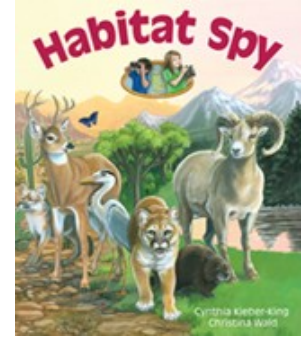




*A Conversation with
Cynthia Kieber-King
author of
Habitat Spy*



How did you get the idea to write *Habitat Spy*?

I've always loved to travel and explore different habitats, ranging from my backyard to the multitude found in our fabulous National Parks. Behind my backyard is a meadow, behind the meadow is a shrubby area full of brambles, and far beyond the brambles the land rises into a wooded hill. I wondered what those woods looked like, but I couldn't get to them - those brambles were too clingy and painful! But I imagined what I would see if I *could* get from the meadow to those woods. And I wondered what I would see if I kept walking, exploring habitat after habitat until eventually I'd traveled across the United States out in to the Pacific Ocean. What a trip that would be – so many intriguing habitats, full of incredible plants and animals! Since I couldn't make that walk in real life, I made that trip come to life on paper, and that imagining turned into *Habitat Spy*.

When did you become interested in writing?

I've always been an avid reader, so in that way I've always been interested in writing. But as far as doing it myself, I've enjoyed creative writing, particularly poetry, since I was a girl. My education and first career in science changed the focus of my writing to technical writing. It wasn't until after my son was born that I made time for creative writing again, and because of him, I was drawn to explore children's writing. I haven't stopped since!

What was the most challenging thing about writing *Habitat Spy*?

Choosing only thirteen habitats – there's so many fascinating, beautiful habitats in our world, it was hard to focus on only a few! Similarly, it was difficult to mention only four organisms in each habitat.



What is the most frequently asked question you encounter as a writer, and how do you respond?

I think that might be *How do you have the discipline to write at home?* My answer: I treat my writing as a job (a most enjoyable one!) with a schedule, so that when it's time to write, it's time to write. I find having a routine helps me stick to the writing, even with all the distractions around me at home.

What sparks your creativity?

My curiosity. Trying to answer those standard questions what, when, where, how, and why turns on my creativity. I find the question What if? particularly good for generating ideas! Reading, music, and nature are important inspirations for me as well.

Want to continue this conversation? Schedule an interview!

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