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Swampwalker's Journal: A Wetlands Year



Synopsis

David Carroll is an artist, both literary and visual, who has dedicated his life to swamps and other wetlands. He knows them better than most of us know our backyards, our hometowns, our best friends. He has stayed in touch with individual turtles for twenty years, watching them dig into hibernation in the winter, greeting them as they emerge in the spring, following them as they breed, feed, and roam through the warmer, wetter months. He knows frogs and snakes, bears and beavers, muskrats and minks, dragonflies, caddis flies, birds, water lilies, pickerel weed, cattails, sedges, and everything that swims, flies, trudges, slithers, or sinks its roots in swamp, marsh, or bog. In *Swampwalker's Journal* Carroll shares his knowledge and passion with the rest of us, taking us on a miraculous year-long journey through the wetlands, revealing why they are so important to his life, to ours, to all life on Earth.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Wetland. The very word makes environmentalists swoon and real estate developers curse. While squishy places like swamps and bogs used to be considered unfit for human habitation, the 19th and 20th centuries saw a veritable festival of "reclamation" as the world's wetlands were transformed into land usable by humans. But what beauty and natural utility was lost in the process? In *Swampwalker's Journal*, David M. Carroll transcends the political to find joy in the damp places he has loved since he was a boy. In chapters describing his favorite vernal pools, marshes, swamps, ponds, and bogs, Carroll describes hours spent watching animals frolic in their moist,

vegetated homes. Braving mosquito bites and the wrath of bears, he embarks on a journey through these mysterious, underappreciated ecosystems and records their ups and downs faithfully, complete with exquisite illustrations. You feel almost as if you're reading his field journals, the writing is so immediate and full of detail. Here, he describes a hunting heron: He keeps as still as the breathless afternoon for a time, then moves again, taking several slow strides, each accompanied by a rhythmic, gradual curvilinear extension and retraction of his serpentine neck. From time to time he redirects his head, his long, sharp bill poised, his avid eyes ablaze with focus and intent. His movements are effected with such heron stealth that even in motion he could pass unseen. Carroll saves his plea for the preservation of these fragile, fading landscapes until the epilogue, allowing readers to become as charmed as he is by the wetlands he loves. Annie Dillard calls David Carroll "a genius, a madman, a national treasure," and you'll agree when you've read this beautiful piece of nature writing, an unforgettable "tour de swamp." --Therese Littleton

Artist, writer and environmentalist Carroll completes his "wet-sneaker trilogy" (The Year of the Turtle; Trout Reflections) with this intimate and impassioned exploration of wetlands throughout the northeastern U.S. By attempting to capture the "defining essence" of these places—their hydrology, structure, signature plant and animal species—Carroll hopes to inspire both a greater appreciation of wetlands and a desire to help protect them. An ardent student of swamps since his first childhood encounter with a spotted turtle, the author is at his best describing the often-overlooked natural dramas unfolding around him: great congresses of salamanders engaged in communal love play; doomed tadpoles searching desperately for shade and water during a drought; a painted turtle's futile attempts to elude a determined raccoon. A patient and gifted observer, Carroll returns to the same haunts season after season in search of old friends like Ariadne, a spotted turtle he has met each spring for 14 years. Amateur naturalists will especially enjoy his carefully detailed descriptions and line drawings, and his thorough knowledge of wetland species. Carroll's anger about the threats facing these increasingly rare areas, and the scorn he evinces toward many environmentalists, strike the only discordant notes in an otherwise lyrical and reflective book. 150 b&w line drawings. Author tour. (Aug.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

I really liked this book. The book is a series of short stories, really, each focusing on one of the author's experiences in a different type of New England wetland. Together they make a great whole, but you could pick it up and enjoy reading the chapters in any order. The prose leans towards the poetic, so sometimes it was hard to pick it up and read, but once I did, I also had trouble putting it

down! I liked the book so much it made me go out and look for frogs last week!

This book really gets your mind back into nature. The effort on detail yet the subtle explanations enable a biologist or a novice to follow this journey fondly as David treks through various habitats and interacts with biota. As a conservationist with herpetofauna at heart, I greatly enjoyed this book and only wished there were more thinkers and doers like Mr. Carroll.

Love this book,,,,,.....if you like to read about the natural world and like to read nature journals, you will not want to miss this

David Carroll is an amazing naturalist who captures the wonder of the areas about which he writes. Drawings are beautifully rendered.

Good book, well written and has a lot of valuable information. My family all like it, and we will use it a lot.

Mr. Carroll has captured nature as it truly is. Like a fine craftsman he was one with the subject and as an artist he has accurately recorded what he observed and has presented the information coherently. I'm left with an indelible, poignant legacy.

she says it is very beautiful , next day arrive. love it . as description. Love this product! It's a gem! I never realized cutting veggies could be so easy. Disclaimer I've never had nice knives before so I'm not sure what I'm comparing it to. I just know I'm happy!

David M. Carroll is one of the finest nature writer/philosophers I've ever come across in my entire reading career. Swampwalker's Journal is a book to be savored, relied upon. Carroll knows the lives of the wetlands so intimately, from first-hand experience over long years, that you know you're getting a privileged glimpse into deep nature. Added to that, he is a truly masterful illustrator, and a graceful, profound writer. I'll be waiting to buy any other book he produces.....

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