EDITORS' CHOICE

Wild Moments: Adventures With Animals of the North
Edited by Michael Engelhard
University of Alaska Press, 248 pages, $21.95

We'd all like to spend more time in wild places. Not simply as a respite from the routines of daily life but because there's much to be learned from these places and the creatures inhabiting them. In *Wild Moments*, 32 nature writers venture into the wilderness. Their real-life experiences, vividly rendered, become our wonder and our delight. Each of 33 stories in this collection, edited by cultural anthropologist Michael Engelhard (he also wrote two of the stories), tells a tale with a different furred, finned, or feathered protagonist: inquisitive ground squirrels in a remote cabin, a snarling wolverine in Montana, a pod of frantically feeding orcas in Alaska's Inside Passage. This is top-drawer nature writing—there's not a clunker in the bunch. Readers will almost hear the sandhill cranes trumpeting overhead, and feel the hair stand up on the back of their neck at an unexpected encounter with a grizzly and her two cubs in the Brooks Range. Still, there are more basic lessons here, as illustrated in Nick Jans's account of locking eyes with a wolf during a snowmobile trip in the Alaskan bush. "In that instant," he writes, "I knew what we fear most in wolves: not their teeth but their wisdom—an alien, elusive intelligence that refuses us, rejecting our notions of superiority with a glance."—*Jerry Goodbody*

To read one of the stories from Wild Moments, *go to audubonmagazine.org/web/moments.*

The Jaguar's Shadow: Searching for a Mythic Cat
By Richard Mahler
Yale University Press, 376 pages, $27

For a decade journalist Richard Mahler stalked the jaguar in the hope of glimpsing the secretive cat. But as Mahler relates in *The Jaguar's Shadow,* the more he learns about the animal's historical and archaeological importance, the less critical his own quest becomes. Despite their endangered-species status, jaguars are hunted almost every place they roam freely, particularly South and Central America, where ranchers believe they harm livestock (a rare occurrence) and livelihoods. For jaguars, which raise just one cub every two years,

Reviews

ESSAY

Edge of Reason

A new biography explores how a firebrand activist took the government, and Audubon, to task.

By Frank Graham Jr.

Rosalie Edge, Hawk of Mercy: The Activist Who Saved Nature From the Conservationists
By Dyana Z. Furmansky
University of Georgia Press
376 pages, $28.95

Rosalie Edge was to the history of the National Audubon Society what the blackfly is to a family's spring outing in the north woods. If not sheer desolation, she spread irritation, tumult, and a wearying sense of being put upon. Her formidable impact on wildlife conservation has been largely forgotten, true. But 70 or 80 years ago she seemed to her foes larger than life, and though she was never content with a single target, Audubon remained for her the first among equals.

"She's unique in the field," a supporter said of Edge in 1948. "She's the only honest, unselfish, indomitable hellcat in the history of conservation."

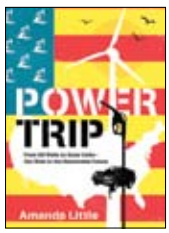
Armed with a vitriolic pen and a conviction of her own infallibility, Edge became during the 1930s and '40s the original environmental jihadist. She charged that most conservation organizations and government agencies were in cahoots with gun makers, shirking their responsibilities to wildlife. Indeed, she appears to have never met a fellow conservationist, government biologist, or specimen-collecting ornithologist she didn't want to take by the scruff of the neck and box about the ears.

Yet Edge went on to establish the world's first preserve for birds of prey, in the 1930s on Pennsylvania's Hawk Moun-

HAWK MOUNTAIN SANCTUARY ARCHIVES

illegal hunting is particularly damaging, especially combined with habitat loss due to development. At the same time, Mahler writes, "No creature in the Western Hemisphere has meant so much to so many for so long. Because of this enduring relationship, my fellow humans might be less likely to give up on—or spurn—this vanishing spotted cat." By shifting his focus from his own intense desire to see the magnificent creature to efforts to save it, Mahler prevents the "will he, won't he see a jaguar" question from playing out too quickly. Instead, the mystery, intricately spun within a crucial conservation tale, prevails until the book's final pages.—*Michele Wilson*

Power Trip: From Oil Wells to Solar Cells—Our Ride to the Renewable Future
By Amanda Little
HarperCollins, 446 pages, $25.99



