and giving them loving homes.



All the Way to the Ocean by Joel Harper, illustrated by Marg Spusta, forward by Laird Hamilton

Reading level: Grades K-2

When James throws away a wrapper into a storm drain, his best friend Isaac points out something important: drains lead all the way to the ocean. Illustrated entirely in environmentally-friendly soy ink, this book tells the tale of two friends learning about the importance of the ocean ecosystem, and how our trash can affect the beautiful undersea world. Marg Spusta's vivid drawings gorgeously represent the rainbow brightness of coral reefs, and the harmful nature of our garbage to marine life.

This book also includes action suggestions for how kids can help their environment, such as cleaning up trash in their neighbourhoods.



Gwen the Rescue Hen by Leslie Crawford, illustrated by Sonja Stangl

Reading level: Grade 3+

Gwen the Hen has spent her whole life in an egg-laying hen house, unable to even spread her wings. One day, a tornado comes along and displaces the hens and their small cage outside. Breaking out of the cage, she dodges danger at every turn, until she finds safety with a boy named Mateo. With her new friend in this new environment, Gwen learns she can now do all the things a chicken is supposed to be able to do.

This book includes a bonus section, entitled “More about Chickens”, where readers can learn about chickens’ extraordinary eyesight, complex language of 24 sounds, good sense of time, and other fun facts.



Hope by Randy Houk, illustrated by Walt Sturrock

Reading level: Grades 1-3

Hope is an ordinary pig who lives on a factory farm. All she wants is to be comfortable, and to be free to act like a pig! Instead, when she is three weeks old, she is taken away from her mother and littermates, and put inside an uncomfortable cage. It is dark, cramped, and painful, and when Hope injures herself, she is not cared for or given proper vet treatment. What will happen to Hope? Will she ever be able to be happy and comfortable again?

Told entirely in verse, this book demonstrates to kids what life is like for a pig when she is denied the freedoms to be comfortable and to express natural pig behaviours. Drawn with beautifully-textured illustrations, *Hope* helps kids to foster compassion for pigs as well as other farm animals.

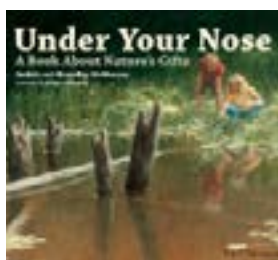
Sometimes I Feel Like a Fox by Danielle Daniel



Reading level: Grades K-1

In this book, inspired by the Anishinaabe tradition of totem animals, children put on different animal masks in order to illustrate and explain why they feel like different animals. By identifying personality traits, emotions, and positive descriptors associated with different species, this book fosters connection and compassion between humans and animals.

Filled with vivid, whimsical paintings, this book teaches children about different animals as well as Anishinaabe culture.



Under Your Nose: A Book About Nature's Gifts by Judith and Shandley McMurray, forward by Robert Bateman

Reading level: Grades K-3

Siblings Chloe and Zachary face seven days at their grandparents' cottage in the forest, without technology! They both head outside with the gentle guidance of their grandparents to discover new creatures, environments and self-directed fun.

Beautifully illustrated by artist Robert Bateman and the Tobin Island Artists, this book also offers a look at different artistic styles.

Challenge students to complete the nature scavenger hunt or create some nature artwork of their own.



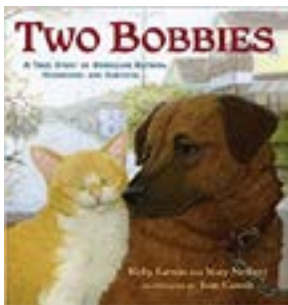
When Anju Loved Being an Elephant by Wendy Henrichs

Reading level: Grade 3+

This story follows a fictional elephant, Anju, who was taken from Sumatra as a calf and sold to a circus. The book begins with Anju being loaded into a truck, wondering where she is being taken.

Throughout the journey (to what is revealed as a sanctuary), Anju reflects on her childhood in Indonesia with her friends and family and her unhappy experiences in the circus world. Will she ever love being an elephant again?

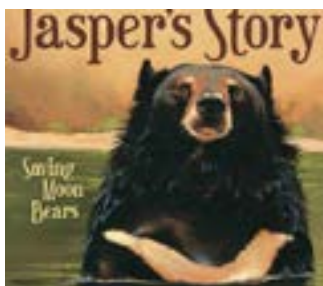
This book will alert young readers to the fact that animals, such as elephants, have feelings and should be treated with respect. A section on elephant facts and advice on how to help them is included.



Two Bobbies: A True Story of Hurricane Katrina, Friendship, and Survival
by Kirby Larson & Mary Nethery, illustrated by Jean Cassels

Reading level: Grades K-2

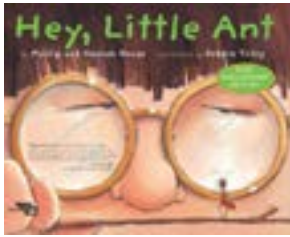
When Hurricane Katrina strikes New Orleans, many people are forced to leave their pets behind – pets like Bobbi and Bob Cat. For months these best friends roam the devastated city, hungry and with only each other as company. The animals are eventually rescued and brought to an animal shelter, where volunteers discover the remarkable bond between this cat and dog. Bobbi and Bob Cat need to stay together – but can their original guardians be found, or will an adoptive family step forward?



Jasper's Story by Jill Robinson and Marc Bekoff

Reading level: Grade 5+

Endangered Asiatic black bears, known as moon bears, are the species of bear most commonly used on bear bile farms in China and Vietnam. “Jasper’s Story” tells the true story of a moon bear, rescued from a bear bile farm and brought to the Moon Bear Rescue Centre in Chengdu, China. Despite 15 years of terrible abuse, Jaspers wounds are eventually healed at the sanctuary and he learns to live a more normal bear life. He becomes a symbol of hope, strength and forgiveness as he helps new bears acclimatize to the sanctuary.



Hey, Little Ant by Phillip and Hannah Hoose

Reading level: Grades K-5

A little boy comes across an ant outside and threatens to squish him. The ant pleads with him not to and asks the boy to think about life from an insect's point of view.

Children are left to ponder the question: To squish or not to squish? This conversation between two creatures, large and small, is bound to inspire important discussions about tolerance, bullying, peer pressure and empathy.

This book is adapted from the song "Hey, Little Ant," written by father-daughter team, Phillip and Hannah Hoose

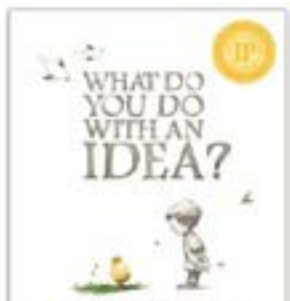


Nico & Lola: Kindness Shared Between a Boy and a Dog by Meggan Hill, photography by Susan M. Graunke

Reading level: Preschool-Grade 2

When Nico's aunt is going away for the weekend, she asks Nico if he will help look after her dog, Lola. Nico is up for the challenge. All weekend long, he finds different ways to be kind to Lola – while Lola also shows kindness to him. Young readers are invited to follow these two friends on their adventures and learn different ways they can be kind, too.

The story explores feelings and helps build empathy for animals by demonstrating the positive relationship and joy pets can bring. Teachers should note there is a photo of Nico hugging Lola. Children should never be encouraged to hug dogs, as it causes some dogs to feel trapped and could lead to a dog bite.



What Do You Do With an Idea? by Kobi Yamada, illustrated by Mae Besom

Reading level: Grades K-3

What Do You Do With an Idea? Follows the journey of a child who has an idea. Written in the first person, the child confides their discomfort and insecurity of having an idea that may be different and ridiculed by some. The child grows more confident throughout the story, working with their idea to make the world a better place. As the story and relationship between the child and their idea evolves, the illustrations become more complex, beautiful and colourful.

What Do You Do With an Idea? Encourages youth to play with, grow and implement their ideas despite being afraid of what others may think. Being able to act on ideas without fear, as we at the BC SPCA try to do, that is what changes the world.

The Happy Tale of Two Cats by Cathy M. Rosenthal



Reading level: Grade K+

It is only when an unhappy cat's guardians move away and leave her that she begins to transition – slowly, and with the help of kind people – into a happy cat herself. From the abandoned house to the animal shelter and eventually her forever home, she finds safety, friendship and love.

The Happy Tale of Two Cats tells a sweet and memorable story of what can happen when caring people in the community all take a part in turning an animal's life around. It addresses the importance not only of physically caring for our feline friends, but also being companions to them.

The Lucky Tale of Two Dogs by Cathy M. Rosenthal



Reading level: Grades K-3

It is only when the unlucky dog escapes from his yard and is picked up by animal control that his life turns around and he becomes a happy dog. From the backyard to the streets, to the animal shelter and eventually to his forever home, he finds safety, friendship and love.

The Lucky Tale of Two Dogs tells a sweet and memorable story of what can happen when caring people in the community all take part in turning an animal's life around. It addresses the importance of social interaction for dogs as well as their physical needs, but also the responsibility of being a pet guardian. The joy and companionship is beneficial to both the guardian and the canine.

Use this as an introduction to pet care, animal abuse or animal shelters.

So, what's it like to be a cat? by Karla Kuskin

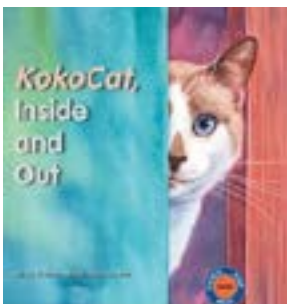


Reading level: Grades K-3

With great style, award-winning children's poet Karla Kuskin uses an interview format – between an inquisitive boy and a witty cat – to ask and answer questions about the feline way of life. Do cats like dark hallways? Getting up for breakfast? Dancing? The responses from this cat might surprise readers – and cause them to think differently about their own cats.

Kuskin's fluid verse combines with Betsy's Lewin's delightful watercolour illustrations to wholly capture the cat's personality and movement. *So, what's it like to be a cat?* is a great book to read aloud with a class. After reading, children may like to pose their own questions about how animals think and feel, and observe their pets' behaviour to seek the answers.

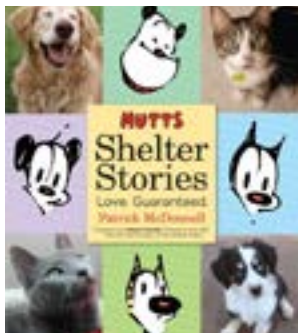
KokoCat, Inside and Out by Lynda Graham-Barber



Reading level: Grades K-2

In *KokoCat, Inside and Out*, Lynda Graham-Barber tells the story of KokoCat, an indoor cat who lives a comfortable life with a nice family. So what happens when one day the door opens and KokoCat's curiosity takes her outside to explore? Quickly lost, KokoCat experiences the life of an outdoor cat. Cold, hungry and alone, she must fend for herself for the very first time. Will KokoCat get back home again?

Fast-paced and featuring illustrations that beautifully depict the difference between KokoCat's indoor and outdoor experiences, this story gives young readers an excellent opportunity to consider whether cats are safer inside or outside.



MUTTS Shelter Stories: Love Guaranteed by Patrick McDonnell

Reading level: Grade 3+ (ages up to adult)

MUTTS Shelter Stories Love Guaranteed is a heartwarming collection of “MUTTS” comic strips by Patrick McDonnell. The collection of comic strips is dispersed with real stories of adopted pets from guardians throughout the world.

McDonnell strikes a balance between lighthearted fun and responsible social commentary without being preachy. The comic strips incorporate messages of responsible pet guardianship, animal advocacy and adoption and the sanctity of all life

His characters are emotive and expound the important messages of shelter animals. It is hard not to feel empathy for these characters.



Me...Jane by Patrick McDonnell

Reading level: Grade K-3

In *Me...Jane*, writer and illustrator Patrick McDonnell goes back in time to tell the true story of a young Dr. Jane Goodall, a child intensely curious about and connected to nature.

The story follows Jane, and her toy chimpanzee, as she teaches herself about the world by reading books and studying her own backyard. She pays close attention to wildlife and understands that she is part of the natural world – a “magical world full of joy and wonder.” Young Jane dreams of a life living with, and helping, animals... until one day, her dream comes true.

This true story encourages curiosity and kindness towards animals, and is an inspirational example of following your dreams. Featuring an accompanying biography and special message from Jane Goodall, *Me...Jane* is a wonderful addition to any library.



South by Patrick McDonnell

Reading level: Preschool-Grade 1, but may be enjoyed by all ages.

South, by writer and artist Patrick McDonnell, does not include any words – but it says a lot.

Through a series of simple and very effective illustrations, *South* tells the story of a little bird whose flock migrates for the winter, leaving him behind. An unlikely friend, Mooch the cat, notices the little bird's sorrow and helps him. Together they set out on a journey to catch up with the flock – they travel until they hear the familiar music of the little bird's family.

South is a beautifully understated story that uses animal characters to touch on themes of compassion, friendship and the importance of family – no matter who you are.



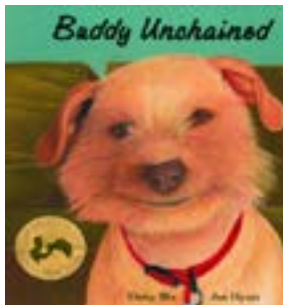
The Gift of Nothing by Patrick McDonnell

Reading level: Preschool-Grade 1

What do you give a friend who has everything? That's what Mooch the cat asks himself.

Mooch wants to give his friend Earl a special gift, but Earl already has a bowl, a bed, a chew toy – and everything a dog needs. After a lot of thought, Mooch decides that “nothing” is the best gift for Earl... but “in a world filled with so many somethings, where could he find nothing?” Mooch figures out how to give Earl nothing – and everything – by giving of himself.

A wonderful meditation on friendship and the value of offering our undivided time rather than “stuff,” *The Gift of Nothing* uses animal characters to draw in the reader and make us think differently about the gifts that we give our loved ones, including our pets. Patrick McDonnell's signature illustrations echo the message of the story; even in their sparse simplicity they fill the pages with tenderness.



Buddy Unchained by Daisy Bix

Reading level: Grades K-3

Before being rescued, Buddy lived his life on the end of a chain no matter what the weather, rain, shine or snow. Now that he has been adopted into a loving home, he shares his story of neglect and rescue. The illustrations capture the expression of a dog who has lost hope and then has his trust in humans restored.

The message of the importance of properly caring for pets and reporting neglect and abuse can initiate a great discussion on preventing cruelty.

Suitable for students aged 5+. If you have older students, consider asking them to read this book to their younger reading buddies.



Are You Ready for Me? by Claire Buchwald

Reading level: Grades K-3

Written from a dog's point of view, *Are You Ready for Me?* illustrates the responsibilities and joys of adopting a dog into your family. Many children ask their parents for a pet without having any reference or understanding of the commitment it takes to care for another living creature. This book covers the important topics that must be discussed before adopting a dog. There is even a contract at the back of the book that families can sign together to show their commitment to their new family member.



