**National Outdoor Book Awards**

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NOTE: Color scans (print quality), complete reviews, and other supplementary art work may be downloaded from: <http://www.noba-web.org/bookrel22.htm>

**2022 NATIONAL OUTDOOR BOOK AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED**

POCATELLO, ID. A woman’s obsession with the kingfisher, a thriller about climbing the world’s eighth highest peak, a Viet Nam veteran’s fascination with grizzly bears, a life amongst caribou in the Northwest Arctic. All of these and more are the themes of winning books in the 2022 National Outdoor Book Awards.

A total of 19 books were chosen as winners or silver medalists in this year's contest which is celebrating its 26th year. Sponsors of the program include the National Outdoor Book Awards Foundation, Idaho State University and the Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education.

Awards are presented in ten categories which range from Natural History Literature to Biography to Journeys.

The winning book in the Journeys category is “Halcyon Journey: In Search of the Belted Kingfisher.” It’s about Marina Richie, a mom and budding citizen scientist who attempts to find and observe a nesting pair of kingfishers.

Day after day, Richie searches for a kingfisher nest near her home in Montana. As we follow her along, she weaves together scientific studies with stories of her family. We learn that the kingfisher is the halcyon of Greek mythology, a bird with magical powers who could calm the waters of the sea when it nested.

Her simple desire to observe kingfishers turns into a halcyon quest and sends her on far-flung adventures to other continents to learn more about these mythic birds.

“This is superb nature writing,” said Ron Watters, the chair of the National Outdoor Book Awards. It is engrossing, enlightening and illuminating. Marina Richie is clearly an exciting new voice in nature writing.”

One work of fiction was among this year’s winner. Taking top honors in the Outdoor Literature category is “Breathless*,*” a spine-tingling novel transporting readers to the icy slopes of Manaslu, the world’s eighth highest peak.

Written by Amy McCulloch, it combines the dangers of high altitude climbing with a sociopathic murderer among one of the teams. It comes as no surprise that McCulloch expertly captures the drama of high altitude climbing in this book. She is a Himalayan climber, having summited Manaslu, the youngest Canadian woman to do so.

“There are very few well written and realistic works of fiction on climbing,” said Watters, “and this gripping page-turner is clearly one.”

The non-fiction winner in the Outdoor Literature category is “Was it Worth It? A Wilderness Warrior’s Long Trail Home.” Author Doug Peacock writes about how his studies of grizzly bears helped heal the scars left from his Viet Nam experiences.

“Peacock, a leader in writing about getting outdoors, is not only an important voice for protecting wild areas,” said Jim Moss, an outdoor industry attorney and one of the judges of the awards, “He’s a darn good writer. This book represents the best of his writing and we get to really know this remarkable individual.”

One of the great migrations of the animal world is the subject of the winner of the Natural History category. Book is titled “A Thousand Trails Home” and is by Seth Kantner. Twice yearly in Alaska, caribou move between summer and winter ranges, typically walking over 2,000 miles. Kantner lives along the migration path and describes his life – and the lives of native Alaskans - dependent upon caribou.

“This book is a remarkable achievement, presenting natural history in a fresh and rich way,” said John Miles, former dean and professor of Environmental Studies at Western Washington University. “It is a deeply emotional book in which Seth Kantner shares his love for the land, wildlife and people. Simply compelling and marvelous.”

Children’s books are also represented in the awards. The winner is “Alaska for the Birds” by Susan Ewing. Oriented to children in the 5 to 8 year group, it describes 14 birds. The birds can be found nearly anywhere and children don’t need to be from Alaska to enjoy it.

“What makes this book stand out is a combination of poems and colorful illustrations,” said Watters, “The poems are pure fun – and they rhyme in a musical way which makes it a joy to read to children.”

Complete reviews of these and the other 2022 winners may be found at the National Outdoor Book Awards website at: [www.noba-web.org](http://www.noba-web.org).

Here is a list of winners.

**Journeys.** Winner. *Halcyon Journey: In Search of the Belted Kingfisher*. By Marina Richie. Oregon State University Press, Corvallis. ISBN: 9780870712036.

