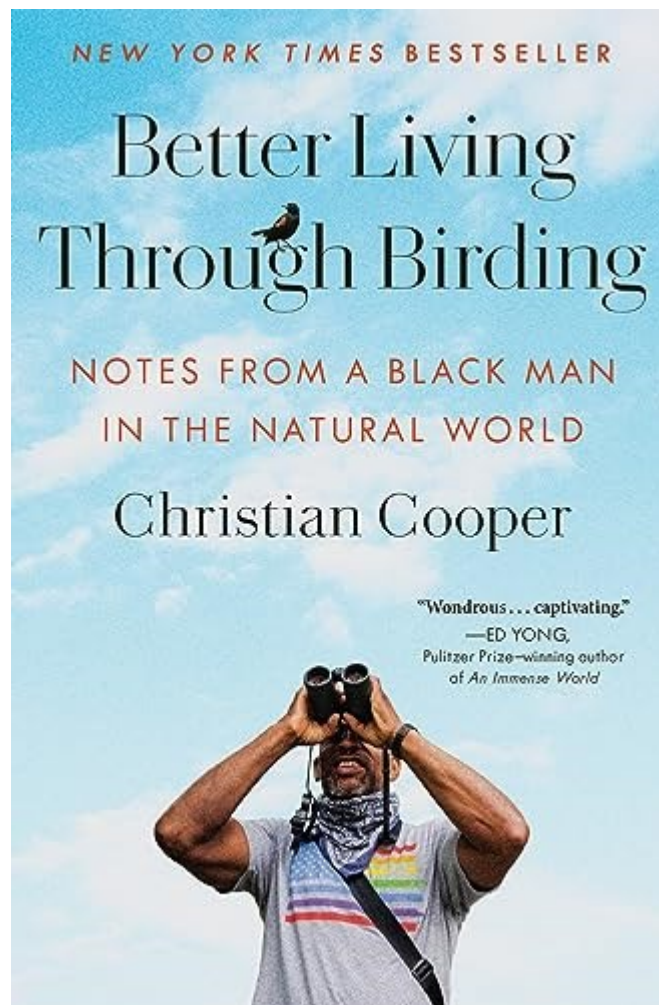


LONG ISLAND READS
One Island—One Book

2024 Reader's Guide



Long Island Reads
is sponsored by the Nassau Library System
and the Public Libraries of Suffolk County

Reader's Guide compiled by: Mara Zonderman, Westhampton Free Library



One Island-One Book

About Long Island Reads

One City, One Book projects are community-wide reading programs. Seattle librarian Nancy Pearl, NPR book critic and author of *Book Lust* and *More Book Lust*, spearheaded the **One City, One Book** phenomenon and hosted the first **One Book** project at the Seattle Public Library's Washington Center for the Book in 1998. Since then, the concept has spread across the United States and around the world.

The **Long Island Reads Committee** is a group of librarians and book discussion leaders from Nassau and Suffolk counties on Long Island who volunteer to work on this island-wide reading initiative. Each spring readers from across both counties read the same book, participate in discussions of the selection, and enjoy related events in public libraries.

Many Long Island Reads events take place during
National Library Week, April 7-13, 2024

For more information about **Long Island Reads: One Island - One Book** visit
<https://longislandreads.wordpress.com/>



About the Author



Photo courtesy of the author

Christian Cooper is a science and comics writer and editor, and the host and consulting producer of *Extraordinary Birder* on National Geographic. One of Marvel's first openly gay writers and editors, Cooper introduced the first gay male character in *Star Trek*, in the *Starfleet Academy* series, which was nominated for a GLAAD Media Award. He also introduced the first openly lesbian character for Marvel and created and authored *Queer Nation: The Online Gay Comic*. Based in New York City, he is on the board of directors for NYC Audubon.

Synopsis of the Book

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • Central Park birder Christian Cooper takes us beyond the viral video that shocked a nation and into a world of avian adventures, global excursions, and the unexpected lessons you can learn from a life spent looking up.

“Wondrous . . . captivating.”—Ed Yong, Pulitzer Prize–winning author of *An Immense World*

A *Washington Post* and Chicago Public Library Best Book of the Year • Longlisted for the Andrew Carnegie Medal

Christian Cooper is a self-described “Blerd” (Black nerd), an avid comics fan and expert birder who devotes every spring to gazing upon the migratory birds that stop to rest in Central Park, just a subway ride away from where he lives in New York City. While in the park one morning in May 2020, Cooper was engaged in the birdwatching ritual that had been a part of his life since he was ten years old when what might have been a routine encounter with a dog walker exploded age-old racial tensions. Cooper’s viral video of the incident would send shock waves through the nation.

In *Better Living Through Birding*, Cooper tells the story of his extraordinary life leading up to the now-infamous incident in Central Park and shows how a life spent looking up at the birds prepared him, in the most uncanny of ways, to be a gay, Black man in America today. From sharpened senses that work just as well at a protest as in a park to what a bird like the Common Grackle can teach us about self-acceptance, *Better Living Through Birding* exults in the pleasures of a life lived in pursuit of the natural world and invites you to discover them yourself.

Equal parts memoir, travelogue, and primer on the art of birding, this is Cooper’s story of learning to claim and defend space for himself and others like him, from his days at Marvel Comics introducing the first gay storylines to vivid and life-changing birding expeditions through Africa, Australia, the Americas, and the Himalayas. *Better Living Through Birding* recounts Cooper’s journey through the wonderful world of birds and what they can teach us about life, if only we would look and listen.