It's Raining Pups and Dogs! by Jeanne Prevost

Reading level: Grades K-3

For many children the thought of having a house full of puppies sounds like a dream. In this book a young girl named Lauren is disappointed that her dog is spayed, taking away the chance to ever have a litter of puppies. But Lauren's dad knows that spaying was the right thing to do as responsible pet guardians. He helps Lauren come to the same conclusion by visiting the animal shelter.

While the challenges of the animal shelter depicted in *It's Raining Pups and Dogs!* aren't indicative of all shelters, the general message – there are too many animals in need of homes to not spay and neuter – is absolutely true. Straightforward language and realistic illustrations makes this a great way to teach children about this important animal welfare issue.



Max Talks to Me by Claire Buchwald

Reading level: Grades K-3

The bond between a human and an animal can be quite amazing.

Max Talks to Me explores how a boy and his dog communicate with each other and the bond that is created. Max does not speak but, through observation and the relationship that is established, the young narrator can predict Max's behaviour and appreciate his companion as a real friend.

Anyone who has ever experienced this bond will appreciate the illustrations in which Max's eyes and expression say it all.

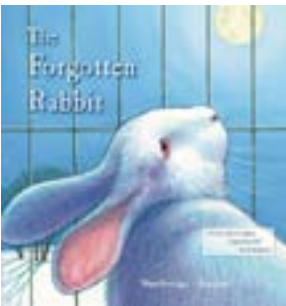


Don't Judge a Book by its Cover by Denise Fleck

Reading level: Grade 1+

Young Mary-Alice likes things to look “pretty,” whether they are the books she reads or the friends she makes. When told she can get a dog, Mary-Alice says she wants the fluffy puppy with pink bow from the pet store. But instead, with the guidance of her parents and a shelter worker, she gives Rico, an adult black Labrador from the shelter, a chance.

By following Mary-Alice and her family as they adopt Rico, the reader learns about some of the common prejudices faced by shelter animals relating to their colour, age or breed. By playing with Rico and realizing that he's different than she first assumed, Mary-Alice learns to be more open-minded in other areas of her life (like with a new girl at school) and carries this lesson with her years later.



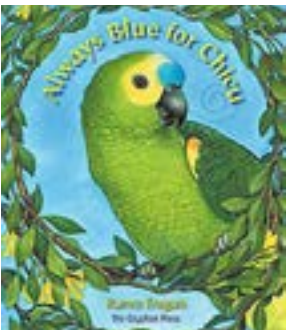
The Forgotten Rabbit by Nancy Furstinger

Reading level: Grade K+

What happens when rabbits are bought as gifts, impulsively and without thought to their future care? This is the question addressed in *The Forgotten Rabbit*.

Born on a farm to a loving mother, the rabbit who narrates this tale is purchased as an Easter gift for children. Initially, the rabbit – called Bunny – receives plenty of care and attention. But soon the kids turn their interest to other things, and Bunny's cage is moved to the backyard. As the seasons change and winter eventually sets in, the reader sees how Bunny suffers. Thankfully, a girl named Rosalita adopts Bunny, changes her name to Bella and gives her a good life in her new home.

Though they are the third most popular pet in North America, rabbits are still often viewed as disposable, or relegated to the backyard. *The Forgotten Rabbit* gives attention to the unique care needs of rabbits, highlighting the importance of a loving, indoor home, companionship and exercise. With colourful, full-page illustrations, this is not only a touching story, but also an excellent introduction to rabbit welfare.

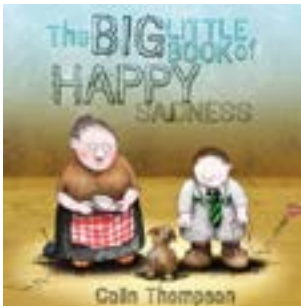


Always Blue for Chicu by Karen Dugan

Reading level: Grades K-3

For a parrot named Chicu, the colour blue symbolizes both safety and freedom. Born in Argentina, young Chicu spends time discovering the world around him and learning to fly. One day, Chicu is trapped and taken away to be sold in the exotic pet trade. After initially living on a boat with a sailor named Big Blue, Chicu is passed around for 30 years. From long stretches all alone in his cage to being fed peanuts in a smoky bar and then kissed, cuddled and dressed up, Chicu is often frustrated that he is not able to behave like a real parrot. Eventually, he is taken to a parrot sanctuary where he is reunited with an old friend.

Always Blue for Chicu tells a lively, complex story with colourful, action-filled illustrations while touching on some important animal welfare issues for exotic pets like parrots. Readers can consider the problem of taking a wild animal from his natural habitat and think about ways it may be difficult to provide proper care. The book also includes questions for current or potential parrot guardians to consider, as well as resources for rehoming parrots and learning more about these animals and the challenges they face.

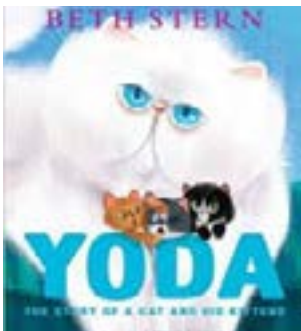


The Big Little Book of Happy Sadness by Colin Thompson

Reading level: Grades K-3

The Big Little Book of Happy Sadness is an evocative story about the importance of family and the role that animals can play in our everyday happiness. George is a lonely little boy who finds a three-legged friend in “the last cage in the last aisle” of the animal shelter. Along with George’s grandmother, they embark on a fun-filled life together.

Using clear, intelligent language, Thompson does not shy away from complex subject matter; he tells the story of a child’s journey through loneliness with grace. The illustrations capture the mood of the story and, along with the characters, become lighter and brighter as the book nears its happy conclusion.



Yoda The Story of a Cat and His Kittens by Beth Stern

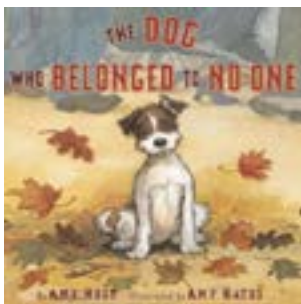
Reading level: Grades K-3

Yoda: The Story of a Cat and His Kittens is a heartwarming tale of a long overlooked shelter cat who finds his calling as a foster mom/dad. Yoda spent months waiting for his forever home, watching other cat pals get adopted and dreaming of becoming a supercat. Little did he know what fate had in store for him. When Beth (wife of Howard Stern and avid kitten foster mom) chose Yoda as her newest furry family member, Yoda thought he was dreaming. But something wasn’t quite right. Yoda’s heart was sad until he discovered the room full of foster kittens down the hall. Yoda immediately took charge, grooming them, teaching them to be gentle and

keeping them safe. He found his purpose and finally became the supercat he’d always imagined he could be.

The illustrations are bright, colourful and fun, helping to tell the true tale of how a special needs rescue cat can defeat the odds and brighten lives every day.

Use this book to introduce students to the concept of fostering animals.



The Dog Who Belonged to No One by Amy Hest

Reading level: Grades 1-3

The Dog Who Belonged to No One, weaves the separate stories of a stray dog with crooked ears and a “wisp of a girl” named Lia, each in need of a friend.

Using soft watercolour illustrations, this sweet book paints a world filled with baseballs, bicycles, and a bakery on the edge of town. With lovely parallels drawn between the little dog and the little girl, the story reaches its climax with a terrific storm that sends them both running for the safety and comfort of home.

The Dog Who Belonged to No One is a poetic tale of friendship found that is sure to warm the hearts of children and grown-ups alike.



Stanley’s Party by Linda Bailey

Reading level: Grades 2-3

“Stanley knew he wasn’t supposed to sit on the couch. But his people went out a lot. And they never came home before midnight.”

So begins *Stanley’s Party*. With exuberant illustrations this picture book for primary-aged students follows Stanley, a usually obedient dog who decides to push his luck. First, Stanley ventures onto the couch. When his action finds no consequence, he quickly discovers new ways to misbehave, until he’s hosting the entire canine community for a raucous party at his place.

Kids will love this fun and funny book which paints dogs as they are: social animals who need companionship... of both their fellow pooches and their people.



The Bookshop Dog by Cynthia Rylant

Reading level: Grades K-2

The Bookshop Dog, is a colourful story about Martha Jane, a bookshop dog who is loved by everyone she meets. When Martha Jane's guardian becomes ill, she must find someone to care for her pet for a week. This doesn't prove difficult. Everyone in town clamours to become Martha Jane's sitter, with some over-the-top results!

Readers in Kindergarten to Grade 2 will enjoy the descriptions and drawings of the book's characters, especially the townspeople: well-meaning but not always well-behaved folks who



Oh, Theodore! by Susan Katz

Reading level: Grades 2-4

Oh, Theodore! is a vibrantly illustrated poetic story about patience, care and bonding with a new pet. The story is told from a young boy's perspective on getting a guinea pig as a pet. He knows it will take patience and time for Theodore to trust him so he does everything slowly and gently. His reward is a new fuzzy friend that will squeak, nibble and entertain him for years.

This is a great introduction to the care of guinea pigs in a fun, poetic format. Kids will love the poems and illustrations.

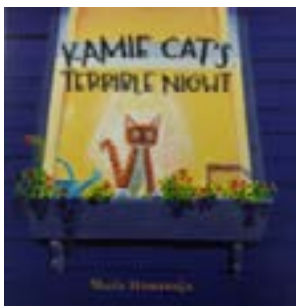


Pablo Puppy's Search for the Perfect Person by Sheila Hamanaka

Reading level: Grades 1-3

Published by the Animal Welfare Institute, *Pablo Puppy's Search for the Perfect Person* tells the story of a stray puppy, Pablo, who ends up at the animal shelter. There, he meets Natasha, an wise older dog who tells him what it means to find the perfect person – someone who will provide everything Pablo needs to be healthy and happy and train him using love, not fear.

Filled with colourful illustrations, *Pablo Puppy's Search for the Perfect Person* is an appropriate book for children in grades 1 to 3. Readers will learn what it takes to provide good care to a pet. "Perfect people" come in all different forms; what they have in common is the understanding that caring for an animal is a very special responsibility.



Kamie Cat's Terrible Night by Sheila Hamanaka

Reading level: Grades 1-3

In *Kamie Cat's Terrible Night*, writer and illustrator Sheila Hamanaka tells the fast-paced story of Kamie's accidental escape from her cozy house with Mr. Wong.

Dodging barking dogs and speeding cars, Kamie runs from house to house trying to get back home, but all she finds are strangers.

Finally, a kind person sees Kamie and takes her to the animal shelter – but without an ID tag, how will she get back to her friend Mr. Wong?

Published by the Animal Welfare Institute, *Kamie Cat's Terrible Night* teaches readers the importance of treating pets well and highlights the bond between cats and their guardians. Children in grades 1 to 3 can read this story and consider what makes a good home for a cat, and what to do in case a pet becomes lost.

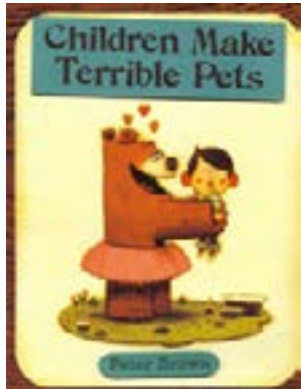


Fred and Pete at the Beach by Cynthia Nugent

Reading level: Grades K - 2

Fred and Pete are pals but Fred is much more cautious and reserved than his adventurous, fun-loving buddy Pete. When their human Ron leaves them behind to go the beach, Pete is determined he and Fred can find their way there on their own. Pete spots a postal truck and quickly hops a ride with Fred scrambling right behind him. This is just the first of several rides they hitch until they finally start to smell the sea air and know they are getting close to the beach.

The illustrations are a combination of photos and paint which make these characters really come alive and steal your heart.



Children Make Terrible Pets by Peter Brown

Reading level: Grades K-1

When Lucy first sees Squeaker in the forest, she can't wait to get him home and ask her Mom if she can keep him. While Lucy and Squeaker have a lot of fun, Lucy also learns that having a pet is a lot of work. Squeaker can be messy, destructive and ill-behaved. When Squeaker disappears one day. When she finally finds him, she learns that some animals just aren't meant to be pets.

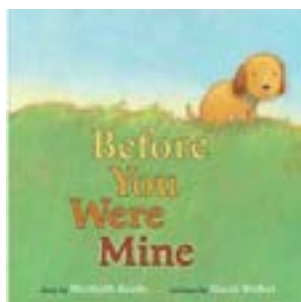
Peter Brown creatively explores the responsibilities of pet ownership including suitability, training and empathy in this tale of Lucy the Bear. This is a good book for generating discussions on the needs of pets, the responsibilities of a pet caregiver and why some animals are better suited as pets than others.



Go Home! by Libby Phillips Meggs

Reading level: Grades K-3

Go Home! is the true story of an abandoned cat surviving on his own, though he yearns for a home. He has some recollection of being a household pet but, for the past year or so, he has been forced to scavenge and find place to sleep. When he first encounters a friendly family, they mistakenly think he has a home because he is wearing a collar – albeit much too tight – and tell him to go home. He survives a few seasons on his own until, one night, he is attacked by a dog. The same family recognizes him as he wanders out from under their shed, injured and thin. They take him to the vet, put up posters and eventually welcome him into their home where he gets all of the love and comforts he so long desired.



Before You Were Mine by Maribeth Boelts, illustrated by David Walker

Reading level: Grades K-2

Before You Were Mine follows a young boy as he speculates on his adopted dog's previous life. He imagines that his lovable companion's last guardians had to move and couldn't take their dog with them, or left him tied up on a chain outside, or didn't look for him when he was lost. After all his speculation, the boy remembers finding his dog at the animal shelter – and thinks that it doesn't matter what happened in the past, because now his friend has a loving, permanent home.

Before You Were Mine is a touching tale that asks many of the questions people have when adopting a stray animal from the shelter – and could lead to further questions during classroom discussion. Along with the story's gentle encouragement of pet adoption, the book includes an afterward by the author which outlines some of the reasons why adopting an older pet can bring great joy to both the animal and the guardian.



“Let’s Get a Pup!” said Kate by Bob Graham

Reading level: Grades K-2

Karen and her parents are ready to welcome a dog into their family. But what kind of dog will they get? This story follows the family on their visit to The Rescue Center. Which dog will they choose? A big dog? A small dog? A sniffer or sleeper? A cute, brand-new pup named Dave or an old, gray dog named Rosy?

“Let’s Get a Pup!” said Kate is a sweet book that illustrates the debate many animal lovers face when visiting a shelter: What do we do when we want to give them all a home? How do we choose between the boisterous puppy and the senior dog who radiates good intention? And once that choice is made, how is each family member’s life improved by the presence of an animal?



It’s Raining Cats and Cats by Jeanne Prevost

Reading level: Grades 2-4

It’s Raining Cats and Cats is a wonderfully illustrated book that deals with the serious topic of the importance of spaying and neutering a pet – but it does so in a humourous, delightful way.

When Jim asks his mother why they had to prevent their cat from having kittens, she takes him into an imaginary future that depicts the potential number of kittens that would result from not having his cat spayed and all of the headaches that go with it.

