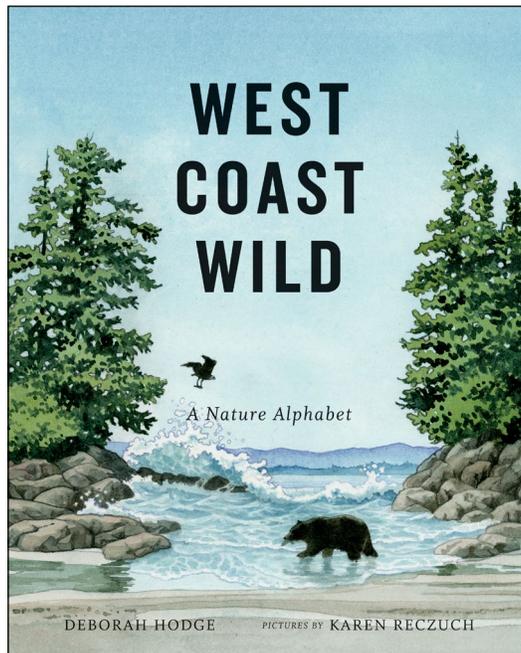




GROUNDWOOD STUDY GUIDES

West Coast Wild A Nature Alphabet

*Written by Deborah Hodge
Illustrated by Karen Reczuch*



**Celebrate the Pacific west coast with this
gorgeous nature alphabet book.**

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Ages 4 to 7 / Grades K to 2

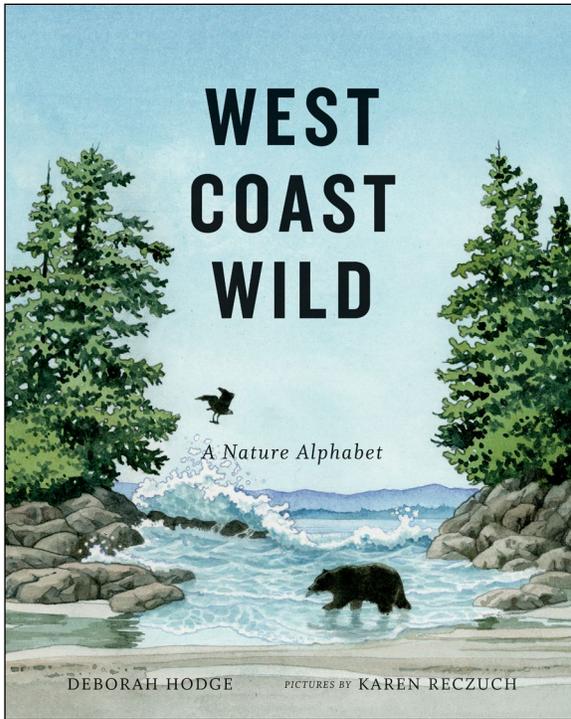
JUVENILE NONFICTION / Concepts / Alphabet / Science & Nature / Zoology / Environmental

Full-color illustrations / 8.75 x 11 / 48 pages

Hardcover / \$19.95 CDN / \$18.95 US / 978-1-55498-440-4

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groundwoodbooks.com



BOOK DESCRIPTION

West Coast Wild: A Nature Alphabet is a celebration of nature on the Pacific west coast — a spectacularly beautiful place, and home to one of the last remaining temperate rainforests in the world.

The book features a fascinating ecosystem where forest meets the sea and introduces children to an eye-catching array of plants and animals thriving in an interconnected web of life.

Designed to encourage an appreciation and understanding of the natural world, *West Coast Wild* is a wonderful way to bring a little bit of the outdoors inside.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Take your nature study across the curriculum with a range of activities that are designed to encourage the children in your group to think about nature and develop an understanding and appreciation of its importance in our world.

**Not everyone lives near the ocean, so feel free to adapt the following activities to suit the natural habitat that is found near you — pond, lake, river, forest, mountain, prairie, urban setting and so on.*

LANGUAGE ARTS

CINQUAIN

Invite the children in your group to write a poem about their favorite animal from *West Coast Wild*. Try a cinquain (a five-line poem).

- Animal's name (one word)
- Two verbs describing how it moves
- Three adjectives describing how it looks
- A four-word phrase about the animal
- Another word for the animal

For example:

Limpet

Gripping, clinging

Small, strong, silent

Fastened to the rock

Snail

or

Sandpipers

Resting, feeding

Tiny, brown, feathered

Flocking on the beach

Birds

ALPHABET BOOKLET

Have the children in your group create an illustrated alphabet booklet (individually or in groups) featuring plants, birds and animals found at the seashore, or in nature near you. Choose the number of letters you would like your group to include in their booklets. (The full alphabet may be too long.) For example:

A is for algae.

