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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★☆ PICTURE BOOKS

Barrington Bear Visits the Emperor: The Emperor Penguin That Is

Keith Szafranski
Keith Szafranski, illustrator
Small Bear Publishing (January 2008)
Hardcover $19.95 (48pp)
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When traveler and photographer Barrington Bear goes to Antarctica to see the Emperor Penguins, young readers learn about where the penguins live and how they raise their chicks. The photos are captivating, and the text is written for younger readers so they can follow along. Facts are interspersed with the photos and kids won't realize they're learning about science along the way. The glossary in the back will help with any new words, and the last pages also include a map and more facts about Emperor Penguins.

Szafranski is a wildlife and nature photographer whose work has appeared in *National Geographic* books and filmstrips. *Barrington Bear Visits the Emperor* is his first book, and the follow-up will depict a safari.

Of special note, a series of photos shows how baby penguins sit on their parents' feet to keep warm. Szafranski shows them walking with chicks still on their feet, and an older one trying to return to the warm spot, called a brood patch. He also inserts Barrington Bear into a few photos, which should hold young readers' attention. Throughout the book, readers see Barrington Bear taking photos from the opposite page, which will also help maintain children's interest.

Nonfiction can be hard to get children to read—they don't like reading bare facts. This book would be good for teachers, homeschoolers, or for anyone with a child who hasn't embraced reading yet. The stuffed bear is cute and always busy, the photographs make readers feel like they're standing right next to the penguins, and the facts are easy to learn because children "see" how they live and what it means. Suggested reading level is six to eight years of age.

This is a great combination of photos and facts about penguins presented in a manner that should entice children to read it and learn. This is an impressive first book in a series that children will be happy to find in stores.
JO ANN HAKOLA (May 1, 2008)

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