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Green Earth Book Awards 2023 Winners

By [Gemma Alexander](#)

OCT 30, 2023 [book awards](#), [children](#), [children's books](#), [environment](#), [read](#), [reading](#)

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Children’s books about the environment don’t often get the kind of mainstream attention as fantasies and literary fiction. [The Nature Generation](#)’s annual Green Earth Book Awards help generate some of that valuable book buzz for environmental-themed books aimed at young people. The books they honor inspire youth to grow a deeper appreciation, respect, and responsibility for their natural environment – and that is something to celebrate.

The Green Earth Book Awards selects winners and honors runners-up in the categories of picture books, and fiction and nonfiction at both children’s and young adult reading levels. Green Earth Book Award winners are indispensable reads for budding environmentalists of any age. Discover the [2023 winners](#) below.

Picture Books

Winner

[To Change a Planet](#)

by Christina Soontornvat, illustrated by Rahele Jomeour Bell (Scholastic Press)

This year's winning picture book beautiful, color-saturated illustrations follow diverse characters through their daily lives until their stories ultimately converge in a climate march on Washington. Well researched environmental messages are presented in calm, simple language that even the youngest children can understand.

Honors

[It's Up To Us: Building a Brighter Future for Nature, People & Planet](#)

by Christopher Lloyd, forward by, King Charles III, HRH and, 33 different illustrators (What on Earth Books)

The title is already long, but the clever subtitle "The Children's Terra Carta" is revealing. This picture book is based on the Terra Carta, a roadmap to sustainability issued by King Charles III, and his Sustainable Markets Initiative. Half of all proceeds will go to the The Prince's Foundation, a charity established by now-king Charles to demonstrate how Nature can be put at the heart of human activities.

[Our Green City](#)

by Tanya Lloyd Kyi, illustrated by Colleen Larmour (Kids Can Press)

In this picture book about the elements of building and maintaining a green city, a diverse cast of characters moves through a city, teaching children ways to make even urban ecosystems healthier for all living things. Children are encouraged to engage with the illustrations by identifying elements called out in the lyrical text.

[Scrap Metal Swan](#)

by Joanne Linden, illustrated by Estrellita Caracol (Barefoot Books)

In playful, rhyming text and mixed media illustrations, this book tells the story of a diverse community that comes together to [clean up](#) a polluted riverfront, and of the POC artist and her child who use the recovered scrap material to make a beautiful sculpture. The book was inspired by a true-life art project.

Children's Fiction

Winner

[Turn the Tide](#)

by Elaine Dimopoulos (HarperCollins)

This story in verse provides a double dose of hope, when the protagonist, a 12-year-old piano player Mimi, learns the true story of Melati and Isabel Wijsen, sisters her age whose lobbying successfully resulted in a [ban on single use plastic bags](#) on their home island of Bali. Mimi is inspired to form a kid-led grassroots movement to do the same thing in her Florida community.

Honors

[Legend Keepers: the Partnership](#)

by Bruce L. Smith (Hidden Shelf Publishing House)

In this sequel to the award-winning *Legend Keepers: The Chosen One*, awkward 12-year-old Garson's environmental journey is sparked by asking a single question at the school science fair. Soon he is fascinated by glaciers. When he climbs the glacier near his home, he befriends a mountain goat that lives there. Beginning to see the impacts of climate change on the glacier through the eyes of his animal friend, Garson is transformed into an environmental advocate.

[Trouble at Turtle Pond](#)

by Diana Renn (Regal House Publishing, Fitzroy Book Imprint)

In an environmental twist on the tradition of kid-sleuths, 11-year-old Miles tries to leave behind his reputation as a troublemaker and control his ADHD when he moves to Marsh Hollow. His new neighbor invites him to join the Backyard Rangers, and together they uncover evidence of poaching that puts the fragile turtle population at risk.

[Wildoak](#)

by C.C. Harrington (Scholastic Press)

Maggie Stephenson is more concerned with her stutter that makes her terrified to speak up in class than environmental issues. But when she finds a snow leopard cub— an abandoned victim of [wildlife trafficking](#) — in Wildoak Forest, she discovers that both the leopard and the forest are in danger.

