

Animal Behavior Society Outstanding Children's Book Award

2019 Reviews of Winner and Finalist Books



WINNER: "Maggie - Alaska's Last Elephant"

This heartwarming story follows the life of Maggie the elephant. Along the way, the reader learns about the social life of elephants, and explores ethical questions about keeping animals in captivity. Kids love how this book interweaves story and facts, and illustrates the types of bonds that can emerge between animals and people. The rich illustrations help to capture both the sadness and joy throughout the story, while highlighting not only the main messages, but also little details.

FINALIST: "The Seal Garden" This is the story of a hiding place on the west coast of North America, where seals can hide away from storms or from the attack of orca killer whales. It is a straightforward story of where marine mammals can take refuge in the kelp growths, children liked it because it was informational but not boring, very realistic. For children from the prairies, it took them to a place they did not know about. The pictures were a great part of the book, described by children as breathtaking, outstanding and amazing, really enhancing the story.



FINALIST: "A Frog's Life" This non-fiction book touches on many aspects of frog biology, including key behaviors, across a variety of species. The topics are sprung to life by the striking illustrations: vibrant watercolors that highlight the diversity among these fascinating amphibians! "The pictures drew me in," commented one student, and another remarked that, "It has so much color." The book closes by addressing the peril many frog species are in as a result of anthropogenic effects like pollution, climate change, and habitat destruction, but leaves readers with a hopeful message.



FINALIST: "The Secret Life of Little Brown Bat" This narrative nonfiction weaves facts about the little brown bat's life cycle into an imagined tale about a bat named Otis. Throughout the book, Otis learns to forage, avoid predation, and even find a mate. Kids described the illustrations as "fabulous" and said the pictures "brought them into the setting," and many commented on how this book was both informative and fun. Children will love this latest installment in Laurence Pringle's "Secret Life of" series.



FINALIST: "The Hyena Scientist" This non-fiction book takes a closer look at one of the most misunderstood animals in Africa. Scientists take the reader on a intriguing journey about the hyena, their family, their habitat and the role on the African Plains. The reader also learns about several scientists and field researchers that have dedicated their lives to understanding the complexities of the hyena. Readers will love the science intertwined with personal stories!