B is for birds.

Make it more challenging by adding a verb and setting to the sentence. For example:

A is for algae that grows on the rocks.

B is for birds that flock on the beach.

FIVE SENSES POEM

Choose a setting in nature (seashore, forest, mountain, desert, urban, etc.) and describe it using your five senses. For example:

At the seashore

I see shells

I hear waves crashing

I smell the saltwater

I feel mist on my face

I taste my yummy picnic lunch

ANIMAL RESEARCH PROJECT

Ask the children in your group to choose an animal, bird or fish from *West Coast Wild* to research. Then have them write and illustrate a report or make a presentation to the class describing what they have learned. Here are some questions your group could research:

Appearance: What does your animal look like? How big is it?

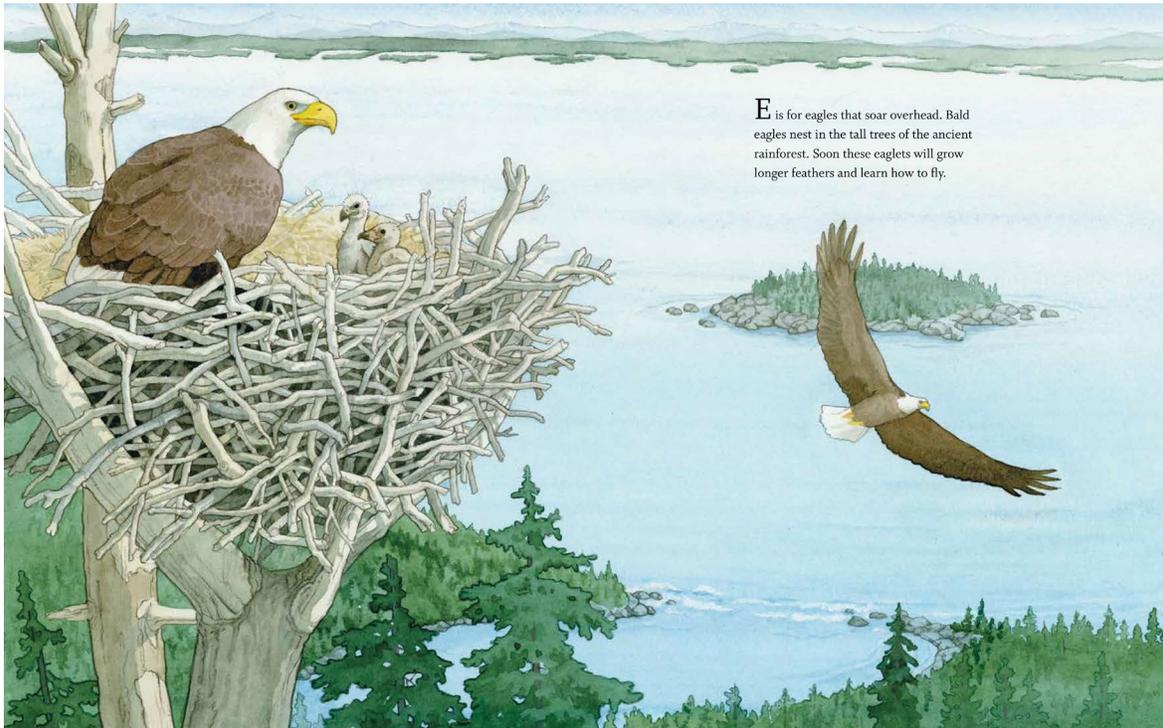
Home: Where does the animal live? What kind of home does it have?

Food: What does the animal eat?

Babies: How many babies does the animal have? How do the parents care for their young?

Enemies: Who are the enemies or predators of the animal? How does it protect itself?

Habits: What are some interesting facts about the animal?



E is for eagles that soar overhead. Bald eagles nest in the tall trees of the ancient rainforest. Soon these eaglets will grow longer feathers and learn how to fly.

SCIENCE

NATURE NOTES

Take your group on a nature walk (at the seashore, if you are near it). Have them bring along notebooks and sketch or write a list of the plants and animals they see. Can they find examples of 10 plants and animals? Have them think about how each plant and animal is suited (adapted) to the place where it lives. Ask them to give examples.

NATURE MAP

After going on a nature walk, have the children in your group make a map, drawing in the nature areas, large and small (trees, bushes, ponds and so on), that are found nearby.