This book is the Winner of the ASPCA Henry Bergh Award for Best Children’s Picture Book, Fiction, Companion Animals.



Ginger finds a home by Charlotte Voake

Reading level: Preschool-Grade 2

In *Ginger finds a home*, the author paints a heart-wrenching picture of a scraggly little cat who lives in a patch of weeds and spends his days searching for scraps of food and drinking out of puddles – that is, until a compassionate little girl takes it upon herself to give him a better life.

Using simple watercolour and ink illustrations, *Ginger finds a home* is the prequel to an earlier book by the same author, simply titled *Ginger*, in which the title cat is faced with a new feline addition to his home.

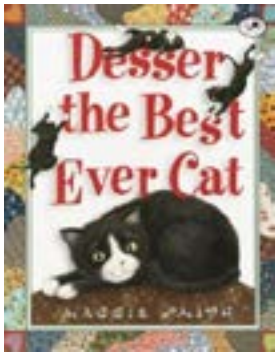
Ginger finds a home may lead to discussions about the lives of homeless cats and how young people can contribute to fixing the problem, even if they are unable to take in strays.



Saying Goodbye to Lulu by Corinne Demas

Reading level: Grades 1+ (best read with an adult for younger children)

Saying Goodbye to Lulu follows a young girl who comes to realize her childhood dog Lulu is very old and will soon pass away. She recounts the good times the pair spent together and goes through an emotional journey from distress to acceptance once Lulu passes. Author Corinne Demas handles pet bereavement in a sensitive and realistic way.



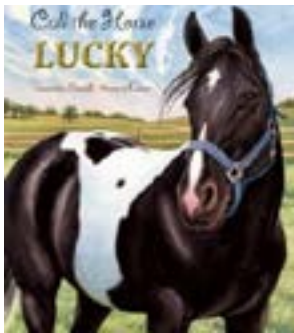
Desser, the Best Ever Cat by Maggie Smith

Reading level: Grades K-3

Desser, the Best Ever Cat is a story about the relationship that a young girl has with her cat as she grows.

It is written from a child's perspective and illustrates the care and respect that evolves in a good human-animal relationship.

The story deals with the death of Desser in a very gentle, realistic way that portrays the grief one feels as well as the acceptance and ability to move on to give another animal a loving home.



Call the Horse Lucky by Juanita Havill and Nancy Lane

Reading level: Grades 1-3

Call the Horse Lucky, is the heartwarming story of a girl named Mel who notices a sick and neglected horse. She takes action by telling her grandmother, who in turn contacts the local humane society. When the horse is taken to a rescue ranch, Mel decides to name him Lucky. And later, when Lucky goes to live at a horse therapy ranch, Mel learns that while she realistically cannot keep him as her pet, she can still help him by becoming a volunteer.

Filled with positive messages about animal care and soft watercolour illustrations that perfectly portray the feelings of both humans and horses, and including an afterward with practical information on how to help horses, *Call the Horse Lucky* is a wonderful book for primary-grade readers.



The Tenth Good Thing About Barney by Judith Viorst

Reading level: Grades 1-3

Grieving over the death of a pet is often a child's first experience with loss. In *The Tenth Good Thing About Barney*, Judith Viorst takes a gentle but realistic approach to death. She captures the emotions and many of the questions children might have after losing a pet.

At a funeral held for Barney, the family cat, the family sings a song and shares good things about him. The child only shares nine good things about Barney but discovers the tenth good thing after he helps his dad plant seeds in the garden.

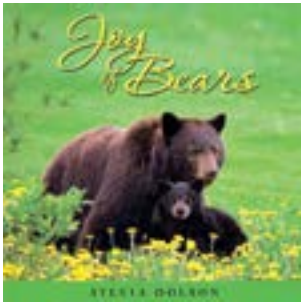


The Boy Who Loved All Living Things by Sheila Hamanaka

Reading level: Grades 2-4

The Boy Who Loved All Living Things is an imagined childhood journal inspired by events in the young life of Albert Schweitzer. Ashamed of some of his own cruel actions towards animals and those of others, Albert reflects, realizes why he acted out and goes out of his way to protect animals that his friends want to harm. In doing so, Albert gains confidence in himself and his beliefs and becomes an animal advocate. He writes, "I do not care anymore what people think about me. I know deep inside who I am."

The Boy Who Loved All Living Things teaches children to view animals as friends that should be treated with compassion and respect, and to stand up for what they know is right. The illustrations and font depict a time long ago but the message is timeless.

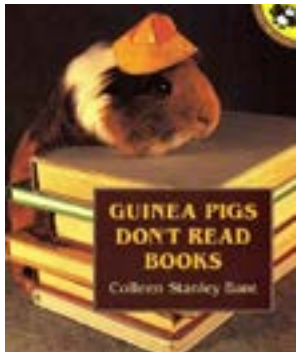


Joy of Bears by Sylvia Dolson

Reading level: Grade 3+

A book by British Columbia's Get Bear Smart Society Executive Director Sylvia Dolson, *Joy of Bears* is a stunning collection of photographs of bears in their natural habitat alongside inspirational quotes about respect for these magnificent creatures and compassion towards all animals.

Readers of all ages will enjoy taking time to pore over *Joy of Bears'* images of black bears, grizzlies and polar bears – and to ponder thought-provoking words from individuals such as Aristotle, Jane Goodall, the Dalai Lama and the author herself. This beautiful book is a love letter to bears in particular, and to nature in general.



Guinea Pigs Don't Read Books by Colleen Stanley Bare

Reading level: Grades K-1

This is a good book to introduce young children to the guinea pig. It reinforces the idea that these small animals are not toys and shouldn't be dressed up but they can be gentle, calm animals that can be a great companion if treated kindly.

The pictures are of real guinea pigs and are very cute. So cute, in fact, you may be tempted to adopt one.



Second Chance: A Tale of Two Puppies by Judy Masrud

Reading level: Grades 3-5

Second Chance tells the parallel stories of two dogs from the same litter who end up in very different homes. Andrew and Matt, boys from separate families, both want a dog. Before Andrew's parents allow him to adopt a puppy, he proves that he is ready for the responsibility by dog walking and dog sitting for neighbours. Matt, on the other hand, learns nothing about caring for or training a dog before adopting; his parents simply give in to his pleading for a pet.

Over the next year, Andrew trains his dog, Boomer, using positive reinforcement for good behaviour. Matt sends mixed signals to his dog, Chance, by encouraging bad behaviour at certain times, then scolding it later; Chance becomes confused and Matt begins to see him as a "bad" dog.

Featuring useful training tips interspersed with the narrative, *Second Chance* is a terrific book for anyone thinking about getting a pet in general, and a puppy in particular.



Belle's Journey by Marilyn Reynolds

Reading level: Grades 1-3

The only job Belle does is carry Molly back and forth from her piano lessons once a week.

When Father considers getting a new horse, Molly is excited at the thought of a young horse. Then one winter day on the way home from piano lessons, Belle and Molly are caught in a blizzard. Molly is frightened but Belle ploughs on until she brings Molly safely home.

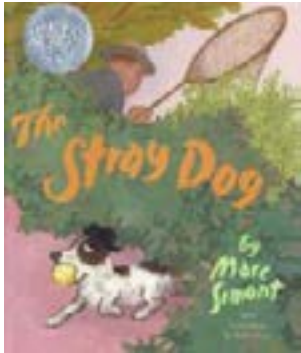
After this heroic deed, Father never talks about selling Belle again.



Norman, Speak! by Caroline Adderson

Reading level: Grades 1-5

A young boy and his family adopt a scruffy little dog called Norman from a local animal shelter. Norman has lots of energy but appears to lack any training, leading the family to think Norman isn't very bright. It turns out Norman was trained using Chinese commands. Once the family learns the Chinese equivalent commands they discover Norman is a smart, well-behaved dog after all. The story illustrates the importance of not judging someone until you really get to know them.



The Stray Dog by Marc Simont

Reading level: Grades K-3

The Stray Dog by Marc Simont is a Caldecott Honor Book about a family that encounters a stray dog at a park.

Short, simple sentences tell this emotional, appealing true story. After playing with a dog, whom they fondly name Willy, all day at a park, the family leaves him behind thinking he must belong to someone. But as the days go by they can't stop thinking about him. The next week they see Willy at the park but he is being chased by the dog catcher. Quick thinking and talking convinces the dog catcher that Willy is their dog. This time Willy goes home with them and becomes part of the family.



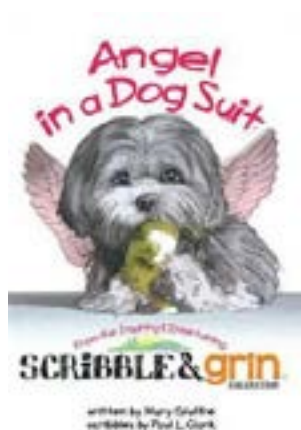
Unknown by Colin Thompson

Reading level: Grades K-3

Unknown is the story of an unlikely hero – a shelter dog called, for lack of a name, Unknown. Though she's always blended into the shadows of her kennel, when a fire threatens her and her fellow shelter residents, this normally nervous little dog takes action.

Along with culminating in an action-packed rescue, this story takes time to illustrate the many types of dogs who find themselves, for reasons beyond their control, without a permanent home. Each character is named after his or her circumstance, such as Owner-Gone-Abroad or Unwanted-Christmas-Gift. Read in the classroom, this book provides excellent opportunity for discussion around the ways animals arrive at shelters. It can also serve as a springboard

to lessons about responsible pet guardianship and why every animal deserves a chance. *Unknown* serves as a reminder that all shelter dogs are special.



Angel in a Dog Suit by Mary Giuffre

Reading level: Grades 3-5

Created in support of the Ontario SPCA's budding humane education program for grade schools, *Angel in a Dog Suit* tells the story of Ruby, a dog rescued from a puppy mill. Told in rhyme, this ultimately uplifting tale follows Ruby through her first six years in a cage, to her rescue and time at the animal shelter, followed by her adoption and adjustment to her new home, family and life.

Based on a true story, *Angel in a Dog Suit* is careful not to oversimplify the journey of a dog who spends half a dozen years suffering and is then introduced to a more humane life. While her circumstances have improved, Ruby is still unsure of life outside of a cage. As the story progresses, we see how her new guardians' love and patience helps Ruby come out of her shell.

While it is important to recognize that not all dogs rescued from puppy mills or other abusive situations may thrive as fully or as quickly as Ruby, this particular account gives readers a sense of how it is possible for an animal to overcome adversity with the right care.



This How We Do It: One Day in the Lives of Seven Kids from Around the World by Matt Lamothe

Reading level: Grades K-5

This amazing book chronicles an average day in the life of seven children from seven different countries across the world, giving a window into other people's lifestyles and traditions. Join these seven kids and learn how, although their appearances, cultures, and customs may differ from Japan to Russia to Peru, they all are connected in their common humanity.

Although this book does not feature animals heavily, it is a wonderful book that teaches kids to respect each other's differences and appreciate their similarities as well. The illustrations are beautifully detailed, and may spark wanderlust! This book is easy to read but may be of interest to older students due to the subject matter.



Manatee Blues by Laurie Halse Anderson

Reading level: Grades 3-6

Brenna, a volunteer at the Wild at Heart Animal Clinic, is thrilled when she is invited to Florida by Dr. Mac, where she will get to visit a manatee rescue center. But the visit to the Gold Coast Rescue Center is not all fun and games—Brenna soon learns that manatees are in grave danger, as boat strikes in manatee habitats have been injuring and endangering the curious creatures. On top of this, the Gold Coast Rescue Center is quickly running out of money... if the centre is forced to close, who will care for the poor gentle giants?

This exciting and fascinating story features a compassionate protagonist who wants to make a difference in animals' lives. Her bravery and passion for animals also leads her to educate others about humans' capability to either harm or help wildlife. This book, one of a larger series of novels, will help kids become aware of their impact on the environment and how humans must be mindful of animals in the wild.



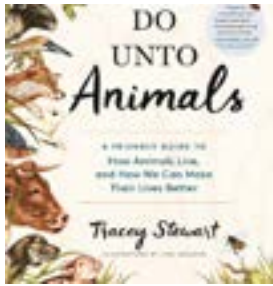
Soapstone Porcupine by Jeff Pinkney, illustrations by Darlene Gait

Reading level: Grades 2-5

Atim the dog arrives suddenly one day at the home of a Cree boy and his family. Almost instantly, she becomes part of the family. But trouble arises when Atim comes across a porcupine in the woods. The porcupine defends itself against Atim, leaving the poor dog in pain. The Cree boy's brother wants to punish the porcupine for the damage inflicted by her quills—but the whole family soon learns why it is important to respect the tough, prickly creature.

Illustrated with beautiful pencil drawings, Soapstone Porcupine is written with a deep respect for wildlife and nature, and helps kids to empathize with animals in the wild while also educating them about Cree language and culture.

Note to Educators: in the novel, the family decides to take the porcupine quills out of their dog's face on their own. This should be done by a veterinarian.



Do unto Animals: A friendly guide to how animals live and how we can make their lives better by Tracey Stewart

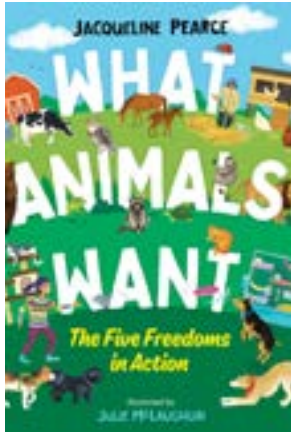
Reading level: Grade 5+

When you see *Do unto Animals* on a library or bookstore shelf, the first thing that pulls you in is the beautiful cover. The gorgeous illustrations by Lisel Ashlock continue throughout the book – they are impressively realistic portraits that truly capture the intelligent and emotional expressions on animals' faces.

In addition to these beautiful pictures, this book is full of fascinating information and food for thought to really inspire adults and youth alike to think more deeply about the creatures around us. Author and animal advocate Tracey Stewart is truly knowledgeable about animals, covering topics ranging from backyard wildlife to companion animal body language and farm animal welfare to respect for nature, all in an empowering way. Young animal lovers will also find plenty of inspiration in this book which includes project ideas such as building bee houses, crafting cat and dog toys and baking healthy treats. They will also discover information about animal shelters, animal welfare issues, the importance of spaying and neutering and so much more.

Stewart has a wide range of sources for her information from groups like the ASPCA, the Jane Goodall Institute, and the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association. *Do unto Animals* will make a beautiful addition to your classroom library. It is more than a pretty package, one that will entice students to care more, learn more and DO more for animals.

NON-FICTION BOOKS



What Animals Want: The Five Freedoms in Action by *Jacqueline Pearce*, illustrated by *Julie McLaughlin*

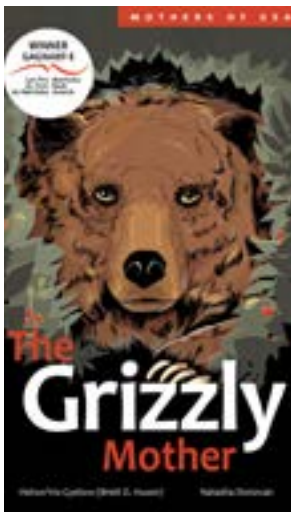
Reading level: Grades 4-8

What Animals Want is a new animal-care book with a difference. Everyone knows animals need food, water and shelter. But what about their social and emotional needs? Modern science tells us that animals experience a wide range of emotions – from fear and anxiety to friendship and happiness.

