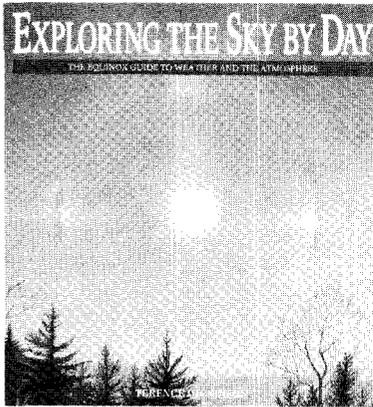


tions. It definitely allows adults many chances to "fill in," "add," and "explain."

The title suggests that "an adventure" is a sufficient expression for Little-Fish's evolutionary journey and, except for vague allusions in the name, "Little-Fish," does not integrate the two stories. The original title, *Le voyage de la vie*, is more fitting and adequate. Could there have been a better translation?

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EXPLORING THE WORLD AROUND US



Exploring the sky by day. Terence Dickinson. Camden House, 1988. 72 pp., \$9.95 paper. ISBN 0-920656-71-4; **Exploring the world of birds: An Equinox guide to avian life.** Adrian Forsyth and Laurel Aziz. Camden House, 1990. 72 pp., \$15.95 \$9.95 cloth, paper. ISBN 0-920656-98-6, 0-920656-94-3.

Everyone in the family will appreciate the clean design, excellent illustration, and general philosophy that characterize these Equinox Guide Books. While the books do not ignore the negative impact of human activity on the natural world, they depend primarily on the positive pleasures of observation to inspire conservationist principles.

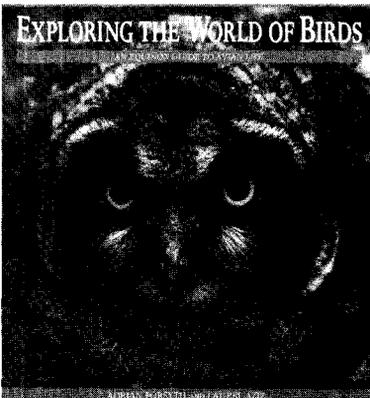
Both books relate their facts to everyday experience. As one might expect, however, the two subjects touch human lives and emotions in very different ways, so *Exploring the sky by day* ties atmospheric phenomena to geographical location and practical application, while *Exploring the world of birds* treads the fine line between describing bird behaviour in human terms and keeping the two clearly distinct.

Exploring the sky by day asks and answers dozens of questions in interesting ways. Raindrops, we learn for example, are not tear-shaped, but "are shaped like tiny hamburger buns, with the flat side down," and the amount of water in clouds is helpfully measured in swimming-pools-full.

Taken separately, the 29 sections of this book are well-written, interesting, and helpfully illustrated with photographs, excellent diagrams, and humorous drawings. It is difficult, however, to discern the organizing principles: why, for example, are hurricanes and tornadoes separated by nearly half the book from

other types of storms? The answer may lie in one puzzling aspect of the book. While weather systems are mentioned several times and the reader is advised to consult the weather maps in the daily newspaper, there is no attempt to demonstrate what a weather map shows us or to discuss in any systematic way the relationships among temperature, barometric pressure, wind, clouds, and precipitation. Thus, the elements of weather tend to be treated as isolated phenomena rather than sequences of events. In suggesting that it will tell us "why changes in weather occur," *Exploring the sky by day* promises rather more than it delivers.

Exploring the world of birds is quite a different matter. Photographs of a wandering albatross greeting its mate with outstretched wings and of a bead of water magnifying the barbules of a gull feather are alone worth the price, but there is more. Like the other book, this divides its subject into bite-sized pieces, but here the sections are woven together into a tightly-knit picture. Such subjects as eyes and eggs, diet and displays are threaded together by the underlying themes of purposeful evolutionary adapta-



tion, perpetuation of the species, and communal living, all embedded in the encompassing theme of the pleasures of watching and learning about birds. This is a book that even a seasoned bird watcher will enjoy.

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QUI SONT LES VÉRITABLES PRISONNIERS DU ZOO?

Les prisonniers du zoo, Denis Côté. Illus. Stéphane Poulin. Montréal, La courte échelle, 1988, 94 pp. 6,95\$. ISBN 2-89021-074-X.

C'est l'été, les vacances, Maxime s'ennuie. Il s'est passé quelque chose d'étrange au jardin zoologique gouvernemental où l'un des zoologues, le Docteur Zaïus Merle, a mystérieusement disparu. Des cages d'animaux qui allaient être euthanasiés ont été ouvertes dans un refuge de la SPA, aucune trace des animaux, aucun indice des coupables. Ces nouvelles n'émeuvent pas particulièrement Maxime mais lui donnent une idée pour occuper une de ces longues après-midi d'oisiveté. Pourquoi ne pas aller faire un tour au zoo avec sa copine