



EVANSTON
PUBLIC
LIBRARY



2025 blueberry awards

ABOUT THE BLUEBERRY AWARD

Evanston Public Library created the Blueberry Award in 2021 to celebrate the best nature books that promote climate stewardship for kids. The Blueberry Awards honor children's literature that strengthens kids' connections with nature and fosters action for the planet. The Blueberry List features books primarily for children ages three to ten.



2025 BLUEBERRY AWARD WINNER



J 639.90968 Crull.K

The Black Mambas

The World's First All-woman Anti-poaching Unit

by Kelly Crull

Head out on patrol with the Black Mambas, South Africa's first women-led anti-poaching unit! These courageous women work in a nature reserve in South Africa's Greater Kruger National Park, home to the largest remaining populations of white rhinos. Get an unforgettable look at these environmental heroes.

Ages 6-10



BLUEBERRY VOTES

Blueberry Votes is a children's choice program in which K-2nd graders select their favorite Blueberry book. Preschool Blueberry Votes is a children's choice program in which 3-5 year olds select their favorite Blueberry book of the year.



J Picture Tagho.S

We Are the Wibbly!

A Tadpole's Tale

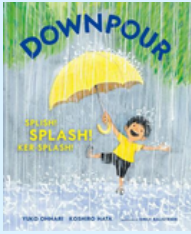
by Sarah Tagholm

Illustrated by Jane McGuinness

Embrace the journey of transformation with a hesitant tadpole who navigates metamorphosis. This story is an adventure of growth, change, and the exciting leap into a wider world.

Ages 3-7

Blueberry Votes Winner



J Picture Onari.Y

Downpour **Splish! Splash! Ker-splash!**

by Yūko Ōnari
Illustrated by Koshiro Hata

A little boy, listening to the drumming of the pouring rain, invites the falling droplets to join him in play.
Ages 3-6

Preschool Blueberry Votes Winner



CHANGEMAKER WINNERS

The Blueberry Committee chose two books for their outstanding achievement in rallying kids to climate action.



J 333.957 Perci.K

Safe Crossing

by Kari Percival

Every spring, frogs and salamanders travel from wooded uplands to vernal pools to mate. See how the kids and adults of the Amphibian Migration Team help them cross the roads constructed through their habitats and propose creative changes to help them thrive.
Ages 5-8



J 363.705 Loach.M

Climate Is Just the Start

by Mikaela Loach
Illustrated by Lauri Johnston

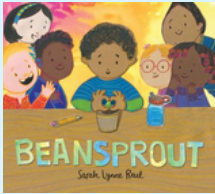
An empowering, hopeful guide for kids on fighting climate change and building a better world. Loach offers an optimistic roadmap, using personal stories to explain the crisis, its ties to social issues, and sharing accounts from global activists, urging readers to save the planet together.
Ages 8-12



BLUEBERRY HONOR BOOKS

The Blueberry Committee selected the following books for their distinguished achievement.

PICTURE BOOKS



J Picture Reul.S

Beansprout

by Sarah Lynne Reul

After a mystery seed for a class project fails to sprout, a disappointed child saves the remaining seeds and decides to plant them instead.

Ages 4-7



J Picture Goade.M

Moon Song

by Michaela Goade

A young Tlingit girl soothes her cousin's fear of the dark with a comforting song about the moonlight and the ocean.

Ages 4-8



J Picture Dulak.M

The Silver Shadow

by Mariosa Dulak Illustrated by Alea Marley

A girl exploring tide pools finds a stranded, baby silver shark. Under the hot sun, with the tide out, the sleek creature is stuck in the shallows. Can she return the lost shark to the ocean?

Ages 3-8



J Picture Sanch.A

A Sky That Sings

by Anita Sanchez & George Steele

Illustrated by Emily Mendoza

A blind girl leads her aunt through her local park to find her favorite feathered friend.

