

★ **Earth Almanac: Nature's Calendar for Year-Round Discovery**

Ken Keffer

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Naturalist Ken Keffer's *Earth Almanac* is a delightful, fact-rich immersion into the seasonal wonders of the natural world.

Beginning with the winter solstice, the book gives budding naturalists a good overview of what goes on outdoors as the seasonal patterns of nature play out. Daily entries introduce little-known facts about North American plants, animals, weather, and geology, topped off by a bit of astronomy, that prove that nature is much more fascinating than the wildest fiction.

The book shows how to observe nature in action everywhere—in backyards, empty lots, and neighborhood parks, as well as in wild places all across the nation. For those who wish to make a contribution to research projects, special entries provide instructions on how to become a “Citizen Scientist” and collect information on species numbers and distribution.

Igniting the imagination, the book rewards curiosity with startling facts on topics that range from “the benefits of eating poop,” to how Jane Goodall’s work with chimpanzees changed the definition of “human,” to the fact that lovely white snow is actually home to snow fleas, snow worms, nematodes, and protozoans. Jeremy Collins’s precise, sensitive illustrations enliven the text and provide a visual field guide to the plants and animals likely to be found on a trek through the wild or the neighborhood.

The book’s enticing entries are a great way to get even small children interested in nature. Who would have thought that the “click, click, click” sound made on the roof by Santa’s reindeer (caribou) actually comes from tendons rubbing over small bones in their feet? Or that a family outing can help scientists when it becomes part of the Audubon Society’s “Christmas Bird Count,” the world’s longest-running citizen science program?

Lively and lovely, Ken Keffer’s *Earth Almanac* is a fun, enlightening guide to the wonders of nature throughout the seasons.

KRISTINE MORRIS (May / June 2020)

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