LIFE CYCLE DIAGRAM

Ask the children in your group to choose an animal, bird or fish from *West Coast Wild*. Have them make an illustrated diagram with labels, showing the stages of its life — from newborn, to young animal, to adult. For example, a Pacific salmon goes through six stages in its lifetime: egg, alevin, fry, smolt, adult and spawner. (Check your library for books that feature information on the life cycles of animals.) Optional: Have children compare a human's life cycle to the life cycle of the animal they choose.

COMPARE WHALES AND FISH

As a group, make a chart recording the similarities and differences between two ocean species: fish and whales. (For example: whales are mammals that breathe with lungs; fish have gills. Whale babies are born live; fish hatch from eggs.)

FLOATING EGG

This experiment will demonstrate the buoyancy of the ocean. In pairs or small groups, have children fill two large glasses with a cup or so of water each. Have them stir in six tablespoons of salt into only one of the glasses. Ask them to place an egg on a spoon and carefully lower the egg into the glass that holds only water and to record what happens. Next, have them place a second egg on a spoon and lower it into the glass with salty water. Ask them to record what happens and share their results. Optional: Have your group research why the ocean is salty. (Hint: It has to do with rain and the rocks on land.)

TREE STUDY

Some of the ancient trees in the west coast rainforest are hundreds (or maybe thousands!) of years old. Have the children in your group make a diagram labeling the parts of a coniferous tree, such as a spruce or cedar. Make sure they include roots, trunk, outer bark, inner wood, branches and needles. Come together as a group to discuss the purpose of each part of the tree and to brainstorm what a tree needs to grow (e.g. sun, rain, nutrients from the soil, space to grow and so on).

SALMON IN THE FOREST

Have your group research the role of salmon in the west coast rainforest. (Bears, wolves and eagles take salmon carcasses into the forest. The remains of the fish decompose and add nutrients to the soil, creating an enriched environment for the trees to grow.)

GEOGRAPHY

LOCATE THE WEST COAST

On a wall map of North America, have members of your group point out the Pacific Ocean and the far west coast (as featured in *West Coast Wild*), stretching as far south as California and as far north as Alaska, and including the west coast of Vancouver Island and the Haida Gwaii archipelago. Have them point out your location, too.

GRAY WHALE MIGRATION

On a wall map showing the Pacific west coast, have the members of your group trace the migratory route of gray whales, believed to be the longest mammal migration journey in the world — a round trip of over 10,000 miles (16,000 km). The whales travel from lush summer feeding grounds in the Arctic to warm calving lagoons off Mexico's Baja Peninsula, where they give birth to their babies in winter. Have your group cut out small paper whales and pin them along the migration route.

MATH

COMPARING AND CLASSIFYING

Ask the children in your group to gather a collection of seashells or rocks of varying shapes and sizes. Have them classify the objects into categories based on their properties. For example: compare size, color, shape, texture and so on. How many different categories can they make?

MEASURE A WHALE

In the gym or on the playing field, have your group measure the size of a gray whale — up to 14 meters (46 feet). Compare this to the size of an orca — up to 9 meters (30 feet). Have the children stand side-by-side with arms outstretched in a line to mark out the length of each whale.

PEBBLE TOWERS

Gather a collection of beach pebbles and invite the children in your group to make towers by piling and balancing the pebbles on top of one another. How strong can they make their structure? How high can they build it? How can they use different sizes and shapes of pebbles to create a balanced structure?

FINE ARTS

CRAYON-RESIST PAINTING

Have your group make underwater ocean pictures using a crayon-resist technique. Ask them to draw whales, salmon, sea jellies, sea stars, kelp and other forms of ocean life with wax crayons. Then, have them paint over their drawings with a light blue watercolor wash.

CLAY MODELING

Have your group use modeling clay to form seashore creatures such as crabs, sea stars, whales or shorebirds, and rainforest animals such as bears, wolves, cougars and deer. Construct a classroom seashore or rainforest scene on a table.

NATURE DIORAMA

Individually or in pairs, have your group create a 3D scene of an ocean or rainforest habitat inside a shoebox turned on its side. They may add fish, or animals and trees cut from cardboard or sculpted from modeling clay; they could suspend fish from the top of the box with string to make it look like they are swimming; or they might make water by gluing foil to the bottom of the box or create sand by sprinkling salt or sand on top of glue.

NATURE RUBBINGS

Have your group collect textured items such as shells, rocks, feathers, leaves, bark and so on. Instruct them to place a piece of paper over each item and rub the paper gently with colored wax crayons or pencil crayons until the textured image appears. Optional: Take this a step further by cutting out the designs and arranging them in an eye-catching nature collage.