Ages 5-10



J Picture Farle.B

Worm Makes a Sandwich

by Brianne Farley

Worm wants to make you a sandwich! Worm showcases the full process from composting scraps into soil, planting, and growing the vegetables.

Ages 3-7

NONFICTION PICTURE BOOKS



J 638.1 Bell.K

Akeem Keeps Bees!

A Close-Up Look at the Honey Makers and Pollinators of Sankofa Farms

by Kamal E. Bell Illustrated by Darnell Johnson

Young Akeem and Kamal Bell of Sankofa Farms apiary teach beekeeping basics, illustrating the special role of bees on a farm.

Ages 6-10



J B Salas.A Fajar.S

Alberto Salas Plays Paka Paka Con La Papa

Join the Quest With Peru's Famed Scientist and Potato Expert

by Sara Andrea Fajardo

Illustrated by Juana Martinez-Neal

Peruvian scientist Alberto Salas believes the potato can change the world. This playful picture book biography follows Alberto's quest for wild, endangered potatoes.

Ages 4-8

2025 Siebert Award Winner



J 598.864 Stree.L

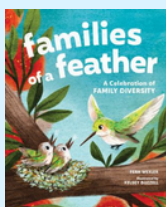
The Blue Jays That Grew a Forest

Saving Seeds in the Svalbard Global Seed Vault

by Lynn Street Illustrated by Anne Hunter

Blue jays, in gathering acorns for winter, inadvertently plant countless trees, becoming silent partners in the expansion of oak forests.

Ages 4-8



J 306.85 Wexle.F

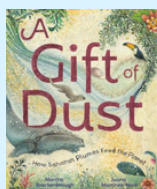
Families of a Feather

A Celebration of Family Diversity

by Fern Wexler Illustrated by Kelsey Buzzell

The diverse range of bird species illustrates a broad spectrum of family structures, all united by the love demonstrated between family members.

Ages 4-8



J 551.37 Brock.M

A Gift of Dust

How Saharan Plumes Feed the Planet

by Martha Brockenbrough

Illustrated by Juana Martinez-Neal

This picture book explores how Saharan Dust connects our planet, from slowing hurricanes to nourishing rainforests, revealing the huge impact of something so small.

Ages 4-8 and up.



J 598.864 Booth.L

I Am We

How Crows Come Together to Survive

by Leslie Barnard Booth

Illustrated by Alexandra Finkeldey

I Am We reveals the secret to crow survival in fall and winter: thousands cooperate, roosting together for community, warmth, and protection from predators.

Ages 5-8



J 581.467 Clend.M

Just in Case

Saving Seeds in the Svalbard Global Seed Vault

by Megan Clendenan Illustrated by Brittany Cicchese

The Svalbard Global Seed Vault, located deep within Norway's mountains, acts as a secure backup for the world's vital food crop seeds.

Ages 4-8



J 597.928 Gutie.B

Pearls in the Sand

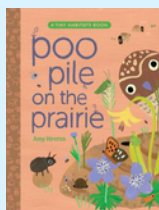
Protecting Sea Turtles In Oaxaca

by Beatriz Gutierrez Hernandez

Papá Grande works day and night to support sea turtles, from greeting them on the beach to protecting their eggs in the meticulously constructed hatchery.

Ages 4-8



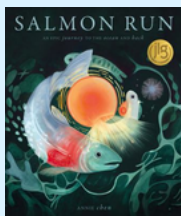


J 577.44 Hevro.A

Poo Pile on the Prairie

by Amy Hevron

Bison droppings are vital to prairie ecosystems, acting as small habitats that fertilize soil, disperse seeds, and provide food and shelter for small grassland species, thus supporting the entire food chain. Adorable, but scientifically rigorous.
Ages 4-8



J 597.56 Chen.A

Salmon Run

An Epic Journey to the Ocean and Back

by Annie Chen

Salmon Run narrates the full life cycle of a Pacific Coho salmon, from egg in a Washington State river, through her Pacific Ocean journey, and concluding with her return to her birthplace to spawn.
Ages 5-8



