

# TEACHER'S NOTES

**TITLE:** I Can Swim A Rainbow

**AUTHOR:** Kim Michelle Toft

**ILLUSTRATOR:** Kim Michelle Toft

**PUBLISHER:** Silkim Books

**PRICE:** \$24.95

**ISBN:** 9780994238801

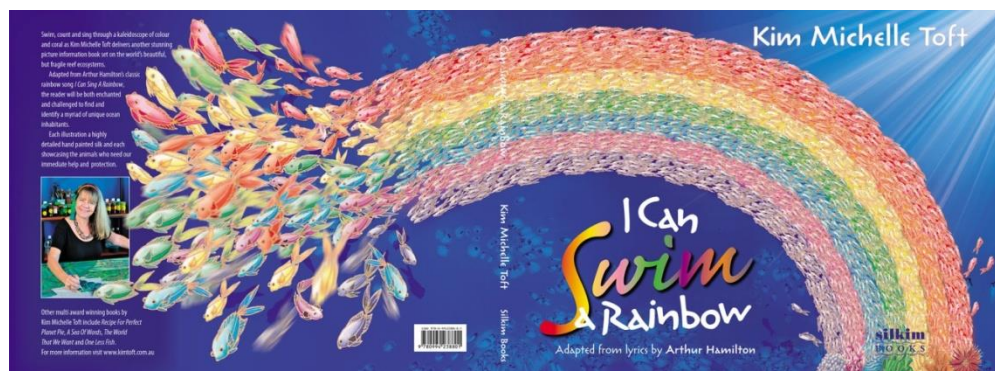
**PUBLICATION DATE:** June 2015

*I Can Swim A Rainbow* is adapted from the classic song *I Can Sing A Rainbow* written and composed by Arthur Hamilton in 1955. The words of the song were a perfect vehicle for me to use the colours of the rainbow to represent the vivid colours and creatures of the reef and also by singing the book it is a celebration of its incredible beauty. The reader floats through a kaleidoscope of monochromatic hand painted silk illustrations, depicting a huge variety of animals found on our magnificent but critically endangered coral reefs.

Each detailed illustration in the book is hand painted onto silk.

## About the Book

The **cover** at first glance looks like bands of colour forming a rainbow, however on closer inspection each band of colour is made up of hundreds of tiny fish which fan out on the back cover. This reflects the diversity of colour on the reef and the frenzy of fish which inhabits it. The bands of colour also come out of clumps of coral of the same colour. The order of the colours follow the traditional order of an actual rainbow - red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet.



A photo of Kim Michelle Toft on the back cover, shows Kim painting one of the silk illustrations from the book, in this case 'Green'. She is also wearing a rainbow coloured headband.

The **end pages** are painted in progression of the colours found in a colour wheel. The dappled effect is created by putting rock salt onto the silk while the dye is still wet. The rock salt draws the dye towards it, creating a 'bubble' effect.

The **half title page** introduces the reader to the challenge which is to find and count the various creatures in each colour.

**Find the animals inside each hue,  
Some will number more than two.  
So take your time and have a good look,  
As the answers you seek are in the back of this book.**

Written in rhyme, which is typical of my half title pages .I also like to use unusual words so children can extend the vocabulary. I have used the word ‘ hue’ which can be discussed as another word for ‘colour’. The second line points out to the child that they need to find as many different creatures, as some animals will have more than one of their kind. The forth line invites the reader to go to the back of the book to find the answers.

The rays of sunlight which are common on the cover, half title and title page represents the importance of sunlight for the survival of coral reefs.

The **body of the text** follows the lyrics of the song *I Can Sing A Rainbow* with words changed to fit the ‘ocean’ theme. The first seven double page spreads are monochromatic illustrations with various creatures camouflaged, making some of them very difficult to find. It will make the child look a number of times before counting all the creatures in each colour.

There are 5 major subject areas covered throughout this book –

- **Science** - Identifying the sea creatures and learning some facts about them
  - Looking at the environmental challenges confronting coral reefs
  - Learning about rainbows and how they are formed
  - Camouflage and how it is used in nature and why it is used
- **Literature** – Reading the words and information in the information pages
- **Maths** – Counting the number of sea creatures on each page
- **Art** – Colour concepts and the colour wheel
  - Silk painting appreciation
- **Music** – Singing the text/lyrics with reference to the sheet music which instruments can also play

