

**The Reading Agency's Booklist
'Nature and Wildlife' July 2021**



Nature and wildlife have been a respite for many over the past year. This booklist includes a mixture of fiction, memoir, poetry and non-fiction, covering the restorative powers of swimming and gardening, the history of our relationship with sheep, animals that talk and the ones we share our homes with, spanning the lakes of Berlin to the forests of Argentina.

***The Natural Health Service* by Isabel Hardman (Atlantic Books)**

ISBN: 9781786495921

In 2016, Isabel Hardman fell prey to severe depression and anxiety. She took time off on long-term sick leave and despite several relapses has returned to work with a much improved ability to cope. She credits her better health to her passion for exercise, nature and the great outdoors. In *The Natural Health Service*, she draws on her own personal experience, interviews with mental illness sufferers and psychologists, and the latest research to examine what role wildlife and exercise can play in helping anyone cope with mental illness.

***The Rain Heron* by Robbie Arnott (Atlantic Books)**

ISBN: 9781838951283

Ren lives alone on the remote frontier of a country devastated by a coup. High on the forested slopes, she survives by hunting and trading - and forgetting. But when a young soldier comes to the mountains in search of a legendary creature, Ren is inexorably drawn into an impossible mission. As their lives entwine, unravel and erupt - as myth merges with reality - both Ren and the soldier are forced to confront what they regret, what they love, and what they fear.

***The Lost Spells* by Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris (Penguin General)**

ISBN: 9780241444641

As in *The Lost Words*, these "spells" take their subjects from relatively commonplace, and yet underappreciated, animals, birds, trees and flowers -- from Barn Owl to Red Fox, Grey Seal to Silver Birch, Jay to Jackdaw. Written to be read aloud, painted in brushstrokes that call to the forest, field,

riverbank and also to the heart, *The Lost Spells* summons back what is often lost from sight and care, and inspires protection and action on behalf of the natural world.

***The Grassling* by Elizabeth Jane-Burnett (Penguin General)**

ISBN: 9780141989624

Spurred on by her father's declining health and inspired by the history he once wrote of his small Devon village, Elizabeth-Jane Burnett delves through layers of memory, language and natural history to tell a powerful story of how the land shapes us and speaks to us. *The Grassling* is a book about roots: what it means to belong when the soil beneath our feet is constantly shifting, when the people and places that nurtured us are slipping away.

***Rewild Your Garden* by Frances Tophill (Quercus)**

ISBN: 9781529410259

In this practical, beautifully illustrated guide horticulturalist and Gardener's World presenter Frances Tophill shows you how to plan and maintain a beautiful garden that will attract bees and birds as well as a throng of unsung garden heroes. Whether you have a small balcony or a large open space, discover the joys of welcoming natural ecosystems back into your garden - along with a host of new visitors.

***A Short History of the World According to Sheep* by Sally Coulthard (Head of Zeus)**

ISBN: 9781789544206

From the plains of ancient Mesopotamia to the rolling hills of medieval England to the vast sheep farms of modern-day Australia, sheep have been central to the human story. Sally Coulthard weaves the fascinating story of sheep into a vivid and colourful tapestry, thickly threaded with engaging anecdotes and remarkable ovine facts, whose multiple strands reflect the deep penetration of these woolly animals into every aspect of human society and culture.

***Flights of Passage: An Illustrated Natural History of Bird Migration* by Mike Unwin and David Tipling (Yale University Press)**

ISBN: 9780300247442

In this luxuriously illustrated volume, celebrated nature writer Mike Unwin and award-winning photographer David Tipling highlight sixty-seven different species of birds from around the world and explore how each has adapted to its migratory cycle. As they bring to life the drama of the Bar-headed Goose's journey over the Himalayas and the amazing sixty-thousand-mile annual round trip taken by the Arctic Tern between the United Kingdom and Antarctica, Unwin and Tipling offer deep insights into the science, mysteries, and wonders of migration.

