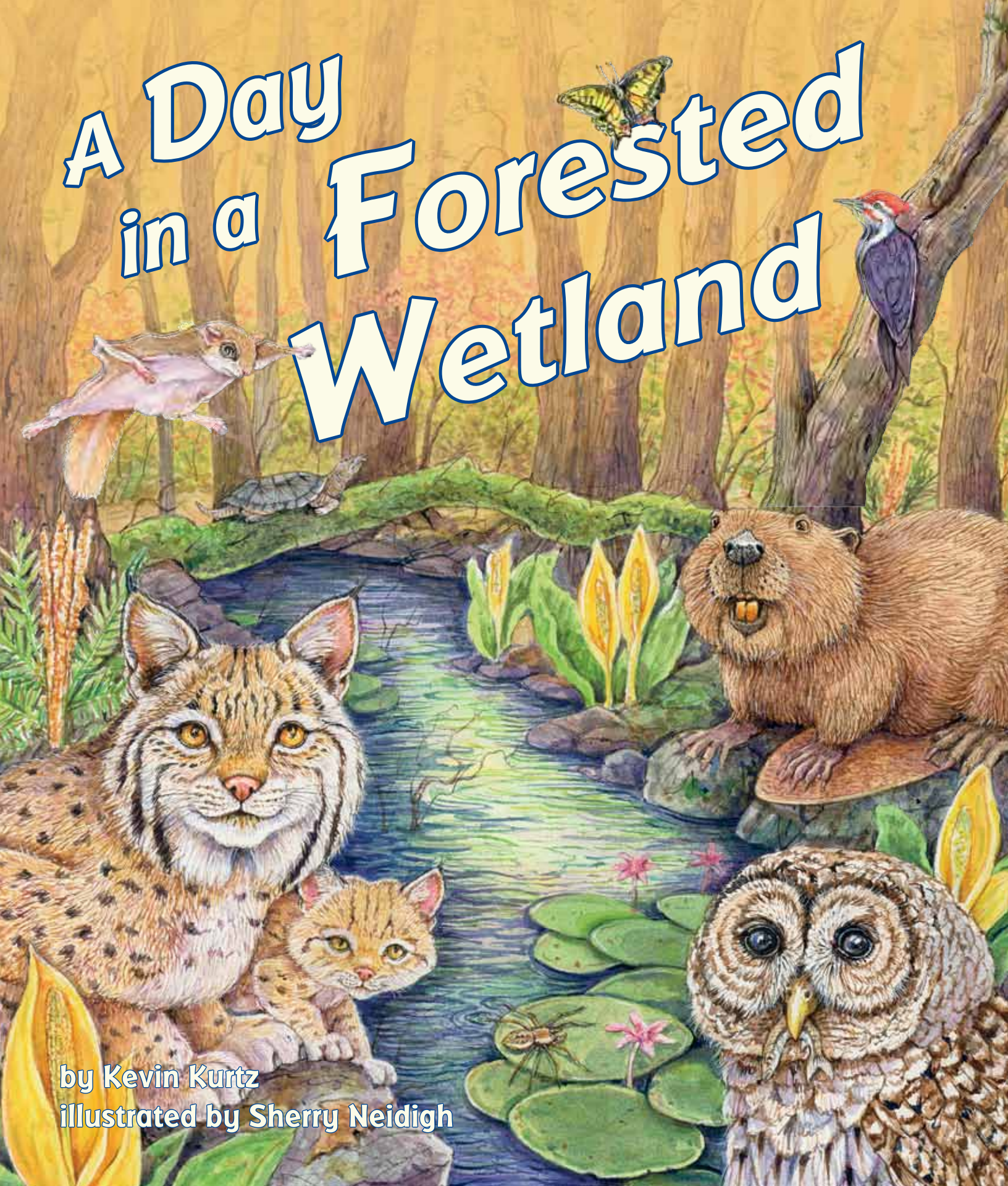


A Day in a Forested Wetland



by Kevin Kurtz
illustrated by Sherry Neidigh

A Day in a Forested Wetland

Come along on a journey through the aquatic habitat of a forested wetland. Meet birds and bobcats, along with the beavers and beetles that call the soggy forest home. Kevin Kurtz continues his award-winning "A Day In" series, and once again delights readers with a rhythmic, nonfiction look into a typical day for the animals that live in this wet habitat.