Christian Cooper and *Better Living Through Birding:* *Notes from a Black Man in the Natural World*

REVIEWS

Audiophile: <http://tinyurl.com/53jydn9j>

Bay Area Reporter: <http://tinyurl.com/55vekmvb>

BookBrowse: <https://tinyurl.com/4mty8a8r>

Booklist: <http://tinyurl.com/45aptvxp>

BookPage: <http://tinyurl.com/tsatryht>

The Christian Science Monitor: <http://tinyurl.com/mrys3f72>

Kirkus: <http://tinyurl.com/bdcw4r6p>

Publishers Weekly: <http://tinyurl.com/58xnfa6z>

The Southern Bookseller Review: <http://tinyurl.com/uvaapj5p>

IN THE NEWS

The Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/2bwkpant>

The New York Times (guest opinion essay): <http://tinyurl.com/2s3n8w57>

PBS: <http://tinyurl.com/4mpe6fxn>

INTERVIEWS and PAST APPEARANCES

Family Action Network: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yFAiRNd3MAA>

Free Library of Philadelphia: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4gL6qbR0_ys

Fresh Air: <http://tinyurl.com/423jknux>

LA Times Book Club: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AT5_usyUpa4

New York Times (with Amy Tan): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qcBW3Urjkh>

Shondaland: <http://tinyurl.com/kba23357>

Washington Post Well+Being: <http://tinyurl.com/2zc93pk9>

WNYC: <https://www.wnyc.org/story/better-living-through-birding/>

Better Living Through Birding is available as an e-book and an e-audiobook on Libby. Many of the other books mentioned in this Guide are also available digitally from Libby or Hoopla. Ask your Librarian for more information.



Suggestions for Reading Critically

Adapted from the Library of Congress Center for the Book Guidelines

The best stories are those that connect to human experience. They reveal an important truth, or provide a profound sense of kinship between reader and writer. Searching for, identifying, and discussing these truths deepens the reader's appreciation of the story. Asking questions, reading carefully, imagining yourself in the story, analyzing style and structure, and searching for personal meaning in a work of literature all enhance the work's value and the discussion potential for your group. Here are some suggestions on how you can become a more critical reader.

Make notes and mark pages as you go. Reading for a book discussion – whether you are the leader or a participant – differs somewhat from reading purely for pleasure. As you read a book in preparation for a discussion, ask questions of yourself and mark down pages to which you might want to refer again. Make notes like, "Is this significant?" or "Why does the author include this?" Making notes as you go slows down your reading but saves you the time of searching out important passages later.

Ask tough questions of yourself and the book. Don't be afraid to ask hard questions because often the author is presenting difficult issues for that very purpose. Look for questions that may lead to in-depth conversations with your group and make the readings more meaningful.

Pay attention to the author's messages. As with any skill, critical reading improves with practice. A good author uses every word in a text deliberately. Try to be aware of what the author is revealing about themselves and what they want you to learn about life from their perspectives.

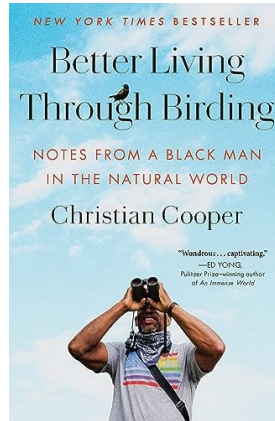
Analyze themes. Analyze the important themes of a story to consider the premises with which the author started. Imagine an author mulling over the beginnings of the story, asking, "what if" questions.

Get to know the characters. When you meet the characters in the book, place yourself at the scene. Think of them as you do the people around you. Judge them. Think about their faults and their motives. What would it be like to interact with them? Are the tone and style of their dialogue authentic? Read portions aloud to get to know the voices of the characters.

Make comparisons to other stories and works. Compare the book to others that have a similar theme or style. Often, themes run through an author's works that are more fully realized by comparison. Comparing one author's work to that of another can help you solidify your opinions, as well as illuminate qualities you may otherwise miss.

Suggested Book Discussion Questions

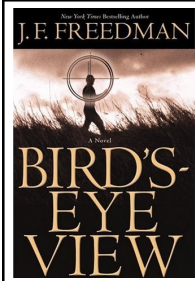
Developed by Mara Zonderman, Westhampton Free Library



- 1) Christian describes himself as a “Blerd,” or Black Nerd. Do you agree? Has the definition or perception of “nerds” changed in the past few decades? In what ways? How do you think that change might affect Christian’s current perception of himself?
- 2) Did you have any experience reading comic books? Did reading this book inspire you to pick up a comic book, or go back to reading them, if you stopped?
- 3) In an essay in *The New York Times*, Cooper questions: “What makes birding such a phenomenon? Why — of all the spectacular creatures with which we share this planet — do birds captivate as no others can? You don’t hear about mammaling or insecting enthusiasts...” What is your answer to his question? (For Cooper’s answer, visit <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/26/opinion/birds-freedom.html>)
- 4) Although it was Cooper's experience in Central Park that gave him a platform, he doesn't discuss the incident much in the book. What are your thoughts about how he deals with it in the book?
- 5) What were your expectations before you started reading this book? Consider the words of the reviewer from *American Scientist*: “Cooper is a victor and not a victim; he is a man and no one’s martyr.” If you had read that quote before starting the book, do you think your expectations would have been different? What about this quote, “[readers] understand his decision not to seek revenge for [the] false accusation, but rather to share his experience,” from *Booklist’s* review?
- 6) What did you think about the “Birding Tips” sprinkled throughout the book? Do you think they were random, or meant to connect with what he was writing about? Were there any in particular that you liked, or didn’t like?
- 7) *Library Journal’s* reviewer reflects that readers “who only know Cooper from that viral video will be delighted to discover that the Central Park encounter is not even close to being the most interesting thing about [him].” What part of his life did you find to be particularly interesting? Why?

