

The Eye of the Sandpiper: Stories from the Living World

By Brandon Keim. 2017. Cornell University Press. 266 pages, 23.98 CAD, Paper.

This book is a thoughtful journey exploring the natural world, the ongoing research into it, while questioning our relationship with it. Based on the cover and title I expected this to be a book full of shorebird research, and so was surprised to read about a variety of life from birds to fish. Keim does a wonderful job choosing stories that capture the audiences' interest and leaves us wanting to know more.

These short stories are organized into thematic sections including: Dynamics, Inner Lives, Intersections, and Ethics.

The first theme draws on evolution and ecological dynamics of the natural world. In this section we read about Cane Toads (*Rhinella marina*), chickadees, Monarch Butterflies (*Danaus plexippus*), and more. He explored stories about the deep sea, challenged how we think about Sea Lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*), and reminded us to listen, literally, to the natural world.

The second theme expands on the inner lives of animals. Keim draws on research that many may consider anthropomorphic topics, such as empathy, self-awareness, language, mental-time travel, and emotions.

It was fascinating to read some of the research being conducted on species we may see around us daily, such as honeybees, mice, rats, and birds.

The third theme, Intersections, is full of stories about people who are applying our knowledge to the world. These stories provide the book with views of hope through the passion people have and the direct changes they can make.

The final theme, Ethics, centres on humanity's role in the future of nature. Human activities have influenced the earth so much that Keim delves into the idea of the Anthropocene throughout this chapter. Topics raised include the ideas of wildness and wilderness, bringing back extinct species, and non-native species.

Chapters were very well written, but I often found myself wishing that they were not so short. Some controversial topics, such as the removal of invasive species such as Mute Swans (*Cygnus olor*) or feral cats, were presented with points of view from both sides. Environmental problems can often be a depressing topic; however, Keim's stories approach them in a way that is interesting and instils a sense of hope. I appre-

ciated that this book was not only well researched and thought provoking, but Keim's curiosity for the natural world was contagious.

Books like this play an important role as they help communicate research to the public. The primary audience of this book is likely already those who read science articles; however, many of the stories and interesting facts could reach a broader audience interested in the natural world. The wide variety of subjects allowed me to learn about species and topics I may not have sought out otherwise.

Throughout this book I found an overarching call to become aware of my surroundings and to learn to act in ways that nourish the life around me, both human and non-human. Perhaps if we pay more attention and further appreciate and respect the non-human world, we will care more about the place we call home and those we share it with.

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