

SOLAR BEAR

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



WORDS BY *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING AUTHOR

BETH FERRY

PICTURES BY CALDECOTT HONOREE

BRENDAN WENZEL



ABOUT THE BOOK

A polar bear transforms into a solar bear to shed light on the increasing risks to animal species across the planet. What would the world be like without them? What can we do to protect endangered species? This timely book speaks to the next generation, who must become “solar kids” to enlighten the world and spark change to save the animals of planet earth.



Photo by Theresa Artigas Photography

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Beth Ferry is the *New York Times* bestselling author of numerous picture books, including *Stick and Stone*, *The Scarecrow*, and *The Nice Dream Truck*. She lives with her family by the beach in New Jersey, where she finds inspiration in the salty air. In addition to writing picture books, Beth also writes graphic novels for emerging readers.



Photo courtesy of Brendan Wenzel

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Brendan Wenzel is an illustrator with a great affection for trees and all the furry, feathered, and scaly things that you can find in them (including snakes!). He has traveled to jungles, savannas, and everything in between in search of fascinating animals and has teamed up with many groups working to preserve wild places and creatures around the world. Brendan is the illustrator of Angela DiTerlizzi’s *Some Bugs*. Brendan lives in New York with his wife, Magdalena.

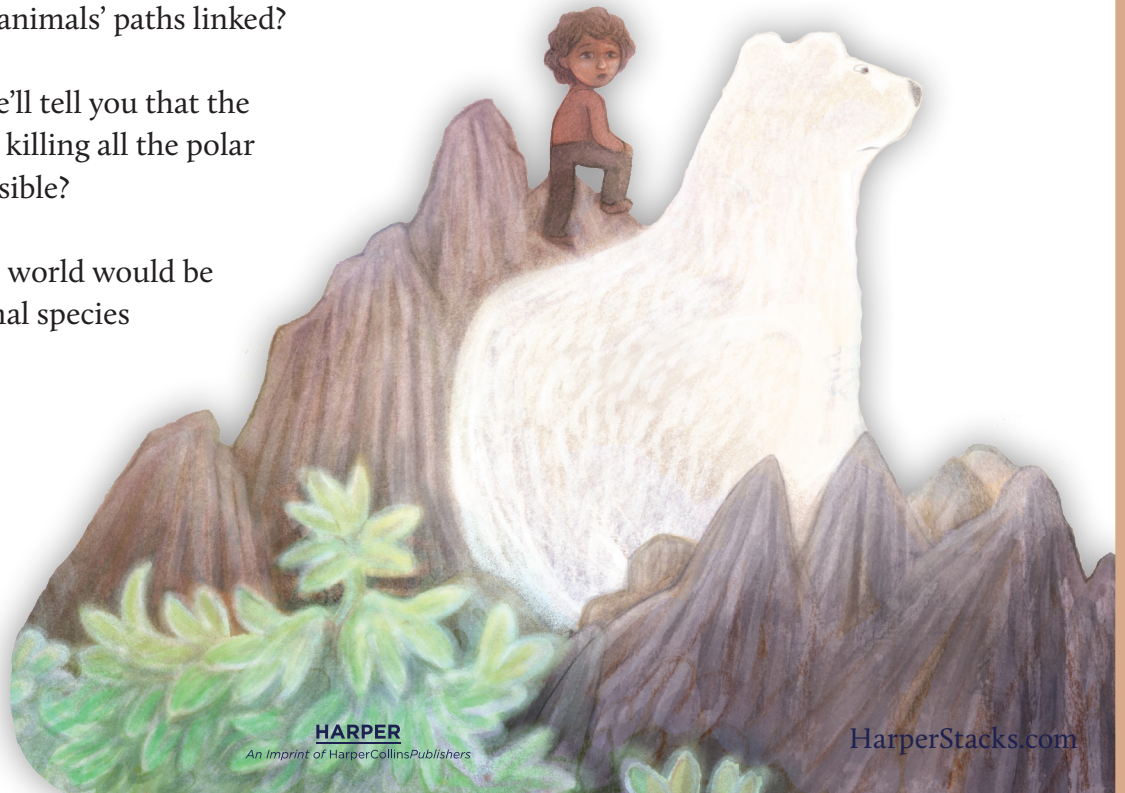
Guide prepared by Sue Ornstein, an educational consultant with 35 years of elementary teaching experience.

BEFORE READING

- Do you know where polar bears live? Do you know what is happening to their habitat and why?
- Ask the children if they know what an “endangered animal” is and if they can name any. Tell them that this story will introduce them to many endangered animals.
- Discuss the word “solar.” What does it mean? Why is the sun important to us? Discuss how the polar bear who tells this story becomes a solar bear to shine a light on all endangered animals and the ways we can help them.
- Ask the children to monitor their feelings as you read this book. Discuss the emotions they are experiencing and why they feel this way.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What endangered animals are introduced in the book?
2. Why does the author mention “ivory tusks” and “rhino’s horn”?
3. Explain what the author means when she writes, “From those of us who have no voice to those of you who have a choice.”
4. How are humans’ and animals’ paths linked?
5. Read the sentence, “We’ll tell you that the words ‘Who cares?’ are killing all the polar bears.” How is this possible?
6. What do you think the world would be like with so many animal species disappearing?
7. What does the author mean when she writes, “We’ll ask you for your mighty roar to show us we’re worth fighting for”?
8. How can you become a “solar kid”? Why is it important?
9. What are the leading causes of extinction? How can we help?



CROSS-CURRICULAR EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

READ ALL ABOUT IT!

Create a list with the students of the endangered species introduced in this story. You can add to the list by visiting the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species website (www.iucnredlist.org) suggested at the end of the book. Then have the students work in small groups to research an endangered species. They can use books, Internet sites, and other publications to find timely information about their animal species. Have the students create a presentation to share their information with their classmates or other classes.

TAKE ACTION.

Read the sections “How Can You Become a Solar Kid?” and “There Are Wonderful Success Stories That Tell Us What We Do Matters” found at the end of the book. Then have the students choose an action they can take today. For example, the students might design posters to display around the school or neighborhood to make others aware of how many animals are endangered. Or they might decide to organize a classroom or school-wide recycling program. Discuss how even small actions can impact our world.

A CREATIVE APPROACH TO CONSERVATION.

Approach the topic of wildlife conservation in a creative way. Have students create polar/solar bears, icebergs, or other animals and habitats featured in *Solar Bear* using recycled materials, like water bottles, cardboard, etc.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Make a list of the lexicon used when discussing wildlife protection. The list might include terms such as “endangered,” “species,” “extinction,” “habitat,” “conservation,” “threatened,” “environment,” “poaching,” and “pollution.” Tell the students they will be creating a dictionary of these terms. Have pairs of students choose a term, and have them write the word on their page, define it, and illustrate it. Then collate the pages into a class dictionary.

ANIMAL ADVOCATES.

Ask the students if they know about Dr. Jane Goodall. Why is her work so important? Do they know who the Kratt brothers are? Can they name other activists working to save animals and their habitats? Visit Dr. Goodall’s youth website Roots & Shoots (<https://rootsandshoots.org>), which is introduced in the back of this book. Explore the website with the class and discuss joining one of Roots & Shoots’ ongoing projects. You can also introduce the animal activist Kratt brothers’ Creature Hero Foundation with this video: (<https://youtu.be/jYQGOZ6kg2U?si=TdP1SYZSbrOe3ANp>).