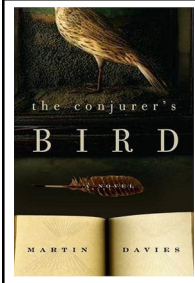
If you enjoyed *Better Living Through Birding ...*

Look for these Fiction Picks



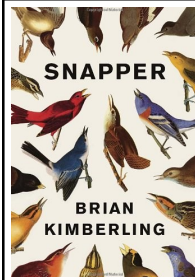
***Bird's-Eye View* by J.F. Freedman (2001)**

While photographing a rare bird on his family's estate in southern Maryland, Fritz Tullis becomes an eyewitness to the murder of a foreign diplomat on the property of his neighbor, a State Department official with ties to the CIA, and teams up with a Washington attorney, a local police detective, his mother, and a sexy ornithologist to uncover the truth about a deadly government conspiracy.



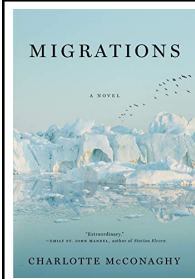
***The Conjuror's Bird* by Martin Davies (2005)**

When old flame Gabby suddenly reappears in Fitz's life asking for help in tracing the history of The Mysterious Bird of Ulieta, a creature once owned by the great 18th Century naturalist Joseph Banks, it soon becomes clear that he's getting involved in something more complicated than the search for a stuffed bird. To solve the puzzle, he must uncover the identity of the amazing woman Banks loved - a woman who has disappeared from history as effectively as the specimen he is hunting.



***Snapper* by Brian Kimberling (2013)**

Working as a birdwatching guide to scrape together enough money to survive, Nathan Lochmueller performs nature research in backwater Indiana, where he falls in love with a heart-breaking beauty named Lola and confronts the accidental turns of his life.



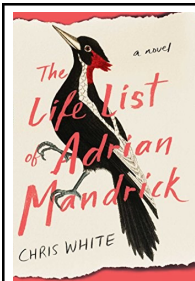
***Migrations* by Charlotte McConaghy (2020)**

Leaving behind everything but her research gear, Franny Stone arrives in Greenland with a singular purpose: to follow the last Arctic terns in the world on what might be their final migration to Antarctica. Franny talks her way onto a fishing boat, and she and the crew set sail, traveling ever further from shore and safety. But as Franny's history begins to unspool—a passionate love affair, an absent family, a devastating crime—it becomes clear that she is chasing more than just the birds. When Franny's dark secrets catch up with her, how much is she willing to risk for one more chance at redemption?



***How to Find Your Way Home* by Katy Regan (2022)**

When they were children, Emily and her brother Stephen were inseparable. Running wild through the marshes of Canvey Island, it was Stephen who taught her to look for the incandescent flash of a bird's wings, who instilled within her a love and respect for nature's wonders. But one June day, their lives came crashing down around them and fate forced them apart. And then one day, her brother walks through the door, homeless and in need of help. In an attempt to rebuild their relationship, they embark on a birding adventure together.

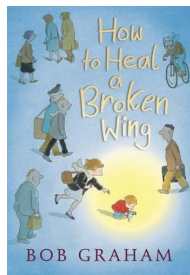


***The Life List of Adrian Mandrick* by Chris White (2018)**

A pill-popping anesthesiologist and avid birder embarks on a quest to spot the extremely rare Ivory-billed Woodpecker, allowing nothing to get in his way--not his wife's growing concerns, not his children pulling away, not even his own dark family history that's dredged back up when tragedy strikes--until he's forced to confront his obsessions and what they've cost him.

If you enjoyed *Better Living Through Birding ...*

Look for these Fiction Picks for Kids and Teens



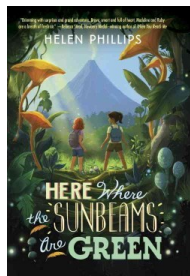
***How to Heal a Broken Wing* by Bob Graham (2008)**

When Will helps an injured bird, he learns that a little kindness can go a long way. No one in the busy city sees the bird lying on the pavement, its wing broken. No one but a small boy called Will. He and his mum carry it home and, with time, rest, and a little bit of hope, the wing mends - and they set the bird free to soar over the city once more. (grades K-2)



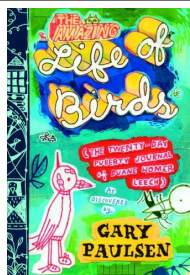
***Shh! We Have a Plan* by Chris Haughton (2014)**

Four friends creep through the woods, and what do they spot? An exquisite bird high in a tree! 'Hello birdie,' waves one. 'Shh! We have a plan,' hush the others. They stealthily make their advance, nets in the air. Ready one, ready two, ready three, and go! But as one comically foiled plan follows another, it soon becomes clear that their quiet, observant companion, hand outstretched, has a far better idea. (grades preK-2)



***Here Where the Sunbeams are Green* by Helen Phillips (2012)**

After a disturbing letter arrives from their ornithologist father, sisters Madeline and Ruby head to Central America with their mother to find him. They are accompanied by a representative of the luxurious La Lava Resort and Spa, which hired Dr. Wade months earlier to document birds in the area. In reality, the spa, winner of numerous environmental awards, has made him a virtual prisoner so he can track down a nearly extinct exotic bird for their own nefarious purposes. Can Madeline and Ruby foil the plot, save their father, and protect the endangered bird? (grades 4-8)



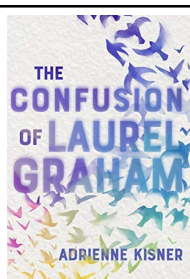
***The Amazing Life of Birds: (The Twenty-Day Puberty Journal of Duane Homer Leech)* by Gary Paulsen (2006)**

As twelve-year-old Duane endures the confusing and humiliating aspects of puberty, he watches a newborn bird in a nest on his windowsill begin to grow and become more independent, all of which he records in his journal. (grades 5-7)



***Flip the Bird* by Kym Brunner (2016)**

Mercer Buddie's two main goals in life — having a girlfriend and proving to his master falconer father that he's not a flake — become diametrically opposed when he falls for Lucy, whose family belongs to HALT, a fanatical animal-rights organization that believes that imposing any sort of restrictions on animals is a form of cruelty. Can he keep his falconing a secret from Lucy, and Lucy's involvement with HALT a secret from his family, or will he have to make a difficult choice between the two? (grades 9+)

