

# Nature and the Environment

BY PATRICK SMITH AND JESSICA TEISCH

America's history begins in wilderness. It is no surprise, then, that our relationship with nature four centuries later continues to play a large role in our collective consciousness. From the grandeur of the Sierra Nevada and the Rockies to the impenetrable wilderness of Alaska, the rugged landscapes of New England to the murky swamps of the South, writers spend their entire lives getting to know and to comprehend terrain—both exterior and interior. Their work helps us to rediscover values long forgotten, to revel in the beauty we pass over daily in our hectic lives, to recall feeling wonder at something so simple, majestic, and ineffable as nature.

Here we explore some books on classic nature writing and seminal works in the modern environmental movement, both American and global. We also offer suggestions on powerful works of fiction for both adults and young adults that capture the struggle to understand and to preserve a viable environment. Our list, of course, is neither comprehensive nor representative of the environmental problems we face today—from species extinction to global climate change. Rather, we chose works both old and new that entertain and, significantly, that challenge readers to think about the natural world and environment in different ways.

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*Authors' Note:* Many thanks to Tom Page for his many thoughtful suggestions and contributions to this piece.

## CLASSIC NATURE WRITING

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### The Outermost House

A Year of Life on the Great Beach of Cape Cod (1928)

By Henry Beston

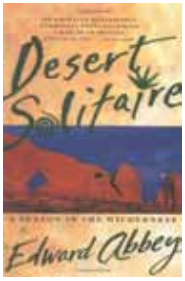


After World War I, American naturalist and writer Henry Beston spent a year on Cape Cod in spiritual recovery. “Nature is part of our humanity,” he writes, “and without some awareness of that divine mystery man ceases to be man.” *The Outermost House*, now considered a classic of nature writing and a precursor to the literature of the modern environmental movement, captures the landscape’s wonders in ways few other works have done. In addition, few other writers have observed the nature of animals as profoundly as Beston: “We patronize [animals] for their incompleteness, for their tragic fate of having taken form so far below ourselves. And therein we err, and greatly err. . . . They are not brethren, they are not underlings; they are other nations, caught with ourselves in the net of life and time, fellow prisoners of the splendour and travail of the earth.”

## Desert Solitaire

A Season in the Wilderness (1968)

By Edward Abbey



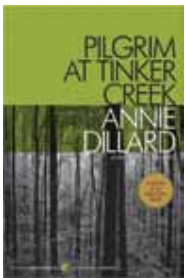
“I write in a deliberately provocative and outrageous manner because I like to startle people,” said Edward Abbey, who was once described as an eco-terrorist for his radical views. What most interested Abbey was the struggle for personal liberty in a techno-industrial complex—with wilderness as the salve for the human soul. *Desert Solitaire*, which recounts his time as a park ranger at Arches National Monument near Moab, Utah, portrays his love of the desert (“the flaming globe, blazing on the pinnacles and minarets and balanced rocks”), its harsh challenges, and the strength and comfort it provides from mainstream culture. Deeply felt, poetic, philosophical, and notable for its pioneering call for wilderness preservation, *Desert Solitaire* brought Abbey critical acclaim.

## Pilgrim at Tinker Creek (1974)

By Annie Dillard

◆ PULITZER PRIZE

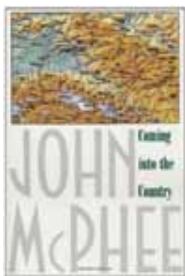
◆ MODERN LIBRARY'S 100 BEST NONFICTION BOOKS, #62



Essayist, poet, critic, and novelist Annie Dillard drew on her personal journals for *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, which refers to a stream behind her former home near Hollins University and Roanoke, Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains. Highly spiritual (Dillard converted to Roman Catholicism) and inspired by Thoreau's *Walden*, the book, written as a series of internal monologues based on the different seasons, chronicles Dillard's thoughts on life and nature and her metaphorical journey over the course of a year. As for her former home near Tinker Creek? “It holds me at anchor to the rock bottom of the creek itself and keeps me steadied in the current, as a sea anchor does, facing the stream of light pouring down. It's a good place to live; there's a lot to think about.”