J 597.928 Hayas.L

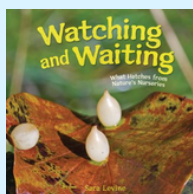
Saving Hawai'i's Honu

by Leslie Ann Hayashi

Illustrated by Kelly Pousette



American sea turtle scientist George Balazs moved to Hawai'i to save the commercially exploited green sea turtle (*honu*) population. His determined counts led Hawaiian legislators to ban commercialization, effectively saving the species.
Ages 4-8



J 591.468 Levin.S

Watching and Waiting

What Hatches From Nature's Nurseries

by Sara Levine

If you discover eggs, egg cases, or galls during your outdoor explorations, consider waiting and watching, and perhaps returning later to see what hatches.
Ages 4-9

EARLY READERS



JE Chin.C

Lily Lu to the Rescue

by Cherilyn Chin Illustrated by Tracy Nishimura Bishop

Lily joins her marine biologist mother on ocean adventures to help save endangered species in this chapter book series written by a marine biologist.

Ages 5-8



NONFICTION MIDDLE GRADE



J 641.3 Franc.J

Bug Snacks

How Eating Insects Can Change the World

by Jess French Illustrated by Zoe Ingram

Colorful illustrations and fun facts teach kids that bugs are a sustainable protein, reducing the environmental impact of animal farming.

Ages 6-10



J 595.799 Vermo.K

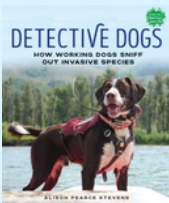
The Buzz on Wild Bees

The Little-Known Pollinators that Keep Our Planet Humming

by Kira Vermond Illustrated by June Steube

Most of the 20,000 discovered bee species are wild, solitary bees that do not live in hives. Learn about their vital ecological role, the threats they face, and how to help them.

Ages 7-10



J 636.70886
Steve.A

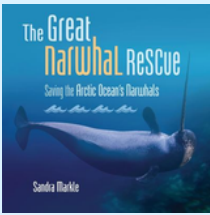
Detective Dogs

How Working Dogs Sniff Out Invasive Species

by Alison Pearce Stevens

These environmental detective dogs are on the frontlines against invasive species. Enjoy a lively introduction to North America's most troublesome invasives.

Ages 8-12



J 599.543 Markl.S

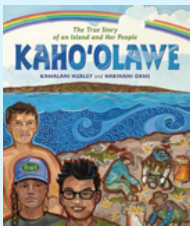
The Great Narwhal Rescue

Saving the Arctic Ocean's Narwhals

by Sandra Markle

With their long tusks, narwhals are unique whales that live in the Arctic Ocean. A new challenge emerges as the Arctic sea ice melts: noise pollution. The thrum of engines and other man-made sounds threaten the narwhal's ability to locate food, communicate with other narwhals, and navigate using echolocation while migrating. How can we reduce noise pollution in the Arctic Ocean to help them?

Ages 9-12



J 996.922 Hurlle.K

Kaho'olawe

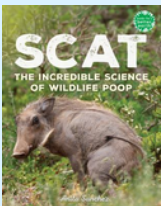
The True Story of an Island and Her People

by Kamalani Hurley

Illustrated by Harinani Orme

This island, sacred to Native Hawaiians, transformed from a volcanic formation to a U.S. military bombing range. Activists successfully reclaimed the sacred place and began rewilding efforts.

Ages 8-11



J 591.5 Sanch.A

Scat

The Incredible Science of Wildlife Poop

by Anita Sanchez

Discover how poop can actually help protect our planet in this nonfiction book on the nutrient cycle and scientific problem solving.

Ages 9-12



J 333.7923 Kelle.T

We Carry the Sun

by Tae Keller Illustrated by Rachel Wada

Newbery Medalist Tae Keller's debut picture book is a splendid account of humanity's relationship with the sun and a timely call to action for a brighter, cleaner future.