In *What Animals Want*, renowned Canadian children's book author Jacqueline Pearce introduces students to the Five Freedoms, an internationally recognized tool for evaluating the welfare of animals. The Five Freedoms were first developed in 1965 in response to the way farm animals were being treated on factory farms. Today, the Five Freedoms are being used by animal groups all over the world to help ensure animals experience good physical and emotional welfare.

What Animals Want is the first book about the Five Freedoms for youth. It helps young people apply the Five Freedoms to pets at home and to other situations where people keep animals. For example, what kind of habitat best meets the emotional and behavioural needs of a hamster, rabbit or guinea pig? How do farmers ensure their cattle have access to fresh water on the summer range? Are aquarium whales protected from sunburn? Do rodeo animals suffer from fear and distress and how would you know?

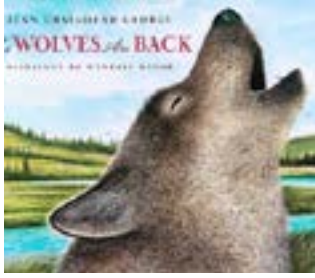
Using examples from animal welfare scientists, Pearce explores how we know what animals really want and need. The book also gives lots of inspiring examples of youth who are making a difference for animals in their communities all over the world. Providing a fresh, science-based perspective, while also encouraging empathy, the book challenges students to look critically at how our society treats and cares for animals.



The Grizzly Mother by *Hetxw'ms Gyetxw (Brett D. Huson)*, illustrated by *Natasha Donovan*

Reading level: Grades 4-6

Glimpse into the secretive lives of grizzly bears! *The Grizzly Mother*, written from the cultural perspective of the Gitksan people of Northwestern British Columbia, explores the interconnections between animals, people and the seasons within the headwaters of the Xsan (Skeena River). The story follows Nox Lik'insxw, a grizzly mother, who must teach her cubs how to hunt, forage and survive on their own within their ecosystem. As a result, readers develop empathy and respect for the living beings in their environment. The author seamlessly weaves narrative, cultural teachings, ecology and the Gitksan language into a richly illustrated and educational text. This book is suitable for grades 4 to 6 and is an excellent starting point for lessons in ecology, cultural perspectives, or language arts (storytelling).



The Wolves Are Back by Jean Craighead George, illustrations by Wendell Minor

Reading Level: Preschool-Grade 3

What happens when a keystone species goes extinct? The Wolves Are Back illustrates just this! Following a young wolf cub as he explores Yellowstone Park, this true story of the persecution of wolves provides a valuable lesson about the delicate balance of nature and the importance of all creatures.

Using simple and engaging prose, Jean Craighead George outlines the cascading effects the removal of the wolf had on practically every aspect of the park's ecosystem over the decades – including prey animals, plants and even streams – making it digestible for young readers. With charming illustrations by Wendell Minor and a refrain found at the bottom of most pages (either “The wolves were back” or “The wolves were gone”), The Wolves Are Back is a great read-aloud story.

A significant resource for teaching about ecosystems and the interconnectedness of their members, this book can also be used to begin a discussion on negative stereotypes. It presents a complete picture of wolves, not as merely villainous or scary. This can help children reevaluate their preconceived notions about wolves and, by extension, other negative stereotypes.



A Friend Like Iggy by Kathryn Cole with Boost Child & Youth Advocacy Centre, photography by Ian Richards

Reading Level: Grades 1-3

Facility dogs are trained dogs who work with a human helper to provide support to their clients. A Friend Like Iggy explores a true story of an important team member at the Boost for Kids BARK program, Iggy the accredited facilitator dog. Iggy helps children at Boost by comforting them through difficult and unfamiliar events including police interviews, counselling sessions and more. This story offers a glimpse into the world of working dogs in a way that is digestible for children 6-8 years old.

In the classroom, this book may help students to begin to understand the world of working dogs. It may also be especially comforting to youth who are navigating a difficult time in their lives. A dog who “helps small people feel bigger and big worries feel smaller,” Iggy is a dog with a very important job!



The Sockeye Mother by *Hetxw'ms Gyetxw* (Brett David Hudson), illustrated by *Natasha Donovan*

Reading level: Grades 4-6

This artfully illustrated book is an exploration of the interconnectedness between animals, the natural landscape and its people. The author shares the cultural lens of the Gitksan people with the reader, describing the life cycle of the sockeye salmon and its significance to the animals, landscape and people of the Pacific Northwest Interior. Through strikingly illustrated pages, we are guided through the seasons as we follow the Sockeye Mother on the journey that is her life cycle. From her treacherous journey down the Xsan, or Skeena river to reach the ocean, to her later return upstream to nesting grounds where she experiences a “replenishing death,” each stage of her life cycle is brought to life for the reader.

As the author guides us through this journey, we discover how the sockeye salmon is not simply a source of food for the Gitksan people, but an animal of cultural significance, and an important reminder of how people, animals and the landscape are all intertwined. With recent scientific research discovering the extensive loss of salmon habitat in British Columbia, the knowledge this book shares and the message it imparts in readers holds much value. Throughout the book, Gitksan terms for places, seasons and animals are accompanied by English translations, allowing the reader to glimpse how the Gitksan language is closely connected to the natural world.



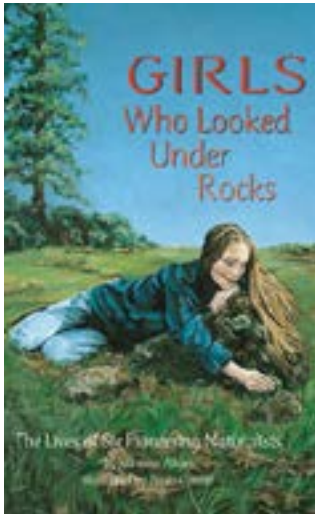
The Lost Words by *Robert Macfarlane*, illustrated by *Jackie Morris*

Reading level: All ages

Children who find a sense of wonder in nature and a connection to all of the plants, animals and other organisms found there will carry that wonder all of their lives. *The Lost Words* seeks to nurture that connection by encouraging children of all ages to turn off their devices and turn on their senses, to notice all the little wonders surrounding us.

This is a big, beautiful book that came about when a new edition of the Oxford Junior Dictionary – widely used in schools around the world – was published in 2007, and a sharp-eyed reader noticed around forty common words concerning nature had been dropped. Apparently, they were no longer being used enough by children to merit their place in the dictionary. Words like acorn, adder, heron, kingfisher, newt, otter and willow were replaced with more “modern” terms like blog, broadband, bullet-point and voice-mail. Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris were inspired to create a “spell book” with some of these “lost words,” using poetry and gorgeous paintings to bring the reader into nature. This would be a lovely read-aloud book.

A wonderful project to do along with reading this book together would be an exercise like Sound Mapping. An art project inspired by the book might have children headed out into nature with pencils and paper to capture a plant or creature they see in their own world. So many beautiful possibilities!



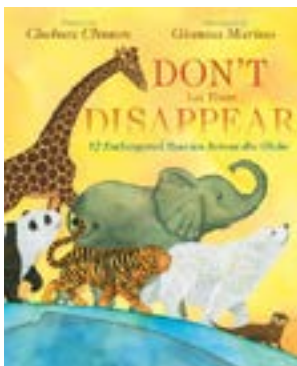
Girls Who Looked Under Rocks by Jeannine Atkins, illustrated by Paula Conner

Reading Level: Grade 7+

From the lesser-known Maria Merian to Anna Comstock to the well-known Jane Goodall, this book explores the lives of six women who would overcome sexism and gender biases to become world-renowned scientists, artists and writers.

From a young age, these women were drawn to a world filled with bugs, animals, plants and fossils. As their girlhood interest in nature turned to fierce determination to protect wildlife and their habitats, they went on to fight limitations placed on women to follow their dreams of protecting, researching and teaching about the natural world. Detailed illustrations accompany each story, helping to create a colourful look into the women and their experiences.

Inspiring and empowering, this chapter book encourages readers to connect with their surroundings while also starting an important dialogue and teaching others about the issues of gender, the environment and the importance of being unique. While a short read, the author provides a list of other resources to continue learning more about these remarkable women and the natural world.



Don't Let Them Disappear by Chelsea Clinton

Reading level: Grades 1-4

Did you know that tigers can jump over fifteen feet in one pounce? Or that a group of Polar Bears is called a celebration? We share the world with millions of unique animal species, but what can we do to ensure they don't disappear?

With scientific facts that will fascinate elementary-age children and vibrant, watercolour illustrations will appeal to everyone, *Don't Let Them Disappear* makes the topic of endangered and extinct species accessible to younger children. Focusing on 12 endangered animals, the causes of these animals' endangerment, including pollution and climate change, the story encourages children to take action by providing tips on how they can help.

Teachers should note, under "What You Can Do", it states to support zoos. The BC SPCA is opposed to the permanent confinement of wild and exotic animals unless the Five Freedoms can be met in the captive environment. ultimately, the BC SPCA believes individuals and organizations should phase out collections of these animals.

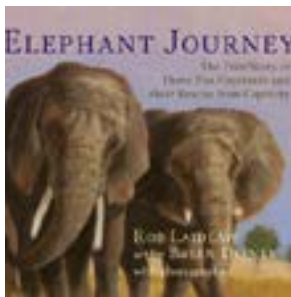


One Plastic Bag: Isatou Ceesay and the Recycling Women of the Gambia
by Miranda Paul, illustrations by Elizabeth Zunon

Reading Level: Grades K-3; inspirational for Grades 4+

Isatou Ceesay has a problem: Plastic bags are creating a nightmare in her village. Farm animals fall ill after eating them, fertile soil and water are polluted, and trash-borne diseases have increased. *One Plastic Bag* tells the inspiring real-life story of how Isatou and her friends creatively solve their community's plastic problem. By making and selling recycled plastic bag purses, they create lasting change for themselves, animals and nature. On the project's twenty-fifth anniversary, their success continues to empower students to overcome obstacles and seek to solve global problems on a local level.

Did you know each purse recycles four-ten plastic bags? Oneplasticbag.com has videos by Isatou showing how to make your own purse. Plus, check out updates on her journey and the project's impact, as well as teacher resources for the book, including worksheets, to motivate your future changemakers.

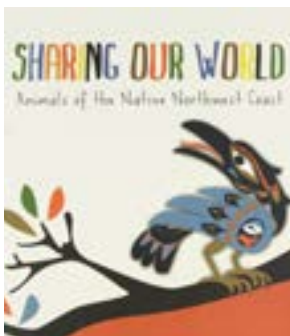


Elephant Journey: The True Story of Three Zoo Elephants and Their Rescue from Captivity
by Rob Laidlaw, art by Brian Deines with photographs

Reading Level: Grades 2-5

In 2013, people across North America were riveted by the story of Toka, Thika, and Iringa, the last three elephants at the zoo in Toronto, Ontario. This is the true story of the elephants' journey from a cold enclosure at the Toronto Zoo to the warm open spaces of PAWS (Performing Animal Welfare Society) Sanctuary in California. Rob

Laidlaw, leading activist and award-winning author, unfolds the story of the elephants' experiences on the journey of three days and 4,100 kilometers that brought them to the sanctuary at last. An informational section at the end of the book explains why zoos cannot meet an elephants' needs and gives the reader a behind the scenes look at how this miraculous journey came to be.

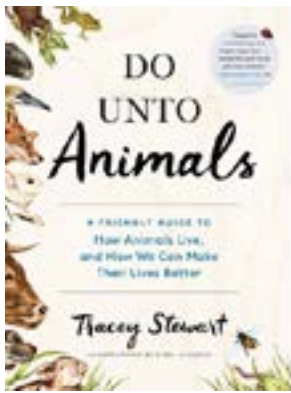


Sharing Our World: Animals of the Native Northwest Coast

Reading level: Grades K-2

Sharing Our World is an introduction to Indigenous Peoples' rich connections and ways of knowing about local animals of the Pacific Northwest. Written for young readers (K-2), this book offers a window into the individual gifts, supernatural powers and cultural significance of an animal as told by Indigenous artists from the Nuxalk, Namgis, Coast Salish, Kwakwaka'wakw, Heiltsuk, Haida, Bella Bella, Tsimshian, Kwa Na Ki Nulth and Nuchatlaht Nations. From the wolf to owl, and frog to whale,

each special relationship and learning is shared through vivid drawings and colourful designs, and would be an excellent starting point for a curricular unit on language arts (recording personal, family and community histories), social studies (stories and traditions), art and design (works of art and artistic traditions) or science (features and behaviours of living things).



Do Unto Animals: A friendly guide to how animals live and how we can make their lives better by Tracey Stewart

Reading level: Grades 5+

When you see *Do Unto Animals* on a library or bookstore shelf, the first thing that pulls you in is the beautiful cover. The gorgeous illustrations by Lisel Ashlock continue throughout the book—they are impressively realistic portraits that truly capture the intelligent and emotional expressions on animals' faces.

In addition to these beautiful pictures, this book is full of fascinating information and food for thought to really inspire adults and youth alike to think more deeply about the creatures around us. Author and animal advocate Tracey Stewart is truly knowledgeable about animals, covering topics ranging from backyard wildlife to companion animal body language and farm animal welfare to respect for nature, all in an empowering way.

Young animal lovers will also find plenty of inspiration in this book which includes project ideas such as building bee houses, crafting cat and dog toys, and baking healthy treats. They will also discover information about animal shelters, animal welfare issues, the importance of spaying and neutering and so much more.

Stewart has a wide range of sources for her information from groups like the ASPCA, the Jane Goodall Institute, and the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association. *Do Unto Animals* will make a beautiful addition to your classroom library. It is more than a pretty package, one that will entice students to care more, learn more and DO more for animals.



The Watcher by Jeanette Winter

Reading level: Grades K-3+

Every child who is fascinated by watching animals around them will be inspired by reading *The Watcher* by Jeanette Winter. This beautifully illustrated picture book biography tells the story of a young Jane Goodall and how she went from a “watcher” to a world-renowned primatologist who has dedicated her life to learning from and protecting primates.

This book is a simple read for beginner readers, with illustrations that tell the story as well, but will also appeal to children of all ages. There is much to talk about with older children, who can discuss young Jane's methods of getting close to the chimps. Her patience in waiting for them to come to her is a lesson for children who wonder how to best interact with their own pets and other animals in the world. Most of all, children can see themselves in young Jane and be inspired to make a difference in their own way, as the story humanizes the almost mythical Dr. Jane Goodall and turns her into a curious child to which they can relate. This award-winning book belongs in every animal-loving classroom!