## Coming into the Country (1977)

By John McPhee



John McPhee, a writer at the *New Yorker* and professor of journalism at Princeton, wrote about Alaska as it was experiencing a cultural and economic shift. He uses a range of voices—those of bush pilots, prospectors, settlers, and businessmen—to explore ideas of wilderness and the controversy over national parks, the decision to move the state capital

from Juneau, and the lives of people living along remote parts of the Yukon River. *Coming into the Country* pays homage to an Alaska that no longer exists, and although somewhat dated, it captures the beauty and hardship of the place like few other books. For other looks at Alaska, see Charles Sheldon's adventure memoir *The Wilderness of Denali* (1930) and John Haines's *The Stars, the Snow, the Fire: Twenty-five Years in the Northern Wilderness* (1989).

## The Snow Leopard (1978)

By Peter Matthiessen

◆ NATIONAL BOOK AWARD



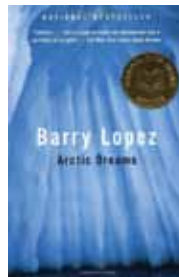
*The Snow Leopard* recounts Peter Matthiessen's two-month study of the Himalayan blue sheep and his search for the rare, elusive snow leopard with biologist George Schaller in the remote Tibetan Plateau. Matthiessen's quest soon becomes a spiritual journey; a student of Zen Buddhism, Matthiessen describes the impenetrable mountains as he reflects on life and death and offers insight into Tibetan culture: “Figures dark beneath their loads pass down the far bank of the river, rendered immortal by the streak of sunset upon their shoulders.” *The Snow Leopard* is a multilayered book of inherent beauty and spirituality, crystalline prose, and extraordinary physical and metaphysical travel. See also Matthiessen's *Wildlife in America* (1959; 1987).

## Arctic Dreams

Imagination and Desire in a Northern Landscape (1986)

By Barry Lopez

◆ NATIONAL BOOK AWARD



Barry Lopez was a landscape photographer when he started writing in the 1960s, and his exploration of the relationship between human culture and the physical landscape reveals an artist's eye. *Arctic Dreams*, written over fifteen trips to the Canadian far north over five years, celebrates the region's beauty, austerity, mysteries, and “tension between its beauty and its capacity to take life.” Lopez argues for both an emotional and scientific approach to preserving the Arctic's wilderness and indigenous culture. His *Of Wolves and Men* (1978), which considers our troubled relationship with the wolf from historical, scientific, mythological, and literary perspectives, was a National Book Award finalist; *Crossing Open Ground* (1988) discusses the landscape of the American Southwest.

## Refuge

An Unnatural History of Family and Place (1991)

By Terry Tempest Williams



“Everything about Great Salt Lake is exaggerated—the heat, the cold, the salt, and the brine. It is a landscape so surreal one can never know what it is for certain. ... Most of the women in my family are dead. Cancer. At thirty four, I became the matriarch of my family.” Thus opens environmental activist Terry Tempest Williams’s memoir and natural history,

which alternates between the story of her family and the property-damaging, record-high water levels of the Great Salt Lake in the 1980s. Raised in Utah, the site of nuclear testing in the 1950s and 1960s, Williams recounts the deaths of her mother, her grandmother, and her six aunts (the “virtual uninhabitants” of the atomic bomb testing site) from cancer as she chronicles the flooding of the lake’s bird sanctuary she holds dear. The refuge for birds becomes a metaphor for joy, sorrow, and spiritual renewal, a plea for our responsibility as stewards of the Earth.