**Outdoor Literature (Fiction).**  Winner. *Breathless: A Thriller*. By Amy McCulloch. Viking/Penguin Random House – Canada, Toronto. ISBN 978035242852.

**Outdoor Literature (Non-fiction).**  Winner. *Was it Worth It? A Wilderness Warrior’s Long Trail Home*. By Doug Peacock. Patagonia Books, Ventura, CA. ISBN 9781952338045.

**Outdoor Literature (Non-fiction).** Winner. *Headwaters: The Adventures, Obsession, and Evolution of a Fly Fisherman*. By Dylan Tomine. Patagonia Books, Ventura, CA. ISBN 9781952338076.

**History/Biography.** Winner. *A Life Lived Wild: Adventures at the Edge of the Map*. By Rick Ridgeway. Patagonia Books, Ventura, CA. ISBN 9781938340994.

**History/Biography.** Winner. *Written in the Snows: Across Time on Skis in the Pacific Northwest*. By Lowell Skoog. The Mountaineers Books, Seattle. ISBN 9781680512908.

**Natural History Literature.** Winner. *A Thousand Trails Home: Living with Caribou*. By Seth Kantner. The Mountaineers Books, Seattle. ISBN 9781594859700.

**Natural History Literature.** Silver Medalist. *The Treeline: The Last Forest and the Future of Life on Earth*. By Ben Rawlence. St. Martins Press, New York. ISBN 9781250270238.

**Nature and the Environment.** Winner. *Seeing the Silence: The Beauty of the World’s Most Quiet Places*. Photography and Text by Pete McBride. Rizzoli, New York. ISBN 9780847870868.

**Nature and the Environment.** Silver Medalist. *The Skies Above: Storm Clouds, Blood Moons, and Other Everyday Phenomena*. By Dennis Mersereau. Mountaineers Books, Seattle. ISBN 9781680515558.

**Children’s Category.** Winner. *Alaska is for the Birds! Fourteen Favorite Feathered Friends*. Poems by Susan Ewing. Illustrations by Evon Zerbetz. Alaska Northwest Books, Portland, OR. ISBN 9781513128665.

**Design*.*** Winner.  *Our National Monuments: America’s Hidden Gems*. By QT Luong. Terra Galleria Press, San Jose, CA. ISBN 9781733576079.

**Design.** Winner. *Drawn to Birds:* *A Naturalist’s Sketchbook*. By Jenny deFouw Geuder. Adventure Publications, Cambridge, MN. ISBN 9781647552251.

**Design.** Silver Medalist. *Inside the High Sierra* by Claude Fiddler. Claude Fiddler, Crowley Lake, CA. ISBN: 9781938393396.

**Classic.** Winner. *Camp 4: Recollections of a Yosemite Rockclimber*. By Steve Roper. The Mountaineers Books, Seattle. ISBN 9780898865875.

**Nature Guides.** Winner*. Common Bees of Eastern North America*. By Olivia Messinger Carril and Joseph S. Wilson. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ. ISBN9780691175492.

**Nature Guides.** Silver Medalist. *Beetles of Western North America*. By Arthur V. Evans. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ. ISBN 9780691164281.

**Outdoor Adventure Guides** **(Guidebooks)**. Winner. *Rocky Mountain National Park: The Complete Guide*. By James Kaiser. Destination Press, Kalispell, MT. ISBN 9781940754475.

**Outdoor Adventure Guides (Instructional)** Winner. *How to Suffer Outside: A Beginner’s Guide to Hiking and Backpacking* by Diana Helmuth. Illustrations by Latasha Dunston. Mountaineers Books, Seattle. ISBN 9781680513110.

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**Full Reviews of Winners**

**Journeys.** Winner. *Halcyon Journey: In Search of the Belted Kingfisher*. By Marina Richie. Oregon State University Press, Corvallis. ISBN: 9780870712036.

