

A Galapagos Day

Teachers' notes

The first day in the life of a baby sea lion

The first day of life for a baby sea lion in the Galapagos Islands can be hazardous. Within an hour of its birth, its mother must leave it to fend for itself while she dives deep to eat enough fish to nourish her baby.

About the author:

Sarah Martin, historian, enjoys writing creatively and working collaboratively with a graphic artist so that her words come to life in beautiful pictures. Galapagos Day is her first children's picture book.

Author's note:

Watching the animals in the Galapagos Islands is an amazing experience, because you can get quite close to them without them being the least bit concerned. We were lucky enough to observe a sea lion give birth from about 10 metres away. Within an hour of being born, that little sea lion was frolicking in a rock pool, and I started to imagine what might happen to it on the first day of its life, the good things and the bad things. I don't like keeping a diary, but wanted to capture the special moment on the island, so when we returned to our boat, I decided to write a story about the animals we had seen in a way that would interest my grandchildren. Our guide was a mine of information about the habits of the animals, so I knew all the things I wrote about could actually happen to that baby sea lion. This was the spark for Galapagos Day.

Written by Sarah Martin

Illustrated by Vincent Agostino

Published by Windy Hollow Books

About the illustrator:

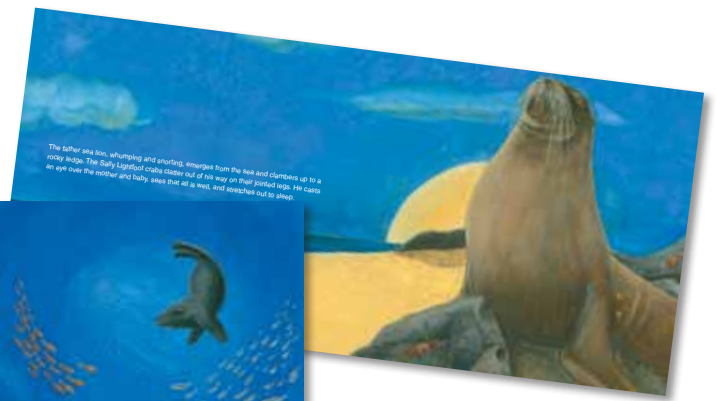
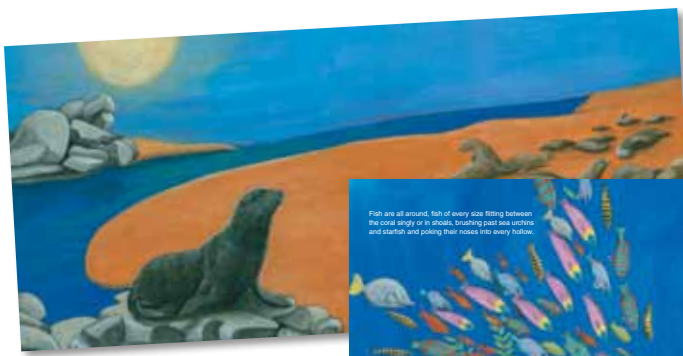
Vincent Agostino has been illustrating for over ten years and also taught illustration to keen students for over eight years at Melbourne Polytechnic.

Picture books he has illustrated include *When Elephants Lived in the Sea*, which won him the Crichton Award in 2007, *My Silent World* and *Little Chelone*. Vincent is currently living in Glasgow, United Kingdom, and working on his next project.

Illustrator's note:

Galapagos Day was special, because it is the first children's book that I have illustrated that required a realistic approach. So, I couldn't just use my imagination. The process of illustration required a lot of research, watching of DVDs and gathering information online. The Galapagos Islands are unique, because a lot of the wildlife present is only found there, even though sea lions are found across the world. The Galapagos sea lions look different, because they had to adapt to their specific environment. I spent lots of time observing the way they swim and play-walk. I drew the sea lions many times and also studied the islands, since not all of them have sea lions. The Galapagos iguanas are different on every island, too. Finally, I compiled some of my drawings to tell the story of Galapagos Day.





Before Reading:

What do you already know about the Galapagos Islands?

Where are they?

What are some unique features of the Galapagos Islands?

After Reading:

Did the book challenge any of the things you thought you knew about the Galapagos Islands?

What more can you find out about them?

This book focuses on the sea lion. What more information can you find out about the Galapagos sea lions?

What other animals are mentioned or illustrated in the book?

What information can you find out about these animals?

In this story how does the baby sea lion know who his mother is? Can you find examples of how other animals may use their senses to find their parent?

What are the sea lion's predators?

Language and Drama

Look at the language that the author uses to describe the sounds and actions of the animals.

What are some of the distinctive words she uses that help the reader understand how the sea lions sound?

How might you recreate these sounds with instruments or voice in the classroom?

What words does the author use to describe the actions of the sea lions?

How might you recreate these actions in the classroom?

If you were to write the story from the perspective of the baby sea lion, how would describe his feelings when he is washed out in to the ocean?

Write a zooming in piece from the perspective of the baby sea lion about finding himself in the deep ocean.

The Animals

What are the different animals that appear throughout the book?

What can you find out about the habitat of these animals?

Art

How has the illustrator used colour to create feeling and atmosphere in the book?

How has the illustrator captured a sense of movement? Eg splashes, ripples

Have a go and drawing moving figures. How can you give a sense of their movement?