NATURE MURAL

As a group, make a mural (or individual pictures) using objects collected from nature: shells, rocks, twigs, grasses, feathers, leaves, seeds and so on. Paint or draw in some birds and animals that live in nature. Optional: Can your group make some of the creatures look camouflaged?

SALT PICTURES

On colored construction paper, have the children of your group draw designs with white glue and sprinkle salt on top. Have them shake off the excess salt into a plastic washtub or sink, and, with a paintbrush, place dots of liquid watercolor paint on sections of the salt. Watch the colors travel!

TISSUE PAPER FISH

Have the members of your group cut a piece of stiff white paper into a fish shape. Then have them tear or cut colored tissue paper into small squares (about 1 inch). Have them use a paintbrush dipped into a mixture of white glue and water (approx. 2 parts glue to 1 part water) to paste the tissue paper on to the fish. When their fish are covered in colorful squares, have them paint over the tissue with the glue/water mixture. (Note: The paper squares can be overlapped to make new colors and interesting designs.) When the fish are dry, hang them from ceiling for a fun ocean effect.

PINECONE CREATURES

Many of the evergreen trees in the west coast rainforest produce pinecones. Gather a collection of pinecones and provide art supplies such as scraps of colored felt or paper, pipe cleaners, miniature pom-poms, wool, glue and so on. Invite the children to create a pinecone creature such as a mouse, owl or other forest animal.

SAND PICTURES

If you can get to a sandy beach, suggest that the children make pictures in the sand by using pebbles, shells, pieces of driftwood, seaweed, feathers or other natural materials they find. Can they make a face? Or an animal or bird? Or an eye-catching abstract design?

PANORAMIC PAINTINGS

If you look closely at the art in *West Coast Wild* you will see a series of beautiful panoramic paintings. Invite the children to create their own panoramic paintings of a wild landscape, such as the seashore or rainforest.



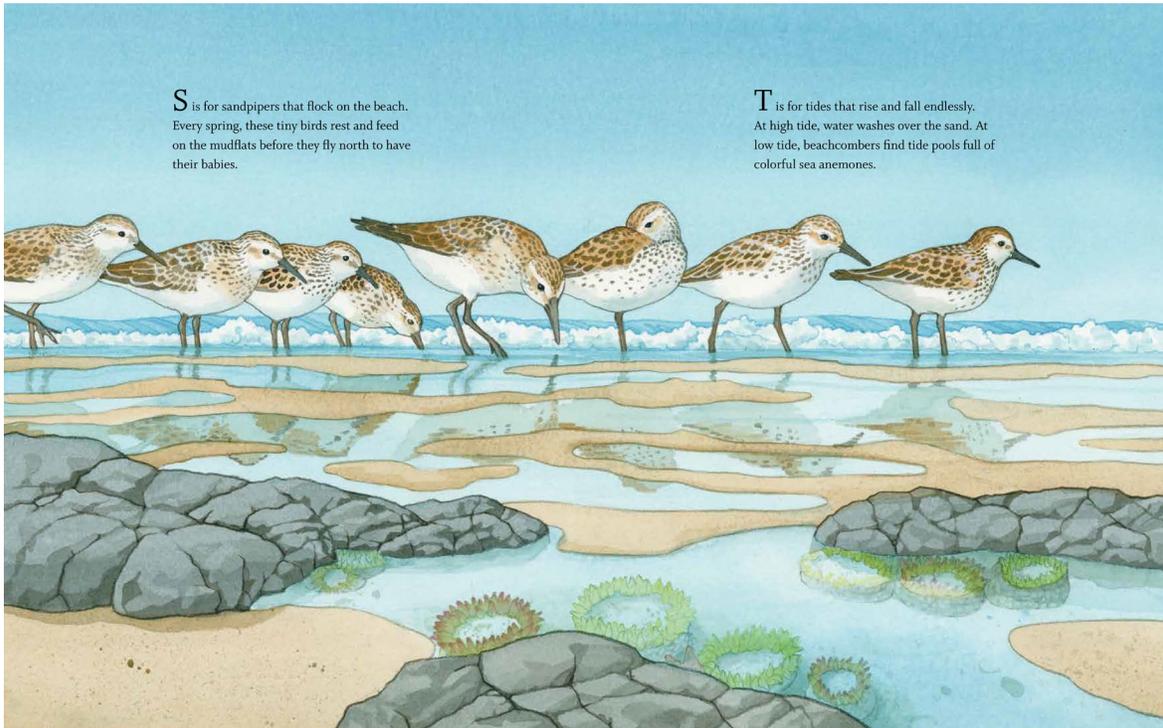
PHYSICAL EDUCATION/DRAMA

ANIMALS IN ACTION

Have the children in your group choose a wild animal, bird or fish from *West Coast Wild*. Ask for action words that describe how it moves. For example: leap, run, swoop, scurry, dive, glide and so on. Write the suggestions on cards. Once you have a set of verbs for a number of animals, go to the gym or playing field. Select a card and announce an animal movement for the children to act out. Repeat with other verbs.

