



## Our Favorites, Annual Reading List

There are SO MANY wonderful books out there where do we start?? LBN polled teachers and parents to help identify a few Go To and often timeless resources for Early and Young readers that creatively weave lessons from nature and learning to foster intrigue and stewardship. Here's our list, enjoy! And please send an email if you feel there's another book we must absolutely add to this: [bobbi@LearningByNature.org](mailto:bobbi@LearningByNature.org)

### **EARLY LITERACY**

**Bear Noel** A Story for Lovers of Animals, Art, and Holiday Harmony

by Olivier Dunrea. Ages 2-6

Normally, Hare and Wolf would not be together in the woods, but this night is special. It is Christmas Eve, and Bear Noel is coming, bringing gifts and food to the woodland animals. Together Hare and Wolf set out to tell the others -- Owl, Possum, Boar, Fox, and Mole.

### **Animal 1 2 3**

by Britta Teckentrup. Ages 1-3

Meet a menagerie of animals in this colorful lift-the-flap book for the youngest set. *Animal 123* introduces the concept of counting as it adds "one more" to all sorts of endearing creatures such as marching elephants, dancing dragonflies, and creeping bears.

### **Are You My Mother?**

by P.D. Eastman. Ages 2-5

A baby bird is hatched while his mother is away. Fallen from his nest, he sets out to look for her and asks everyone he meets -- including a dog, a cow, and a plane -- "Are you my mother?"

### **In My Tree**

by Sarah Gillingham (and Lorena Siminovich). Ages Infant – 4

The In My Tree finger puppet board book is truly amazing. These colorful die cut pages take children through the unforgettable experience of one of nature's wondrous creatures. In the "In My Tree" board book, you discover what the little owl's day and night are like, how it fairs in rainy weather and how the best part of his day is being with his family! Each "In My" series is 7 x 7 in size, has a finger puppet for interactive learning, and full-color illustrations.

Also available: **In my Pond, In My Nest, In My Den, In My Meadow**

### **Sam and the Firefly**

by P.D. Eastman. Ages 2-5

As Sam the owl moves about his evening, he discovers that most other animals are sleeping, except his new nocturnal friend, the firefly. A nice nighttime story with an entertaining nocturnal natural history lesson.

### **The Hungry Caterpillar**

by Eric Carle. Ages 2-6

An innovative story of one of Nature's commonest yet loveliest marvels, the metamorphosis of the butterfly. Cleverly die-cut pages show what the caterpillar ate on successive days, graphically introducing sets of up to 10 objects and also the names of the days of the week in rotation, as well as telling the central story of the transformation of the caterpillar. The final, double-page picture of the butterfly is a joyous explosion of color, a vibrant affirmation of the wonder and beauty of Nature.

### **EARLY READERS**

#### **The Lorax**

by Dr. Seuss (Theodore Seuss Geisel) Ages 5-9

"Unless someone like you...cares a whole awful lot...nothing is going to get better...It's not."

Long before saving the earth became a global concern, Dr. Seuss, speaking through his character the Lorax, warned against mindless progress and the danger it posed to the earth's natural beauty. A classic!

"The big, colorful pictures and the fun images, word plays and rhymes make this an amusing exposition of the ecology crisis."—*School Library Journal*.

#### **Just So Stories**

by Rudyard Kipling. Ages 6-10

With vivid characters and an hysterically funny choice of words, Rudyard Kipling's beloved stories "explain" how camels got humps, great whales got tiny throats, elephants got trunks, and more. These time-tested classics lead us to look at accepted qualities in new and creative ways, and even better, make us laugh out loud.

#### **The Giving Tree**

By Shel Silverstein. Ages 4-8

We have all climbed trees, had our very own tree, or sought solitude in our very own tree. It is part of growing up. The story of the Giving Tree is a one that takes on the perspective of the tree itself and its love of the boy that sought her out as his very own. She gives everything she has to the boy till the very end. The story is touched with sadness and heartwarming lessons in that the boy doesn't fully realize what the tree really gave him throughout his years until his adulthood.

#### **Who Pooped in the Park?**

Authors vary depending on Park region. Ages 6-9

A series, "Who Pooped in the Park?" are educational illustrated picture books following the adventures of children/ families, who learn how to read the evidence of wild creatures in the Park (locations vary per book). From telling the difference between bobcat tracks and wolf tracks, to recognizing owl pellets, to learning how to recognize what animal a given scat came from (what it eats), "Who Pooped in the Park?" is lively, forthright, and downright fascinating.

## **NATURE GUIDES FOR EARLY LEARNERS**

### **Peterson First Guide to... (Mammals, Birds, Insects, Fossils)**

These handy pocket sized Guides list all the most common and conspicuous species of North America, use color illustrations and black and white drawings depicting tracks, pattern, and animal-related sign where pertinent. A FIRST for that budding naturalists book collection!

### **Rocky Mountain Tree Finder. A pocket manual for identifying Rocky Mountain trees.**

by Tom and Bridget Watts

This handy guide is perfect for teaching how to use a dichotomous key in a very simple fun manner. Includes illustrations, maps, definitions of terms, ruler.

Also check out these other great “Pocket-Finder” Guides\* by Nature Study Guild Publishers:

### **Mountain State Mammal Guide**

**Rocky Mountain Flower Finder** (this one is more advanced, 6<sup>th</sup> grade thru adult)

*\* Similar books available for NW, East, Desert regions*