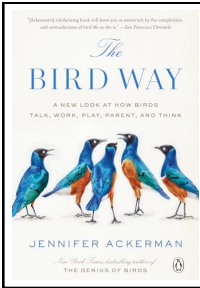


***The Confusion of Laurel Graham* by Adrienne Kisner (2019)**

Laurel Graham has a singular, all-consuming ambition in this life: become the most renowned nature photographer and birder in the world. The first step to birding domination is to win the junior nature photographer contest run by prominent Fauna magazine. Winning runs in her blood -- her beloved activist and nature-loving grandmother placed when she was a girl. But when Gran is in a horrible car accident, Laurel's world is turned upside-down and she must decide what means the most to her, and what she's willing to do to save it. (grades 9+)

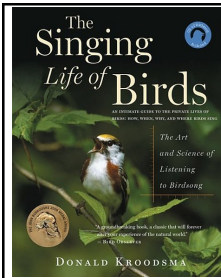
If you enjoyed *Better Living Through Birding...*

Look for these Non-Fiction Picks about Birds and Birding



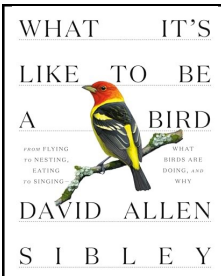
***The Bird Way: A New Look at How Birds Talk, Work, Play, Parent, and Think* by Jennifer Ackerman (2020)**

Drawing on personal observations, the latest science, and her bird-related travel around the world, Ackerman shows there is clearly no single bird way of being. In every respect, in plumage, form, song, flight, lifestyle, niche, and behavior, birds vary. It's what we love about them.



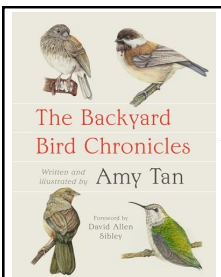
***The Singing Life of Birds: The Art and Science of Listening to Birdsong* by Donald Kroodsma (2005)**

Using your trained ears and eyes, you can begin your own journeys of discovery. Listen anew to birds in your backyard and beyond, exploring the singing minds of birds as they tell all that they know. Join Kroodsma not only in identifying but in identifying with singing birds, connecting with nature's musicians in a whole new way.



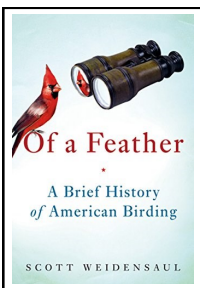
***What It's Like to Be a Bird: What Birds are Doing and Why* by David Allen Sibley (2020)**

Can birds smell? Is this the same cardinal that was at my feeder last year? Do robins "hear" worms? In *What It's Like to Be a Bird*, David Sibley answers the most frequently asked questions about the birds we see most often. This special, large-format volume is geared as much to nonbirders as it is to the out-and-out obsessed, covering more than two hundred species and including more than 330 new illustrations by the author.



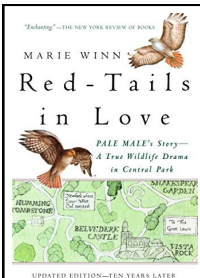
***The Backyard Bird Chronicles* by Amy Tan (2024)**

Tracking the natural beauty that surrounds us, *The Backyard Bird Chronicles* maps the passage of time through daily entries, thoughtful questions, and beautiful original sketches. With boundless charm and wit, author Amy Tan charts her foray into birding and the natural wonders of the world.



***Of a Feather: A Brief History of American Birding* by Scott Weidensaul (2007)**

Of a Feather traces the colorful origins of American birding: the frontier ornithologists who collected eggs between border skirmishes; the society matrons who organized the first effective conservation movement; the luminaries with checkered pasts, such as Alexander Wilson (a convicted blackmailer) and the endlessly self-mythologizing John James Audubon; and the explosive growth of modern birding.

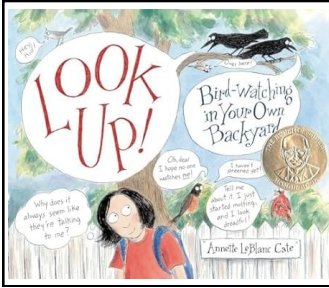


***Red-Tails in Love: Pale Male's Story — A True Wildlife Drama in Central Park* by Marie Winn (1998)**

In the Ramble, an unknown wilderness deep in the heart of Central Park, an odd and amiable band of nature lovers devote themselves to observing and protecting the park's rich wildlife. When a pair of red-tailed hawks builds a nest atop a Fifth Avenue apartment house, Marie Winn and her fellow "Regulars" follow the hilarious and occasionally heartbreaking saga of Pale Male and his mate as they struggle to raise a family in their unprecedented nest site.

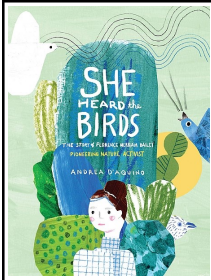
If you enjoyed *Better Living Through Birding...*

Look for these Non-Fiction Picks about Birds and Birding for Kids and Teens



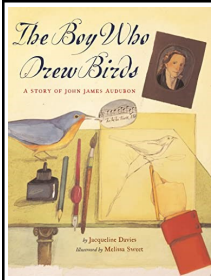
Look Up! Bird-Watching in Your Own Backyard by Annette LeBlanc Cate (2013)

A conversational, lighthearted introduction to birdwatching that encourages kids to get outdoors with a sketchbook and explains how to identify local varieties by referencing cartoon illustrations that whimsically profile bird characteristics. (grades 3-5)



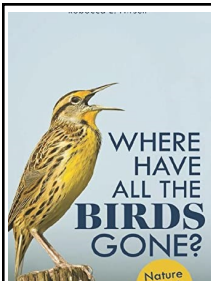
She Heard the Birds: The Story of Florence Merriam Bailey, Pioneering Nature Activist by Andrea D'Aquino (2021)

