

Nonetheless, O'Grady and Wansbrough have produced a rich resource of topical information that would easily serve as an addition to family health and sex education studies. The authors clearly wish to encourage dialogue, and they have integrated environmental, multicultural, social and health perspectives throughout the text. Their matter-of-fact approach is liberating, especially for those who may have difficulties getting straight answers to simple questions. Practical advice is prefaced with a heading, and is often boxed and highlighted within the text. This invites the reader to simply skim the book, and then stop and read when something attracts her attention.

Several of the stories and memoirs are exceptional. Mary Helen Stefaniak's "Outrunning Gravity" is a bittersweet coming-of-age tale, attaining its freshness when told from a father's perspective. "Blood," by Jane Eaton Hamilton, uses contemporary teen language and attitudes to effectively explore the ambivalent territory of curiosity and disgust. While the literary merits of the stories in *Sweet Secrets* vary in strength, each conveys important truths about women's complex relationships with their bodies.

The book finishes with an excellent glossary that includes medical or "real" words and several corresponding slang terms. The book is refreshing in its approach to anatomical and sexual considerations, though it is surprising that it contains no references to homosexuality. In every other respect, *Sweet Secrets: Stories of Menstruation* is an inclusive and affirming resource that will engage, enlighten, and inform its readers.

Ruth E. Walker's story, "Traditions," won Canadian Living's 1996 short fiction award. The mother of four children and a former foster parent, she is completing an English/Cultural Studies degree through Trent University.

Exploring Nature: Jaws, Paws and Claws

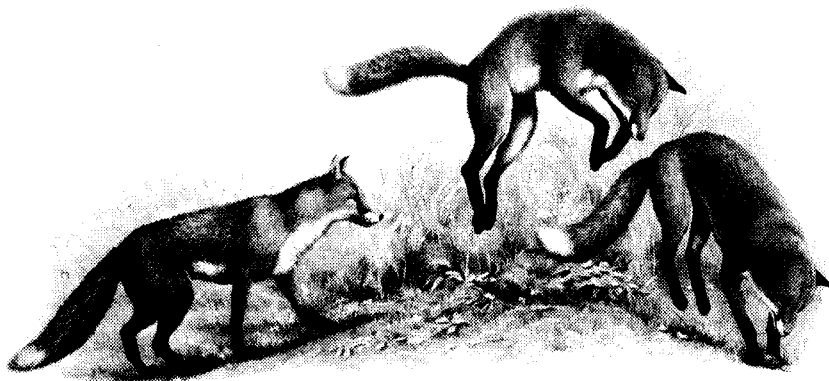
What's a Zoo Do? Jonathan Webb. Key Porter Kids, 1995. 90 pp. \$18.95 paper. ISBN 1-55013-609-7 (cloth), 1-55013-664-X (paper). *By the Seashore.* Tessa Paul. Crabtree, 1997. 32 pp. ISBN 0-86505-587-4 (RLB), 0-86505-595-5 (paper). *By Lakes and Rivers.* Tessa Paul. Crabtree, 1997. 32 pp. ISBN 0-86505-586-6 (RLB), 0-86505-594-7 (paper). *In Woods and Forests.* Tessa Paul. Crabtree, 1997. 32 pp. ISBN 0-86505-584-X (RLB), 0-86505-592-0 (paper). *In Fields and Meadows.* Tessa Paul. Crabtree, 1997. 32 pp. ISBN 0-86505-585-8 (RLB), 0-86505-593-9 (paper).

Author Jonathan Webb, in *What's a Zoo Do?* presents an excellent introduction to all aspects of the zoo, from its early beginnings as a playground for kings to its current role in the conservation and preservation of endangered

species. Webb takes the reader behind the scenes of today's "zoo as modern city," to reveal the surprising range of workers: keepers, vets, kitchen help, security personnel, guides, researchers and designers.

Well-researched and thorough, the book presents the material in an engaging and often humorous manner. Webb has chosen many high quality photographs of zoo animals as well as archival illustrations, such as a drawing of the bear pit in the London zoo in 1835. Side bars contain intriguing tidbits of information : "Should zoo animals do tricks?", "Which is the most difficult animal to keep alive in a zoo?". The scope of the book is international, with zoos featured from throughout the world, including the Metro Toronto Zoo.

Overall, this is the kind of book that will spark enthusiasm for the natural world in any animal-loving child. It is an impressive work of solid research that is well written and presented in an attractive package.



The four titles in the Animal Trackers series by Tessa Paul are also designed to spark the imagination of the curious child. Each of the four books is devoted to a different habitat (seashore, meadow, forests and freshwater environments) and showcases the community of animals to be found within it. This ecological approach to writing about animals is an interesting and logical way to describe wildlife.

The books are attractively designed with large illustrations of each animal (mammal, bird, fish, amphibian, invertebrate) in its natural setting. A unifying border of paws, claws, webbed feet or eggs appears on each page. Side bars provide information on intriguing aspects of the animal's biology or behaviour.

Each book begins with a two-page introduction, inviting the young

reader to become an “animal tracker,” and search for the often elusive clues these animals leave behind. This is a great concept, but unfortunately it isn’t carried through. Most of the descriptions of the animals do not indicate in which part of North America they are to be found. A map showing the geographical distribution of the animal seems an obvious piece of information and yet it is lacking. One can imagine the disappointment of a child on Canada’s east coast out looking for prairie dogs, magpies and pronghorns. There seems to be a slant towards focusing on western species, but this is never made explicit.

A “footprint” of each species is given if feasible, but it is not drawn to scale, although this is not mentioned. Likewise with the eggs of birds, there is no mention of size.

Each book contains a very brief index and a not very helpful glossary. One is left with the impression that the series, while attractive, is lacking in serious research and attention to detail.

Marilynn Rudi is a librarian with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, in St. Andrews, New Brunswick.

Destroying the Plot

Struwwelpeter Tales of Hoffmann. Trans. Seanair. Iolair Publishing, 1996. 64 pp. \$19.95 paper. ISBN 1-55037-099-5.

There are only a few German books which are recognized as worldwide children’s classics — one of them is Heinrich Hoffmann’s picture book *Struwwelpeter*.

In 1844, H. Hoffmann, a former medical doctor, became a children’s book author. When, just around Christmas, he started to look for a present for his son and couldn’t find anything he bought a little empty booklet and started to write and paint the verses and drawings which would later become so well-known. In 1845, when the book was published, a classic was born.

Hoffmann has succeeded in creating something of an archetype — his *Struwwelpeter* has something for everyone. He has been, at various times, forced into uniform as a *Militärstruwwelpeter*, or has metamorphosed into the German Emperor William II, “Swollen-headed William;” he has even changed into *Struwwel-Hitler*, and a little girl, *Struwwelotte*. Not long ago, *Struwwelpeter* got to be gay and at last, very successfully, became Anti-*Struwwelpeter*.