The thread tying together national security, climate change, and the energy crisis is the same one that has linked much of modern American society, from our web of highways and electrical grids to our obsession with food and fashion: oil. Even the Tupperware that stores our leftovers and the stylish clothes that adorn our bodies rely on fossil fuels. In *Power Trip,* journalist Amanda Little leads readers on a journey through America's long association with this ubiquitous yet shrinking resource while exploring the forces helping to usher in a fossil-fuel-free future. Far from simply relaying abstract theories of peak oil or alternative energy technologies, Little profiles a vibrating five-mile-long oil drill, roaring race cars averaging five miles per gallon, and a towering, 945-foot-tall green skyscraper. And she paints a human face on each innovation—eco-friendly or not. Her rapier wit slices through discussions of the "love affair between the petroleum industry and politics" and General Motors' reign during the "dawn of car fetishism." Still, the predominant attitude remains optimistic. Little leaves readers hopeful that the same ingenuity that bound America to oil will eventually liberate us from it.—*Lynne Peeples*

NATURE BOOKS FOR KIDS

Marsupials
By Nic Bishop
Scholastic, 48 pages, $17.99 (Ages 4–8)

Warning to parents: After reading *Marsupials*, your child is going to want a wombat, or a bilby, or, really, any of the irresistibly adorable creatures featured inside. Engaging, digestible facts about marsupial biology and behavior temper the cute overload, however, and will

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tain. She undermined a scheme to build a big dam in Yellowstone National Park. Savaging the timber industry as well as government agencies for obstructing her plans, she lobbied successfully for the creation of Olympic National Park in Washington State, since recognized as one of the system's jewels. Though a life member of National Audubon, she sued that organization for trapping fur animals on its sanctuaries. Its lawyer, in turn, publicly branded her "a common scold."

Now she has a biography worthy of her reputation. Written with disarming and compelling glee, *Rosalie Edge: Hawk of Mercy,* by Dyana Z. Furmansky, tells the unlikely story of how a poor little rich girl became the most effective American conservationist between John Muir and Rachel Carson. She was born into New York City's high society in 1877. Hard times knocked neither the silver spoon nor the highfalutin tone from her lips. (Edge is said to have sounded like Eleanor Roosevelt.) Her father's early death brought the family financial problems, and later a legal separation from her husband left her dependent on his increasingly uncertain monthly allowance. And so, during her combative heyday, this "hawk of mercy" (an epithet lifted from the title of a 1948 *New Yorker* profile of Edge) generally engineered her achievements in wildlife protection with other people's money. She supplied the caustic energy.

Furmansky pinpoints the campaign to secure women's suffrage during World War I as bringing Edge into the arena of public advocacy and giving her "the opportunity to hone her inborn sense of how stories could advance social justice." Edge's forte was producing a stream of impassioned pamphlets for the cause. "The material is strident," Furmansky writes, "and packed with arguments that are essentially if not absolutely true, two trademarks of the conservation pamphlets she would begin to edit or write fifteen years later."

Edge's childhood love of animals resurfaced in birdwatching. One day in 1929 she received a 16-page pamphlet entitled "A Crisis in Conservation," alleging, without naming names, that organizations purporting to protect birds were standing idly by—or even supporting—federal predator control programs. Edge sprang to arms. She questioned Willard Van Name, an inverte-

brate zoologist at the American Museum of Natural History and one of the pamphlet's authors, and received an earful of facts. She became especially troubled to hear him mention Audubon, as she was a life member of the society. Van Name, whose ties to the museum restricted his ability to speak out on controversial matters, suggested Edge sign and publish the material he would pass on to her. She eagerly agreed.

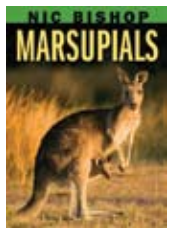
Edge attended Audubon's annual meetings in the stance of an angry stockholder, charging dereliction of duty by the society's leaders. Members crowded those once tame affairs, anticipating the spectacle of the irrepressible Mrs. Edge in action. After one such contentious event, Audubon president T. Gilbert Pearson complained she "had spoiled the meeting and there was no time to show the moving picture which was to have been the feature of the morning." With Van Name channeling information as well as money, Edge composed—in vivid prose illustrated by lurid photos—the pamphlets designed to educate and energize other lovers of wildlife. These handouts appeared with such incendiary titles as "Blood Money for the Audubon Associations" and "It's Alive! Kill It!"

She found lots to deplore with Audubon, including the use of steel traps to remove muskrats feeding on the aquatic plants that sustained geese on the extensive Rainey Sanctuary in Louisiana and a clumsy attempt to snatch the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary from her control. The society rejected her request for its mailing list. In a highly publicized court case, she won her point and flooded the membership with her pamphlets. More than half the society's 8,400 members in 1929 had left by 1933 (though, of course, the Great Depression played a part in the fallout).