MIME A WILD ANIMAL

Ask the children to choose several animals from *West Coast Wild* and mime their behavior as a “day-in-the-life” activity. For example, have them role-play a cougar climbing a tree, waking up from a nap, stretching or pouncing. Or have them mime a crab scurrying across the ocean floor, opening and closing its pincers and shedding its shell, or a sea jelly drifting in the waves, or an eagle soaring in the sky, catching a fish and feeding its babies.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

PACIFIC RIM REGION

To learn more about the Pacific Rim region featured in *West Coast Wild*, here are some websites to explore:

Pacific Rim National Park Reserve

pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/bc/pacificrim/index.aspx

Select “Things to do” and then “First Nations cultural experiences” to read about the rainforest, seashore and Nuu-chah-nulth, the first residents of the Pacific Rim region. Choose “Things to do” to see information on hiking trails, beach walks and bird watching. See “Learning Experiences” to find out about public summer programs.

Raincoast Education Society

raincoasteducation.org

Find out about west coast educational and interpretive programs for children and youth and an annual shorebird festival.

Ucluelet Aquarium

uclueletaquarium.org

This is a catch and release aquarium, where all the marine creatures are released back into the sea at summer’s end.

GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST

Pacific Wild

pacificwild.org

Learn about conservation efforts in the Great Bear Rainforest. See photos and videos of coastal wildlife in action, including bears, wolves, salmon, birds and more.

WEST COAST AQUARIUMS

There are many excellent aquariums along the Pacific coast. Here are some you can visit, in person or online. Check out their websites for close-up photos and videos of west coast marine creatures. Some also have live web cams. If you are able to go to an aquarium, many have realistic seashore displays, touch pools and programs for children.

Aquarium of the Bay

aquariumofthebay.org

Aquarium of the Pacific

aquariumofpacific.org

Monterey Bay Aquarium

montereybayaquarium.org

Oregon Coast Aquarium

aquarium.org

Seattle Aquarium

seattleaquarium.org

Vancouver Aquarium

vanaqua.org

BOOKS

For younger readers

Ancient Ones: The World of the Old-Growth Douglas Fir by Barbara Bash. Sierra Books for Children, 2002 (first published 1994).

Bears, Salmon, Whales and other titles in the Wildlife series by Deborah Hodge, Kids Can Press.

First Field Guide to Shells by Brian Cassie. National Audubon Society, Scholastic Inc., 2000. (See also: *Birds, Fishes, Trees* and other titles in this series.)

One Small Place by the Sea by Barbara Brenner. Harper Collins, 2004.

Salmon Creek by Annette LeBox, illustrated by Karen Reczuch. Greenwood Books/Douglas & McIntyre, 2002.

Star of the Sea: A Day in the Life of a Starfish by Janet Halfman. Henry Holt and Company, 2011.

For older readers

Beachcomber's Guide to Seashore Life in the Pacific Northwest Rev. Ed by J. Duane Sept. Harbour Publishing, 2009.

The Great Bear Sea: Exploring the Marine Life of a Pacific Paradise by Ian McAllister and Nicholas Read. Orca Book Publishers, 2013.

Nowhere Else on Earth: Standing Tall for the Great Bear Rainforest by Caitlyn Vernon. Orca Book Publishers, 2011.

AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR BIOGRAPHIES



Deborah Hodge is the author of more than thirty books for children. Her honors include twice winning the Children’s Literature Roundtables of Canada’s Information Book Award, winning the Green Prize for Sustainable Literature, and being shortlisted for the National Jewish Book Award for Children’s Literature. Her work has also appeared on such lists as ALA’s Top Ten Best Environmental Books for Youth.



Karen Reczuch has illustrated many award-winning children’s books. *Loon* by Susan Vande Griek won the TD Norma Fleck Award for Canadian Children’s Non-fiction, the Ruth and Sylvia Schwartz Children’s Picture Book Award and the Children’s Literature Roundtables of Canada’s Information Book Award. Karen’s other books include *West Coast Wild*, also the winner of the Information Book Award, *West Coast Wild at Low Tide*, *West Coast Wild Babies* and *West Coast Wild ABC*, all by Deborah Hodge.