



## *Wild Pond Hockey*

**Author:**

Jeffrey C. Domm

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**Grades:**

Kindergarten-grade 3

**Ages:**

Ages 5-8

**Review by:**

Review by Roxy Garstad

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**Excerpt:**

*The pond is smooth and slick as the pack walks onto the ice. The wolves' rough pads and claws help them balance and grip.*

*Two younger curious wolves approach the ravens' chunk of ice, which is sparkling and gleaming in the sun. They sniff it, and one gently pushes it with her muzzle.*

*That was fun!*

*Wild Pond Hockey* is a typically Canadian homage to our favourite sport, albeit presenting it with a creative flair. It is a clever hockey origin story, adding a new dimension to a nearly saturated field of juvenile hockey titles. While it acknowledges the possibility that hockey was invented by Indigenous peoples and subsequently taught to European settlers, this story offers a fantastical theory that the author/illustrator develops quite convincingly, leaving it up to young readers to decide in the end. What starts as an investigation of a rather large chunk of ice by a group of intelligent ravens leads to a playful game of tossing

ice chunks back and forth among the wolves in a pack, with the ravens being relegated to a raucous spectator role. It is the ravens, however, who skillfully employ twigs as hockey sticks once the wolves abandon the smaller, less engaging chunks of ice. The final page offers a nonfiction explanation of the intelligence and highly sophisticated communication styles of both ravens and wolves.

Domm writes utilizing succinct language, with an informational, factual tone, which will appeal to grade school children who have graduated past the juvenile and poetic picture books of their earlier years. Hockey terminology, such as “centre ice”, is employed, along with British spelling, the latter of which is becoming more rare in Canadian children’s literature. Even if the story does not appeal to non-hockey fans, the illustrations are so incredibly exquisite that the book is worthy of purchase for them alone. Fine animal fur is depicted with such detail and accuracy, each hair placed perfectly on the animal’s body. Even the vein network of an individual leaf is drawn with near-photographic quality. Such artistry deserves close examination of each page. *Wild Pond Hockey* is a must-have for all Canadian children’s literature collections.

**Highly Recommended**

**Reviewer:**

Roxy Garstad is the Collections Librarian at MacEwan University in Edmonton, Alberta.