## FURTHER READING

**NATURE** (1836) | RALPH WALDO EMERSON

**WALDEN** (1854) | HENRY DAVID THOREAU

**LEAVES OF GRASS** (1855) | WALT WHITMAN

**THE LAND OF LITTLE RAIN** (1902) | MARY AUSTIN

**MY FIRST SUMMER IN THE SIERRA** (1911) | JOHN MUIR

**GOODBYE TO A RIVER** (1960) | JOHN GRAVES

**THE NIGHT COUNTRY** (1970) | LOREN EISELEY

**THE UNSETTLING OF AMERICA: CULTURE & AGRICULTURE** (1977) | WENDELL BERRY

**THE SOLACE OF OPEN SPACES** (1985) | GRETEL EHRLICH

**WINTER: NOTES FROM MONTANA** (1991) | RICH BASS

**RAVEN’S EXILE: A SEASON ON THE GREEN RIVER** (1994) | ELLEN MELOY

**COMING HOME TO THE PLEISTOCENE** (1996) | PAUL SHEPARD

**A WALK IN THE WOODS: REDISCOVERING AMERICA ON THE AP-PALACHIAN TRAIL** (1998) | BILL BRYSON

**ECOLOGY OF A CRACKER CHILDHOOD** (2000) | JANISSE RAY F AMERICAN BOOK AWARD

**DAKOTA: A SPIRITUAL GEOGRAPHY** (2001) | KATHLEEN NORRIS

**THE RURAL LIFE** (2004) | VERLYN KLINKENBORG

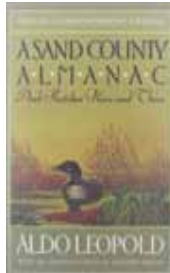
**THE HABIT OF RIVERS: REFLECTIONS ON TROUT STREAMS AND FLY FISHING** (2006) | TED LEESON

## SEMINAL WORKS IN MODERN AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTALISM

### A Sand County Almanac

And Sketches Here and There (1949)

By Aldo Leopold



In his direct, intimate style, Aldo Leopold, a former scientist at the U.S. Forest Service and the University of Wisconsin, penned perhaps *the* essential book of the modern conservation movement and laid the foundation upon which current wildlife conservation policies rest. *A Sand County Almanac* contains his famous “Land Ethic”:

“The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land. ... A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.” Leopold also shares his thoughts on his boyhood hunting in Iowa, on the concept of a trophic cascade (in the famous essay “Thinking Like a Mountain”), on ecological consciousness, and on the ironies of conservation. *Round River: From the Journals of Aldo Leopold* (1953, published posthumously) contains more of his essays and a number of journal entries.

### Silent Spring (1962)

By Rachel Carson



Along with Leopold’s *A Sand County Almanac*, there may not be another environmental book written in 20th-century America that has had as much impact. *Silent Spring*, a surprise best seller, documented the harmful effect of pesticides on the environment, particularly on birds; led to a nationwide ban on DDT; and inspired the modern

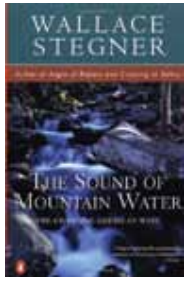
environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s. But as much as it pains us to say it, some of Carson’s other works remain more accessible to readers today. The National Book Award–winning and *New York Times* best seller *The Sea Around Us* (1951), for example, is poetic, intelligent—and less technical. Readers interested in Carson’s life and career as a marine biologist and writer may also wish to turn to *On a Farther Shore: The Life and Legacy of Rachel Carson* by William Souder (★★★★ Jan/Feb 2013).



## The Sound of Mountain Water

The Changing American West (1969)

By Wallace Stegner



Wallace Stegner, known for *The Big Rock Candy Mountain* (1943) and the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Angle of Repose* (1971), was primarily concerned with the stories of the American West's history and environment. This volume contains essays, letters, and speeches written over two decades, when the West was experiencing unprecedented environmental changes.

Of particular interest is Stegner's "Wilderness Letter," written to the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission. The letter expresses the importance of federal protection of wild places and helped win passage of the 1964 Wilderness Act. "Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed," writes Stegner, "if we permit the last virgin forests to be turned into comic books and plastic cigarette cases; if we drive the few remaining members of the wild species into zoos or to extinction."

