

Approved for use in 7th Grade

Summary of the Work:

Roy is a middle school student new to Florida from Montana. While trying to adjust to a new school climate and new classmates who physically pester him, a boy his age running by the bus stop without shoes catches his attention. After meeting the unique boy, Roy joins with him and his stepsister in an environmental battle against corporate America. A large restaurant chain is set on erecting a new pancake house, and the kids are intent on saving an endangered species of owl living on the property.

Rationale:

Hoot is an entertaining read for middle school students. Hiassen’s humor infuses this story of unlikely friendship and fighting for what’s right.

All elements of fiction can be explored: characters, setting, plot, and theme. The themes, especially, resonant with this age group: friendship, the perilous position of animals in the face of human development, and the triumph of teens over adult plans.

Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

Gr. 5-8. It seems unlikely that the master of noir-tinged, surrealistic black humor would write a novel for young readers. And, yet, there has always been something delightfully juvenile about Hiassen's imagination; beneath the bent cynicism lurks a distinctly 12-year-old cackle. In this thoroughly engaging tale of how middle-schooler Roy Eberhardt, new kid in Coconut Cove, learns to love South Florida, Hiassen lets his inner kid run rampant, both the subversive side that loves to see grown-ups make fools of themselves and the righteously indignant side, appalled at the mess being made of our planet. When Roy teams up with some classic children's lit outsiders to save the home of some tiny burrowing owls, the stage is set for a confrontation between right-thinking kids and slow-witted, wrongheaded civic boosters. But Hiassen never lets the formula get in his way; the story is full of offbeat humor, buffoonish yet charming supporting characters, and genuinely touching scenes of children enjoying the wildness of nature. He deserves a warm welcome into children's publishing. Bill Ott. From: Syndetics Solutions, Inc. Distributed by Syndetic Solutions, Inc.

Paula Rohrlack (KLIATT Review, September 2002 (Vol. 36, No. 5))
 Hiassen, a columnist for the Miami Herald and the author of many best-selling novels for adults about the wild and wacky side of the state of Florida, offers a hoot of a read here in his first novel for YAs. Roy is the new kid in town, a student at Trace Middle School in Coconut Cove. From the school bus window, as a bully is harassing him, Roy spots a barefoot boy his age running by, and he becomes intrigued. Roy follows the boy, and gradually learns that he is involved in trying to protect the nesting site of some rare burrowing owls. This site is currently an empty lot that is about to be turned into a pancake house by a corporate executive called Chuck Muckle, with the assistance of a bald foreman called Curly. Adventures and misadventures ensue—alligators pop up in portable potties and a tough girl takes a bite out of Roy’s bike tire—before Roy works out a way to get revenge on the bully and help the barefoot boy save the owls. My 14-year-old daughter read this and liked it, calling it "clever and funny" and commenting "it was interesting how the plots came together." Hiassen's trademark over-the-top humor and satire, along with his concern for safeguarding Florida's wildlife, come through clearly and will entertain readers. Here's hoping he continues to write for YAs. Category: Hardcover Fiction. KLIATT Codes: J--Recommended for junior high school students. 2002, Random House/Knopf, 304p., \$17.99. Ages 12 to 15. Print resources are available from the library media center and libraries in the district. Contact any library media specialist to view the scholarly sources.

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- * Scholarly reviews are also available online through Books in Books in Print and Gale. Contact the library media specialist to obtain username and password information to access the subscription database of full-text reviews.

Noted Distinction:

- Newbery Honor Book

Readability:

- Lexile Score: 760L
- Readability Level:

Learning Resources Guidelines:

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

Standard Alignment: [\(link\)](#)

Approval:

Submitted to Committee:

Approved for Adoption:

Notes on the Text:

(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

Connection to the Curriculum:

Hoot is a modern, humorous look at timely environmental issues. It also depicts middle school age students who are not afraid to stand up for their beliefs, to make friends across the social barriers, and to be individuals in a society of cliques. This novel provides a great narrative example for 6th graders of plot development, characterization, themes, foreshadowing and other significant literary elements introduced and developed in middle school.

Additional Connections:

(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)