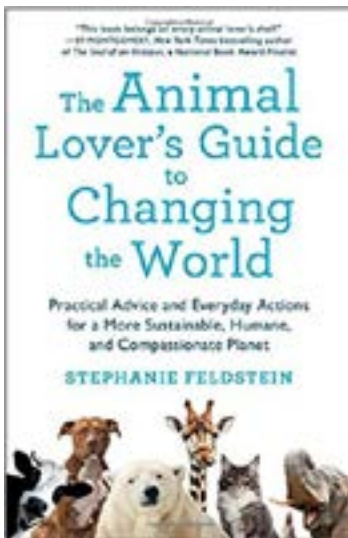
A Voice for the Spirit Bears by Carmen Oliver, illustrated by Katy Dockrill

Reading level: Grades 1-4

This is the inspiring true story of Vancouver native, Simon Jackson, and his perseverance in his quest to save the Spirit Bears.

Struggling with a debilitating stutter and bullying by other kids in school, Simon starts to find his voice and confidence through advocating for animals. At 13, Simon learns about the rare white Kermode, or “spirit bear”, found only in B.C., and the threats to their rainforest habitat. He knows he must do something to help them and rallies those around him to action. Simon goes on to create the Spirit Bear Youth Coalition and see his favourite animal in the wild.

A Voice for the Spirit Bears shows how one child can be the catalyst for change, and that together we can make a big difference. It also shows how advocating for those who are more vulnerable can help us develop our own confidence and overcome personal obstacles. Featuring a supplementary biography and suggestions to young readers on how to make a difference of their own, this book is part of the CitizenKid book collection, which aspires to make global issues understandable for younger readers and encourage them to action.



The Animal Lover's Guide to Changing the World: Practical Advice and Everyday Actions for a More Sustainable, Humane, and Compassionate Planet by Stephanie Feldstein

Reading level: Grade 9 to Adult

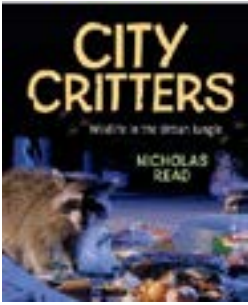
Any book that has “changing the world” in the title has big boots to fill, but in the case of *The Animal Lover's Guide to Changing the World*, those boots fit just fine. Stephanie Feldstein's book is an accessible read not just for adults but for older students as well, providing empowering advice on how each human can use their day to day actions to make a difference for all of the other animals with which we share the earth. Not everyone can become vegan, adopt six cats and a dog or save the rainforest, but Feldstein inspires and encourages all of us to really think about other animals, how they think and feel, and how our actions create a ripple effect.

This book is the perfect read for teachers who want to inspire their students. A chapter on “Compassion in the Classroom” talks about finding teachable moments in the everyday to encourage students to think about animals and how to make the world better for them. “Kids have powerful voices and it is never too soon for them to learn to use them,” Feldstein writes.

This is a well-written, well-researched and thoughtful read that makes changing the world seem like something to which we really can each contribute, simply by having empathy for our fellow creatures.

“Elephants live in a world rich with emotion and empathy, where they know their actions affect those around them. We should all be more like elephants.” ~ Stephanie Feldstein

*May not be appropriate for younger students due to some content like “Let's talk about sex.”

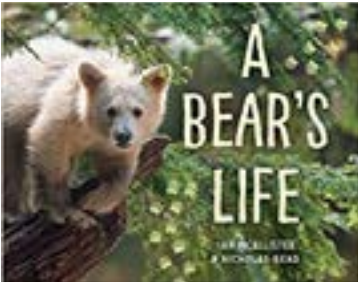


City Critters by Nicholas Read

Reading level: Grades 4+

When we think of wildlife we think of forests, oceans and rural areas but if we take a closer look there are many critters we share spaces with in urban centres too. Discover why these animals choose to live in urban spaces and how they survive in areas we consider inhospitable to their wild behaviours and needs.

This book is full of amazing, colourful pictures of mammals, birds, aquatic animals, reptiles and insects as well as informative facts. It makes one ponder what responsibilities humans must accept since we must share our space with these animals whose ancestors once ruled the wild space our cities used to be.

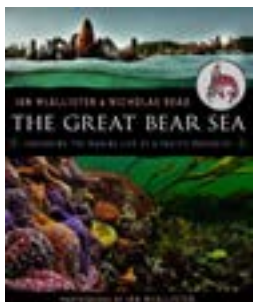


A Bear's Life by Ian McAllister and Nicholas Read

Reading level: Grades 3+

Located on the west coast of Canada, The Great Bear Rainforest has everything black bears, grizzly bears and spirit bears need to live rich, full lives.

This educational book by Ian McAllister and Nicholas Read combines stunning real-life footage with informative information on the life of bears. From the important bond between mother bears and cubs, the beach buffet that fulfills many dietary needs, and the mysterious of the rare spirit bear, each page dives into fascinating details of how bears live. Classes will get an inside perspective to the majestic creatures that share our home region. Discussion questions to have with your class may include how we as humans effect bears, their habitat, food sources and population numbers, as well as ways to build awareness for these issues.

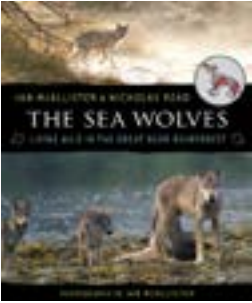


The Great Bear Sea: Exploring the Marine Life of a Pacific Paradise
by Ian McAllister and Nicholas Read

Reading level: Grades 3+

Prepare for an expedition into an often mysterious but always breathtaking underwater world!

The Great Bear Sea is an informative and inspirational look at life within the ocean off the coast of the Great Bear Rainforest. This book is an excellent resource for class discussions on life cycles, food webs and human impacts on wildlife and the environment. For students eager to see the spectacular images from *The Great Bear Sea* in motion, check out the accompanying video at greatbear-sea.com.



The Sea Wolves: Living Wild in the Great Bear Rainforest
by Ian McAllister and Nicholas Read

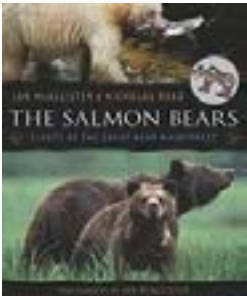
Reading level: Grades 3+

The Sea Wolves takes readers on a journey into a little-known world where wolves can swim like otters and fish like bears.

The world of the coastal wolf is unique. Unlike any other wolves on the planet, coastal wolves have adapted to a life on land and at sea. They hunt the beaches for crabs, clams and mussels, and wade out into the rivers to catch salmon. They even brave the ocean waves to paddle from one island to another in search of food.

But the world of the coastal wolf is also fragile. Coastal wolves are only found in the Great Bear Rainforest. When the rainforest comes under threat, the wolves are put in danger too since all life in the forest is connected.

The Sea Wolves is ideal for class discussions on life cycles, food webs and human impacts on wildlife and the environment. With breathtaking photos and page-turning facts, the world of the coastal wolf is brought to life.



The Salmon Bears: Giants of the Great Bear Rainforest
by Ian McAllister and Nicholas Read

Reading level: Grades 3+

Through magnificent photos and descriptions of the interconnectedness of bears, salmon and the rainforest, McAllister and Read bring readers closer to these amazing creatures. The journey of the bears through the seasons is informative and fascinating.

In the last chapter, the authors encourage readers to consider the future of the bears. Even though a large section of land has been preserved, it represents only 30 per cent of the bears' range. The other 70 per cent remains open to logging and other industrial pursuits. Much of the protected area is inhabitable for bears and therefore much more needs to be done if the bears are to survive for future generations to admire.



Trash Talk by Michelle Mulder

Reading level: Grades 4-5

Most of us recycle but, unfortunately, that alone won't solve the world's pollution problem. Finding ways to use less and to make something useful from what others consider trash is a better means of helping the planet. *Trash Talk* is all about people from around the world who are doing just this in surprisingly easy, creative and artistic ways. This book takes the phrase "One man's junk is another man's treasure" seriously! From composting, reusing or fixing items other people are finished with to using "trash" to build new houses or musical instruments, there are so many ways to reduce waste. The result will be friendlier communities, cost savings and – most importantly – a healthier Mother Earth. There is a take-away lesson for everyone in this book.

Use *Trash Talk* as an introduction to study the environmental impact of trash and to spark creative solutions to overconsumption and our 'trashy' habits.



What's the Buzz? Keeping Bees in Flight by Merrie-Ellen Wilcox

Reading level: Grades 4-7

Not all buzzing yellow and black insects are bees and not all bees sting. These are just a couple of the myths dispelled in this thorough introduction to bees.

What's the Buzz? author Merrie-Ellen Wilcox is an experienced B.C. apiculturist (bee-keeper). She shares her knowledge and passion for bees in this informative, accessible book that is filled with bee facts and tips on how to help bees survive. The photos and diagrams throughout the book add visual appeal and will engage students to read on and take action for the planet.



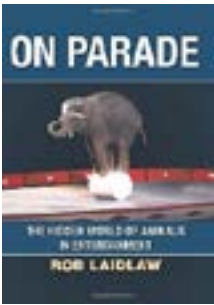
Explore a Frog by Aimee Bakken

Reading level: Ages 8 and up

Layer by layer, *Explore a Frog* reveals how a frog's anatomy allows it to leap, swim, catch food, and more. This wonderfully illustrated, full colour book and model, explores the skeletal, nervous, respiratory, digestive, circulatory, reproductive, muscular and integumentary (skin) systems of the frog, peeling away each system with each page. It's clear and structured layout allow it to be read in any order that most interest the reader.

Start with the skeletal system or jump right to the frogs that eat bats and the poison dart frogs of South America!

No frogs were harmed in the reading of this book! The plastic model at the center of this books allows readers to turn over, touch, and peel away the different parts of the frog to see how it does all of it's amazing feats, while keeping the real frogs hopping happily along.

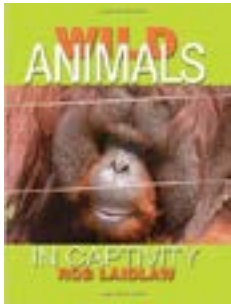


On Parade: The Hidden World of Animals in Entertainment by Rob Laidlaw

Reading level: Grade 5+

Using compelling non-fiction narratives and first person accounts from the author, *On Parade* shows young readers the many troubling aspects of using animals for entertainment. This intelligent book explains the welfare needs of animals and delves into different types of entertainment in which animals are often harmed, including circuses, film and television, zoos, rodeos, magic shows, animal racing, animal fighting and more.

Despite its saddening subject matter, *On Parade* allows all readers – youth and adult – to come away with hopeful ideas for alternatives to animals in entertainment and ways that they can start making a difference right away. Featuring a list of ten ways to help animals in entertainment, *On Parade* offers opportunity for student action both in the classroom and at home.



Wild Animals in Captivity by Rob Laidlaw

Reading level: Grades 6+

Rob Laidlaw is a chartered biologist and the founder of the wildlife protection organization Zoocheck Canada.

Wild Animals in Captivity provides information on the welfare of animals in zoos. It looks at a wide range of animals that are kept in captivity and examines what happens when wild animals live in unnatural spaces. The photos are compelling and will leave the reader asking, Should these animals be here at all? What is it like for the animals who live in the same enclosures day after day?

Laidlaw also includes questions to think about if you do go to a zoo and a list of ways to help animals in captivity.

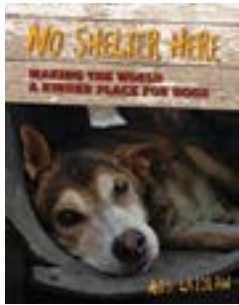


Saving Lives & Changing Hearts: Animal Sanctuaries & Rescue Centers by Rob Laidlaw

Reading level: Grades 4+

This moving and informative book begins by addressing the question, “What is an animal sanctuary?” and establishing the differences between sanctuaries and rescues. Each subsequent chapter features the personal story of an animal or animals’ journey from suffering to sanctuary or rescue, with specific details about the individuals and organizations that have saved them. The book touches on potential animal welfare concerns when a facility isn’t set up properly and also offers readers eight action steps they can take to help animals in need of sanctuary.

Featuring plenty of colour photographs and an engaging design, *Saving Lives & Changing Hearts* can be used effectively in the classroom for independent student reading, research projects and group discussion.



No Shelter Here: Making the World a Kinder Place for Dogs by Rob Laidlaw

Reading level: Grades 3-6

No Shelter Here: Making the World a Kinder Place for Dogs offers a well-rounded look at dog welfare at home and in countries across the globe and gives youth a starting point to create positive change for our canine friends.

Topics include welfare issues such as puppy mills, street dogs, cosmetic surgeries, in-breeding, dog racing, dog fighting and scientific testing, to name a few. *No Shelter Here* features a strong focus on dogs as companions and encourages adoption from animal shelters. Readers learn about dogs' needs as well as the process of adopting a new furry family member.

Perhaps best of all, *No Shelter Here* tells the stories of dozens of young “Dog Champions” who work to make the world a more humane place for dogs. From a 10-year-old who formed a charity to protect police dogs to a 15-year-old whose efforts changed the laws on devocalization surgery in Massachusetts, the youth featured in *No Shelter Here* are an inspiration to animal lovers of all ages.

Readers of *No Shelter Here* will have a deeper knowledge of the challenges dogs face and how they can help. Teachers can encourage students to take the Dog Lover’s Pledge, at the end of the book, and get started today on making a difference for dogs.

Cat Champions: Caring for our Feline Friends by Rob Laidlaw

Reading level: Grades 3-6



In *Cat Champions*, award-winning author and activist Rob Laidlaw once again informs and inspires young readers to make a difference for animals, this time with a focus on cats.

A well-balanced book, *Cat Champions* addresses some of the most important cat welfare concerns, such as overpopulation and spay/neuter, indoor vs. outdoor cats and the importance of identification. It also provides straightforward information about adopting and caring for cats, explains the role of animal shelters and tells the stories of fantastic felines like Tuxedo Stan, a former stray who became a spokescat for animal issues.

Most importantly, though, *Cat Champions* introduces readers to the cat champions themselves – ordinary youth who are taking action in a variety of ways, including volunteering, fostering, adopting, fundraising and educating others about the cat welfare issues that matter to them. The profiles of these young animal advocates can serve as inspiration for other kids to be the change they want to see in the world.

Featuring a special Cat Lover’s Pledge and extra resource listings, *Cat Champions* is an excellent book to ignite and enhance classroom discussions around animal issues and social responsibility.



Animals at Play by Marc Bekoff

Reading level: Grades 3-5

Animals play, wrestle and sometimes fight, but they learn the rules of the game in the process. Biologist and ethologist (expert in animal behaviour), Marc Bekoff has written his first children's book to help kids understand animal communication and pique their interest in animal observation. We can learn about ourselves by observing animal behaviour and it is a great way to build empathy skills.

Dr. Jane Goodall wholeheartedly endorses this book. She writes, "Marc Bekoff's ideas about fair play stress the significance of cooperation and justice, aspects of behaviour desperately needed in the world today. Read this book, share it with the children in your life and incorporate its lessons into your classroom, family room or board room."



