

Book Reviews

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FISH

Ray Troll's Shocking Fish Tales: Fish, Romance, and Death in Pictures. By Ray Troll and Brad Matsen. 1991. GTE Discovery Publications, Inc. (22020 20th Ave. S.E., Bothell, WA 98021). 103 pp. Paperback \$15.95.



Ray Troll's Shocking Fish Tales: Fish, Romance, and Death in Pictures is a unique collection of impressive artwork focusing on fish indigenous to the Pacific coast of North America. In his often surrealistic, always intriguing pictures, Troll explores several different artistic styles ranging from vibrant poster imagery to time-consuming, exquisitely detailed abstractions, some of which are reminiscent of M.C. Escher's work. Other illustrations appear to be sketches of suddenly inspired ideas. The artist achieves these diverse effects using a variety of media including colored pencils, pen and ink, silk-screen, charcoal, and/or acrylics. The fish concept is blended with underlying themes touching the Native American ties to fish, the contemporary fishing industry, the stages of the fish life cycle, humor (Troll is an integral part in many of his art pieces), and a multitude of abstract fish/human relationships.

Highlighting the pictorial content are the informative facts, short stories, folklore, essays and anecdotes of Brad Matsen. The text may peak one's curiosity, thereby enticing the reader to

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investigate other sources and learn more about the multitude of ichthyic aspects presented. However, not all of the statements are accurate; for example, a turtle is referred to as a "repulsive amphibian" whereas turtles are reptiles. The book contains an acknowledgment section but does not list any written references. Overall, Matsen's comments and tales are enlightening and assist the reader to fully appreciate the yarn behind the illustrations.

Although the text is written in an extremely casual style, ideal for light reading and oriented toward the young adult, fish enthusiasts of all ages will find this book enjoyable. The overall atmosphere of the book is whimsical, intending to be more of a pleasure than a mere collection of dry facts. The full-color pages are printed on quality paper yielding a reasonably priced book. Listed next to each print are the illustration's title, year produced, media applied, and frame size. This picture book is not loaded with technical details and diagrams; instead, the book focuses on the ecological harmonies and disharmonies between humans and the aquatic dwellers. Both the artwork and the literature centralize around the emotional, if not spiritual, side of fish instead of strictly adhering to unadulterated science. This collection of drawings is a must for anyone interested in fish portrayals outside of the realms of reality and fact. For other readers, this book may open a previously undiscovered door to the fascinating world of fish and fish tales.

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ENVIRONMENT

The Atlas of Endangered Animals. The Atlas of Endangered Places. By Steve Pollack. 1993. Facts on File, Inc. (460 Park Avenue South, New York, NY). 64 pp. \$16.95 each.



These books comprise a two-volume series written by Steve Pollack to promote environmental awareness. The background

information of this series indicates that these books were designed for young adults. I feel that these books are most appropriate for students from grades 6-9.

The Atlas of Endangered Species provides a brief introduction to the problems that have caused many animal species to become threatened or endangered. The introduction also describes general activities that people can do to help safeguard endangered animals. The remainder of the book is organized by geographic areas of the world (i.e. Central America, eastern Europe, northern Africa). Each geographic area has a detailed topographic map, with a scale and insert that indicates the location of the area of interest in the world. On each map, the endangered species of the area are identified by symbols placed in locations that reflect each animal species habitat and range.

Located opposite each map, the endangered or threatened animal species of each region are described briefly. Wonderful photographs are used with each animal. The *Atlas* uses a series of symbols to tell the status of each animal species, from commercially threatened to extinct. In addition, symbols show four general activities that have caused the animal species to become threatened. At the end of the volume, there is a glossary and a list of organizations that can be contacted for further information.

The Atlas of Endangered Places is organized in a similar manner to *The Atlas of Endangered Animals*. This volume focuses on manmade activities that have harmed ecosystems in the various regions of the world. As in the other *Atlas*, colorful photographs illustrate activities that are of special concern in each region. Opposite the descriptive page is a regional map with symbols used to identify the activities of greatest concern in each region. Positive activities, such as protective legislation, are also described in appropriate areas of the text.

Both volumes of this series are colorful, informative and well organized. *The Atlas of Endangered Places* is more unique in treating its subject matter in an atlas format. As such, it is as appropriate for use in a geography class as it would be in a biology or environmental science class. I have some con-