

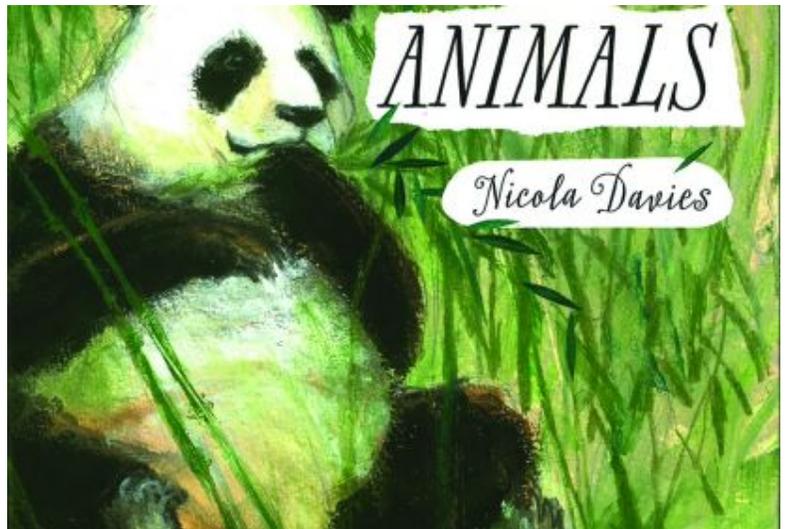
Book review

December 10, 2019

A First Book of Animals

By Nicola Davies, illustrated by Peter Horacek, Walker Books, 2016

A First Book of Animals celebrates the magnificent diversity of animals that exists on our planet, from monarch butterflies to emperor penguins to humpback whales. Author Nicola Davies showcases more than 50 wondrous wildlife species, with an accompanying short poem, under the themes of "Big and Small", "Colours and Shapes", "Animal Homes", "Animal Babies" and "Animals in Action". Illustrator Peter Horacek uses beautiful vibrant colours to not only highlight each animal's evolutionary uniqueness but also their personalities. This celebration of biodiversity reminds us why we must treasure and protect wildlife.



The Godwits

By Bruce Pickworth, illustrated by Lorraine Robertson, Bullawai Book, 2016

This book highlights the threats to the migratory godwit through two stories. One is about Gao Wei, a Chinese boy, who is an avid bird lover, and who takes action when he hears his father is involved in a housing project that will destroy the mudflats the godwits are utterly dependent upon. The other main character is a bar-tailed godwit, Gowie, who leads his flock on their migratory journey from NSW's Shoalhaven coast to Alaska. This book about the endangered godwit highlights how we are all connected. The Eastern Curlew:

The Extraordinary Life of a Migratory Bird

By Harry Saddler, Affirm Press, 2018

Nature writer Harry Saddler follows the incredible global journey of the eastern curlew from Australia to Kamchatka in Siberia. This flight path, known as the East Asia-Australasian Flyway, includes the coastline mudflats of Australia, China and the Korean peninsula. Without strong, enforceable international protections for these mudflat ecologies, the eastern curlew is doomed.

For tens of thousands of years, these birds have left their breeding grounds in the Arctic in August to embark on a perilous 10,000km journey flying south to the Australian coastline.

Everything in their life depends upon them completing their migration. To survive the long flights they must feed voraciously on the invertebrates found in mudflats. The birds revisit the same feeding grounds year after year. This is why the internationally listed Ramsar mudflats in Australia's Moreton Bay are so important. Currently, they are under threat from a proposal to develop the mudflats into canals and a marina, as aired on ABC's *Four Corners* program "Extinction Nation, The fight to save Australia's endangered species" (June, 2019). Already huge swathes of habitat have been destroyed with land reclamation projects in the Yellow Sea pushing many migratory birds to extinction.

This thoughtful and sensitive book exposes the underbelly of a “strong economy”.

Janine Kitson is a Federation Life Member

Queer, There and Everywhere
By Sarah Prager, HarperCollins, 2017

Real life LGBTIQ heroes jump off the page and smash through stone walls in this accessible book that’s rich in learning opportunities.

Each chapter is based around the true life of one of 23 influential LGBTIQ figures throughout history. The fascinating life stories focus on how these individuals fought, created, and loved on their own terms and in their own times.

The riveting facts and fun pop culture vibe ensures the stories are told in an entertaining way and appeal to a wide audience. At the same time, the book reflects on how world history has been made by countless LGBTIQ individuals, many of whose stories have not been heard of.

Among the astonishing life stories are historic figures that include a Roman emperor and French liberator through to modern day figures, such as Holocaust survivors and inventors who saved lives. It includes Renée Richards, a transgender tennis player who won a court case to play as a woman. Other well-known figures are cast in a whole new light such as the great emancipator, Abraham Lincoln.

If I was your Girl
By Meredith Russo, Usborne Publishing, 2016

With a central theme of being seen for who you are, this big-hearted novel is as sweet as it is heart-warming.

The fictional story follows Amanda Hardy, the new girl in school trying to find her place. But Amanda’s desire to make friends is complicated by a secret, one that prevents her from getting too close to anyone. Her secret? At her previous school, she used to be Andrew.

Enter Grant whose sweet, easygoing nature begins to break down Amanda’s emotional barriers. As romantic feelings develop, Amanda finds herself wanting to open her heart and share her truth. But Amanda is terrified that once Grant knows her secret it will change everything. The story beautifully captures the emotional tensions that come with being who we truly are.

And this universal story of love inspires us to have the courage to be who we are.

Chris Roberts is a member of the LGBTIQ Restricted Committee