

## Press Release



# Swampwalker's Journal

by David M. Carroll

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Winner of the John Burroughs Medal for Best Natural History Book for the Year in 2001

## Introduction

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Over the past two years, 20,000 acres of wetlands have been destroyed and 150 streams channeled without environmental review (*New York Times*). The loss to our natural world is incalculable. What does this destruction do to those who love the wetlands — people like David Carroll, who have known the wetlands and their wildlife for nearly fifty years? More important, what becomes of the creatures living in the vernal pools, marshes, swamps, and bogs when their habitat is destroyed?

In *Swampwalker's Journal*, Carroll explores the importance of wetlands, both for himself and the creatures living in these habitats. He carries us through an entire year of exploration, allowing us to see a world we frequently miss in our impatience and misunderstanding. He educates us about one of the most contentious environmental issues of our time by introducing us to wetlands inhabitants he has long known and loved, such as the spotted, wood, and painted turtles. "Half an hour into my ground search I encounter a tiny traveler," he writes. "The hatchling painted turtle halts in midstep as I kneel for a closer look. His eyes are bright with September light, lemon gold, brighter than goldenrod, with a jet-black slash and round pupil sparked with

sun. This turtle, so new, has the look of an ancient wanderer, one who has walked the earth for a thousand years."

Although this baby turtle has not been wandering for a thousand years, its ancestors have. Yet the fate of the hatchling is unknown, as is the fate of the wetlands themselves. In April of this year, the Environmental Protection Agency announced that it would close a loophole that allowed developers to work in wetland areas without permits. As Carroll lyrically familiarizes us with the plants and animals that live in wet places, he unobtrusively reminds us that such protection is only the first step in preserving their habitats.

As one of the Northeast's most influential voices in wetlands conservation, naturalist and artist David M. Carroll is an active lecturer and preservation advocate whose testimonies have been instrumental in protecting wetlands throughout New England. He is also the author of *The Year of the Turtles* and *Trout Reflections*.

## **Praise for *Swampwalker's Journal***

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"Carroll gets waist deep into the muck in order to convey the true beauty, bounty, and ecological fragility of northeastern U.S. wetlands." — *Library Journal*

"I was captivated by David Carroll's graceful, lyrical style, his almost superhuman powers of observation, and his obvious passion and respect for life in all its forms." — Emily d'Aulaire, *Smithsonian*

"His hungry eye devours all of life . . . Carroll has a huge heart. He shares with anyone who chooses to listen." — *Boston Globe*

"*Swampwalker's Journal* puts a face, or faces, on the creatures we are destroying, something much more effective than a blanket cry to 'save the wetlands' . . . The gift of this book is in sharing that intimacy with us, letting us immerse ourselves in these worlds that we are rapidly losing." — David Gessner, *Boston Sunday Globe*

"Simply, utterly, wonderfully soggy." — *San Diego Tribune*

"As nature disappears, we need more people who speak the language of flowers. As the Book of Life continues burning, we need more David Carrolls." — *Philadelphia Inquirer*

"David Carroll is a genius, a madman, a national treasure." — Annie Dillard

"I devoured David Carroll's magnificent *Swampwalker's Journal*. This is the best kind of book. You will want to read it in one great swallow; you will also want to lay it aside and hunt out your rattiest tennis shoes for an immediate trip to bog, swamp, pool, puddle, fen, or floodplain. *Swampwalker's Journal* is an admission ticket to a secret corner of the world." — Bill McKibben

"I love this book!" — Bernd Heinrich

"In my pantheon of nature writers, David Carroll walks on water. His perpetual damp prowl, illuminated by deft, limpid writing and exquisite drawings, makes for a near-perfect book. Carroll has written the richest, smartest, and most generous account of living land-and-waterscape since Henry Williamson's *Tarka the Otter*." — Robert Michael Pyle

"A wonderful medley of natural history and poetry." — Jan DeBlieu

"An intimate and wise book." — Sue Hubbell

"Another wonderful book by an author who conveys the true beauty and excitement of the living world." — William A. Niering

"A joy to read . . . This delightful book should be in the library of all wetland ecologists and persons interested in natural history." — Carl H. Ernst

"David Carroll's 'being there' makes me feel as if I sloshed, absolutely enchanted, through each one of those ponds and fens and bogs, trailing behind an expert, charming guide." — Anne Zwinger

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