## FURTHER READING

**THE EVERGLADES: RIVER OF GRASS** (1947) | MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS

**ENCOUNTERS WITH THE ARCHDRUID** (1971) | JOHN MCPHEE

**DUMPING IN DIXIE: RACE, CLASS, AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY** (1990) | ROBERT D. BULLARD

**CONFESSIONS OF AN ECO-WARRIOR** (1991) | DAVE FOREMAN

**A CIVIL ACTION** (1996) | JONATHAN HARR ♦ NATIONAL BOOK CRITICS CIRCLE AWARD

## GLOBAL OVERVIEWS

### 1493

Uncovering the New World Columbus Created

By Charles C. Mann (2011)



American science journalist Charles C. Mann's *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus* (★★★★ Nov/Dec 2005) helped debunk the myth that Christopher Columbus "discovered" a sparsely populated, environmentally pristine Americas. *1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created*, a follow-up that covers five centuries and six continents,

argues that Columbus's journey to the Americas initiated a double-edged biological, ecological, and economic exchange that set the course of human history and underpinned modern-day globalization. This "Columbian Exchange,"

Mann writes, "is arguably the most important event since the death of the dinosaurs." See also Alfred Crosby's classic account, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (1972).

## Field Notes from a Catastrophe

Man, Nature, and Climate Change (2006)

By Elizabeth Kolbert



*Field Notes from a Catastrophe* is part travelogue, part primer on global warming. Kolbert interviews scientists, interprets scientific reports, and visits communities affected by climate change to argue that we're on the verge of a major catastrophe. As Shishmaref, Alaska, witnesses its ice disappearing, as melting permafrost in Fairbanks threatens homes, and as the

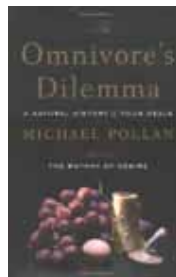
Dutch allow the sea to reclaim parts of their low-lying land, global warming heralds imminent disaster. Kolbert, while explaining climate change and modeling, places our current predicament in the contexts of the collapse of ancient civilizations and of species evolution and extinction. "Global warming," she concludes, is no longer "merely a theory."

(★★★★ July/Aug 2006)

## The Omnivore's Dilemma

A Natural History of Four Meals (2006)

By Michael Pollan



"To go from the chicken (*Gallus gallus*) to the Chicken McNugget," writes University of California, Berkeley journalism professor Michael Pollan in this significant book about environmental change and a plea for the local food movement, "is to leave this world in a journey of forgetting that could hardly be more costly." Such "forgetting" reveals the omnivore's

daily dilemma: what should we eat and how should we produce it? To understand the effects of our food choices on our health and the environment, Pollan travels around the United States to chronicle the origins of four meals: a McDonald's lunch, which starts in an Iowa cornfield; a flawed "big organic" meal from Whole Foods; food from a sustainable farm in Vermont; and, for the grand finale, mushrooms and wild pig foraged from the wilds around Sonoma, California. "What should we have for dinner?" has never posed a greater challenge. (★★★★ SELECTION July/Aug 2006)

## Four Fish

The Future of the Last Wild Food (2010)

By Paul Greenberg



Many Western eaters are familiar with the conditions in factory farms or are aware of the effects of monoculture on soil. But the fish of the sea still *seem* to be a wild source of food. Greenberg, using global economic, ecological, and historical perspectives, argues that food from the sea will soon be as domesticated as any land-based source, with

potentially devastating consequences. Following the story of salmon, cod, sea bass, and tuna from spawning in the wild to digestion in the human stomach, he shows readers how our appetite for these four fish may be seriously altering the ocean environment. Encouragingly, he also makes suggestions for action. (★★★★ **SELECTION** Nov/Dec 2010)