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Thanks to Ellen Randomanski, Lead Environmental Educator at Shangri La Botanical Gardens and Nature Center, for verifying the accuracy of the information in this book.

The *For Creative Minds* includes

- Keystone Species: Beaver
- Beaver Dam Forested Wetland Sequencing
- Wetlands
- Find the Animal

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Award-winning author **Kevin Kurtz** has loved science and nature since he was a kid. As an adult, he has worked at an aquarium, a science museum and a marine biology lab. He was also the Education Officer on the JOIDES Resolution, a scientific research ship. Along with *A Day in a Forested Wetland*, Kevin has written *A Day on the Mountain*, *A Day in the Deep*, *A Day in the Salt Marsh*, *Living and Nonliving Things: A Compare and Contrast Book* (NSTA/CBC Outstanding Science Trade Book) and *Sharks and Dolphins: A Compare and Contrast Book*. He visits schools around the country to talk to students about his books. Visit his website at www.kevkurtz.com.

Sherry Neidigh has been freelance illustrating for over twenty years. Sherry's love of animals and nature comes through in her bright, colorful art. In addition to illustrating *A Day in a Forested Wetland*, *Deep in the Desert*, *Count Down to Fall*, and *The Best Nest* for Arbordale, Sherry has illustrated several trade and education titles including *Who Needs That Nose?*, *If I Had a Tail*, and *Black and White*. Sherry lives in South Carolina. Visit Sherry's website at www.sherryneidigh.com.