Tells the story of pioneering birder and activist Florence Merriam Bailey, whose compassionate approach to nature influenced modern bird-watching and inspired a lasting sense of curiosity and respect for the world's feathered creatures. (grades K-2)



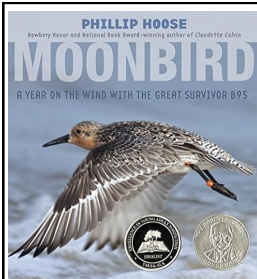
The Boy Who Drew Birds: A Story of John James Audubon by Jacqueline Davies (2004)

As a boy, John James Audubon loved to watch birds. In 1804, at the age of eighteen, he moved from his home in France to Pennsylvania. There he took a particular interest in peewee flycatchers. While observing these birds, John James became determined to answer a pair of two-thousand-year-old questions: Where do small birds go in the winter, and do they return to the same nest in the spring? (grades 2-4)



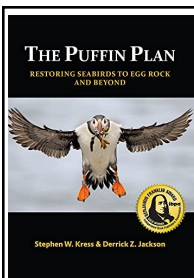
Where Have All the Birds Gone?: Nature in Crisis by Rebecca E. Hirsch (2022)

In the face of rapidly declining bird populations, read about the vast impacts birds have on ecosystems, food systems, and our mental health and what we can do to protect them. (grades 7-12)



Moonbird: A Year on the Wind with the Great Survivor B95 by Phillip Hoose (2012)

Documents the survival tale of an intrepid shorebird who has endured annual migrations between Argentina and the Canadian Arctic throughout the course of a long lifetime while his species continues to decline. (grades 6+)

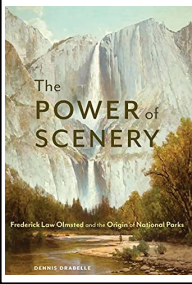


The Puffin Plan: Restoring Seabirds to Egg Rock and Beyond by Stephen W. Kress and Derrick Z. Jackson (2020)

Fifty years ago, a young ornithologist named Steve Kress fell in love with puffin. After learning that hunting had eradicated their colonies on small, rocky islands off the coast of Maine, he resolved to bring them back. So began a decades-long quest that involved collecting chicks in Canada, flying them to Maine, raising them in coffee-can nests, transporting them to their new island home, watching over them as they grew, and then waiting--for years--to see if they would come back. (grades 7-10)

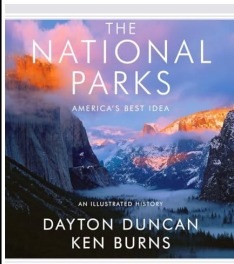
If you enjoyed *Better Living Through Birding...*

Look for these Non-Fiction Picks about National Parks



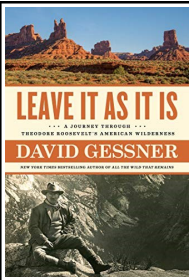
***The Power of Scenery: Frederick Law Olmsted and the Origin of National Parks* by Dennis Drabelle (2021)**

The Power of Scenery tells the story of how America's national parks came to be, with Frederick Law Olmsted's insights and energy serving to link three jewels: Yosemite National Park, Yellowstone National Park, and Niagara Falls State Park.



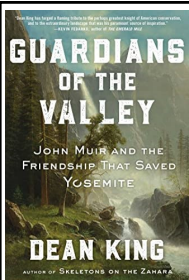
***The National Parks: America's Best Idea: An Illustrated History* by Dayton Duncan and Ken Burns (2009)**

In this evocative narrative, the authors delve into the history of the park idea, from the first sighting by white men in 1851 of the valley that would become Yosemite and the creation of the world's first national park at Yellowstone in 1872, through the most recent additions to a system that now encompasses nearly 400 sites and 84 million acres.



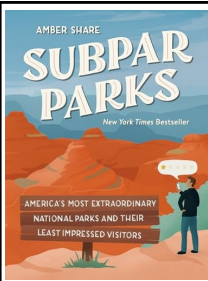
***Leave It As It Is: A Journey Through Theodore Roosevelt's American Wilderness* by David Gessner (2020)**

An environmental clarion call is told through a *New York Times* best-selling author's wilderness road trip inspired by America's greatest conservationist, Theodore Roosevelt.



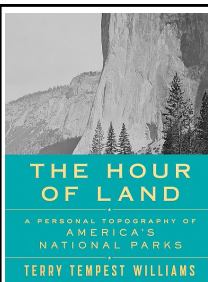
***Guardians of the Valley: John Muir and the Friendship that Saved Yosemite* by Dean King (2023)**

When John Muir returned to Yosemite Valley in June of 1889 with editor Robert Underwood, he is shocked to see that predatory mining, tourism, and logging industries have plundered and defaced "the grandest of all the special temples of Nature." Muir and Underwood form a pact, which leads to the creation of Yosemite National Park, and launches an environmental battle that captivates the nation and ushers in the beginning of the American environmental movement.



***Subpar Parks: America's Most Extraordinary National Parks and Their Least Impressed Visitors* by Amber Share (2021)**

Millions of travelers enjoy the national parks every year... and some post one-star reviews after their visits. Share celebrates the parks with humor as she uses the visitors' comments as starting points for brief descriptions that include basic facts and history about each park.

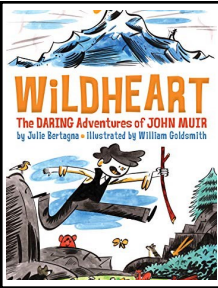


***The Hour of Land: A Personal Topography of America's National Parks* by Terry Tempest Williams (2016)**

America's national parks provide public breathing spaces in a world in which such spaces are steadily disappearing. Here, Williams gives us a literary celebration of our national parks, what they mean to us, and what we mean to them. Part memoir, part natural history, and part social critique, this is a meditation and manifesto on why wild lands matter to the soul of America.

