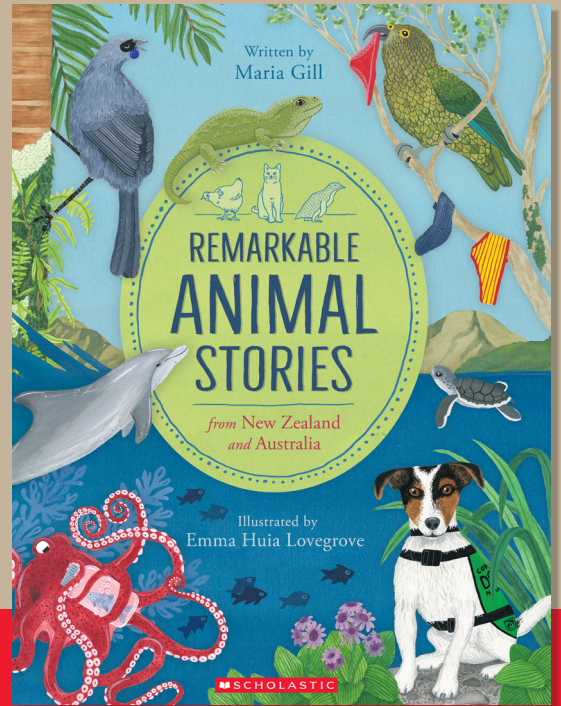


Remarkable Animal Stories

By Maria Gill

Illustrated by Emma Huia Lovegrove

• Reading • Writing • Social Studies • Art •



Synopsis

A collection of creative nonfiction stories about New Zealand and Australian quirky animals. Meet Nigel No-Mates, the lovesick gannet; Paddles, the cat with extra toes; Henry, the tuatara that became a first-time dad at 111 years old; and Migaloo, a rare white whale. These are just some of the remarkable real-life characters that have inspired this quirky and curious collection of 28 true animal tales, brought to life with more than 80 watercolour paintings, and 30 photographs. In a section at the back of the book, readers can learn about the roles of wildlife centres, sanctuaries and zoos. Useful links to further information about the animals are on the website page or in the bibliography.

About the Author

Maria Gill grew up in Auckland, New Zealand and then her family moved to Australia when she was in her teen years. They travelled around in a caravan, and she and her siblings spent their days being fascinated by Australian wildlife. When they moved back to New Zealand, Maria trained to be a teacher and taught in Intermediate and Primary classrooms. For thirteen years, she lived on a lifestyle farm with ducks, sheep, chickens, rabbits, guinea pigs, two cats and a dog. But she's since downsized to just one cat and now lives in a seaside village where she writes full time. Maria has written 60 children's books including the winner of the 2016 Margaret Mahy Book of the Year, *Anzac Heroes*. Ten of her books have received Storylines Notable Book Awards. In 2020, Maria was awarded the Margaret Mahy Medal for services to children's literature from Storylines, and graduated with an AUT Masters in Creative Writing (First Class Honours) degree.

About the Illustrator

Emma Huia Lovegrove is a visual artist and illustrator from Auckland, New Zealand. Emma graduated from Elam School of Fine Arts in 2019 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts with First Class Honours and was a 2nd place recipient of the 2018 Henrietta and Lola Anne Tunbridge Watercolour Scholarship. Since graduating from Elam, she has collaborated with Pauanesia and held her first solo exhibition, titled *Whenua*, at Endemic World. Emma uses her art as a way to foster her relationship with the landscapes that she visits. She is drawn to locations that feel wild and untouched, but when you peer more closely, vibrant ecosystems thrive and intricate patterns are revealed. This is her first children's book.



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Writing Style

Remarkable Animal Stories is an engaging, and at times funny collection of true animal tales from New Zealand and Australia. It's written in creative nonfiction style, third person, present tense with 28 stories from New Zealand and Australia. There is a factual section at the book of the book about wildlife centres, sanctuaries and zoos, as well as a websites and further reading page.

The text includes active verbs, transition words to move the story along, and descriptive passages and summaries that incorporate research and interviewed information. Each animal has its own double-page spread with a fact box, a photo, and illustrations depicting scenes from the story. The tales focus on a brief period of the animal's life. For some stories, the author has researched the behaviour and life cycle of the animal and included how they got to where the story is set. The book targets young readers (8-14) who enjoy and love animals.

Illustration Style

Illustrations have been created in watercolour and gouache. Over 80 paintings and sketches complement the stories. Some are one-off animal pictures. Others include landscape and foliage and decorate full strips. Watercolour backgrounds feature on some of the double-page spreads with text laid over the top. Over 30 framed photographs show the real characters.

Shared Learning and Discussion Points

During the shared sessions encourage students to ask questions to clarify their understanding of characters and events. Have them make predictions, inferences and relate these to their own experiences. Read the passages aloud and/or have students read alongside or by themselves.

ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

Look at the cover and read the blurb.

- What animals might they read about in the book?
- Will the stories be true or fictional? How can you tell?
- Will the stories be about native animals or pets, or a mix of both?
- What do you think might qualify an animal as 'remarkable'?

Comprehension questions

- Why do you think the author has chosen the animals she has in the book?
- What makes Kahurangi extraordinary?
- Why does Kahurangi not want to be with other birds like herself?
- Why does Lindsay Hazley choose the name 'Henry' for the tuatara?
- What operation does Henry need and how does he change afterward?
- What causes Flint to get lost?
- What would you have done if it was your dog?
- What food does Brigitte Stevens feed the wombats?
- How long was the tunnel Brigitte found? What else likes to live in the wombat homes?
- What causes Ken-Joe to get lead poisoning and what is the treatment for it?
- How does Paddles become famous? What are some of the reasons that koalas end up in the koala hospital?
- How does Izzy Bee form a special relationship with the koalas?
- How does Inky escape? And what happened to the first octopus?
- How many partners does Rob have? What happened to them?
- Why is Migaloo famous, and how does he help researchers?
- Where does Migaloo migrate to with his family and why do they go there?
- What attracts Nigel to Mana Island? Why does he attack Norman?



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- Why was Phar Lap so famous? What was it about the horse that might have helped him win all those races?
- How does Chrystall show that she is a survivor?
- Why are yellow-eyed penguins so endangered?
- Why does Little Miss Sunshine not know how to stand, peck or sunbathe at first?
- How does she become a TV star?
- How did Glenn Druey protect Gus during the dog race? And why did everyone make a fuss about Gus being in that race?
- How have echidna managed to survive for centuries?
- How does Big Mama show her playful side?
- What supercharged verbs has the author used in Calvin's story?
- Where do they release Calvin, and why do they have a ceremony when they let him go?
- What is another name for little blue penguins? What is it about them that scares off predators when they come in to land?
- Why do people send knitted jumpers to the sanctuary, and what are they used for?
- What foods do the keepers feed Royal the kiwi to build her up when she is a chick?
- At what age will Royal be safe from most predators? What animals are a threat to her?
- How does the young platypus pup get injured? Who saves him and how? Why are the keepers cautious around Wally?
- How does Tumbles get his name? How do the takahē get sponsorship?
- What TV show are Tumbles and Kawa on, and why?
- Why are Albert and Einstein shy when they first arrive at the sanctuary?
- How does Einstein show that he likes to be the centre of attention?
- How does Moko rescue the two whales?
- Why does Moko like to play with humans?
- How does Mark Todd get Charisma into shape for racing?
- What are the stages of a kangaroo growing up?
- How does the author show that Mandy cares deeply for her rescued kangaroos?
- What do you think the falcon's name means?
- What training does Debbie Stewart do to get the falcon fit again?
- What is Taylor trained to detect, and what do he and his trainer do once they find on?
- In what way is the job sometimes dangerous for Taylor and Ryan?
- How did Sirocco become famous? How did they try to cure him from it?
- How do the rangers manage to find Sirocco again?
- What is the role of carers in wildlife centres and sanctuaries?
- What Australian animal did wildlife hospitals help save early in 2020?
- How have zoos changed over the last century?



ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1: MATCH IT!

Match these words with their meanings.

aviary	animal that comes to recognise another animal/person as a parent or object of trust
imprint	seasonal movement of animals
anthropomorphise	having a jagged edge
migration	physical effort
serrated	to attribute human characteristics or behaviour to an animal
exertion	cage for birds

ACTIVITY 2: CATEGORISE IT!

Look at the Table of Contents. Identify which birds are from New Zealand and which are from Australia. Are they native or introduced birds?

What other categories might we have for the birds, mammals, reptiles that are in the book?

ACTIVITY 3: WRITE YOUR OWN STORY!

Write a story about an animal you know, or that you've read about in the news. Plan the story on a storyboard. Research information about the behaviour of the animal, then brainstorm words that describes the animal in action.

Write a draft with an introduction, middle paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph. Check your story and then read it aloud to a partner. If you pause or stumble, it's your intuition telling you that you need to improve the flow of the story. Once you are satisfied with it, write out a good copy and draw an illustration to go with it.

Collate the rest of the classroom's stories and publish your own 'remarkable animal stories'.

ACTIVITY 4: BOOK TRAILER TIME!

Watch the book trailer for the book. How does it hook in the reader? How is it persuasive? Have they chosen the right type of music for the type of book? What could be done to improve the book trailer?

Design your own trailer for the book with a software package like Animoto, using one of their free templates. Storyboard what you want to say in the book trailer, collect photos, illustrations and videos (if needed), and then insert them into the Animoto template you have chosen. Show it to the class. See if the school library or website would like to include it on their site.

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