Children's Nonfiction

Winner

[Fresh Air, Clean Water: Our Right to a Healthy Environment](#)

by Megan Clendenan, illustrated by Julie McLaughlin (Orca Book Publishers)

Profiling kids around the world who are taking environmental action, this book presents the case that living in a healthy environment is a human right and features [important court cases](#) that are working to legally establish that right. This book provides a foundation for understanding how industrial activity has led to climate change and presents a variety of practical approaches to environmental activism.

Honors

[A Kid's Guide to Saving the Planet: It's Not Hopeless and We're Not Helpless](#)

by Paul Douglas, illustrated by Chelen Ecija (Beaming Books)

The subtitle says it all. Meteorologist Paul Douglas presents realistic, proven solutions to fight climate change and explains how young people can be part of the solution by making smart choices.

[Sharks Forever: The Mystery and History of the Planet's Perfect Predator](#)

by Mark Leiren-Young (Orca Book Publishers)

Long misunderstood, [sharks](#) play a key role in marine ecosystems but face myriad threats. This book takes a deep dive into the lives of sharks— their habitat, biology, habits and personalities, and the biggest threats to their existence, from marine pollution and overfishing to bycatch and shark-fin soup. But it also presents sharks in a new light, looking past the stereotypes to reveal that some sharks are cute and tiny, while others even have social lives.

[The Global Ocean](#)

by Rochelle Strauss, illustrated by Natasha Donovan (Kids Can Press)

Once upon a time, sailors sailed the seven seas. But today we understand that all the world's marine systems make up a linked system of one great, global ocean. This book explores the ocean's enormous influence on the planet, and [humans' harmful influence](#) on the ocean. But it also offers hope by highlighting many inspiring initiatives underway to stop and even reverse the damage.

Young Adult Fiction

Winner

[Two Degrees](#)

by Alan Gratz (Scholastic Press)

To many kids – and adults – climate change is too abstract to spark concern. This book makes the impacts of climate change concrete and relatable through thrilling adventure stories about four kids fighting for their lives in the midst of climate disasters, including a California [wildfire](#), a Florida hurricane, and an encounter with a displaced polar bear.

Honor

[Front Country](#)

by Sara St. Antoine (Chronicle Books)

Ginny Shepard is excited to spend a month [hiking](#) in the Montana backcountry instead of taking college prep classes; she's less excited about the tech-addicted boys who are also on the trip, or the fact that it's designed for kids who need "extra support." But a month in the great outdoors gives her a new perspective on her companions, and on the problems that she will have to face when she goes back to the "front country."

Young Adult Nonfiction

Winner

[Salmon: Swimming for Survival](#)

by Rowena Rae (Orca Book Publishers)

This is number eight in the Orca Wild series of books focusing on keystone and threatened species like orcas and grizzly bears. It explains the unique biology of salmon, their cultural and economic importance, and the important role they play in ecosystems. Finally, it introduces people who are working to protect salmon from the many threats they face.

Honors

[Where Have All the Birds Gone: Nature in Crisis](#)

by Rebecca E. Hirsch (Twenty-First Century Books)

To a kid, it might seem like there are birds everywhere. But since 1970, nearly 30 percent of all birds in the United States and Canada have vanished. Even adults will be fascinated to see how human activity from city lights and skyscrapers to [pet cats](#) and [pesticides](#) has impacted wild birds.

If you're looking for even more great books on the environment, check out The Nature Generation's Awards [full 2023 list](#) of winners, honors, and recommended reading. You can also check out [past years' winners](#) and Earth911's lists of books [about climate change](#) and other [eco-themed reading](#) for kids.



Reading time: 5 mins

[Earth911 Inspiration: Ordinary Situations](#)



By [Gemma Alexander](#)

Gemma Alexander has an M.S. in urban horticulture and a backyard filled with native plants. After working in a genetics laboratory and at a landfill, she now writes about the environment, the arts and family. See more of her writing [here](#).

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