The progression of colour and the pages as follows –

- RED
- YELLOW
- PINK
- GREEN
- PURPLE
- ORANGE
- BLUE

- BLACK and WHITE

## RED



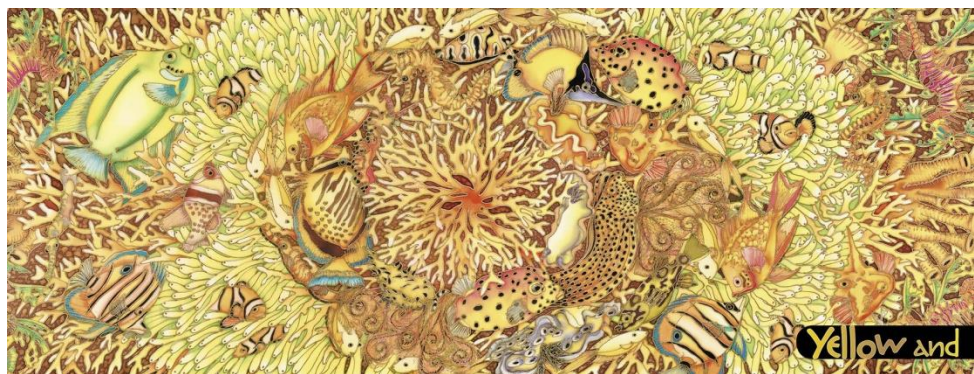
*Fact* : Red is a primary colour and is the first colour on the outside of a rainbow. It is a warm colour and is often used as a warning colour.

*Find* : There are 17 different animals to find ( answers are found in the back of the book with each animal numbered). What animals are not fish?

*Discuss* : Discuss other objects in nature which are red and man-made things which are red and discuss why do you think red could be a good colour.

*Activity* : Children choose one of the animals from the 'red' pages and draws and colour . Then as a group they paste them on a red piece of cardboard to form a monochromatic collage .

## YELLOW



*Fact* : Yellow is a primary colour and is the third colour from the outside of a rainbow. It is a warm colour and is often related to happiness.

*Find* : There are 22 creatures to find. This is the colour with most animals to find ( answers are found in the back of the book with each animal numbered)  
There are 7 different types of sea slugs or nudibranchs in this illustration, which all

look different from each other , even though they are the same animal try and find all 7 sea slugs.

*Discuss* : Why did the illustrator spiral the illustration , using the coral as spokes radiating from the centre? To represent the sun. The Sun is so important for coral reefs , why ?

*Activity* : Cut a large yellow circle out of stiff cardboard and attach yellow objects around the outside of the circle creating a 3D sun-like sculpture.

## **PINK**



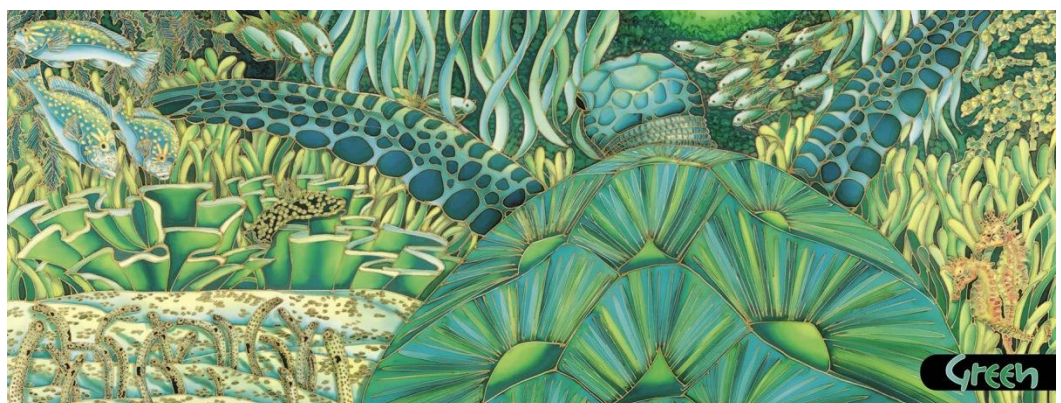
*Fact* ; Pink is a light tint of red or crimson . It is made by adding white to red. It is not a true colour of the rainbow. The closest colour in the rainbow would be indigo. Pink is often associated with love and romance.

*Find* : There are 8 different creatures to find ( answers are found in the back of the book with each animal numbered). What are the 2 large fish doing?

*Discuss*: What is one shape Kim Michelle Toft has used for the coral ? Are the 2 large fish kissing? How does that shape and the fish fit together?

*Activity* : Mix the colour pink by adding very small amounts of red to white paint. Paint heart shapes on cardboard in various shades of pink and cut out and make a mobile. This colour could be used around Valentine's Day.

## **GREEN**



*Fact* : Green is a secondary colour and is made by mixing blue and yellow. It is the middle colour of the rainbow. Green is often associated with nature and freshness.