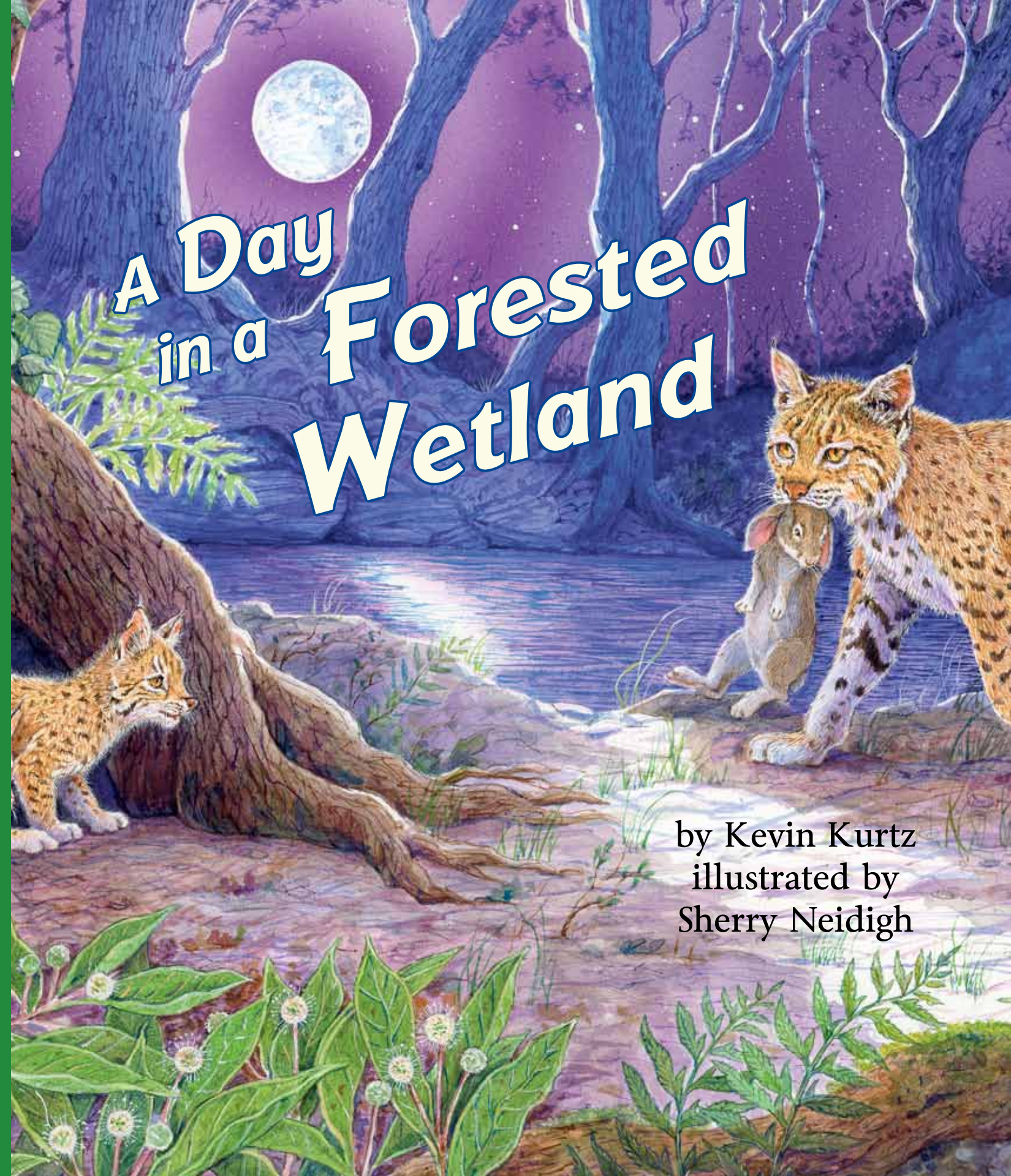


Kevin Kurtz

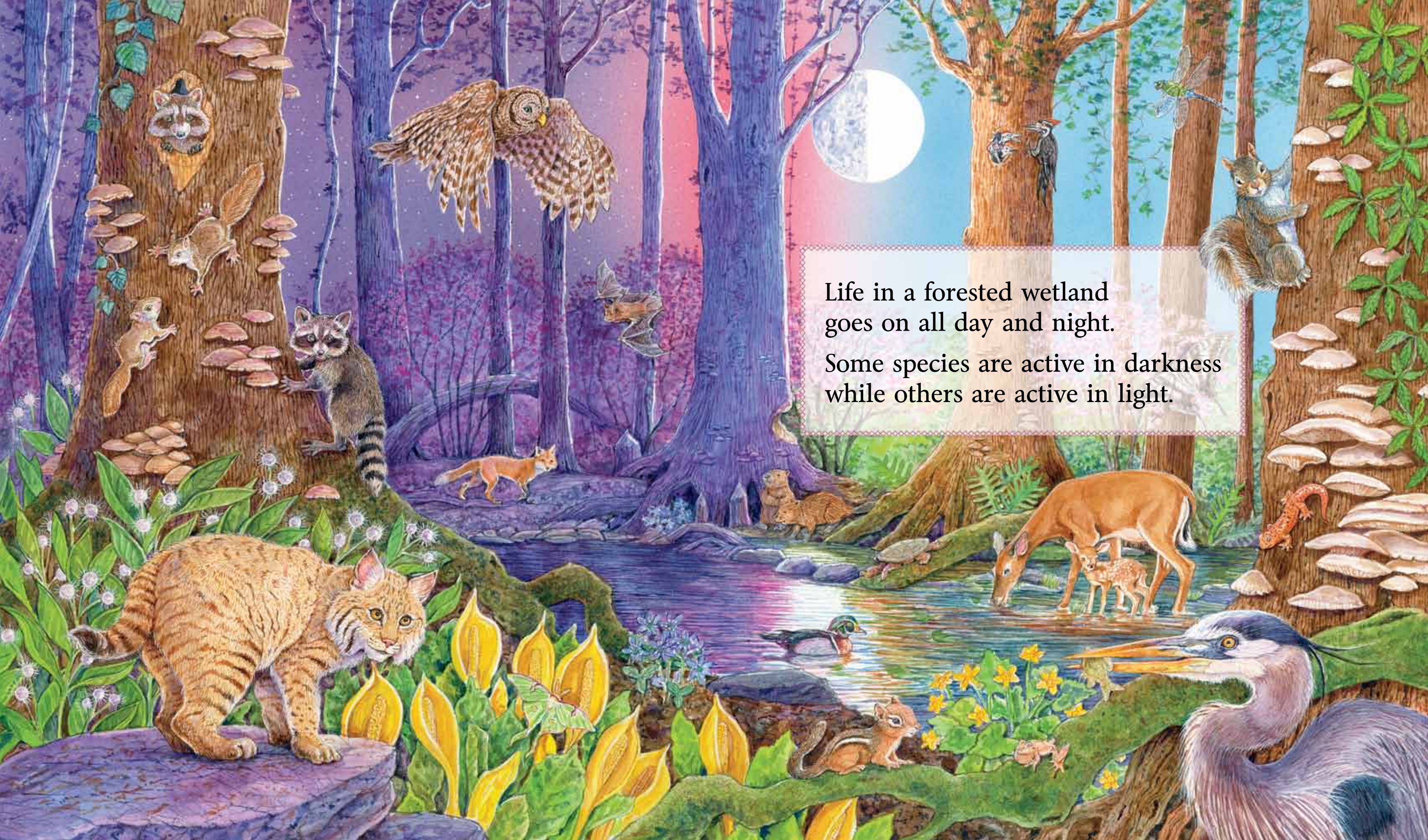


Sherry Neidigh

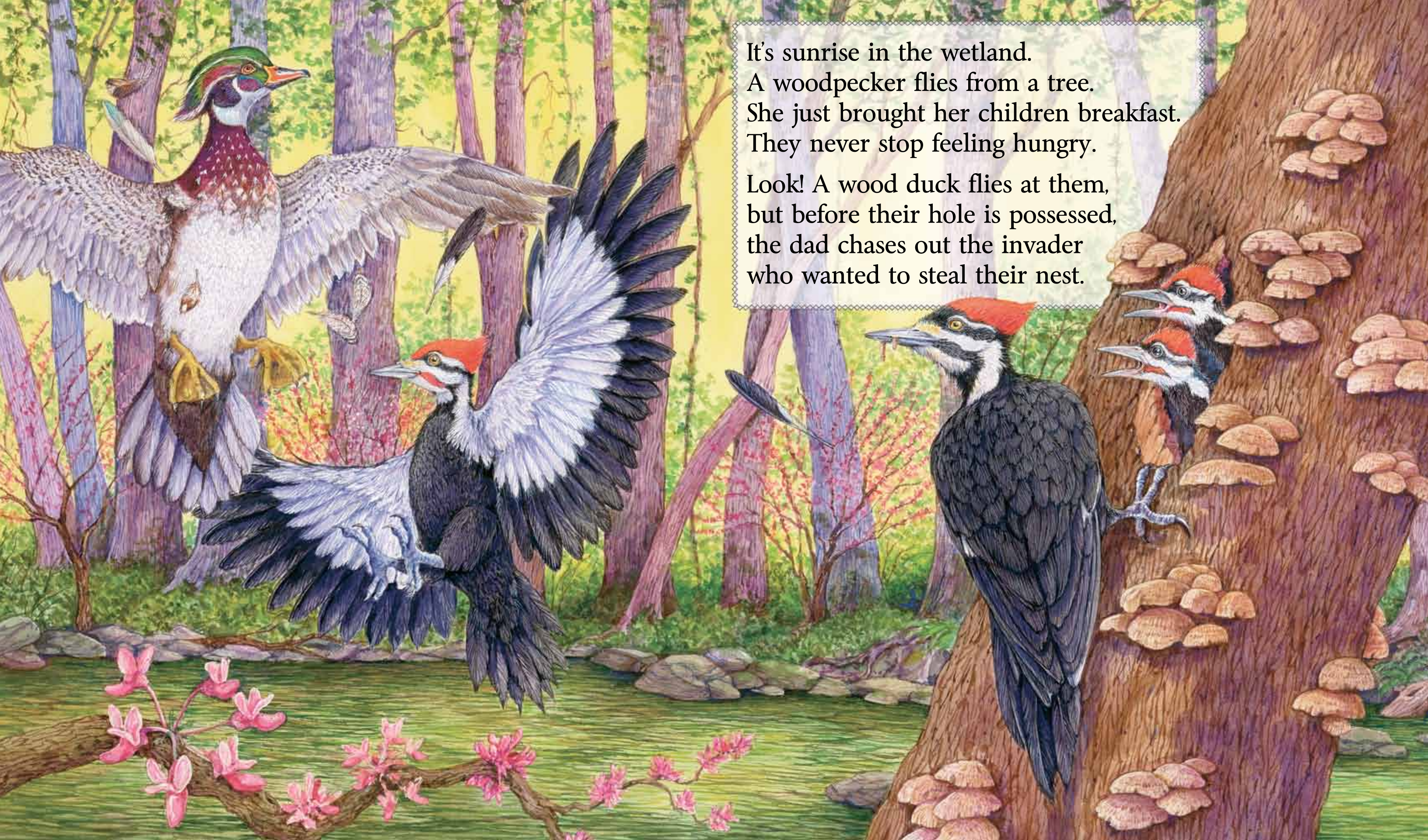
