

Author Spotlight

with

Caroline Arnold



It's clear from your books that you love animals. Of all the different kinds of creatures you've written about, do you have a favorite?

I like all kinds of animals, but birds have always been a favorite topic in my books. When I was a child I went on early-morning bird walks with my father, who was an amateur bird watcher, and now my husband, Art, studies birds in his research at UCLA. In my book *Birds: Nature's Magnificent Flying Machines*, I focused on all the different ways a bird's body is adapted for flight. In *A Warmer World* I looked at how climate change is affecting nesting and migration patterns, or, in the case of Antarctic penguins, how melting ice is diminishing their main food source, krill.

You've traveled extensively for research. What is your most memorable trip to date?

Over the years I have traveled to every continent except Antarctica and had many memorable trips, so it is hard to choose just one. Several years ago I went to Alaska for the first time. The most dramatic effects of global warming are seen in places like Alaska, which are in or close to the polar regions of the world. One day when we were traveling on the Kenai Peninsula, we took a boat trip to view Portage Glacier. When I got home, I compared my photos of the glacier with those taken by my parents, who had photographed the same glacier on a trip twenty years earlier. The glacier in our photos was visibly smaller. This was my first personal observation of the impact of global warming. It made me realize that even small changes in the world's temperature can result in easily observable alterations to the landscape in a relatively short period of time.

How did you go about researching the different animals for *A Warmer World*?

My research process follows the same pattern for all of my books. I start in the library and read books and articles. I also search the internet. In many cases I consult scientists and other experts in the field. And whenever possible, I try to make my own observations about the animals in my books. Ideally, I like to see animals where they live in the wild. Several years ago I visited a penguin nesting colony in southern Chile. More often, though, I observe animals in zoos and wildlife parks. To learn about polar bears and walrus, I went to Sea World and the San Diego Zoo. The wonderful thing about zoos is that you can see huge animals like these just inches away on the other side of the glass. Basically, I discovered, walrus are huge lumps. They are a bit like your living room sofa with tusks. And yet they are surprisingly agile in the water.

Your parents helped run, and therefore lived in, a settlement house. What was it like to grow up in such a diverse community?

Until I was ten, I lived with my family at the Northeast Neighborhood House (now East Side Neighborhood Services), a settlement house in Minneapolis. Settlement houses are community centers, something like the YMCA, offering a wide range of recreational and social services. I enjoyed after school puppet, drama, and cooking clubs, sports in the gymnasium, and holiday programs, and I didn't even have to leave home! The settlement house also had a camp in northern Wisconsin, which is where I spent most of my summers. The camp was in a pine forest around a small lake, which is where I developed my love for the outdoors. I think this is why so many of the books I write today are about animals, nature, and the environment.

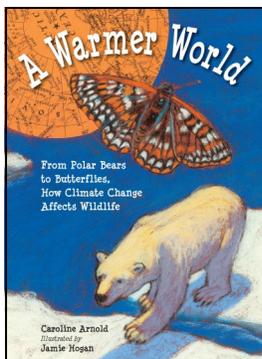
A Warmer World tackles some serious issues and explores the consequences of global warming. What inspired you to write a children's book about climate change?

A Warmer World grew out of a suggestion from my editor, who knew of my interest in animals and the environment and my concern for the earth we live on. Many subjects in the book—polar bears, walrus, penguins, sea turtles, migrating birds, coral reefs—are topics that I have written about previously. In doing the research for those books I had learned how environmental changes are threatening their ability to survive. This book gave me the chance to focus on those issues.

How did you get your start as an author?

My writing career began with my love for reading, which was fostered by my parents, who read to me from the time I was very small. But even though I loved books, I never imagined that I would be a writer when I grew up. I studied art in school and planned to be an artist and art teacher. After I had my own children, I read stories to them. I realized that perhaps I could use my training in art to be a children's book illustrator. I started to write stories so that I could illustrate them and soon discovered that I enjoyed writing very much. Now I am primarily an author, but I occasionally illustrate as well.

By Caroline Arnold



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Ages 7-10

Acclaimed nonfiction author Caroline Arnold details the ways in which global warming has affected ecosystems around the world and how the animals within these ecosystems had adapted.

Complemented by Jamie Hogan's rich collage of illustrations, *A Warmer World* offers young readers an informative and thought-provoking look at how animals have had to adapt—or face extinction.