

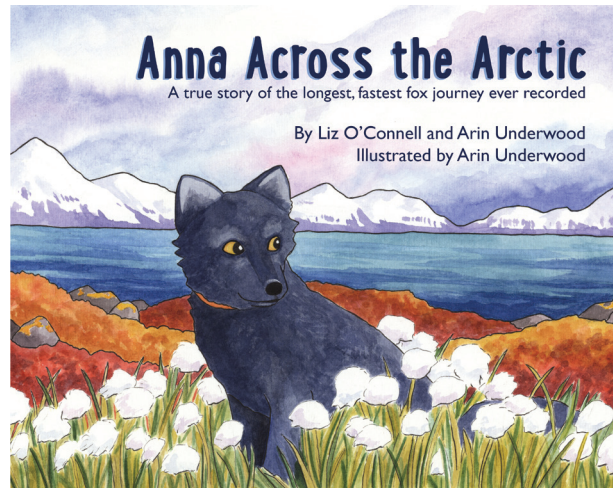
## BOOK REVIEW

Review of *Anna across the Arctic*, by Liz O'Connell & Arin Underwood, illustrated by Arin Underwood (2020). Anchorage, AK, USA: WonderVisions. 35 pp. ISBN: 978-0-9677126-6-6

*Polar Research* does not ordinarily include notices of children's books. An exception is being made for *Anna across the Arctic* because it is based on a story first told in the pages of this journal about an Arctic fox that was satellite-tracked as she travelled from Svalbard, Norway, to Ellesmere Island, Canada, over the course of four months (Fuglei & Tarroux 2019).

As documented by Fuglei & Tarroux, the total cumulative distance covered by the 1900-gram fox after she left her natal area on 1 March 2018 until she settled on Ellesmere Island on 1 July that same year was 4415 km. The straight-line distance was about 1789 km. Crossing sea ice, glaciers and unglaciated terrain, she moved an average of 46.3 km/day. Her northernmost location was 84.7°N, on the sea ice off northern Greenland. This extraordinary case—among the longest and fastest documented dispersal movements by an Arctic fox—was quickly picked up by Reuters, Al Jazeera, the BBC, CNN, *The Guardian*, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times* and other conveyors of news. Two years after its publication, the article remains among the most viewed articles on *Polar Research's* website on a monthly basis.

Charmingly illustrated and told in quatrains, *Anna across the Arctic* is a story for very young children. The plucky female Arctic fox encounters ptarmigans, red-throated loons, polar bears, ringed seals, belugas and other animals as she traverses land and sea ice. The book uses the known and imagined adventures of "Anna", from her capture and collaring by scientists in Svalbard to her establishment (with a male who is of a different colour morph than herself) in Canada, to tell a much larger story about the Arctic ecosystem. A mini-field guide near the end of the book challenges children to locate organisms



ranging from comb jelly to purple saxifrage in the main story.

Another page informs the adult reader about the effects of climate change on the Arctic, a region that is warming twice as quickly as the rest of the planet, with potentially dire consequences for Arctic plants and animals that depend on cold and ice. This grim topic is only briefly and lightly touched upon in the main part of the book ("Anna travels on thin ice that is / Not as thick as it used to be"), which keeps the story suitably upbeat.

Both authors are rooted in the Far North. O'Connell is an Alaska-based artist and writer who led a US National Science Foundation project that investigated how multimedia can support science education. Underwood is a fisherwoman and artist in Alaska who studied seabirds and ecology in Svalbard for her Master's degree at UiT The Arctic University of Tromsø.

## Reference

Fuglei E. & Tarroux A. 2019. Arctic fox dispersal from Svalbard to Canada: one female's long run across sea ice. *Polar Research* 38, article no. 3512, doi: 10.33265/polar.v38.3512.

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