*Find* : There are 8 different animals to find ( answers are found in the back of the book with each animal numbered), What is the featured animal in this colour? And which animal was the hardest to find?

*Discuss* : Green is often used to represent nature and the environment , why is that? What other things in nature are the colour green? *ie.* trees , leaves , grass , the ocean ( sometimes) and a wide range of insects , reptiles, amphibians and birds.

*Activity* : Research turtles , you could use one of Kim Michelle Toft's other books , ***Turtle's Song***. Look at the lifecycle of the turtle and identify the different types of marine turtles, which are all endangered.

- Discuss what endangered means and then discuss the next step , extinction.
- What animals are now extinct? What type of creature were they and what did they have in common with turtles?
- What other reptile lives on the land and water like the marine turtle and was around with the dinosaurs?

The children all receive a ping pong ball to represent the Green Sea Turtle's egg and then use plasticine to mould hatchlings that are small enough to fit in the ball /'egg' . Place all the 'eggs' and hatchlings in a 'nest' to show how turtles begin their lives.

## PURPLE

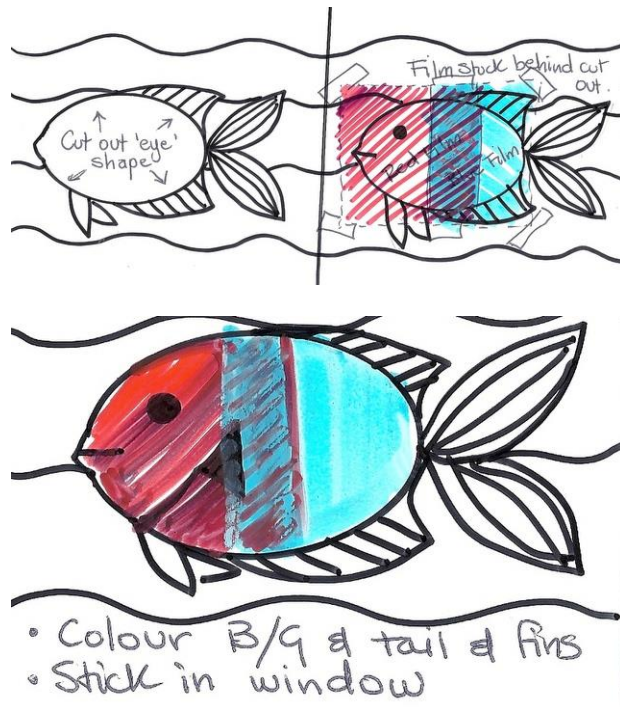


*Fact* : Purple is a secondary colour and is made by mixing red and blue together. It is the first inside colour of the rainbow which is also known as violet. Purple is often associated with spirituality and harmony.

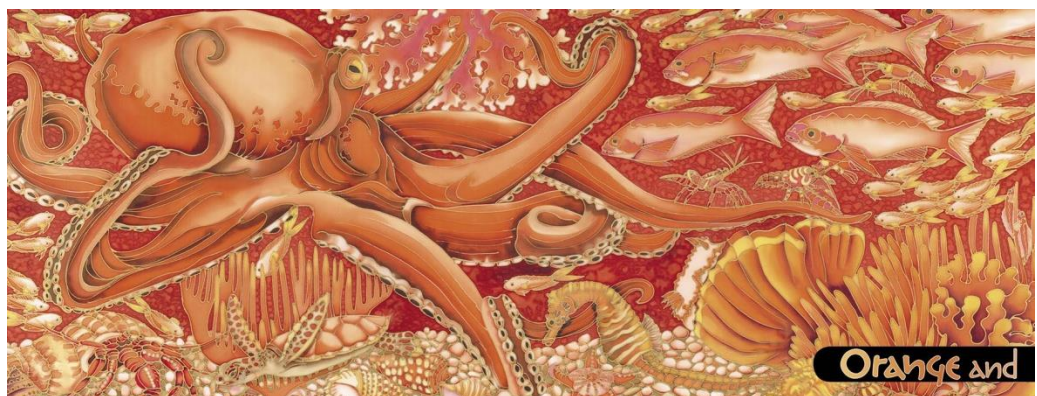
*Find* : There are 10 different animals to find ( answers are found in the back of the book with each animal numbered)

Discuss : What is the most unusual creature and why do you think it is?  
Look in other 'underwater' books and find a photograph of one of the creatures.

*Activity* : Use blue and red film or cellophane and overlap down the centre of a fish which has been cut out of stiff white or blue cardboard . Just cut the basic 'eye' or 'almond' shape and the children stick the film on the back of the image. They can colour the fins and water , if white cardboard is used .Then paste fish on the windows , so that the light shines through the blue , purple ( in the centre) and the red film.



