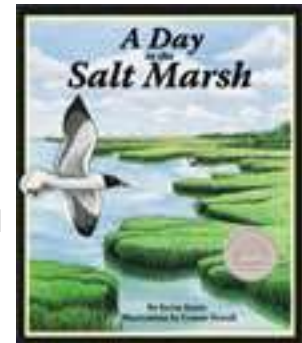


A Conversation with Kevin Kurtz author of *A Day in the Salt Marsh*

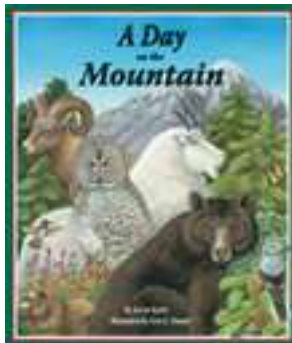


Why did you write *A Day in the Salt Marsh*?

While working as an environmental educator at the South Carolina Aquarium, I became aware that there was not a children's book available that focused solely on salt marshes. Being a salt marsh fan and a children's literature fan, I thought, "Someone needs to rectify this situation!" and then about two seconds later, "That someone could be me." I came up with an idea about how to write about the wonders of salt marshes for children in an informative and fun way, and that idea eventually turned into my book, *A Day in the Salt Marsh*.



What inspired you to write *A Day on the Mountain*?



I wanted to write another book like *A Day in the Salt Marsh* that explored an entire ecosystem and how the animals and plants that live there adapt to changes in the environment. I ended up choosing mountain ecosystems mainly because of my sister, who has been living in the mountainous parts of Montana, Wyoming or Alaska for most of my adult life. Whenever I went to visit her, we would hike up at least one mountain trail together, which allowed me to experience first-hand how just a couple thousand feet change in elevation would also change the wildlife that was visible. I had been lucky enough to see some really interesting animals on these hikes, many of which I ended up writing about in the book. I knew these were animals and ecosystems that most people were not able to encounter, and I wanted to bring their world to a larger audience.

What are the most frequently asked questions you encounter as an author?

How long did it take you to write the book?

This is hard to give an exact answer to, as the idea germinated in my head for about a year before I attempted to put it to paper. The initial writing was on and off for three or four months, and the editing that followed that happened on and off for over a year.

I have an idea for a children's book. Can you help me get it published?

I am still not sure how to answer this.

What sparks your creativity?

I am very passionate about nature and education, so anything related to those two areas tends to spark ideas, which has worked out well for me, considering I have worked as an environmental educator for most of the past decade. Humor is key for me, too. Even if the final product is not supposed to be funny, if an initial idea makes me laugh, it tends to shift my brain into creative gear.



What was the most challenging part about writing *A Day on the Mountain*.

Preparing to write *A Day on the Mountain* required a lot more research than I had to do for *A Day in the Salt Marsh*. When I had written *A Day in the Salt Marsh*, I had been living for years in a place where I was surrounded by salt marshes. I had been able to spend a lot of time in salt marshes and was fairly knowledgeable about them before I decided to write my book. When I decided to write the mountain book, all of my experiences with the mountains of the west had occurred on vacation, which I did not feel was enough for the basis of a book. Luckily, I was able to borrow a number of books on mountain ecosystems from my sister, which helped me build up my content knowledge. Also, I had moved to Oregon about the time I started my research, which allowed me to have more firsthand experience in the mountains. It took me awhile to feel comfortable that I knew what I was talking about and could begin writing. Reading and hiking are two of my favorite activities, though, so for the most part it was enjoyable.

Want to continue this conversation? Schedule an interview!

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