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Opening extract from
Nature Adventures

Written by
**Mick Manning and Brita
Granstrom**

Published by
**Frances Lincoln Children's
Books**

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This book is dedicated to *The Wildlife Trusts*,
working hard to conserve the full range
of the UK's habitats and species – Mick and Brita

The authors and publisher would like to thank David North of The Wildlife Trusts
for checking the accuracy of the text and illustrations for this book.

JANETTA OTTER-BARRY BOOKS

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*The illustrations in this book are in pencil and watercolour.
Mick has done most of the natural history drawings while Brita has drawn the people,
a selection of the plants, some seaside creatures and the hand lettering.
Find out more about Mick and Brita's books at: www.mickandbrita.com.*

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NATURE ADVENTURES



Mick Manning & Brita Granström

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FRANCES LINCOLN
CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Town Wildlife

The wildlife in a town can be amazing when you look closely. It's a place to look again at things we sometimes take for granted: a singing starling, the amazing colour of sycamore buds, the egg-yolk-yellow of dandelions or a nettle patch heaving with hairy caterpillars. Try a simple plant and mini-beast survey, by pegging out a 1 metre by 1 metre (3 feet by 3 feet) square using sticks and string. The variety of animals and plants you find within your chosen area is known as 'species diversity'. Using your notebook, list what you see, then try your surveying skills in a larger 'enclosed' habitat such as a garden, churchyard or park.

'I know a bank where the wild thyme blows.'
William Shakespeare

Cool!

Gently pour a bucket of water over your survey area to bring worms to the surface.

Many birds and animals eat worms, beetle grubs, slugs and snails.

Dock leaf - dulls the pain of nettle stings

Blackbird



Hedgehogs hunt at night. Look out for black tarry droppings on lawns.

Woodlice are common in the garden.



Sycamore buds

Zebra Spiders stalk and jump on their prey.

Ivy provides good cover for nesting birds.

Cockchafer Beetle Grub



Earthworm



Slug



Snail

Orb Spiders build beautiful webs to catch their prey.

Centipede

Millipede

Earwig



Ladybird

Rosebay Willow Herb loves waste ground and railway embankments.

Dandelion

'clock' or seedhead

Four common garden insects:



Wasp



Bumblebee



Bluebottle



Hoverfly

Butterflies love park and garden flowers.

Male 'pussy willow' catkins of the Goat Willow or Sallow



Peacock



Red Admiral



Tortoiseshell



Cabbage White and caterpillar

Look for caterpillars on plants like Nettle and Cabbage.

Peacock Caterpillars, dark skin soaks up the sun.



Hatching pupae

White Dead-Nettles do not sting.

Daisy



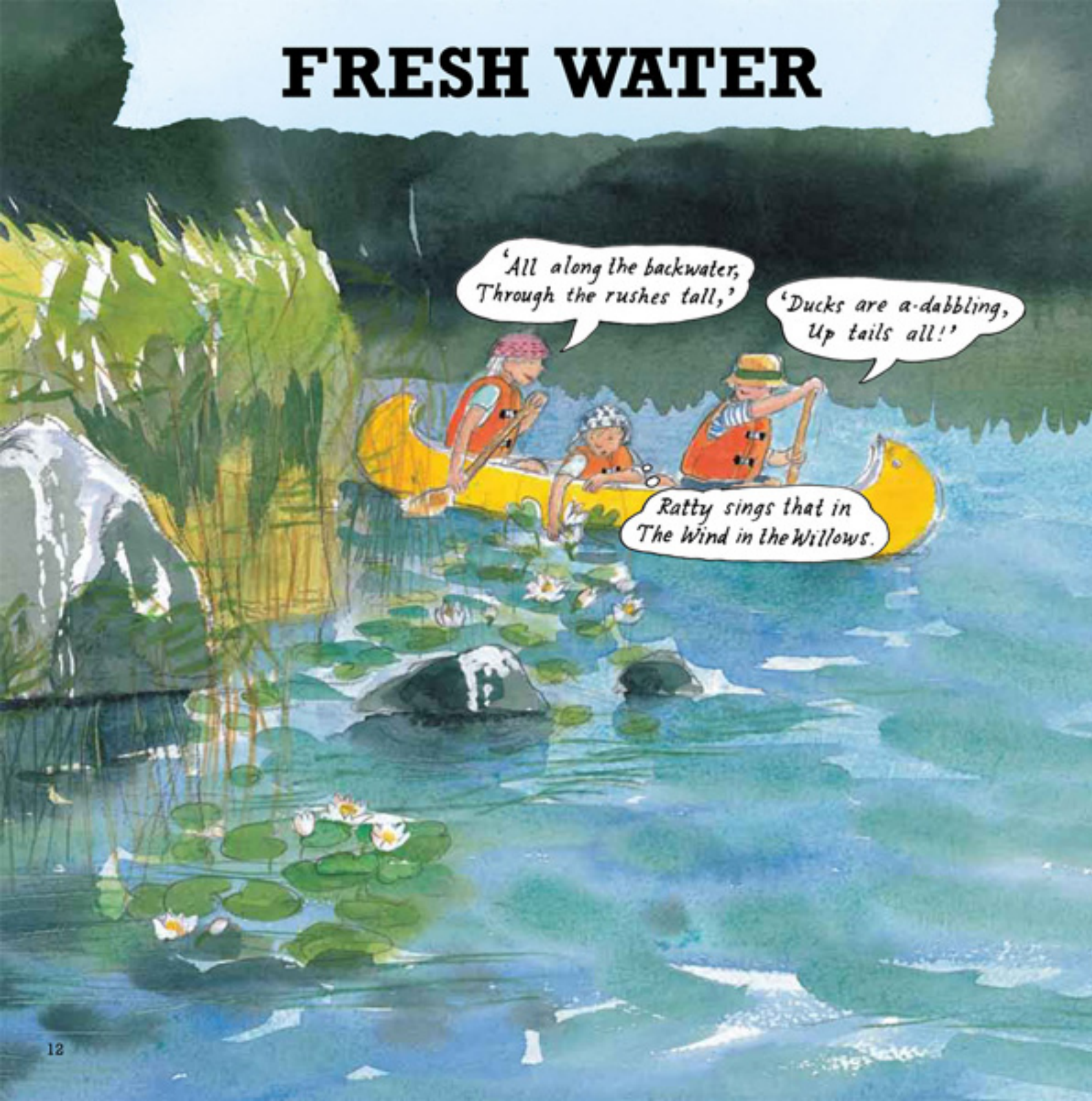
Nettles Ouch!