The Case of the Vanishing Honeybees: A Scientific Mystery by Sandra Markle

Reading level: Grades 4-7

Honeybees are dying in vast numbers around the world. Can scientists find the culprit in time to save them?

An intriguing combination of science and mystery, *The Case of the Vanishing Honeybees* manages to make a complex issue both accessible and relevant to a young audience. Students are bound to come away with a new appreciation for bees. This

book is a great source for student reports, and can spur children on to further research and action with recommended readings and ways to help honeybees.



Welcome to the World of Coyotes by Diane Swanson

Reading level: Grades 3-5

Welcome to the world of coyotes! When students delve into this engaging non-fiction book, they will be amazed at what they didn't know about coyotes. From their eating habits and their communication methods to the ways they play and raise their young, there's a lot more to these smart, spirited, sensory-driven animals than many of us realize.

With colour photographs on every page and interesting complementary anecdotes, *Welcome to the World of Coyotes* makes a great resource for teachers looking to educate their students about the nature of coyotes, and can lead to further learning about human-coyote conflict and what kids need to know if they come across a coyote.



Every Human Has Rights by National Geographic

Reading level: Grade 4+

When a group of elder statesmen (including Nelson Mandela, Jimmy Carter, Aung San Suu Kyi, and Kofi Annan), decided to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, the National Geographic for Kids decided to support this by creating a book on the declaration for kids.

They held a contest through ePals (a pen pal site for kids). The contest consisted of a classroom lesson on the declaration (rewritten for kids) and student submissions responding to one of the rights. Sixteen of those entries are included in the book.

This book is accessible and intelligently designed for children.



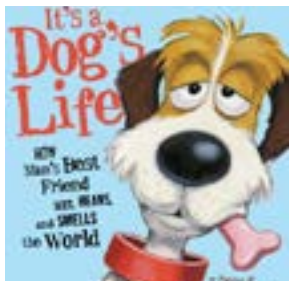
ER Vets by Donna M. Jackson

Reading level: Grades 5-8

From saving a tiny foal in a coma to untwisting a German shepherd's stomach, life in an animal emergency hospital can be dramatic and exciting. *ER Vets* gives you a behind-the-scenes look at what goes on in the animal ER.

Filled with stories and graphic photos which provide enough detail to give the reader insight without being overwhelming, this book will give budding young vets and vet techs a taste of what it takes to work in this fast-paced career.

The book includes a fairly comprehensive glossary and is suitable for grades 5-8.



It's a Dog's Life: How man's best friend sees, hears and smells the world by Susan E. Goodman

Reading Level: Grades 2-5

For kids who are keen to know more about their canine companions, *It's a Dog's Life* is the perfect introduction to the history and behavior of our doggy friends. Using fun, colourful illustrations and the "dog's-eye-view" Goodman's book tells us about the domestication of dogs over time and how exactly that happened, including the emergence of particular breeds and dog "jobs." This book looks like a humorous picture book but is surprisingly packed with information, fun facts included.

There is even a Woof/English Dictionary so kids can try to interpret what their dog is saying with a woof or just with body language. Goodman uses illustrations by David Slonim to depict the many ways dogs communicate with their bodies, including fearful and aggressive signs. The dog narrator closes by saying, "I figured if you know a little more about us, maybe you'll stop trying to turn us into humans. That's right, no more doggy Halloween costumes or nail polish at the groomers."

That is a message that students can also share with adults! *It's a Dog's Life* is a great introduction to dog behavior for the curious young reader.

CHAPTER BOOKS

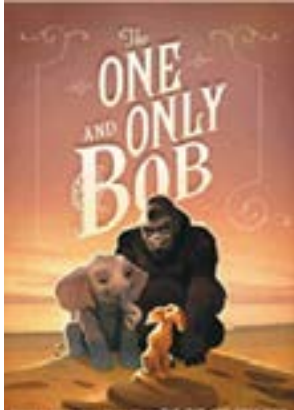


The Summer We Saved the Bees by *Robin Stevenson*

Reading level: Grades 3-6

When twelve-year-old Wolf is inspired by a project at school, he and his family embark on a journey to bring awareness to the collapse of honeybee colonies. Donning bee costumes and painting their van to resemble a bee, the family sets off from Vancouver Island to travel across British Columbia, educating people on the importance of pollinators and what they can do locally to prevent bee extinction.

This fascinating story captures how a family unites their passion to save bee colonies in North America, and how education plays a vital role in spreading this message. The family's journey unfolds with laughter, adventure and compassion, concluding that making a difference can take many forms, but as long as the world has hope, the future for bees can be bright.



The One and Only Bob by *Katherine Applegate*

Reading Level: Grades 3-5 (content is suitable for young adults as well)

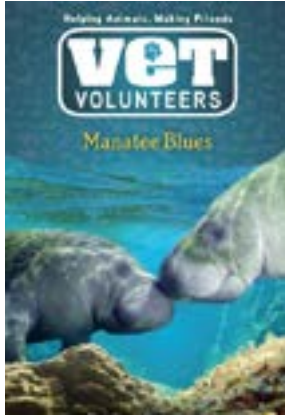
For students (and adults!) who loved *The One and Only Ivan*, author Katherine Applegate has come through with a beautiful sequel featuring Ivan and Ruby's canine friend, Bob. *The One and Only Bob* tells the tale of a self-described "mutt" of uncertain breed, "Definitely some Chihuahua, with a smidgen of papillon on my father's side."

Fans of the first book (now a movie) will love spending more time with Bob, as well as revisiting the themes of friendship, loyalty and animal welfare that made it more than just an adventure story. Applegate never makes animals "human" but rather helps humans see life through the eyes of animals, for better or worse. She starts off the book with a practical visual guide to canine body language, as well as a glossary of "dog language" that Bob uses, like drool flag and bed boogie.

Bob's story is a good read for many reasons, but the author's effort to help readers get into someone else's shoes, or in this case, paws, and feel from their perspective is one of the most effective ways to build empathy. In this excerpt she describes how Bob came to be a puppy alone in the cruel world:

"Being man's best friend can mean a lot of things. Companionship. Belly rubs. Tennis balls. But it can also mean a dark, endless highway, and an open truck window. It can mean the smell of the wet wind as hands grab the box you are in with your brothers and sisters and you go sailing into the unkind night and still, crazy as it sounds, you're thinking, But I'm yours, I'm yours, I'm yours."

The One and Only Bob by Katherine Applegate is available in book, ebook and audiobook.



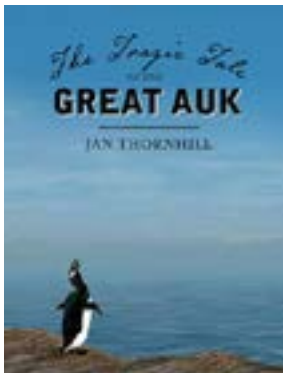
Manatee Blues by Laurie Halse Anderson

Reading Level: Grade 4+

Brenna, a volunteer at the Wild at Heart Animal Clinic, is thrilled when she is invited to Florida by Dr. Mac, where she will get to visit a manatee rescue center. But the visit to the Gold Coast Rescue Center is not all fun and games—Brenna soon learns that manatees are in grave danger, as boat strikes in manatee habitats have been injuring and endangering these curious creatures. On top of this, the Gold Coast Rescue Center is quickly running out of money... if the center is forced to close, who will care for the poor gentle giants, the manatees?

This exciting and fascinating story is part of the Vet Volunteers series by Laurie Halse Anderson. It features a compassionate protagonist who wants to make a difference in animals' lives. Her bravery and passion for animals also lead her to educate others about humans' capability to either harm or help wildlife. This book, one in a larger series of novels, will help kids become aware of their impact on the environment and how humans must be mindful of animals in the wild.

Educators should note that Brenna has a pet crow. Keeping wild animals as pets is illegal in Canada.



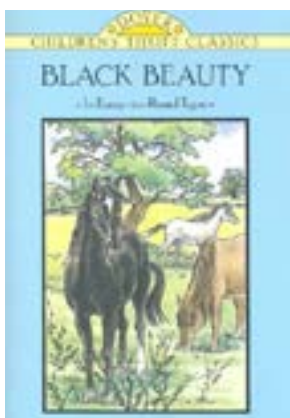
The Tragic Tale of the Great Auk by Jan Thornhill

Reading Level: Grades 5-7

When the Great Auk went extinct in 1844, did anyone make a sound? The answer might surprise you. Canadian author Jan Thornhill explores the fascinating history of this flightless Arctic bird, from its physiology, natural behaviors and habits to its eventual extinction. A non-fiction read, this book touches on Inuit perspectives of sustainable land management, and delves into the ethics of using and collecting wild animals for human purposes.

Young readers are asked to question the biological, geographical and human forces that cause an animal's extinction, and what they can do to help. Ultimately, the reader is left with an unexpected benefit to the Great Auk's tragic tale – the creation of a protected ecological preserve.

The book also includes a map, glossary and index of other extinct species for further inquiry.

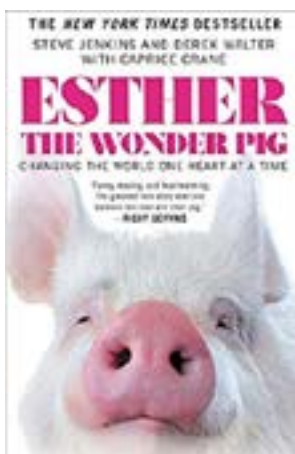


Black Beauty by Anna Sewell

Reading Level: Grade 5+

First published in 1877, Anna Sewell's classic tale of a horse named Black Beauty was a positive force for change in the treatment and welfare of horses at the time, and still offers lessons in kindness and empathy for us to draw from today. From his days as a young colt, through his many hardships as a London cab horse, to his final days in retirement, we follow the journey of Black Beauty, seeing the world through his eyes as he discovers how humans can be capable of showing cruelty and indifference, or compassion and kindness.

Black Beauty is a thinking, feeling and reasoning character and exploring the story from his perspective allows the reader to develop empathy for all animals. This is a wonderful novel for any animal lover and shorter chapters make it an ideal story for parents and kids to enjoy together.



Esther the Wonder Pig: Changing the world one heart at a time by Steve Jenkins and Derek Water with Caprice Crane

Reading level: Grade 8+

In *Esther the Wonder Pig*, Steve Jenkins and Derek Water recount the trials and tribulations of bringing a farm animal into their home as a pet, discovering their "micro pig" would reach a staggering 600 pounds, and transitioning from their urban Toronto home to a farm where they can legally have Esther. As their story unfolds, readers experience the challenges Jenkins and Water faced when Esther entered their lives. With accompanying photos of Esther growing up, this heartwarming book gives readers get a sense of just how much a piglet can change.

Esther is also a social media sensation, with active Instagram and Facebook pages where readers can keep up to date on Esther and her whole family. Esther challenges readers to consider the social divisions we have placed between pets and farm animals. Her personality changed the lives of those she lives with, and the minds of many others who follow her antics online.

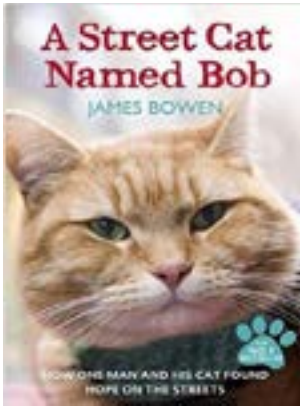


Avenging the Owl by Melissa Hart

Reading Level: Grade 7+

Knowing right from wrong isn't always easy, and 13 year-old Solo is about to find that out when he is sentenced to community service at a raptor sanctuary after he tries to shoot the owl that killed his kitten. Solo works closely with a Great Horned Owl, named Artemis, and is forced to confront his dislike and prejudice, as well as his own grief. The bond they form is one of understanding, forgiveness, and ultimate redemption.

This young-adult, fiction novel, by Melisa Hart, explores mature themes surrounding growing-up, mental illness, friendship, loss, grief and compassion. It challenges students to think critically on a variety of topics, including personal identity and the value of all animals' lives. This story is partially based on the author's own experience as a wildlife volunteer, and Hart's knowledge of raptors' natural behaviours. It paints a realist picture of these often misunderstood predators. This book is an honest exploration of tolerance, animal stereotypes, and prejudice.



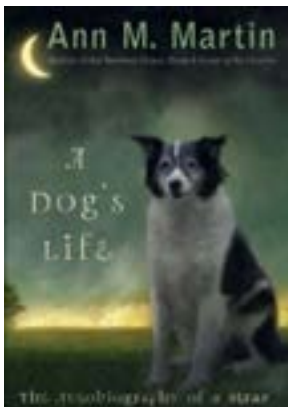
A Street Cat Named Bob By James Bowden

Reading Level: Grade 6+

James Bowden is a young man suffering from drug addiction on the streets of London. He is lonely and hopeless, barely surviving on the small amount he makes from busking. When a stray cat comes into his life the last thing he needs is another mouth to feed, but he feels connected to the cat whose run-down condition and life of hardship seems to mirror his own. A strong bond quickly develops between James and the stray, whom he names Bob, as they struggle through life's obstacles with humour and determination.

Almost any pet guardian will relate to James and Bob's connection; however this story goes much further to illuminate the reciprocal nature of a pet and guardian relationship. As a homeless man and an addict, James describes feeling invisible to strangers. Unexpectedly, it is his cat who humanizes him to other people and allows him to reengage with the world and share his story. The unconditional trust that Bob puts in James makes James determined not to let him down. Through Bob's eyes he learns to see himself as someone who can be relied upon, deserving of love and companionship. James repays Bob by providing him with the best care he can give and illustrates many ways in which low-income pet owners can still provide optimal animal welfare.

A Street Cat Named Bob offers many opportunities for critical thinking and addresses social issues that many of us experience or observe every day, such as homelessness, addiction and oppression. Students can consider how all animals and humans have the same basic needs and rights, and why those needs are met for some but not for others. The empathy James feels for Bob reminds us of the empathy we should strive to feel for all the animals and humans that we encounter throughout our lives.



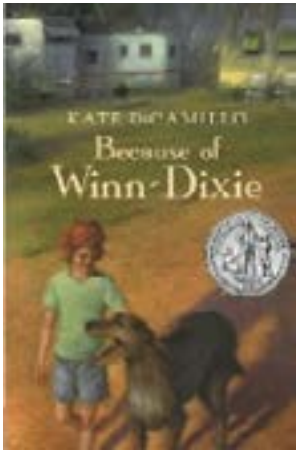
A Dog's Life: The Autobiography of a Stray by Ann M. Martin

Reading Level: Grades 4-7

A Dog's Life tells the story of two young, orphaned pups, Squirrel and Bone, who must find a way to survive in the world. They have learned from their mother's experience how to avoid humans and find food, but when she doesn't return to the shed, they set out on their own to explore the world around them. After narrowly escaping being hit by cars, they are taken home by strangers. Since Squirrel and Bone have never lived indoors their stray dog habits of eating trash and howling to go outside soon land them back on the streets in a mall parking lot. Squirrel is left behind when someone takes Bone home with them.