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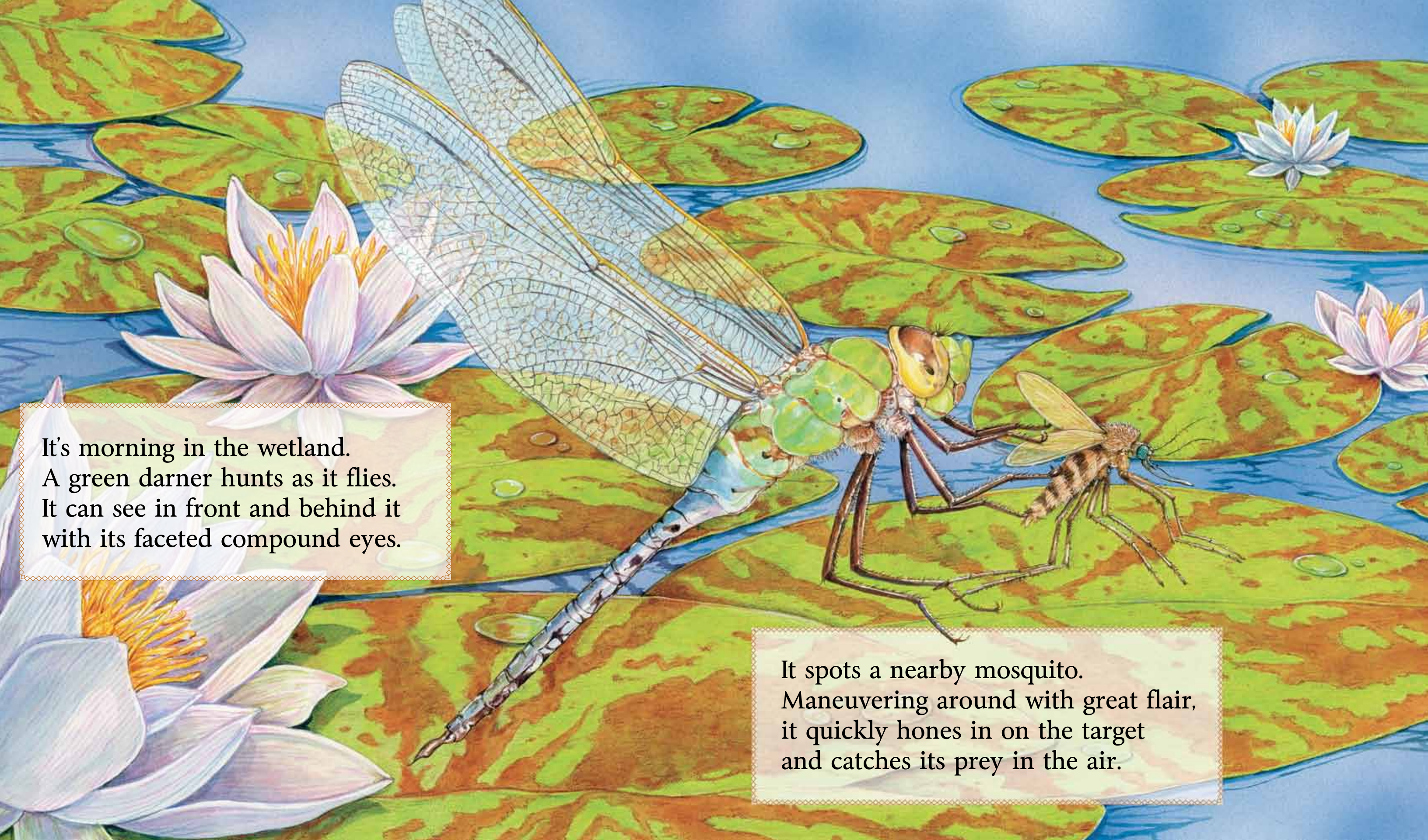
by Kevin Kurtz
illustrated by
Sherry Neidigh



Life in a forested wetland goes on all day and night. Some species are active in darkness while others are active in light.