***The Adventures of China Iron* by Gabriela Cabezón Cámara, translated from the Spanish by Fiona Mackintosh and Iona Macintyre (Charco Press)**

ISBN: 9781916465664

A riotous romp taking the reader from the frontier culture of the pampas deep into indigenous territories. It charts the adventures of China Iron, Martín Fierros' abandoned wife, in her travels across the pampas in a wagon with her new-found friend and lover, Liz. In a unique reformulation of history and literary tradition, Gabriela Cabezón Cámara, with humour and sophistication, re-writes Martín Fierro from a feminist, LGBT, postcolonial point of view. She creates a hilarious novel that is

nevertheless incisive in its criticism of the way societies come into being, and the way they venerate mythical heroes.

***The Overstory* by Richard Powers (VINTAGE)**

ISBN: 9781784708245

A story of a vast, unknown and interconnected world above the one we know, Richard Powers' thirteenth book brings together the lives of strangers, each summoned by trees. Arching from antebellum New York to late twentieth-century Pacific Northwest, it is a glorious, ambitious novel of how we can learn to recognise a history and pattern to the world beyond our own. Through an epic series of tales, separated by location and time, we rediscover our lost interrelationship with the vast and magisterial sentience of trees, and in the process we find our redemption.

***Turning: Lessons from Swimming Berlin's Lakes* by Jessica J. Lee (Little, Brown)**

ISBN: 9780349008332

At the age of twenty-eight, Jessica Lee finds herself in Berlin. Alone. Lonely. She makes a decision that she believes will win her back her confidence and independence: she will swim fifty-two of the lakes around Berlin, no matter what the weather or season. This is the story of a beautiful obsession: of the thrill of a still, turquoise lake, of cracking the ice before submerging, of floating under blue skies, of tangled weeds and murkiness, of cool, fresh, spring swimming - of facing past fears of near drowning and of breaking free.

***How To Be Human* by Paula Coccozza (Cornerstone)**

ISBN: 9780099510772

When Mary arrives home from work one day to find a magnificent fox on her lawn - it is only the beginning. He brings gifts, and gradually makes himself at home. And as he listens to Mary, Mary listens back. She begins to hear herself for the first time in years. Her bullish ex-boyfriend, still lurking on the fringes of her life, would be appalled. So would the neighbours with a new baby. They only like wildlife that fits with the decor. But inside Mary a wildness is growing that will not be tamed.

***The Lowland* by Jhumpa Lahiri (Bloomsbury)**

ISBN: 9781408843543

From Subhash's earliest memories, at every point, his brother was there. In the suburban streets of Calcutta where they wandered before dusk and in the hyacinth-strewn ponds where they played for hours on end, Udayan was always in his older brother's sight. As U.S tanks roll into Vietnam and riots sweep across India - their brotherly bond can do nothing to forestall the tragedy that will upend their lives.

***At the Pond: Swimming at the Hampstead Ladies' Pond* by various (Daunt Books)**

ISBN: 9781911547396

In these essays we see the Pond from the perspectives of writers who have swum there. Esther Freud describes the life-affirming sensation of swimming through the seasons; Lou Stoppard pays tribute to the winter swimmers who break the ice; Margaret Drabble reflects on the golden Hampstead days of her youth; Sharlene Teo visits for the first time; and Nell Frizzell shares the view from her yellow lifeguard's canoe. At the Pond captures fourteen contemporary writers' impressions of this unique place.

***Ceremony* by Leslie Marmon Silko (Penguin Modern Classics)**

ISBN: 9780241441640

'Ceremony is the greatest novel in Native American literature. It is one of the greatest novels of any time and place' Sherman Alexie

Tayo, a young Second World War veteran of mixed ancestry, is coming home. But, returning to the Laguna Pueblo Reservation, he finds himself scarred by his experiences as a prisoner of war, and further wounded by the rejection he finds among his own people. Only by rediscovering the traditions, stories and ceremonies of his ancestors can he start to heal and find peace.

***99 Maps to Save the Planet* by KATAPULT (VINTAGE)**

ISBN: 9781913348854

Presenting a wealth of innovative scientific research and data in stunning, beautiful infographics, 99 Maps to Save the Planet provides us with instant snapshots of the destruction of our environment. At one glance, we can see the precarious state of our planet - but also realise how easy it would be to improve it.