

Book Reviews

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CHILDREN'S SCIENCE

The **LOOK CLOSER** series of children's books is from Covenant Garden Books Ltd. (95 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016). Each book is 29 pp. Paperback \$4.95.

Tide Pool. By Christiane Gunzi. 1998.
Pond Life. By Barbara Taylor. 1998.
Desert Life. By Barbara Taylor. 1998.
Rain Forest. By Barbara Taylor. 1998.

 Each book in the **Look Closer** children's series is filled with beautiful photographs of representative plants and animals in each of these habitats. Comprised of pictures and captions, they are intended as supplemental resources. **Tide Pool** covers arthropods, mollusks, echinoderms, fish, algae and other aquatic life. **Pond Life** includes arthropods, fish, amphibians, mollusks and algae. **Desert Life** covers amphibians, reptiles, rodents and cacti. **Rain Forest** includes arthropods, plants, reptiles, amphibians and mammals. Each book starts out with a general overview of the habitat.

Representative organisms are pictured on the opening pages and labeled. For example, the caption for a butterfly in **Rain Forest** reads, "The Postman Butterfly (*Heliconius melpomene*) is 1¼ in. across its wings" (p. 8). The following pages describe each group of organisms represented in the

opening. The captions describe processes as well as parts and functions of an organism's anatomy. For example, the caption in **Desert Life** that accompanies a section on cacti reads, "The stem's green color is due to chlorophyll, a substance that the plant uses to convert sunlight to food" (p. 19). Included with the photographs are illustrations that indicate the organism's size compared to the size of an upper elementary child. The books are interesting to look at as well as read. Each book ends with an index of organisms and a glossary of scientific terms.

The books do not cover all of the organisms that can be found in each habitat, but they do a satisfactory job of showing common animals. I was pleased that the author stayed away from stereotypical scenes such as sand dunes, saguaro cacti and rattlesnakes in **Desert Life**. Instead good representative organisms (e.g. a Mammillaria cactus and a King Snake) that inhabit a variety of deserts were used. Although the brevity of the books leads one to believe they are intended for younger children, the captions are suitable for upper elementary or older. Children interested in animals will find these books filled with fascinating facts and beautiful photographs that make them worth taking a closer look.

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The **SEE & EXPLORE SERIES** is published by Dorling Kindersley, Inc. (95 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016). Each is 63 pp. Paperback \$7.95.

See & Explore books are a must for elementary age students (grades 2–6) but it would not be surprising to find adults and teenagers flipping through these magnificent books and ending up reading them as well.

These books are so fully illustrated—every page is covered with pictures—and so well written that even students who haven't acquired the love for reading would find it very difficult to ignore this whole new world of learning. The readability level may cause some prob-

lems for early readers but the abundant color illustrations more than compensate for it. The information is easy to understand whether one reads the text or is read to. This is one good way to get parents involved in reading to their children and spending time together.

Every library should have more than one set of these books as they would be very hard to keep on the shelves.

 **The Body and How It Works** by Steve Parker helps the reader to explore the human body beginning from the very moment of conception. Have you ever wondered how you began? Do you know how your heart works? Find out about the world around you by reading about the five senses and how important they are.

Do you know how many bones there are in your body? Did you know that half of your blood is made up of a watery liquid called plasma?

Actual diagrams and detailed illustrations enhance the reader's understanding of the development of the human body.

This book provides resource material that is easy to understand and fascinating facts about the human body that make you unique.

 **Whales, Dolphins and Porpoises** by Marc Carwardine will delight any reader regardless of age. Ever wonder how many sea mammals are living in the ocean depths? Did you know the world's seas and oceans are full of superb swimmers? Discover which sea mammals could easily outswim humans if they were challenged to a race. Despite its huge size, did you know the killer whale is one of the fastest animals in the sea?

Explore the world of thousands and thousands of sea mammals. Discover how these creatures feed, breathe and live in their mysterious underwater world.

This book will motivate readers of all ages to learn more about these sea mammals and seek out other books on the same subject.

 **Sharks and Other Monsters of the Deep** by Philip Steele will capture the reader's attention as fasci-

Rita Hoots, Book Reviews Editor, is a Professor at Woodland Community College and teaches classes in the biological sciences, human anatomy, and chemistry. Her various degrees in the sciences, counseling, and education come from the City University of New York, University of Wisconsin-Madison, California State University-Sacramento, and the University of California-Berkeley. Before entering the education field, Hoots was for many years a researcher in cell ultrastructure and immunology. Her predominant passion in education is directed to the popularization and illumination of science for the public. Her address is: **Science Dept., Woodland Community College, 41605 Gibson Rd., Woodland, CA 95776; e-mail: rahoots@ix.netcom.com.**