It's sunrise in the wetland.
A woodpecker flies from a tree.
She just brought her children breakfast.
They never stop feeling hungry.
Look! A wood duck flies at them,
but before their hole is possessed,
the dad chases out the invader
who wanted to steal their nest.

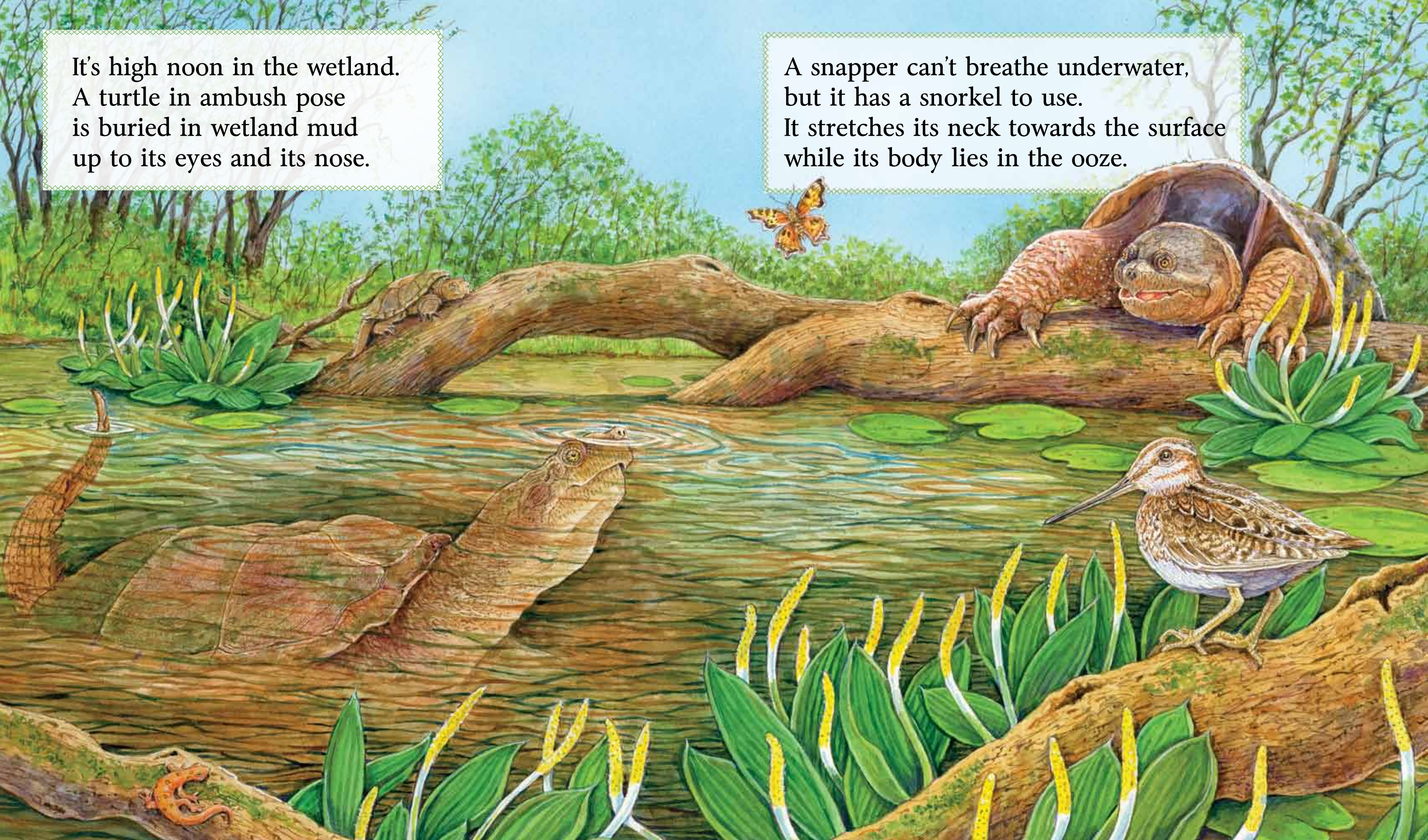


It's morning in the wetland.
A green darner hunts as it flies.
It can see in front and behind it
with its faceted compound eyes.

It spots a nearby mosquito.
Maneuvering around with great flair,
it quickly hones in on the target
and catches its prey in the air.