As Furmansky points out, some of Edge's charges were exaggerated; others were simply not true—including her claims that Pearson had joined an offending duck-hunting club in Louisiana, and that he had billed Audubon for foreign travel unconnected with his duties. But Edge never feared to look ridiculous, and that was part of her strength. In the end, the harsh light she shone on Audubon's indifferent response to the indiscriminate slaughter of some wildlife induced in her target a stiffening of its programs to protect eagles and other birds of prey.

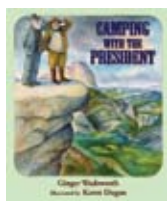
There was even a reconciliatory closure. In 1962, three weeks before her death at 85, Rosalie Edge returned to the fold. Having arrived unannounced at Audubon's annual meeting that year, she walked to her place at the dais on the arm of Audubon president Carl Buchheister as its members stood and cheered.

reviews



educate youngsters about a few familiar species, such as eucalyptus-crunching koalas, as well as ones they may have never heard of. Take the noolbenger, or honey possum, for example. Slightly longer than a pinky, this marsupial has a "special feathery tongue" and "runs from flower to flower, as busy as a hummingbird, lapping up almost its body weight in nectar every night." In contrast, the aptly named fat-tailed dunnart is carnivorous and stores a day or two of food as fat in—you guessed it—its tail. With almost pleading, black buggy eyes, the dunnart, which grows no bigger than a mouse, surely made an impression on award-winning photographer and author Nic Bishop, who spent nearly six months working on his book in Australia, where many marsupials live. "I could not help falling in love with them," he writes. Neither will his readers.—*Julie Leibach*

Camping With the President
By Ginger Wadsworth/Illustrated by Karen Dugan
Calkins Creek, 32 pages, $16.95
(Ages 8 and up)



Coinciding with Ken Burns's latest documentary series on national parks, *Camping With the President* is a kid-friendly companion about two great historical figures who had an enduring impact on our national parks and forests. Ginger Wadsworth's chatty, well-researched narrative tells the true story of Theodore Roosevelt's camping trip into Yosemite Valley with renowned naturalist John Muir. For four solid days the pair rode horseback amid giant sequoia trees and granite mountains, sleeping in tents and awakening to birdsong—evading the press and the president's Secret Service at every turn. Karen Dugan's watercolor illustrations depict the characters and scenes in delightful detail: Roosevelt is robust in tan Rough Rider–like attire, round spectacles, and cropped mustache; lithe and bearded, Muir dons a simple charcoal suit. In one inspiring scene, a halo of firelight ensconces the two men as El Capitan's indigo facade rises behind them in the growing darkness. Muir waves his hands animatedly while Roosevelt reclines pensively, revealing how the president "respected the mountaineer's advice on the importance of preserving land"—indeed, Roosevelt established Muir Woods National Monument, among others—as well as his understanding that to appreciate nature, it helps to spend time under the stars.—*Julie Leibach*

COURTESY OF OSCILLOSCOPE LABORATORIES

ART OF THE WILD

Four hundred years ago Henry Hudson was searching for a route to China when he spied a long island near the edge of North America, rich with natural splendor. From swamps and salt marshes to forests and grasslands, it encompassed more ecological communities per acre than Yellowstone; at least 150 different bird species flew over it each year; and billions of mollusks filtered its surrounding waters. Of course, Hudson wasn't aware of all that, nor could he have fathomed the extent to which this island—Manhattan—would be transformed over the centuries. But we can, thanks to landscape ecologist Eric W. Sanderson. Inspired by a detailed British map of the island from 1782, Sanderson spent a decade mining primary sources and applying the latest in geographic computing in an effort to strip the island's layers of concrete and asphalt and reconstruct its environmental riches. The result is *Mannahatta: A Natural History of New York City* (Harry N. Abrams Inc., $40), an enthralling account of the island's past, present, and possible future. Throughout, Markley Boyer's striking graphics of Manhattan's once-verdant terrain juxtaposed with photographs of the island as it appears today are potent symbols of the tension between nature and humanity. Yet Sanderson envisions those scenarios ultimately melding into "a world with both Mannahattas and Manhattans"—and really, can't we have it both ways?—*Julie Leibach*

For an interactive map that shows Manhattan Island and its native wildlife in 1609, visit themannahattaproject.org/explore/mannahatta-map/.