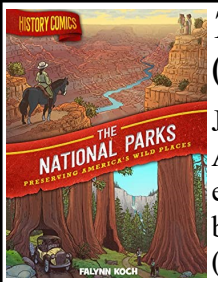
If you enjoyed *Better Living Through Birding...*

Look for these Non-Fiction Picks about National Parks for Kids and Teens



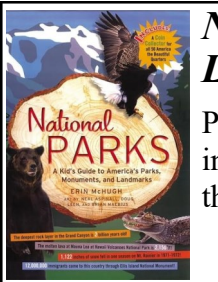
***Wildheart: The Daring Adventures of John Muir* by Julie Bertagna (2019)**

This is the story of John Muir's adventurous life, from his wild and playful boyhood in Scotland to his legendary exploits in America, where he became an inventor, a global explorer, and the first modern environmentalist. His words made a difference and inspired people in many countries to start protecting planet Earth--and they still do. (grades 4-8)



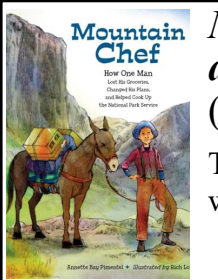
***The National Parks: Preserving America's Wild Places* by Falynn Koch (2022)**

Join our intrepid tour guides as they introduce us to the visionaries, artists, and lovers of the American landscape who fought against corruption and self-interest to carve out and protect these epic places for future generations. It's the story of the ongoing battle to ensure that the most beautiful spaces in the world are not gated up or destroyed, but preserved and accessible to all. (grades 5-7)



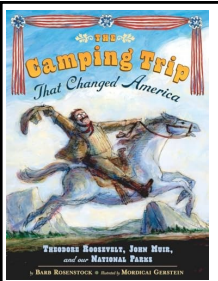
***National Parks: A Kid's Guide to America's Parks, Monuments and Landmarks* by Erin McHugh (2019)**

Presents a guide to some of the national parks of the United States, designated by state, and includes information on the history of each site and the plants and animals that can be found there. (grades 2+)



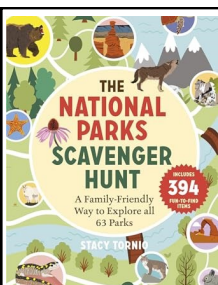
***Mountain Chef: How One Man Lost His Groceries, Changed His Plans, and Helped Cook Up the National Park Service* by Annette Bay Pimentel (2016)**

The true story of a Chinese American mountain man who fed thirty people for ten days in the wilderness — and helped inspire the creation of the National Park Service. (grades K-5)



***The Camping Trip that Changed America: Theodore Roosevelt, John Muir, and Our National Parks* by Barb Rosenstock (2012)**

An account of a lesser-known environmental episode in American history describes how, in 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt joined naturalist John Muir on a Yosemite camping trip during which they shared conversations that ultimately led to the establishment of national parks. (grades 1-4)

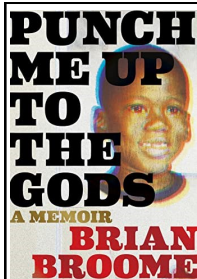


***The National Parks Scavenger Hunt: A Family-Friendly Way to Explore All 63 Parks* by Stacy Tornio (2023)**

This fun-filled guide shares an exciting scavenger hunt for every American National Park — featuring natural history factoids and fun and educational ways to get kids engaged with nature. (grades 3-5)

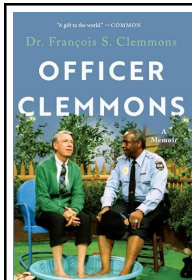
If you enjoyed *Better Living Through Birding...*

Look for these Non-Fiction Picks about Race and Sexuality



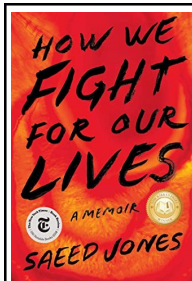
Punch Me Up to the Gods: A Memoir by Brian Broome (2021)

A coming-of-age memoir about Blackness, masculinity, and addiction follows the author, a poet and screenwriter, as he recounts his experiences, revealing a perpetual outsider awkwardly squirming to find a way in.



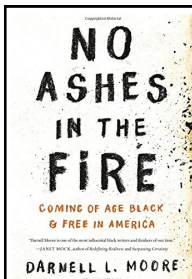
Officer Clemmons: A Memoir by Dr. François S. Clemmons (2020)

An intimate debut memoir by the Grammy Award-winning artist who famously played Officer Clemmons on Mister Rogers' Neighborhood traces his Oberlin College music studies, his embrace of his sexual orientation and his life-changing chance encounter with Fred Rogers.



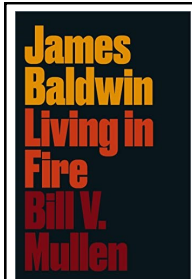
How We Fight for Our Lives: A Memoir by Saeed Jones (2019)

The co-host of BuzzFeed's AM to DM, award-winning poet and author of *Prelude to Bruise* documents his coming-of-age as a young, gay, black man in an American South at a crossroads of sex, race, and power.



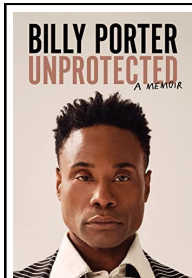
No Ashes in the Fire: Coming of Age Black and Free in America by Darnell L. Moore (2018)

The editor-at-large of CASSIUS and original Black Lives Matter organizer describes his own direct experiences with prejudice, violence, and repression; his search for intimacy in the gay neighborhoods of his youth and his participation in key civil movements where he found his calling as an advocate on behalf of society's marginalized people.