## FURTHER READING

**ECOLOGICAL IMPERIALISM: THE BIOLOGICAL EXPANSION OF EUROPE, 900–1900** (1986) | ALFRED CROSBY

**THE SONG OF THE DODO: ISLAND BIOGEOGRAPHY IN AN AGE OF EXTINCTION** (1996) | DAVID QUAMMEN

**THE END OF NATURE** (1989) | BILL MCKIBBEN

**EARTH IN THE BALANCE: ECOLOGY AND THE HUMAN SPIRIT** (1992) | AL GORE

**GUNS, GERMS, AND STEEL: THE FATES OF HUMAN SOCIETIES** (1997) | JARED DIAMOND

**THE WHALE AND THE SUPERCOMPUTER: ON THE NORTHERN FRONT OF CLIMATE CHANGE** (2004) | CHARLES WOHLFORTH

**THE WORLD WITHOUT US** (2007) | ALAN WEISMAN (★★★★ Nov/Dec 2007)

**THE UNNATURAL HISTORY OF THE SEA** (2007) | CALLUM ROBERTS

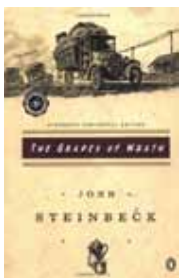
## FICTION

### The Grapes of Wrath (1939)

By John Steinbeck

◆ NATIONAL BOOK AWARD

◆ PULITZER PRIZE



Driven from their home in the Oklahoma Dust Bowl, the Joad family seeks redemption and survival in the fertile fields of California. Few novels before World War II encapsulate the burgeoning environmental sensibility better than this novel. In 1962, on the strength of both his fiction and nonfiction, much of which reflects his passion for nature, conservation, and stewardship and influenced subsequent

generations of writers, Steinbeck won the Nobel Prize in Literature. *The Grapes of Wrath*, though, remains his most enduring work. “Wherever human beings dream of a dignified and free society in which they can live in right relationship with the environment and other humans, and harvest the fruits of their own labor,” Steinbeck scholar Robert DeMott writes, “*The Grapes of Wrath*’s insistent message is still applicable.”

### The Monkey-Wrench Gang (1975)

By Edward Abbey



**SEQUEL:** *Hayduke Lives!* (1989)

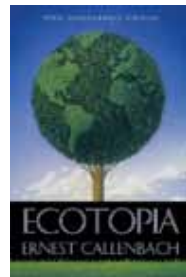
Famous for this over-the-top story of four unlikely compatriots set on saving the world, controversial environmentalist Edward Abbey published *The Monkey-Wrench Gang* seven years after *Desert Solitaire*. The book’s four main characters—a river guide; a doctor and his assistant; and George Hayduke, a

former Green Beret and demolitions expert (the character is modeled after Abbey’s great friend, writer Doug Peacock [*Grizzly Years*])—perform various acts of eco-terrorism as a prelude to the destruction of the Colorado River’s Glen Canyon Dam. Abbey’s novel has seeped into the American conservation mind-set and infiltrated the English lexicon—“to monkey-wrench” something is to commit an act of sabotage—and continues to hold a place near the top of the “must-read” list for eco-warriors of all stripes.

## Ecotopia

The Notebooks and Reports of William Weston (1975)

By Ernest Callenbach



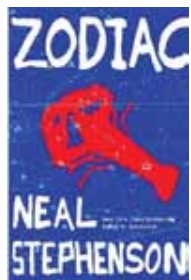
**PREQUEL:** *Ecotopia Emerging* (1981)

In 1980, much of the Pacific Northwest breaks from the United States to found Ecotopia, a sovereign utopia predicated on environmental ethos and egalitarianism. The story, important as much for defining radical environmentalism in America in the 1970s as for its characters or plot, is told through the dispatches of American journalist William Weston, the first “outsider” to get a close look at the new republic. Seldom read these days, Callenbach’s novel is prescient of the later development of reality television and spectacle, of recycling, and of locavorism and draws on then-current research on environmental issues and counterculture mores.

## Zodiac

An Eco-Thriller (1988)

By Neal Stephenson



Later known for his smart, byzantine science fiction fantasy novels (*Snow Crash* [1992], *Cryptonomicon* [1999], *The System of the World* series [2003–2004]), Neal Stephenson wrote an off-the-wall take on eco-terrorism and environmental disaster early in his career. His second novel, *Zodiac*, starts with a Group of Environmental Extremists operative and “professional pain in the ass” Sangamon Taylor investigating pollution in Boston Harbor and a bacterium that threatens to destroy all marine life. Taylor has no qualms about publicly embarrassing global corporations who threaten the environment, but his flamboyant methods draw the attention of the U.S. drug Mafia and a cartel of PCP addicts. Stephenson doesn’t go light on the humor or the irony here, and the novel anticipates the author’s genre-bending fiction.