It's high noon in the wetland.
A turtle in ambush pose
is buried in wetland mud
up to its eyes and its nose.

A snapper can't breathe underwater,
but it has a snorkel to use.
It stretches its neck towards the surface
while its body lies in the ooze.



For Creative Minds

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Keystone Species: Beaver

Beavers are among the few species (including humans) that can make big changes to their environment. This ability to shape their habitat makes beavers into **ecosystem engineers**.

Beavers shape their environment by building dams. A colony of beavers works together to make a dam out of wood, mud, and stones. The dam slows a stream and creates a pond of still water behind the dam. The pond is usually between three and six feet deep. It helps protect the beavers from land predators like wolves, bears, and coyotes. The pond hides the underwater entrance to the lodge, where the beaver lives.

Beaver dams change a forest into a wetland environment. These changes last for years, even long after the beavers are gone.

In a stone bridge or arch, there is one stone called a keystone. This stone presses down on the others and holds the whole structure in place.

Plants and animals in an ecosystem rely on each other. They help each other meet their basic needs.

Sometimes there is one species that helps support all the other species. This is called a **keystone species**.



Just like a keystone in an arch holds the structure in place, the keystone species holds the ecosystem in balance. Without the keystone species, the whole ecosystem would suffer.

Beavers are a keystone species. They shape their habitats to create new types of ecosystems, like forested wetlands. Other plants and animals need these new ecosystems.



Beaver Dam Forested Wetland Sequencing

Some forested wetlands are created by beavers. These forested wetlands can last for many years but are not permanent. Put the following stages in order to discover how a beaver makes a forested wetland, and how that forested wetland can change over time.

The answer will spell the word for beavers' genus.

R Once the pond completely fills with sediment, it becomes a bog or fen.

C A beaver builds a dam across a stream near a forest.

T As the forest trees die, more sunlight reaches the pond. Aquatic plants grow.

O Over many years, aquatic plants live and die. Old plant matter fills the pond with rich sediment, and the water gets shallower. New marsh plants begin to grow.

S Many trees cannot live with their roots underwater. They die in the new forested wetland. Some trees, like alders and cypress, continue to grow and thrive.

A The pond behind the dam floods the forest. This creates a forested wetland.

Not all forested wetlands are created by beavers. Some can occur naturally. Forested wetlands can last for centuries, or they may be more temporary habitats. Some forested wetlands are seasonal. They form during spring flooding as water from rain and melted snow overflows rivers and floods low-lying woodlands.

Answer: Castor. The North American beaver belongs to the species *Castor canadensis*.



Wetlands

A wetland is an environment where the soil becomes completely saturated with water. Shallow water sometimes covers the surface for at least part of the year. Wetlands can occur in areas with poor drainage or where the water table is close to the soil surface.

There are four main types of wetlands: forested wetlands (sometimes called swamps), marshes, bogs, and fens. Often multiple types of wetlands can exist side-by-side, without clear barriers between the different types.

As a forested wetland created by a beaver dam changes over time, it can become which of these other wetland types?



Find the Animal

Barred owls make a hooting sound that sounds like they are saying “Who cooks for you.”

Beaver teeth are orange because they contain iron, which makes them stronger for cutting down trees.

Bobcats get their name from their naturally-short tails. “Bob” is an old-fashioned word that means “to cut short”.