James Baldwin: Living in Fire by Bill V. Mullen (2019)

As a lifelong anti-imperialist, black queer advocate, and feminist, James Baldwin was a passionate chronicler of the rise of the Civil Rights Movement, the U.S. war against Vietnam, Palestinian liberation struggle, and the rise of LGBTQ rights. Mullen explores how Baldwin's life and work channel the long history of African-American freedom struggles, and explains how Baldwin both predicted and has become a symbol of the global Black Lives Matter movement.

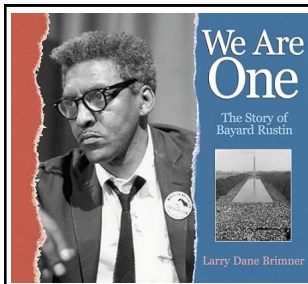


Unprotected: A Memoir by Billy Porter (2021)

Before Billy Porter was an acclaimed recording artist, actor, playwright, and director, he was a young boy in Pittsburgh who didn't fit in. At five years old, Porter was sent to therapy to "fix" his effeminacy. He was endlessly bullied at school, sexually abused by his stepfather, and criticized at church. Porter came of age in a world where simply being himself was a constant struggle. This is the story of a young man whose unbreakable determination led him through countless hard times to where he is now: a proud icon who refuses to back down or hide.

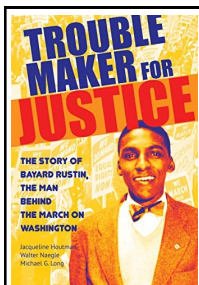
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Look for these Non-Fiction Picks about Race and Sexuality for Kids and Teens



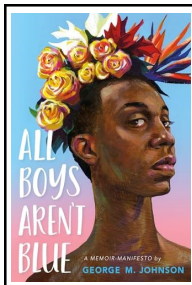
***We Are One: The Story of Bayard Rustin* by Larry Dane Brimmer (2007)**

Accompanied by archival photographs, this powerful biography traces the life of nonviolent activist Bayard Rustin who, working alongside many African American leaders, fought against injustice and discrimination. (grades 6-10)



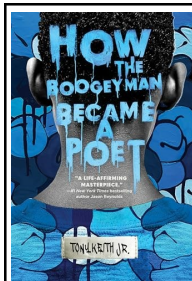
***Trouble Maker for Justice: The Story of Bayard Rustin, the Man Behind the March on Washington* by Jacqueline Houtman (2019)**

Bayard Rustin was a mentor to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., teaching him the philosophy and techniques of nonviolent direct action. He organized the March on Washington, and yet, he is absent from most history books, in large part because he was openly gay. This biography traces Bayard's lifetime of activism and highlights his fearless commitment to justice and equality for all. (grades 7+)



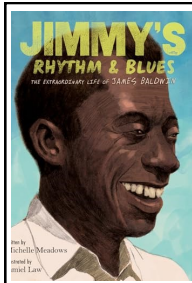
***All Boys Aren't Blue: A Memoir-Manifesto* by George M. Johnson (2020)**

In a series of personal essays, prominent journalist and LGBTQIA+ activist George M. Johnson explores his childhood, adolescence, and college years in New Jersey and Virginia. From the memories of getting his teeth kicked out by bullies at age five, to flea marketing with his loving grandmother, to his first sexual relationships, he crafts a memoir that is both a primer for teens eager to be allies as well as a reassuring testimony for young queer men of color, *All Boys Aren't Blue* covers topics such as gender identity, toxic masculinity, brotherhood, family, structural marginalization, consent, and Black joy. (grades 9+)



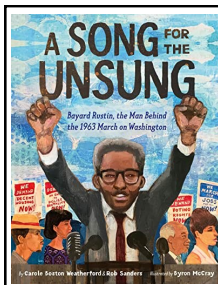
***How the Boogeyman Became a Poet* by Anthony R. Keith, Jr. (2024)**

In this powerful YA memoir, the poet, writer, and hip-hop educator traces his journey from being a closeted gay Black teen battling poverty, racism, homophobia, and his own personal Boogeyman to becoming an openly gay first-generation college student who finds freedom in poetry. (grades 8+)



***Jimmy's Rhythm and Blues: The Extraordinary Life of James Baldwin* by Michelle Meadows (2024)**

This first-ever picture book biography of the legendary writer and activist introduces readers to the passionate Black man who discovered his true power in the written word, which opened the world to him as he used his voice fearlessly. (grades preK-2)

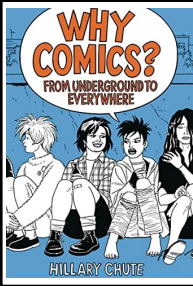


***A Song for the Unsung: Bayard Rustin, the Man Behind the 1963 March on Washington* by Carole Boston Weatherford (2022)**

Every movement has its unsung heroes: individuals who work in the background without praise or accolades, who toil and struggle without notice. One of those unsung heroes was at the center of some of the most important decisions and events of the Civil Rights Movement. That hero was a quiet man, a gay African American man. He was Bayard Rustin. (grades K-4)

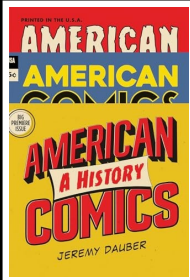
If you enjoyed *Better Living Through Birding...*

Look for these Non-Fiction Picks about Comics and Comic Books



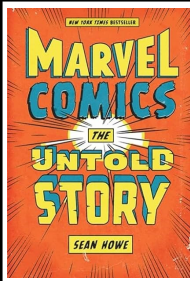
***Why Comics?: From Underground to Everywhere* by Hillary Chute (2017)**

Chute chronicles comics culture, explaining underground comics (or “comix”) and graphic novels, analyzing their evolution, and offering fascinating portraits of the creative men and women behind them. Chute reveals why these works--a blend of concise words and striking visuals--are an extraordinarily powerful form of expression that stimulates us intellectually and emotionally.



