



The Southern Swamp Explorer

- AUTHOR: Irene Brady
- TRIM: 8½ x 11
- PAGES: 128 pp.
- ILLUSTRATIONS: 375+
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- READING LEVEL: 12 - Adult

The Southern Swamp Explorer approaches its broad subject of swamps with a fictional but true-to-life narrative of life in a black-water swamp as lived by its wildlife. Lively, illustrated sidebars offer interesting details and extra information which allow the story to proceed unhindered. All of the native wildlife and plants featured throughout the book are found in a broad swath of swamps across the Southeastern U.S., from Texas to the Carolinas.

Forty-six animals are connected together in a narrative that weaves a story around their interlinked lives. The fictional approach to real life patterns makes the material more accessible to the reader than the typical litany of dry facts, and draws even reluctant readers into the subject.

The book sets the scene with a lively discussion of swamp characteristics, including how the swamps first formed, the many kinds of wetlands, and the types of plants and wildlife found in cypress swamps and the surrounding hardwood forests, pine flatwoods and scrub.

As in the first book of the Explorer Series (*The Redrock Canyon Explorer*), right-hand pages take the reader on a trip through the environment on the wings, paws, hooves, and fins of its inhabitants. Chapter 1 begins the story with a hatching dragonfly, and follows along as she matures, lays eggs, then gets side-swiped by a hungry bullfrog, who is the main feature on the next right-hand page. Then, follow the bullfrog through its day until its life-path intersects with the next character, a barred owl.

Subsequent chapters lead the reader along an absorbing trail through the swamp, peering into the lives of hatching alligators, jumping spiders, common grackles, longnose gars, little blue herons, red-bellied woodpeckers, red crawfish, raccoons, anole lizards, and many other creatures interconnected through their life in the swamps.



Opposite the narrative pages are lavishly illustrated sidebar pages. Across from Chapter 1, for instance, text and drawings show what dragonfly nymphs and eggs look like, compare dragonflies with damsel flies, and illustrate how a dragonfly nymph's strange hinged jaws work. One sidebar describes a cicada's shrill whine and shows the cicada mentioned in the story. This page also introduces the dominant swamp tree, the bald cypress, discussing and illustrating buttresses, cypress knees, seedlings, and the Spanish moss drapery that decorates the mysterious southern swamps.

The Southern Swamp Explorer informs effortlessly as it entertains. Readers hardly notice that they're getting a first-rate education on the life and workings of swamps, marshes, and the surrounding environs. In today's fast-moving world, it has become essential to quickly educate as many as possible about the natural world, so this is a vitally important attribute. To this end, a 4-page index provides easy access to every subject mentioned.

Irene Brady researched this book in swamps throughout the South. Facts were checked with existing literature and swamp experts, resulting in an accurate and faithful representation of life in the collective southern swamps. She blends carefully researched materials in a lively and compelling story, balancing narrative with illustrations that clarify, delight, and excite the imagination of the book's readers.

HERE'S WHAT REVIEWERS ARE SAYING:

↓ “Swamps ... full of hidden life and mysterious sounds, peculiar creatures with curious habits, strange plants with surprising qualities ~ an unfamiliar place until you read *The Southern Swamp Explorer* by Irene Brady.

Clear enough to hold the attention of a pre-teen, *The Southern Swamp Explorer* is also an absorbing journey for the curious adult looking for answers. Take it with you next time you go swamping. It will greatly enrich your experience.”
Arthur P. Cooley, Founding Trustee, Environmental Defense Fund

↓ “I love this book!!! *The Southern Swamp Explorer* is a real treasure chest and a tool kit that you can take into the swamp, use in the classroom, or just enjoy wherever you may be.

Weaving her rich artwork and natural history lessons into the “big picture,” Brady has created a beautiful portrait of the traditionally unloved swamp. She captures the imagination while highlighting the assets and values of wetlands.

I recommend it for nature education programs, promotion of wetlands conservation, and for sheer pleasure!”

Carol Lovell-Saas, Biologist, Educator and Director, Biophilia Nature Center, Elberta, Alabama

↓ “Irene Brady’s latest book, *The Southern Swamp Explorer*, will lead you into a strange world where few of us have gone before. The remarkably detailed illustrations and the true-to-life narrative transport you directly into the amazing ecosystem of the deep swamp ~ then, the thorough, interesting sidebars reveal its wonder-filled mysteries, with close-ups, diagrams, and even a few funny rhymes to help remember things.

This extraordinary book is a true treasure for any naturalist, any age, anywhere.”

Elizabeth Wasserman, Naturalist, Homer, Alaska

↓ “Part field guide, part nature journal, *The Southern Swamp Explorer* does a beautiful job of engaging readers with vivid narrative, exquisite drawings, and fascinating facts about denizens of swamps and other Southern Wetlands.”

Jennifer Rigby, Director, Acorn Naturalists, “the premier nature catalog for today’s young naturalists”

↓ “...”*The Southern Swamp Explorer*” is informatively written and profusely illustrated by Irene Brady, who blends her impressively researched data with the skills of a natural storyteller. . . Enhanced with a comprehensive four-page index, “*The Southern Swamp Explorer*” is appropriate as a curriculum supplement for environmental studies and highly recommended for non-specialist readers ages 13 to adult.”

John Burroughs, The Midwest Book Review

↓ “...the *Southern Swamp Explorer* is loaded with information about southern swamp ecosystems. Natural and cultural history, biology, botany, and ecology, presented in user-friendly text and fun-fact sidebars, is easy to understand and entertaining for all ages. And with directions to some of the best sites to view southern swamps, the *Southern Swamp Explorer* can serve as a great trip planner, too.”

Claire R. Coco, Director, BREC’s Bluebonnet Swamp Nature Center, Baton Rouge, LA

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Irene Brady trained as a biological illustrator at Harvard University’s Botanical Museum and the Museum of Comparative Zoology, and her subsequent writing and illustrations have appeared in *Audubon*, *Ranger Rick Nature Magazine*, *RV Journal*, *Cricket*, *Your Big Backyard*, and other natural history magazines. She has traveled extensively in the southwestern deserts, northern forests, southern swamps, Costa Rica and New Zealand to research her books.

Long recognized for her writing and illustrating skills, Brady has received *The Evelyn Sibley Lampman Award* from the Oregon Library Association for “Significant Contribution to the Children of Oregon in The Field of Literature.” Her publications include thirteen books which she wrote and illustrated, and an additional fourteen which she illustrated for other authors through major publishers, plus numerous art workbooks.

Five books she illustrated have received *Outstanding Science Books for Children Awards*, from the National Science Teachers Association/Children’s Book Council Joint Committee. *Wild Mouse*, which Brady wrote and illustrated, received the New York Academy of Sciences *Seventh Annual Children’s Science Book Award* for the best science book for children. Her book *Illustrating Nature ~ Right-brain Art in a Left-brain World* has been showcased on the popular *The Old Schoolhouse* homeschooling site.

Since 1969, such renowned publishers as Houghton Mifflin, Coward-McCann, Scribners, Morrow, Stackpole and others have published Irene Brady’s works. Recent works have been published by Nature Works Press.