Left on her own, Squirrel must now defend herself and find food and a warm place to sleep. She faces many challenges but also finds kindness along the way. Will she ever find a person to care for her and give her a warm place to sleep?

Through this heart-touching story, told from the dog's perspective, readers understand how early experiences can influence a dog's behaviour forever, but how kindness and patience can help them learn to trust humans.

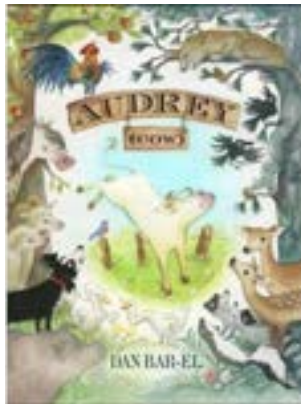


Because of Winn-Dixie by *Kate DiCamillo*

Reading Level: Grades 3-4

Because of Winn-Dixie, the Newberry Honor book, deals with friendship, human-animal bond and coping with loss.

When India Opal Buloni sees an ugly, skinny dog getting in trouble she comes to his aid by claiming ownership. She just moved to Naomi, Florida with her father who has taught her about helping those in need. Since Winn-Dixie was in need of a home, food and love he quickly becomes part of the family. This new companion is just what India needs to help her meet new friends in town. Her new friends aren't typical friends for a 10 year old but they all share one thing in common, they miss someone. India manages to get her unique groups of friends together for a party but during the party Winn-Dixie is scared by a crack of thunder and runs away.



Audrey (cow) by *Dan Bar-el*, illustrated by *Tatjana Mai-Wyss*

Reading Level: Grade 6+

Audrey the cow has a zest for life, and she doesn't want to end up in the meat aisle of a grocery store. The story of Audrey's escape from the farm is told with humour and charm through short "interviews" with various animals and people, showing different perspectives of the same event. The author doesn't shy from the reality that farms raise food animals, and that some animals will be killed, but he does it with a gentle touch and with humour (for example, the animals mishear the word "abattoir," referring to the dreaded place the truck takes animals who never return as "Abbot's War").

You can use this story to initiate a discussion of where our food comes from and how animals might perceive their reality living on farms. Do farm animals know their fate?

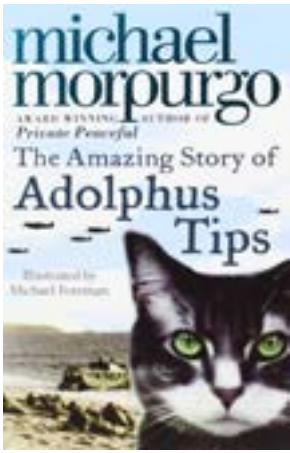


Flood Warning by *Jacqueline Pearce*, illustrated by *Leanne Franson*

Reading Level: Grade 3+

A young boy saves his family's dairy herd from a flood with the help of his dog, Amos. This is an exciting, easy-to-read chapter book based on a real situation that happened when British Columbia's Fraser River flooded in 1948.

Teacher extension: The novel is told from the perspective of the boy, Tom. Have students write the story from the point of view of the mother cow or her calf, or from the perspective of Amos the dog. How does the little calf feel when water starts to creep over the farm and she is separated from her mother? Does Amos feel like a hero when he is asked to help lead the cows to safety, or is he just having fun as usual?



The Amazing Story of Adolphus Tips by Michael Morpurgo, illustrated by Michael Foreman

Reading Level: Grades 4-7

In the south of England during World War II, Lily's family and 750 others are told they must leave their homes behind so soldiers can use the land to practice for the upcoming D-Day invasion. But when evacuation day comes, Lily's beloved cat, Tips, runs away. With barbed wire surrounding her village, will Lily be able to sneak back in and find Tips?

The Amazing Story of Adolphus Tips touches on various themes, including the human-animal bond and the importance of friendship and keeping our promises. Readers may imagine themselves in Lily's situation and consider how they would feel and what they would do. This book also touches on some animal welfare issues specific to its

time and place. Classroom discussion could certainly arise around why Tips the cat is not spayed and continues to have litters, and why Lily's parents say they must drown the kittens they cannot care for, even though Lily opposes it.

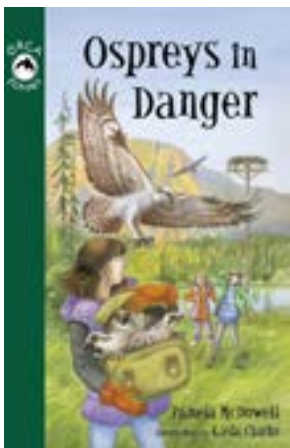
A wonderful piece of historical fiction for young readers, *The Amazing Story of Adolphus Tips* is a great read for animal lovers, history buffs and anyone who likes a good story.



Saving Sammy by Eric Walters, illustrated by Amy Meissner

Reading Level: Grade 3+

After Morgan's backyard is flooded by a nearby river, her dog finds a baby beaver unable to survive on his own. Morgan and her family care for the beaver kit (with guidance from a wildlife expert) until he can be returned to the wild.



Ospreys in Danger by Pamela McDowell, illustrated by Kasia Charko

Reading Level: Grade 3+

When an osprey nest atop an electrical pole catches fire, Shilo and her friend find three osprey chicks on the ground. With the help of Shilo's park warden father, the girls look after the chicks, hoping to reunite the chicks with their parents.

With *Saving Sammy* and *Ospreys in Danger*, discuss with students why looking after orphaned wildlife is never a good idea because of the specialized care they need. It is also against the law to keep or care for any B.C. wildlife without a permit. Before handling any injured or orphaned wildlife, students should contact a wildlife rehabilitation centre (wrnbc.org) for advice.



To Be a Cat by Matt Haig, illustrated by Stacy Curtis (Atheneum, 2013)

Reading Level: Grades 4-7

When facing difficult challenges at school and tough times in his family life at home, 12-year-old Barney Willow figures life would be a lot easier if he could live as a cat. When his wish unexpectedly comes true, Barney quickly discovers that life as a cat is anything but simple.

Barney doesn't fit in at school and, while neither does his fiend Rissa, she handles bullying much better than he does. Though the idea that you can disappear into someone else's skin is intriguing for the getting students to empathize, the story may well be used as a launching point to talk about issues of bullying and how it affects people in different ways.



Kit: The Adventures of a Raccoon by Shirley Woods

Reading level: Grades 2-5

Kit chronicles the first few years in the life of a young raccoon.

Though he starts life with two siblings, Kit soon finds himself the only survivor of his litter when his sisters are subjected to predators and human activity. Later, when he is old enough and on his own, Kit's adventures include encounters with other wildlife, track hounds, traps and humans.

While some anthropomorphizing is apparent, it doesn't take away from the realistic nature of the story. Kit's story will intrigue young readers and provide them with an accurate portrayal of a raccoon's life in both an urban and wild setting.

Though out of print, *Kit* can still be found for sale online.



Sharing Snowy by Marilyn Helmer, illustrated by Kasia Charko

Reading level: Grades 2-4

Ali loves cats and dreams of having one of her own, but unfortunately her brother Jay is allergic. Unable to have a feline friend at home, Ali is thrilled when she discovers a white cat hanging out in her backyard clubhouse. She names her Snowy, and quickly becomes all-consumed with being a good guardian. She brings her leftovers to eat, makes her a comfortable bed and even leaves her beloved teddy bear with Snowy at night to keep her company.

Everything seems to be going well until Ali sees a "Lost Cat" sign at the store with a picture of Snowy. Ali doesn't want to give Snowy up but knows that she belongs to someone else who also loves her. Reluctantly, Ali returns Snowy to her guardian,

Ruby. Ruby is ecstatic to have Snowflake (Snowy's real name) back home. She can see that Ali has taken good care of the cat so she invites her to visit anytime – the best gift Ali can imagine.



Ten True Animal Rescues by Jeanne Betancourt

Reading level: Grades 3-5

A hamster hero and a gentle gorilla are just two of the stars of *Ten True Animal Rescues* that will surprise you. Read about a pup who digs a young girl out of a snow bank, a family dog that saves his human family from a fire, and a cat who alerts a mom to her suffocating baby. These are just some of the amazing stories that will delight and amaze young readers. The content is engaging and will likely be re-told by the reader to anyone who will listen!

Some of the stories from long ago (“Shark Attack!”) seem a bit embellished and others (“Lost at Sea”) will make you question the welfare of the animal. However, these tales also emphasize the change in attitudes towards animals over the years, and can lead to some interesting class discussions.



One Unhappy Horse by C.S. Adler

Reading level: Grades 4-6

Jan could talk to her father. But when he dies in a car accident, Jan is left with many changes in her life.

She finds comfort spending time with her horse Dove. When Dove needs expensive surgery and mom is already finding it difficult to pay the bills, Jan finds true friendship in an unlikely source.

Mattie is a forgetful older woman who lives next door in an assisted living home. Mattie loves horses and reminisces about her childhood horse. Jan visits Mattie regularly and becomes like the granddaughter Mattie never had.

When Mattie offers to loan Jan the money for the surgery, it becomes complicated.



The Rabbit Rescuers by Cindy Howard

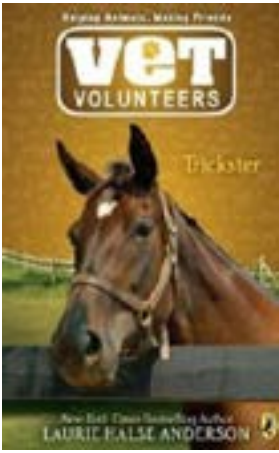
Reading level: Grades 3-5

When twins Kate and Zack reluctantly move to the suburbs, they feel certain the change is for the worse. All seems hopeless until they meet Paityn and Marijane, the quirky cousins who live next door. Happily for the twins, the girls share their love of animals and sense of adventure. Together, they are drawn into the secretive world of abandoned rabbits in the park across the street. Seeing firsthand just how dangerous this world can be convinces the new friends to form a club to help the rabbits.

The story is both gripping and heartwarming, strengthened by the fact that the setting is a real-life park and the rabbit characters are loosely based on real-life rabbits and their harrowing experiences. By giving abandoned rabbits a voice, the author brings into focus the plight of pet rabbits everywhere who have been left outdoors to fend for

themselves.

Just as importantly, *The Rabbit Rescuers* shows young readers the power they have to make a difference. Young readers are sure to follow along with pleasure as Kate and Zack open themselves up to new friendships and experiences.



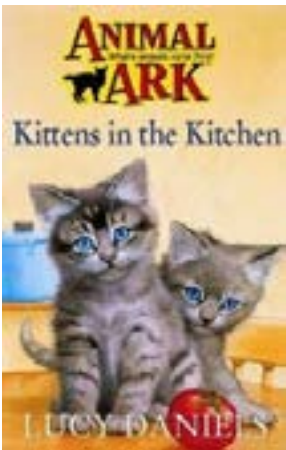
Trickster by Laurie Halse Anderson

Reading level: Grades 3-5

David, who loves horses, is a volunteer at the Wild at Heart veterinary clinic. When he sees Trickster, a horse from Quinn's Stables, he immediately knows that this is the horse he wants to ride. But David's gotten into trouble at the stables before, and he must regain Mr. Quinn's trust through hard work before his dream of riding Trickster can come true.

Readers will relate to David as they cheer for him as he struggles to prove himself, taking a few missteps along the way. *Trickster* uses scenes at the stables and vet clinic to demonstrate the importance of responsible pet care, as well as being accountable for all of our actions.

Trickster features plenty of animal care and veterinary details, character development and a few suspenseful twists.



Kittens in the Kitchen by Lucy Daniels

Reading level: Grades 3-5

Kittens in the Kitchen follows Mandy Hope as she races to find homes for four newborn kittens. Mandy is told she has just a week to adopt out the kittens before Mr. Williams the custodian will "deal with them" himself.

With the help of her friends, family and neighbours, Mandy perseveres to not just find homes for the kittens, but to find responsible, loving guardians. The task isn't easy, but Mandy doesn't give up. In between her search for four great homes and taking care of the mother cat and kittens, Mandy keeps up with her responsibilities as a guardian to her own pets at home.

Kittens in the Kitchen is a great book that demonstrates what can be done when one caring, dedicated person makes it their mission to make a difference.



Fight for Life by Laurie Halse Anderson

Reading level: Grade 4+

Maggie thinks that living at the Wild at Heart Animal Clinic is pretty cool but her grandma, the vet who owns the clinic, wants Maggie to make school work her first priority, not the animals.

When the clinic takes in several very sick puppies, all of whom came from the same local farmers market, Maggie decides she has to put a stop to this. Even though her grandma has cut Maggie's time in the clinic dramatically until her grades improve Maggie makes finding the puppy mill owner a priority.

This is a great novel for any students who love animals. It is the first in a series of books about young vet volunteers.



Little Joe by Sandra Neil Wallace

Reading level: Grades 3-5

Little Joe is a heart-warming story that explores family relationships and the bond between humans and animals. Eli, a young boy, raises his first show calf, Little Joe. With this comes the responsibility of caring for another living thing which brings with it some hard lessons in reality.

Little Joe is written in straightforward but appealing language that will work for both urban and rural kids. City kids will be able relate to the lessons Eli learns and will gain better insight into life on a farm for both children and animals.

Little Joe is a great classroom or at-home chapter book that gives a glimpse of life on the farm.



A Treasury of Pet Stories by Suzanne Carnell

Reading level: Grades 3-4

Featuring 16 short stories by noted children’s authors including Beverly Cleary and Judy Blume, *A Treasury of Pet Stories* touches on many aspects of the human-animal bond.

In “Henry’s Canine Teeth,” a boy enlists his dog’s help to impress his friends. In “Dribble,” a child’s pet turtle goes missing in the most unexpected way. And in “Posy Bates Goes Green,” a young environmentalist holds a pet show to raise money to plant trees – with chaotic results.

The tales in *A Treasury of Pet Stories* can be used to entertain and to ignite classroom discussions of responsible pet guardianship and animal welfare. What do the characters do right, and what could they do better? This collection is excellent for reading aloud or independently.



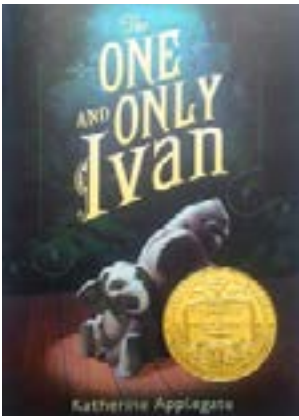
Guinea-pig Gang by Lucy Daniels

Reading level: Grades 3-5

In this installment of the Animal Ark Pets series, protagonist Mandy Hope and her friends are gaga for guinea pigs – so much so that they form a “Guinea-pig Gang” to bring their pets together and to talk about proper care.

When one of the girls, Lisa refuses to bring her guinea pig, Carla to the group, Mandy knows that something’s up. As Mandy soon discovers, Lisa would love to take part, but her big sister poses a big problem. When Lisa must prove herself as a responsible pet guardian or risk losing Carla forever, Mandy helps her hatch a plan to become the blue ribbon winner at the local pet show.