## Track of the Cat

The First Anna Pigeon Novel (1993)

By Nevada Barr



Abandoning life in New York City after her husband’s death, Anna Pigeon takes a job as a law enforcement ranger at Guadalupe Mountains National Park in Texas. When a fellow ranger dies in what appears to be a mountain lion attack, Pigeon is convinced that her colleague’s death is something more sinister. A subsequent “accidental” death only whets her resolve to expose the killer. Nevada Barr has published 17 books in the Anna Pigeon series, including *Endangered Species* (1997), *Deep South* (2000), *High Country* (2004), and *The Rope* (2012). In each, Pigeon investigates mayhem in a different national park, and Barr always works ecological and conservation angles into her plots.

## The Windup Girl (2009)

By Paolo Bacigalupi

◆ NEBULA AWARD

◆ HUGO AWARD



Science fiction readers often encounter dystopian futures where the depletion of fossil fuels leads to the end of our energy-intensive way of life. Bacigalupi has created a new kind of future: here, empty skyscrapers fill the skies and computers are run by cranks, yet genetic engineering continues apace, as those powers with access to dwindling energy sources (like biotech corporations) seek to consolidate their

advantages. Another such power is Thailand (the book’s setting), which has remained independent because of a strict environmental ethos. *The Windup Girl* follows several characters through the struggles of this dystopian world, including Emiko, the “girl” of the title, who is genetically engineered to be sexually submissive yet still longs to be free. (★★★★ July/Aug 2010)

## FURTHER READING

**THE MILAGRO BEANFIELD WAR** (1974) | JOHN NICHOLS

**A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT: AND OTHER STORIES** (1976) | NORMAN MACLEAN

**CEREMONY** (1977) | LESLIE MARMON SILKO

**THE SALT EATERS** (1980) | TONI CADE BAMBARA

**THE RIVER WHY** (1983) | DAVID JAMES DUNCAN

**THE MEADOW** (1992) | JAMES GALVIN

**REMEMBERING** (1988) | WENDELL BERRY

**FIDELITY: FIVE STORIES** (1993) | WENDELL BERRY

**BIG WOODS: THE HUNTING STORIES** (1996) | WILLIAM FAULKNER

**LAST STANDING WOMAN** (1997) | WINONA LADUKE

**POACHERS: STORIES** (1999) | TOM FRANKLIN

**STRONG MOTION** (2001) | JONATHAN FRANZEN

**THE LAST GOOD CHANCE** (2003) | TOM BARASH

**THE HIGHEST TIDE** (★★★★ SELECTION Nov/Dec 2005) | JIM LYNCH

**SHADOW COUNTRY** (2008) | PETER MATHIESSEN ◆ NATIONAL BOOK AWARD

## FOR THE YOUNGER CROWD

### My Side of the Mountain (1959)

By Jean Craighead George

◆ NEWBERY HONOR



**SEQUELS:** *On the Far Side of the Mountain* (1991) and others

Living in a crowded apartment, adolescent Sam Gribble needs his space. He bolts from New York City for his great-grandfather’s secluded farm in the Catskill Mountains. At first, wilderness life isn’t everything Sam had hoped for. But he soon learns the ways of nature

and befriends a raccoon, a weasel, and a falcon—companions he values more than his human acquaintances. When his family moves to the old farmstead, Sam, known as the “wild boy of the Catskills” and the focus of much media attention, questions his need for human contact. Thoreau’s *Walden* for young adults and the most popular of the many novels of Jean Craighead George, *My Side of the Mountain* made an immediate, enduring impact.



## Island of the Blue Dolphins (1960)

By Scott O'Dell

◆ NEWBERY MEDAL



**SEQUEL:** *Zia* (1976)

When the members of her tribe are betrayed by a group of Aleuts hunting sea otters in the area, Karana, a young Native American girl, jumps off a rescue ship and is left alone with her brother—who is later killed by a pack of wild dogs—to fend for herself on her home island off the California coast. Karana survives by

her wits and her strong bond with nature, even taming the leader of the dog pack that attacked her brother. She befriends a young Aleut girl who has returned with her people to the island; when the Aleuts leave, Karana feels her isolation even more profoundly. Scott O'Dell based this beautiful novel on the true account of the Lost Woman of San Nicolas, who lived alone on the island from 1835 to 1853.