The kingfisher is the halcyon of Greek mythology, a bird with magical powers who could calm the waters of the sea when it nested. In this beautifully rendered book, Marina Richie sets out on a halcyon quest, an obsession actually, to find and observe a nesting pair of kingfishers. But first she must find the nest. We hike along with her, morning after chilly morning as she searches the banks of a creek near her home in Montana. As we follow along, she adroitly weaves into her narrative scientific studies, family stories, and the influence of her naturalist father. All those chilly mornings are finally rewarded when she finds the birds’ nesting hole in the side of a cutbank. The obsession broadens in scope and sends her on far-flung adventures to other continents to learn more about these mythic birds. This is superb nature writing: engrossing, enlightening and illuminating – and heralds the introduction of a new, powerful voice of the genre.

**Outdoor Literature.** Fiction Winner. *Breathless: A Thriller*. By Amy McCulloch. Viking/Penguin Random House – Canada, Toronto. ISBN 978035242852.

Hold on to your seats. This spine-tingling novel will transport you to the icy slopes of Manaslu, the eighth highest peak in the world. One climber dies from an accident. Then another, but this time, the realization is spreading through the team that it’s no accident. There is a murderer present. Who might be next? It is no coincidence that author Amy McCulloch so expertly captures the thrill and dangers of high altitude climbing in this book. She is a Himalayan climber, having summited Manaslu, the youngest Canadian woman to do so. There are very few well written and realistic works of fiction on climbing and this gripping thriller is clearly one.

**Outdoor Literature.**  Non-fiction Winner. *Was it Worth It? A Wilderness Warrior’s Long Trail Home*. By Doug Peacock. Patagonia Books, Ventura, CA. ISBN 9781952338045.

The first thing you notice about Doug Peacock’s writing is his devil-may-care attitude. His experience in Vietnam certainly plays a role in that temperament. After returning from military duty there in the 1960’s, all he wanted was to spend time alone in the wilds of the West. In particular, he found solace studying and filming grizzly bears in Yellowstone. From Yellowstone, he expanded his range, travelling to Mexico to track down the remnants of a grizzly population.. Instead of being the tracker, however, he was the tracked when one chilling night he and his companion were stalked by a jaguar. The jaguar story, along with others in the book, represent some of Peacock’s best writing. You’ll find him always questioning, always asking whether it was worth it. Was it? The answer lies somewhere in this engrossing read.

**Outdoor Literature.** Non-fiction Winner. *Headwaters: The Adventures, Obsession, and Evolution of a Fly Fisherman*. By Dylan Tomine. Patagonia Books, Ventura, CA. ISBN 9781952338076.

Dylan Tomine is no slouch as a writer. He has a light hearted approach and this book is certain to entertain whether you fish or not. As you progress through the book, you’ll find Tomine going through a transformation. His writing is as good as ever, but after travelling the world and returning home to the rivers of the Pacific Northwest, he comes to the realization that his life’s pursuit is in danger. Fish that were once in abundance are dwindling. This is one for your list. Read it for its excellent writing and Tomine’s eloquent plea to strive toward a better future.

**History/Biography.** Winner. *A Life Lived Wild: Adventures at the Edge of the Map*. By Rick Ridgeway. Patagonia Books, Ventura, CA. ISBN 9781938340994.

Rick Ridgeway is one of the great adventurers of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. He was on the first American ascent of K2 and made the first traverse of Borneo. He was a key figure in the attempt to climb the seven summits, the highest point on each continent, and was the primary author of the book chronicling the climbs. His writings span the globe: North America, South America, Asia, Africa and Antarctica. Joining him are a who’s who of outdoor personalities. But it’s not solely about adventure. It’s also about the special times with family and friends. All in all, Ridgeway’s book is a perfect testament to a life lived wild.

**History/Biography.** Winner. *Written in the Snows: Across Time on Skis in the Pacific Northwest*. By Lowell Skoog. The Mountaineers Books, Seattle. ISBN 9781680512908.

Over 20 years in the making comes one outstanding work on ski history. Lowell Skoog covers the northwest scene like none other: Alpine, Nordic, backcountry and even fastest ascents and descents. But the book is not just a recounting of history; Skoog immerses himself into that history by organizing long forgotten ski races and retracing historic mountain traverses. Highly readable and filled with fascinating stories of the past, this is a fine addition to the literature of skiing.

**Natural History Literature.** Winner. *A Thousand Trails Home: Living with Caribou*. By Seth Kantner. The Mountaineers Books, Seattle. ISBN 9781594859700.