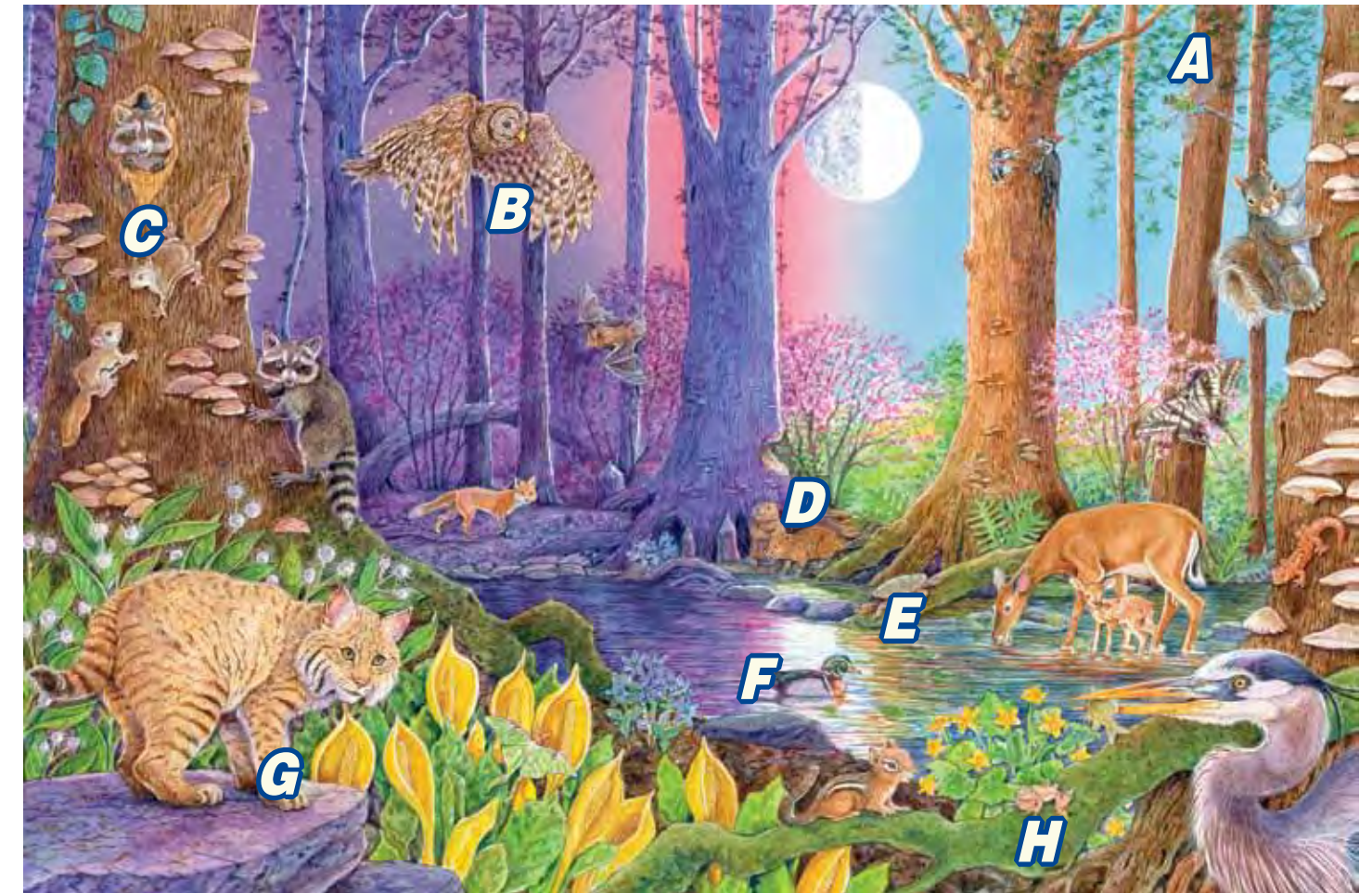
Flying squirrels can glide for distances over 150 feet.

Green darners will fly south for the winter, often in large swarms.

Snapping turtles eat both plants and animals (omnivores). One-third of their diet comes from plants.

Spring peeper bodies can freeze almost completely solid during the winter. They wake up in the spring when they warm up.

Wood ducks build nests in tree holes. Their ducklings can jump out of a nest from up to 50 feet in the air without hurting themselves.



Answers: A) green darter. B) barred owl. C) flying squirrel. D) beaver. E) snapping turtle. F) wood duck. G) bobcat. H) spring peeper.

For my mom, who inspired me in so many ways.—KK

Thanks to Ellen Ransomanski, Lead Environmental Educator at Shangri La Botanical Gardens and Nature Center, for verifying the accuracy of the information in this book.

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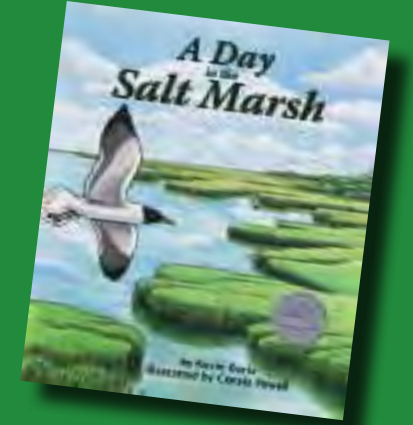
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