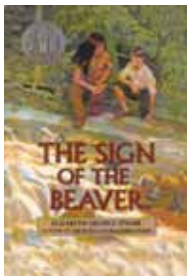
## The Sign of the Beaver (1983)

By Elizabeth George Speare

◆ HORN BOOK FANFARE

◆ SCOTT O'DELL AWARD FOR HISTORICAL FICTION

◆ NEW YORK TIMES BEST BOOK OF THE YEAR



In 1768 Maine, Matthew Hallowell and his father settle a plot of land for their family. When Matt's father leaves to retrieve the rest of the family from Massachusetts, Matt, intent on proving his manhood, hunkers down to protect their land. His efforts are futile: his rifle is stolen, the crops that he and his father planted are ravaged by wildlife, and Matt

must be saved from drowning by a member of the local Penobscot tribe. Despite what he has heard about the Native Americans, he learns much about their culture and the power of friendship through Attean, the grandson of the tribe's chief. Matt realizes the strength of his bond to Attean when the boy leaves to find his "manitou," or guiding spirit, as he enters adulthood.

## Hoot (2002)

By Carl Hiaasen

◆ NEWBERY HONOR



"Ever since I was little, I've been watchin' this place disappear—the piney woods, the scrub, the creeks, the glades," Carl Hiaasen's 12-year-old protagonist Mullet Fingers bemoans to his friend. "Even the beaches, man—they put up all these giant hotels and only goober tourists are allowed. It really sucks." In *Hoot*, Hiaasen's first book for the young-

er crowd, two boys in small-town Florida get involved in a plot to sabotage the construction site for the next Mother Paula's All-American Pancake House and to save a rare species of owl from disappearing. Hilarity—and more than a little disdain for the "malling" of South Florida—ensues. Hiaasen, a native Floridian and staunch supporter of the Everglades-restoration movement, brings the environment to bear on his story, as he does in his dozen wild—and wildly popular—novels for adults.

## Whalesong

**A Novel About the Greatest and Deepest of Beings (1981)**

By Robert Siegel

◆ GOLDEN ARCHER AWARD

◆ MATSON AWARD



**SEQUELS:** *White Whale* (1991), *The Ice at the End of the World* (1994)

With a poetry and grace not found in most books for young adults, Robert Siegel immerses readers from *Whalesong's* opening lines in the improbably beautiful and unknowable world of the humpback whale: "The first thing I

remember is a dim green radiance, the deep lit by a single shaft of light, and the singing, always the singing." The first in a trilogy, *Whalesong* follows Hruna, a young humpback whale who will eventually lead his pod as he describes the lives of generations of his kind fighting to survive and thrive despite increasing pressure from the whalers intent on killing them. Siegel's books have continued relevance for so compellingly and poignantly portraying nonhuman characters.

## FURTHER READING

**WHERE THE RED FERN GROWS** (1961) | WILSON RAWLS

**JULIE OF THE WOLVES** (1972) | JEAN CRAIGHEAD GEORGE

**HATCHET** (1987) | GARY PAULSEN

**KOKOPELLI'S FLUTE** (1995) | WILL HOBBS

**PULSE** (1996) | JOE CARDILLO

**THE KINGFISHER'S TALE** (2000) | MARK DELANEY

**WATER INC.** (2004) | VARDA BURSTYN

**HANNAH WEST IN DEEP WATER** (2006) | LINDA JONES

**THEY CAME FROM BELOW** (2007) | BLAKE NELSON

**OPERATION REDWOOD** (2009) | S. TERRELL FRENCH

**BLOOD SUN** (2011) | DAVID GILMAN

**OPERATION REDWOOD** (2011) | S. TERRELL FRENCH

**EMPTY** (2012) | SUZANNE WEYN ■