If you’ve been following past winners in this category, you will find this a very different kind of book. It includes some science, of course, but this is natural history from a personal perspective. Through a series of narratives, author Kantner unveils a life that revolves around the wilds of Northwest Arctic and the twice yearly migration of caribou. It’s about a life of subsistence – a life that had sustained native Alaskans, the Inupiat, for centuries. The hunting of caribou was central to their existence, and consequently there are frequent depictions of hunting in this book. But it is also about changes over the last decades – social, political, technological – which have altered the lifestyles of those who live there. It’s a book filled with wild passion and love of place that will keep you absorbed well into the night.

**Natural History Literature.** Silver Medalist. *The Treeline: The Last Forest and the Future of Life on Earth*. By Ben Rawlence. St. Martins Press, New York. ISBN 9781250270238.

Ben Rawlence is captivated with the taiga, the boreal forest, that band of hardy trees which encircle the globe’s northern regions. In fact, we all should be thankful for this great forest, the largest of the world’s biomes which breathes oxygen into our atmosphere and stores vast amounts of carbon. In essence, it’s part of the planet’s respiratory system. You might say it is a great, green lung. But that green lung isn’t as healthy as it once was. The boreal forest is changing due to man’s activities - and that has consequences everywhere. For an illuminating look at this vital biome, follow along as Rawlence journeys from place to place, conversing with scientists and spending time with the people who live in the boreal forest and experience it firsthand.

**Nature and the Environment.** Winner. *Seeing the Silence: The Beauty of the World’s Most Quiet Places*. Photography and Text by Pete McBride. Rizzoli, New York. ISBN 9780847870868.

When photographer Pete McBride uses the word “silence,” he means the absence of man-made sounds. The silence of nature, he writes, can range from “pin drop quiet one second and wonderfully loud the next.” We learn that there are few places where one can hear only nature’s silence. Even in wilderness areas, the frequent rumble of jets is heard as they pass over. McBride has travelled the globe, seeking out those rare hide-aways of nature’s silence, and in this fine work, he shares what he has found through stories and breathtaking photography.

**Nature and the Environment.** Silver Medalist. *The Skies Above: Storm Clouds, Blood Moons, and Other Everyday Phenomena*. By Dennis Mersereau. Mountaineers Books, Seattle. ISBN 9781680515558.

This is the sort of book that you can page through time and time again and always find something new and fascinating. The title says it all. It is about the skies and what you see when you look up. The author guides you through each of the seasons and the science behind thunderstorms, blizzards, tornadoes, hurricanes, rainbows, and much more. It’s a first-rate reference book, perfect for any outdoor lover’s library.

**Children’s Category.** Winner. *Alaska is for the Birds! Fourteen Favorite Feathered Friends*. Poems by Susan Ewing. Illustrations by Evon Zerbetz. Alaska Northwest Books, Portland, OR. ISBN 9781513128665.

This is a wonderful surprise for children in the 5 to 8 year old group. And the best thing? A child doesn’t have to live in Alaska to enjoy it! The 14 birds covered within its pages are found nearly everywhere. What makes this book stand out is a combination of poems and colorful illustrations. The poems are pure fun – and they rhyme in a musical way which makes it a joy to read to children. The luminous artwork fits perfectly with the poems. There’s a bonus too. The end of the book has complete descriptions of each of the birds, a helpful reference for moms or dads when an inquiring mind wants to know more.

**Design*.*** Winner.  *Our National Monuments: America’s Hidden Gems*. By QT Luong. Terra Galleria Press, San Jose, CA. ISBN 9781733576079.

The artistry of renowned photographer QT Luong is on full display in this stunning large format work. Luong navigates us to 27 national monuments. Twenty-one are in found in the western states, but there are also marine national monuments in the Pacific, a glimpse of which is provided by photographer Ian Shive.. What a sumptuous treat this book is – but it is also a reminder that these areas need protectors. To emphasize its conservation message, Luong provides a voice for 27 conservation organizations each associated with one of the monuments covered in the book.

**Design.** Winner. *Drawn to Birds:* *A Naturalist’s Sketchbook*. By Jenny deFouw Geuder. Adventure Publications, Cambridge, MN. ISBN 9781647552251.