Buddleia



FRESH WATER



'All along the backwater,
Through the rushes tall,'

'Ducks are a-dabbling,
Up tails all!'

Ratty sings that in
The Wind in the Willows.



male Pintail

Goldeneye are diving
ducks and winter visitors.

Wigeon gather in
huge flocks in winter.



male

female

The Dabchick dives for
small fish and insects.



Great Crested Grebes
also dive for fish.

Black-Throated
Diver



Divers are rare birds
with a haunting call.
They nest in wild
places like the
Scottish highlands.



Red-Throated
Diver

Look for the velvety
sausage-shaped seed
heads of the Bulrush.

Common Reeds
grow in dense
reed beds.

Dragonflies spend
up to four years as
fierce underwater nymphs...

Nymph

...after that they
crawl out to become
dragonflies.



Emperor
Dragonfly



Pond Skaters
can walk on water.

Water Boatmen
swim with hairy
back legs.



Fresh Water

These habitats include lakes and rivers as well as 'man-made' reservoirs and canals. But don't forget rushing streams, drainage ditches, park lakes - even tiny garden ponds. All sorts of animals live in and around fresh water, and many others visit it to drink, bathe and hunt for food. What you might see depends on where you are; so although many animals on these pages, such as ducks, dragonflies and pike, are common in different habitats, you'll only see black or red-throated divers breeding in the far north - although they do turn up around the coast during the winter.

Autumn

Autumn is when many trees lose their leaves and drop nuts and seeds. Forage for conkers, beech mast and acorns once the autumn winds begin to blow. Autumn is also a good time to spot fungi, but don't touch because many can be poisonous. Look and listen for flocks of winter visitors such as gaggles of geese and 'chack-chacking' fieldfares, and on still nights go outdoors and listen for the thin 'seeep-seeep' call of redwings.

Fungi grow well in early autumn. Leaf litter is home and food for many mini-beasts.



Fly Agaric is very poisonous.



The Stinkhorn's smell of rotten meat attracts flies that help disperse its spores.



Harvestman



Worms drag leaves underground for food.



Dormice begin to hibernate by late autumn.

Flocks of Fieldfares and Redwings arrive to spend winter with us.



'Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness!' wrote John Keats.



Winter

Winter snow and ice can cover and freeze the drinking water birds and mammals rely on, so remember to put out fresh water as well as food. Look out for the acrobatic flight patterns of starling and wader flocks, designed to confuse birds of prey. By late winter the fat buds, bulging on many tree branches, are a sure sign that spring is just around the corner.



Look for tracks in snow...



Fox



Pet dog

In the winter, Starlings roost together in huge, noisy, acrobatic flocks. They like the warmth of towns and shopping centres.

'Yes, of course it hurts when buds are bursting. Why else should springtime hesitate?'

Xarin Boye



Winter visitors such as Waxwings can be seen feeding on berries even in the town.



Listen for their 'worried' twittering call.

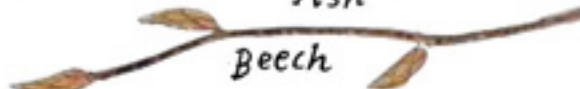
Winter Twigs



Horse Chestnut



Ash



Beech



Hazel



Silver Birch



Lime



Sycamore



Oak



Hawthorn



Rowan



The frosted web of an Orb Spider