

Emma: Emma Twigg's Incredible Journey to Olympic Gold (2022)
Jessica Lawry, Upstart Press, 32pp.
978 1 990003 64 6 **\$19.99** Pb

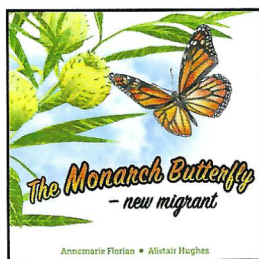
Author and primary school teacher, Jessica Lawry, met Emma Twigg at university and has followed her rowing career. To inspire the next generation, Lawry has put Emma's story in picture book format giving appeal to a wide range of ages. Emma's story is truly inspirational. Lawry begins the story with Emma falling in love with rowing as a schoolgirl. Tension builds in the narrative as Emma persists with long, lonely hours of training, is selected for the 2012 Olympics and comes fourth. This is followed by more disappointment at the Rio Olympics. Emma takes breaks, reassesses her goals and gives her Olympic dream another chance. This story is told with humility and the real sense that Olympic gold does not come easy. Emma's pain and disappointment is clearly shown in the beautiful illustrations and the text. Lesser people may have thrown in the towel earlier, but Emma's 20-year rowing career is the ultimate example of perseverance and resilience. Instead of using photographs, Lawry has created beautiful but realistic illustrations, capturing the misty scenes on Lake Karapiro and the emotions on faces. There are no white spaces on the pages and the illustrations vary from double-page spreads to half a dozen smaller pictures overlapping to illustrate Emma's journey to Olympic glory. This book would be a great addition to any school library. Highly recommended for ages 8-99.
Nova Gibson, Auckland

The Monarch Butterfly: New Migrant (2022)

Annemarie Florian, ill. Alistair Hughes, Upstart Press, 32pp.
978 1 990003 66 0 **\$34.99** Pb



Specific to the monarch butterflies in New Zealand, this picture book



beautifully illustrates the magic that is the life and metamorphosis of the butterfly. The text is melodically written, bringing the life cycle alive with alliteration, wonderful vocabulary and little couplets on each page (in larger font), summarising the detail.

The illustrations are simple, yet detailed, and I love the amount of white space throughout, creating a fresh and clean look. The slightly larger-than-normal size of the book gives presence, is good to hold, and really showcases the story, also proving to be an excellent format for reading aloud to a larger group of young ones.

An interesting account at the end of the book provides the reader with an opportunity to think about how the first butterflies arrived here, so far from their natural home in North America.

This is a beautiful book, really well done, the best I've seen for a long time on this topic. If it was a hardback, it would be even more presentable as a gift book. Read it.

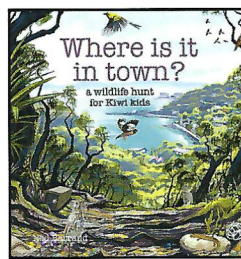
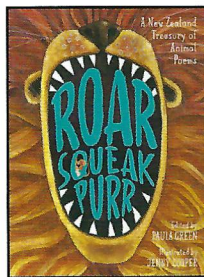
Rosemary Tisdall, Auckland

Roar, Squeak, Purr: A New Zealand Treasury of Animal Poems (2022)

Editor Paula Green, ill. Jenny Cooper, Puffin, 280pp. 978 0 14377514 0 **\$45.00** Hb

Where would New Zealand children's poetry be without Paula Green? Our poetry superstar has brought together a wonderful collection of poems about all kinds of animals—from the water, the air and the land. The poems come from well-known, and new New Zealand writers, some already known for their children's writing, but some from the adult poetry world too. There are marvellous pieces from Paula herself, and gathered from young contributors who have sent poems to her children's poetry blog *Poetry Box*.

The top-notch production makes this a forever book, along with



Jenny Cooper's dazzling watercolour illustrations which capture the animals so well. They have personality plus and I'm astounded by the different array of cats she has managed to portray (cats are a very popular subject for poems!). Some are humorous, while others make you want to reach out and stroke them. The creatures in the water section have wonderful green / blue aquatic backgrounds. The whale is a favourite, both in words and illustration.

This collaboration has previously produced **A Treasury of NZ Poems for Children**, which this new publication makes a fine companion to. Look out for the roaring lion's mouth on the cover, complete with embossing, and a tiny mouse sitting on the 'squeak' of the title. It's irresistible.

If you want to encourage children to be writers I can't think of a better place to start than with a copy of this book and an introduction to:

nzpoetrybox.wordpress.com
Crissi Blair, Auckland

Where is it in Town? A Wildlife Hunt for Kiwi Kids (2022)

Ned Barraud, Potton and Burton, 32pp. 978 1 98855046 6 **\$21.99** Pb

I am a long-time admirer of Ned Barraud's work. Among my favourites are **Tohora: The Southern Right Whale** (2019) and **Incredible Journeys: New Zealand Wildlife on the Move** (2021). I recently gifted a copy of **Where is It? A Wildlife Hunt for Kiwi Kids** (2020) to my grandson. He lives in Australia but, at 2.5 years old, he already has a keen interest in wildlife, so it was an ideal book to connect him back to New Zealand.

Its sequel, **Where is it in Town? A Wildlife Hunt for Kiwi Kids** is immediately engaging, presenting the reader with a different search-and-find scene on each page.

There are 11 two-page spreads depicting wildlife habitats found in the city: the back garden both at daytime and at night; long grass; the garden shed; leaf litter; in the trees; in a creek; the botanical gardens; a nature reserve; the edge of town; and at the wharf. The animals hidden in each scene are realistically rendered in a key, set against a white background, on the right-hand panel of each spread. The last few pages give extra information about the creatures found within the book.

This is a multi-layered, sophisticated search-and-find book, one that will draw readers back to its pages many times to pore over its hidden detail. The illustrations evoke a strong sense of place with immediately recognisable New Zealand flora and fauna. There is playful detail in the red band gumboots at the bottom of the stairs, the cob-webbed garden shed, and the kahu with its roadkill. The distinctive wooden houses in the garden and on the edge of town, the tangle of power lines, and old batten and wire farm fences further ground the images to place.

The wide-ranging selection of habitats encourages investigation of places we may otherwise overlook—leaf litter and under the pier of the city harbour for example. The inclusion of a road cone in the latter scene is perhaps a nod to the problem of pollution. The spread of the nature reserve with images of a stoat, trap, and rabbit in the foreground reminds the reader of the dangers posed to our wildlife, as do the cat, hedgehog, and possum in the night garden. They invite discussion for enquiring children. There is also space to research the names and significance of the many trees and flowers found within our cityscapes.

I was surprised that the Māori names for many of the creatures pictured were not consistently used in the key. Barraud includes korimako, kereru, kārearea, and ruru. Other names, while they appear in the informational back pages, are not used: tititipounamu (rifleman); piwakawaka (fantail); and tauhou (silveryeye). Perhaps it was a design issue to avoid cluttering the page with text, but it seems a lost opportunity to familiarise our young readers with the Māori names of our diverse wildlife.

Misgivings aside, I look forward to sharing this book with my grandson when he next visits. It promises many hours of exploration and