This charming book is a splendid melding of art and text. Open it and the book immediately radiates appeal, drawing you in with a profusion of colorful watercolors. The watercolors are supplemented with text etched in delicate calligraphy, easy on the eyes and in perfect harmony with the artwork. After an introduction on how to identify birds, Jenny deFouw Geuder covers more than 60 bird species found in the backyard or in nearby parks. She includes ideas on how to create a better habitat in your yard and ties it up with a segment on common wildflowers and insects.

**Design.** Silver Medalist. *Inside the High Sierra* by Claude Fiddler. Claude Fiddler, Crowley Lake, CA. ISBN: 9781938393396.

It was the great conservationist, John Muir who gave the Sierra Mountains the name “The Range of Light.” He was enraptured by the range, by its “glorious floods of light” and “the white beams of the morning streaming through the passes.” If there is any photographer who has captured Muir’s floods of light in his images, it is Claude Fiddler. In fact, Fiddler was the photographer of an earlier work, the much lauded *The High Sierra: Wilderness of Light*. This new collection of photographs doesn’t disappoint. It’s full of feeling, demonstrating his keen eye for bringing out the emotional impact of the landscape. It is, in essence, a visual expression of his long and devoted love affair with the Range of Light.

**Classic.** Winner. *Camp 4: Recollections of a Yosemite Rockclimber*. By Steve Roper. The Mountaineers Books, Seattle. ISBN 9780898865875.

First published in 1994 and now in its seventh printing, *Camp 4* is clearly a classic work on rock climbing. It covers the golden age of Yosemite climbing, that quarter century period from 1947 to 1971. Author Steve Roper was there in the 1960’s, a part of a curious mix of personalities and egos who were associated with the ground breaking climbs that marked the period. “I strode among giants,” he writes, “though at the time I felt more like a misfit associating with oddballs.” Much could have been written about Yosemite’s history during this period, yet Roper has wisely compressed it into just the right amount for a fascinating read.

**Nature Guides.** Winner*. Common Bees of Eastern North America*. By Olivia Messinger Carril and Joseph S. Wilson. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ. ISBN9780691175492.

Let’s face it. Identifying bees isn’t the easiest task in the world, but this new, innovative work is here to help. What sets this guide apart from others is the use of striking, high resolution color photographs which have been overlaid with key identifying marks. It even includes silhouettes which depict the actual size of the bee. Covering 125 of the most commonly seen species in the eastern US and Canada, this fine guide raises the standards of insect identification.

**Nature Guides.** Silver Medalist. *Beetles of Western North America*. By Arthur V. Evans. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ. ISBN 9780691164281.

If any guidebook on insects could be called a scientist’s magnum opus, this is it. It is the only comprehensive, fully color guide to the beetles of the western US and Canada. The statistics are almost mind numbing: 640 pages long, filled with more than 1,500 photos and covering 1,428 species. You can’t go wrong with this guide. For western beetles, it’s the go-to guide.

**Outdoor Adventure Guides.** Guidebook Winner. *Rocky Mountain National Park: The Complete Guide*. By James Kaiser. Destination Press, Kalispell, MT. ISBN 9781940754475.

If you are planning to visit Rocky Mountain National Park, this is your guide. With a rugged cover and sized perfectly for carrying in a pack, it is designed to be used and taken wherever you go. Intelligently designed with color throughout, it has a bit of everything about the park with introductory segments on geology, ecology, wildlife, and history. That’s followed by places to see and helpful suggestions on camping, hiking and backpacking.

**Outdoor Adventure Guides.** Instructional Winner. *How to Suffer Outside: A Beginner’s Guide to Hiking and Backpacking* by Diana Helmuth. Illustrations by Latasha Dunston. Mountaineers Books, Seattle. ISBN 9781680513110.

The writing style in this how-to book forges a different path from other works on backpacking. You might say it is cheeky – witty, smart, and often opinionated. If you’ve been dreaming about giving backpacking a try and need a little nudge, author Diana Helmuth is there to give that nudge. “Yeah,” she writes, “We’re going to do it. We’re going to get you out there.” (One note: some of the language may be objectionable to some readers.)