A chapter book suitable for grades 3 to 5, *Guinea-pig Gang* teaches crucial lessons about the responsibility of pet care, and the importance of knowing what’s involved before bringing an animal home.



The One and Only Ivan by Katherine Applegate

Reading level: Grades 3-5 (content is suitable for young adults as well)

The One and Only Ivan is the Newbery Medal-winning story of Ivan, a wild-born gorilla who now lives, and works, at the Exit 8 Big Top Mall and Video Arcade. Ivan spends his time watching TV, drawing pictures for the gift shop to sell and pondering the ways of humans. Though he has an elephant friend named Stella, a dog friend named Bob and a young human friend named Julia, Ivan lives alone in his cage. He is the only gorilla he knows. One day, a baby elephant named Ruby is brought to the Big Top Mall. Other changes happen, too. Ivan starts to see his world differently, developing a new purpose – and a plan – to fulfill a very important promise.

Told in short, poetic chapters, or vignettes, *The One and Only Ivan* is a beautifully written and moving book. It subtly asks the reader to contemplate how humans treat animals, particularly wild animals in captivity. Why do some humans help while others cause harm? Is there such a thing as a “good zoo”? What can we do, as individuals and as a society, to improve the lives of animals? Through the artfully imagined voices of Ivan and his friends, as well as human characters like the young girl, Julia, and the boss and the Big Top Mall, Mack, the author paints a heartbreaking but hopeful portrait of the lives of animals in captivity.

While recommended for a grade 3-5 reading level, *The One and Only Ivan* should not be limited to a specific age group. Read it aloud to younger students or recommend it to teenagers and adults; this is a story for all ages.



The Nine Lives of Travis Keating by Jill MacLean

Reading level: Grades 4-6

Travis feels more alone than ever when he and his father move to a small town after his mother dies of cancer. But his discovery of a colony of abandoned cats gives Travis a chance to put aside his grief and anger to care for them, a decision that results in more satisfaction – and more danger – than he could have ever imagined.

The Nine Lives of Travis Keating is a poignant and compelling book. Readers will likely be able to empathize with Travis, perhaps even crying with him and cheering for him as he struggles to find his place in the world. The characters are well developed and the relationships between them are complex; no one – not even the town bully – is one-dimensional. Moreover, there is enough action to keep even the most reluctant reader interested.

Though the story centres on Travis’ efforts to help the cats, MacLean masterfully weaves together diverse themes such as bullying, abuse, grief, loneliness, poverty, alcoholism, stereotypes, friendship, lying, forgiveness and responsibility. As such, *The Nine Lives of Travis Keating* is a versatile book that will work well as a read-aloud and a discussion starter.



The Summer of the Spotted Owl by *Melanie Jackson*

Reading Level: Grades 4-6

Dinah Galloway, a young sleuth, always seems to find intrigue and adventure and this time it involves the endangered spotted owl.

A strange sequence of events peaks Dinah's inquisitive mind. Her inflatable turtle is stolen by a inept hang glider that crashes into the backyard pool. Rownea is acting very secretive about the contents of an old trunk. A reporter for the local newspaper shows up just minutes after these things happen and the city councilor has a quick change of heart about protecting the spotted owl in North Vancouver. Are these things all connected or just coincidence? Dinah and her friends set out on a hilarious adventure to put the puzzle pieces together during their summer vacation.

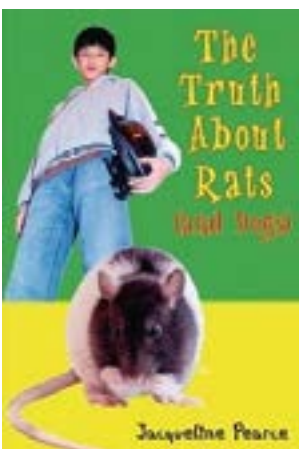


Dog House Blues by *Jacqueline Pearce*

Reading Level: Grades 3-5

Dog House Blues is the first in a series of books written especially for the BC SPCA Kids Club. The story is about Erika who finds it difficult living in a house with 3 dogs. Smelling of dog cologne is not a good thing when you're trying to make a good impression at school and the class bully doesn't like dogs. Worrying about making new human friends causes Erika to forget what her dog friends mean to her - until a crisis opens her eyes.

The novel, aimed at kids ages 8 to 12, shows some of the less glamorous aspects of being a dog guardian (such as picking up dog doo!), but it also highlights the close bond that develops between a girl and dog who have grown up together.

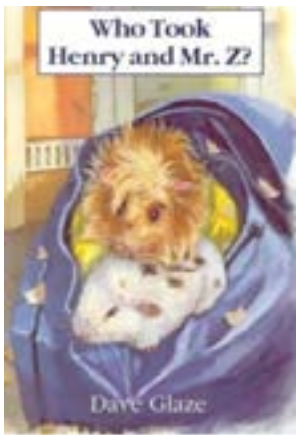


The Truth about Rats (and Dogs) by *Jacqueline Pearce*

Reading Level: Grades 3-5

Rats are dirty, sneaky and scary, right? Wrong!

Conner knows what it's like to have people decide something about you without even knowing the facts. He is expected to be good at school and music because he looks Chinese and his big sister Jenna is great at both. Conner is good at doing stunts on his BMX bike, and he loves animals, but his parents have a no-pets rule. The last animal Connor ever wanted for a pet was a rat, that was until he meets Oscar, a rat at his local animal shelter. Conner finds himself offering to foster Oscar - even if it means hiding him from his mom and dad. Connor soon realizes he will have to stand up for Oscar and for himself, even if that means confronting his parents head on.

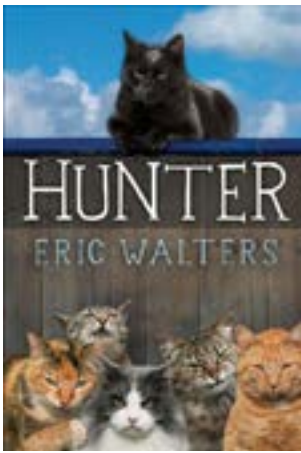


Who Took Henry and Mr. Z? by David Glaze

Reading level: Grades 3-4

The story is about how two young sleuths who set out to solve the mystery of the missing guinea pigs. Henry and Mr. Z are classroom pets of Mrs. Whitestar's grade five class. When the two are missing one morning everyone is anxious to find them. The next day it is discovered that not only were the guinea pigs stolen but so was money from the teacher's desk. Are the two crimes connected?

This young mystery novel is very believable and a good introduction to the mystery genre. Kids will be able to relate to the characters and the situations they get into at school. It also imparts the message of commitment and care for these small animals.



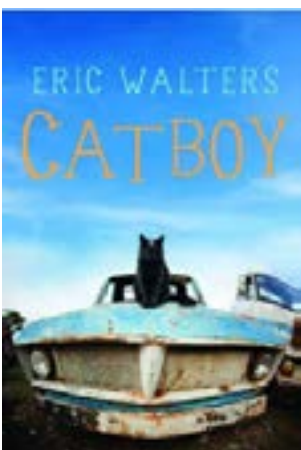
Hunter by Eric Walters

Reading level: Grade 4+

In this follow-up to his young adult novel, *Catboy*, about a boy named Taylor trying to save a feral cat colony at a junkyard, Eric Walters tells the same story, this time from the point of view of one of the feral cats, Hunter.

Based on previous experiences, Hunter distrusts humans. How will he react when Taylor and his friends start showing up at the junkyard? Will he grow to trust them? The novel's perspective gives students the chance to consider how feral cats might view human behaviour and to better understand the differences between feral and domestic cats. Anthropomorphizing is used for the purpose of the point of view as well as some aspects of the plot; while not always realistic, this approach does work to evoke empathy in the reader. Unfortunately, some animal welfare issues are not addressed; most notably, the opportunity to mention spay/neuter to prevent overpopulation is lost.

Hunter is sure to entertain, while also offering educators a springboard to animal welfare-related lessons and discussion.



Catboy by Eric Walters

Reading level: Grade 4+

Catboy tells the story of Taylor, who has recently moved from a small northern town to the diverse metropolis of Toronto. Everything in the city is new to Taylor, including a feral cat colony that he discovers with his friend, Simon.

Taylor, called Catboy by an older bully, quickly takes an interest in the cat colony. When a new condominium development threatens the cats' survival, he vows to come up with a solution.

Catboy touches on some important information regarding feral cat colonies, as well as the issue of anthropomorphizing animals. Unfortunately, it neglects to discuss the sterilization of feral cats or their effect on wild birds, both issues that could be raised in classroom discussions of the story.

Interspersed are messages about cultural diversity, gentrification and the question of morality vs. legality – all of which offer the possibility of further critical thinking and discussion. *Catboy* offers a page-turning and thought-provoking read.



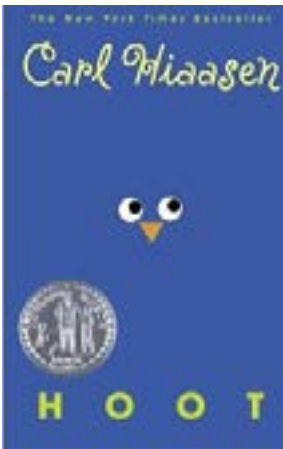
Scat by Carl Hiaasen

Reading level: Grade 5+

During a science field trip to Black Vine swamp, the much feared teacher, Mrs. Starch goes missing after a wild fire breaks out.

Even though the students welcome the break from their teacher, something just doesn't feel right so Nick and Marta start to investigate. They suspect "bad boy" Duane as having something to do with their teacher's disappearance but once they find clues they soon discover they have misjudged him and their teacher.

As they start to unravel the mystery they stumble upon a scam by an oil company and an endangered puma. All of this makes for an exciting adventure young readers are sure to enjoy.



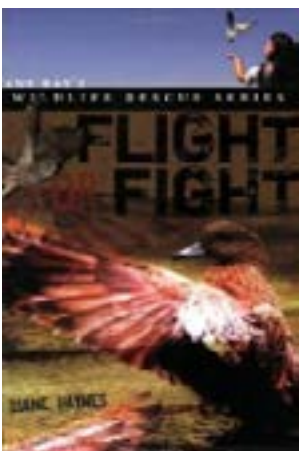
Hoot by Carl Hiaasen

Reading level: Grade 5+

Roy just moved from Montana to Florida and he quickly becomes the target of the school bus bully. But when Roy gets his head squished up against the school bus window he is intrigued by a barefooted boy running down the street. Roy sprints off on a mission to find out more about this "wild" boy.

Soon he gets involved in this boy's creative tactics to stop the building of a restaurant in order to save the endangered burrowing owls (also endangered in BC) that live underground on the land about to be bulldozed.

This story may inspire young readers to critically examine land use decisions and take a stand for causes in which they believe.

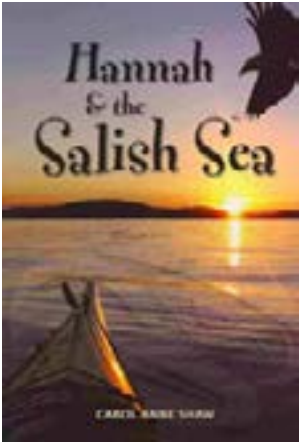


Flight or Fight by Diane Haynes

Reading Level: Grade 6+

When Jane rescues a drowning seabird from an oil spill, she doesn't realize this will change her life. After taking the bird to the Urban Wildlife Rescue Centre she gets interviewed by a TV crew and speaks out against the company responsible for the spill. This grabs the attention of both the Sea King Shipping Pacific executives and the star football player at school.

Jane commits herself to working with and for the animals at the Urban Wildlife Rescue Centre. She volunteers her time and makes a plan to get Sea King to do the right thing. Jane finds love, friends, passion and danger.



Hannah and the Salish Sea by Carol Anne Shaw

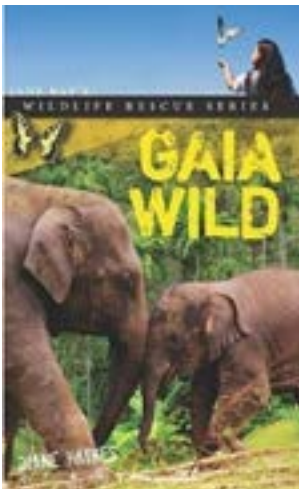
Reading level: Grade 6+

Hannah plans on enjoying her summer vacation hanging out with her friend Max and working part-time at the Salish Sea Studios. Her plans are upturned, however, when her curiosity about unexplained events turns into suspicion of criminal activity.

Along the way, Hannah meets Izzy, a reluctant summer resident who is sent to work with her mother's friend Ramona at the Salish Sea Studios to get in touch with her First Nation's roots. The three teenagers put clues together – and themselves in danger – to explain how an accidental eagle death, the grisly discovery of a dead bear cub and some strange new people in town are all connected. This quest culminates in a midnight kayak paddle to an abandoned tuna boat where they soon have to fight for their lives and the lives of the animals being hunted for their body parts.

Hannah and the Salish Sea will appeal to youth ages 12 and up and adults alike. This novel deals with serious matters in a sensitive way that allows the reader to enjoy the plot as it unfolds. The characters are very realistic, and teen readers will relate to the frustrations and pressures they endure as well as the victories and self-discovery they achieve.

Concepts in this novel that can be expanded upon in other subject areas include, peer pressure, bullying, poaching and pride in culture.

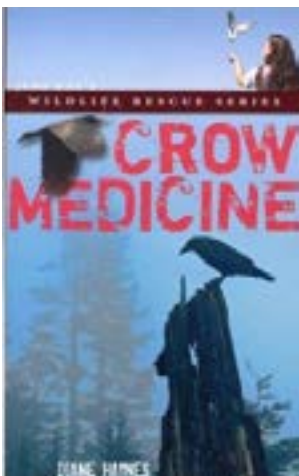


Gaia Wild by Diane Haynes

Reading Level: Grade 6+

This time Jane and her friends are working on a movie set. Everyone in town seems to be star struck with the exception of Jane. She can't prove it but senses something isn't right with the animals on set. Gaia, the elephant, is performing on command and has spent her whole life in captivity. Jane finds out the Gaia's life is on the line and intends to do something about it, with the help of her best friends Amy and Flory.

The adventures continue and heads will roll in the latest book in this series that is sure to be gobbled up by students.



Crow Medicine by Diane Haynes

Reading Level: Grade 6+

Jane, a young volunteer at the Urban Wildlife Rescue Centre in the Fraser Valley, loves animals and has a particular interest in crows. The threat of West Nile Virus puts the wildlife centre in a difficult position. Since crows are the messengers of the disease and could pass on the virus to humans the controversial decision is made to euthanize all crows that come into the wildlife centre for the safety of staff and volunteers. This sets off protests and threats by animal rights groups and donors who don't agree with the decision. A timely donation allows Jane and her two best friends to embark on a road trip to the Rocky Mountain Wildlife Hospital to get an expensive vaccine to save the crows. This becomes quite an adventure for the young heroine and her pals.