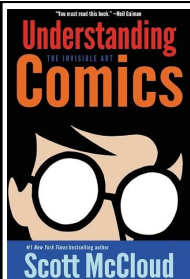
***American Comics: A History* by Jeremy Dauber (2021)**

Author Jeremy Dauber whizzes readers through comics’ progress in the twentieth century and beyond: from the golden age of newspaper comic strips to the midcentury superhero boom; from the moral panic of the Eisenhower era to the underground comix movement; from the grim and gritty Dark Knights and Watchmen to the graphic novel’s brilliant rise. Dauber’s story shows not only how comics have changed, but how American politics and history have changed them.



***Marvel Comics: The Untold Story* by Sean Howe (2012)**

Interweaves history, anecdotes, and analysis with more than one hundred interviews with Marvel insiders to reveal how Marvel, which introduced brightly costumed caped crusaders in the 1960s, became one of the most dominant pop cultural forces in contemporary America.



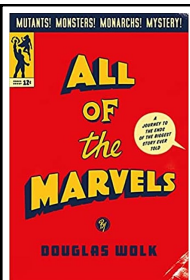
***Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* by Scott McCloud (1993)**

Praised throughout the cartoon industry by such luminaries as Art Spiegelman, Matt Groening, and Will Eisner, this innovative comic book provides a detailed look at the history, meaning, and art of comics and cartooning.



***Superheroes!: The History of a Pop-Culture Phenomenon from Ant-Man to Zorro* by Brian R. Solomon (2023)**

Superheroes! is the ultimate reference book about the men and women in tights who fight for what's right and the comic book phenomenon that conquered the world.

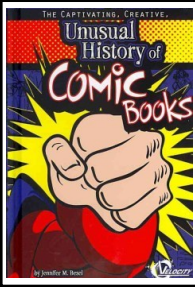


***All of the Marvels: A Journey to the Ends of the Biggest Story Ever Told* by Douglas Wolk (2021)**

The first-ever full reckoning with Marvel Comics’ interconnected, half-million-page story, a revelatory guide to the past 60 years of American culture--from an authority on the subject who read all 27,000+ Marvel superhero comics and lived to tell the tale.

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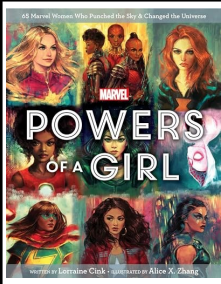
Look for these Non-Fiction Picks about Comics and Comic Books for Kids and Teens



The Captivating, Creative, Unusual History of Comic Books

by Jennifer M. Besel (2010)

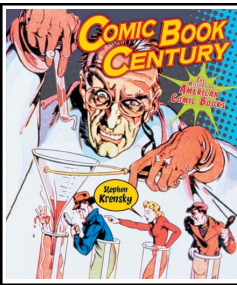
Describes the history of comic books, featuring little known facts and bizarre inside information. (grades 3-4)



Powers of a Girl: 65 Marvel Women Who Punched the Sky & Changed the Universe

by Lorraine Cink (2019)

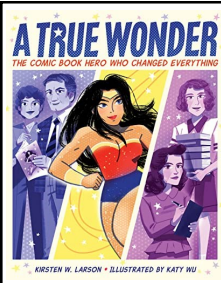
This character guide to the women of the Marvel Universe is filled with inspirational lessons and clever observations, digging into what these relatable women can teach us about growth, bravery, and the true meaning of strength. Paired with over one hundred original illustrations, this book balances the responsibility and the fun that comes with being a hero.



Comic Book Century: The History of American Comic Books

by Stephen Krensky (2007)

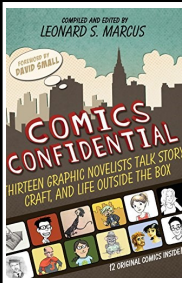
Provides a history of comic books in America during the twentieth century, showing how it has influenced and been influenced by American culture. Includes an epilogue about comics in the early twenty-first century. (grades 5-9)



A True Wonder: The Comic Book Hero Who Changed Everything

by Kirsten W. Larson (2021)

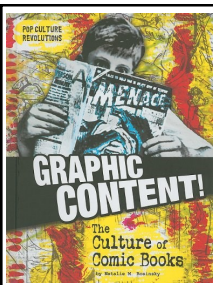
A behind-the-scenes look at the creation and evolution of Wonder Woman, the iconic character who has inspired generations of girls and women as a symbol of female strength and power. (grades 1-2)



Comics Confidential: Thirteen Graphic Novelists Talk Story, Craft, and Life Outside the Box

by Leonard S. Marcus (2016)

Powerful influences from manga to the movies to underground comix have influenced the thirteen artists and writers interviewed in these pages to create their own narratives. Here are their moving, funny, inspirational stories: true tales from the crucible of creative struggles that led each to become a master of one of today's most vibrant art forms. (grades 6+)



Graphic Content!: The Culture of Comic Books

by Natalie M. Rosinsky (2010)

Comic books have come a long way from short newspaper strips to award winning novels. Their evolution mirrors our complicated and controversial society. *Graphic Content* traces the origins of comic books and discusses the emergence of superheroes, censorship issues, their depiction of increased social diversity, and their impact on society. (grades 7-9)

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Long Island Reads events during
National Library Week, April 7-13, 2024

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1. Have you read, or do you plan to read, *Better Living Through Birding*? Yes ___ No ___
2. Have you visited the our website? Yes ___ No ___
3. Which library do you belong to? _____
4. Please let us know what you thought about today's program.

5. Have you participated in any Long Island Reads events in the past? Yes ___ No ___
6. Are you in a book club? Yes ___ No ___
Is it a library book club or independently run? _____
7. If you would like to suggest an author or title for Long Island Reads 2025, please do so below.

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10. Do you reside in Nassau ___ Suffolk ___ or Other (please specify) _____

Additional comments:

Please return this form to a member of the LI Reads Committee here today or to:

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Westhampton Beach, NY 11977

You can also give this form to a librarian at your home library and ask them to have it delivered.

Thank you for participating in Long Island Reads!