Ages 7-10



MIDDLE GRADE FICTION



J Chapter Krish.U

The Sunshine Project

by Uma Krishnaswami
Illustrated by Julianna Swaney

Anil discovers that his city's new solar panel factory threatens local species and displaces villagers. Is it time to speak up?
Ages 8-12



J Fiction Kelly.L

Three Blue Hearts

by Lynne Kelly

After a storm, Max rescues an injured octopus and promises to return her to the sea with friends' help, a plan complicated by his politician father and the octopus's biology.
Ages 8-12



J Fiction Messn.K

The Trouble with Heroes

by Kate Messner Illustrated by Julie Kuo

Two years after his hero firefighter father's death, failing seventh-grader and non-athlete Finn is compelled to climb 46 mountain peaks this summer to redeem himself after making headlines.
Ages 9-14

FOLKTALES



J Fiction Ryan.P

El Niño

by Pam Muñoz Ryan Illustrated by Joe Cepeda

Combining a significant El Niño weather event with a swimmer's grief and powerful elements of mythology and folklore, this story explores resilience, hope, and identity. The blue ink of the text and the amazing illustrations enhance the reading experience.
Ages 8-12

GRAPHIC NOVELS



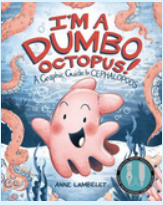
J 594.5 Lloyd.M

Winging It

by Megan Wagner Lloyd
Illustrated by Michelle Mee Nutter

Twelve-year-old Luna struggles with her move from California to Virginia until a visit to the National Museum of Natural History, where seeing a luna moth (her namesake) connects her to her late mother.

Ages 8-12



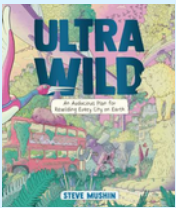
J 594.5 Lambe.A

I'm a Dumbo Octopus

A Graphic Guide to Cephalopods
by Anne Lambelet

A dumbo octopus gives a tour of cephalopods (cuttlefish, nautilus, octopuses, squids). When he can't explain his own uniqueness, his friends step in with fascinating facts.

Ages 7-11



J 363.7 Mushi.S

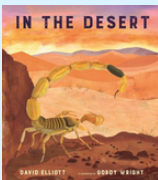
Ultrawild

An Audacious Plan for Rewilding
Every City on Earth

by Steve Mushin

Mind-bendingly original and full of intricate illustrations, *Ultrawild* is totally unique, containing over one hundred outrageously funny, scientifically plausible inventions for rewilding cities and saving the planet. Ages 9-18

POETRY



J 811 Ellio.D

In the Desert

by David Elliott Illustrated by Gordy Wright

With wonder and wit, David Elliott's poems look beyond the Sahara's blinding surface to the rich flora and fauna of the world's largest hot desert, depicted in Gordy Wright's vibrant illustrations. Ages 3-7



J 513.2 Levy.D

Photo Ark 1-2-3

An Animal Counting Book in Poetry and Pictures
by Debbie Levy Photographed by Joel Sartore

A delightful number-themed picture book pairing spectacular animal photos with lively poems. Ages 3-7



2025 Blueberry Committee

Betsy Bird
Karen Bireta
Meghan Bohn
Kim Diebold
Abby Dye
Laura Florian
Hilda Gonzalez
Ethan Johnson

Sam Lieb
Bessie Mbadugha
Martha Meyer
Andrea Perrin
Bridget Petrites
Cara Pratt
Lauren Solarski
Jessica Iverson Wu

For more information, visit www.epl.org/blueberry
or email Martha Meyer at msmeyer@cityofevanston.org

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2025 Blueberry Award Winners
An online list of the books featured in this booklet



2025 Best Nature Board Books
Board books for children ages 0-5



2025 Blueberry Adult Books
Nature and climate change books for adults



2025 Blueberry Educator Resources
Nature and climate change books for educators