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Picture Books

Tender Moments In the Wild: Animals and Their Babies
Stephanie Maze, editor
Moonstone Press
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Animals love their babies—just like humans do.

The editor, whose *I Want to Be* career series was on VOYA's (Voice of Youth Advocates) Nonfiction Honor list and two titles of which were named *Outstanding Science Trade Books,* has gathered a team of world-renowned wildlife photographers such as Norbert Rosing and Anup Shah for her latest project. With simple phrasing and up-close shots of the animals, which range from lolling hippos to smooching cheetahs, young readers and non-readers alike will be entertained and will come away with a new outlook on the creature kingdom.

Using the camera to explore maternity, Maze introduces children to the various ways that mothering manifests itself in the wild. A pelican's maw opens wide, allowing her fuzzy baby to nose around inside for a bit of something filling. Family members gather around a mother elephant, providing a circle of calm in which she quietly nurses her calf. Mama crocodile transforms her usually treacherous jaws into a tote for her young litter.

Very small children will enjoy the pictures, although there are a few images of animals that for some may have frightening or unpleasant associations. However, if the book is read aloud, children will soon learn that even "scary" animals engage in loving behavior. Furthermore, little fingers will enjoy following the tiny, colorful figures that march around the edges of each page. Children just learning to read will benefit from the large type and the straightforward phrasing; uncomplicated sentences are easy to decipher, especially with the help of the accompanying photographs.

All readers will learn that the nurturing experiences they've shared with parents and friends extend into a world beyond their backyards. The message of connection across species will come as a surprise to some and can be appreciated by all.