## ORANGE



*Fact* : Orange is a secondary colour and is made by mixing red and yellow together. It is the second colour from the outside edge of the rainbow , sandwiched between red and yellow just as it is on the colour wheel. It is a considered a warm colour and is associated with fire.

*Find* : There are 15 different animals to find ( answers are found in the back of the book with each animal numbered).Which animal dominates the illustration?

*Discuss* : Research octopuses and look at their amazing ability to change their shape and their colour, making it the master of camouflage. It is also considered to be one of the most intelligent creatures in the sea.

*Activity* : Mix orange with red and yellow paint. The lighter the shade of orange , more yellow is used and the darker the tone of orange , more red is used. Divide children into pairs and mix different shades of orange and then cut out flame-like shapes and paste on a large sheet of cardboard to form a large fire image.

## **BLUE**



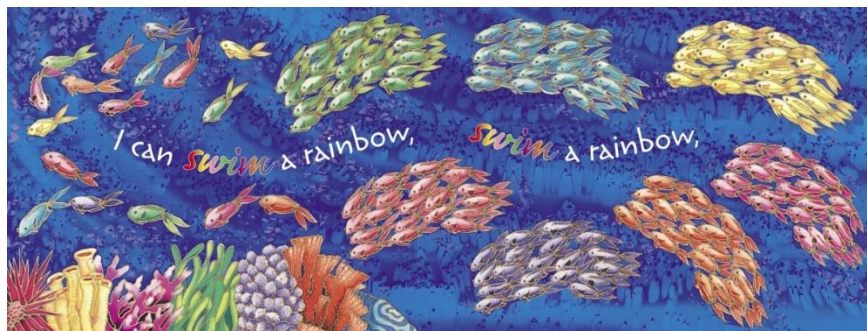
*Fact* : Blue is a primary colour and is the fifth colour from the outside of the rainbow. It is a cool colour and is associated with the sky and water.

*Find* : There are 11 different creatures to find ( answers are found in the back of the book with each animal numbered). Many are not fish but mammals.

*Discuss* : The difference between a fish and a mammal.

*Activity* : Paint a large mural with shades of blue on a large piece of cardboard or silk , If using silk put rock salt on the wet dye to create the 'bubble' effect. Hang the silk or paper from the ceiling and use fishing line to hang an array of sea creatures which are blue in front the coloured blue background, creating a 3D mural. You can also hang blue streamers in between the animals.

## **I CAN SWIM A RAINBOW , SWIM A RAINBOW**



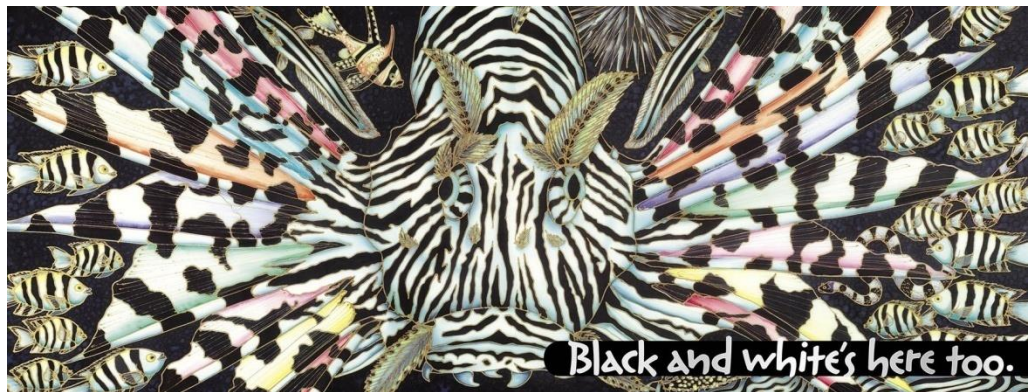
*Fact* : Fish often travel in large schools or shoals for protection ie. strength in numbers.

*Find* : Count how many fish are in each school and what colours are represented?

*Discuss*: What are these fish (answers are found in the back of the book with each animal numbered) and did you notice that they are on each double page of the various colours?

*Activity* : Find photos of large schools of fish and observe what shape they have created. Cut out lots of eye shapes in different coloured paper and paste on a collective piece of blue cardboard, overlapping the shapes and forming a large school.

### **BLACK and WHITE**



*Fact* : Black and white are not actually colours. Black absorbs light and is a shade without hue. It is used to darken colours. It is the opposite to white. White is a tint which reflects nearly all light. It is used to lighten colour.

*Find* : There are 8 different creatures to find ( answers are found in the back of the book with each animal numbered) What is the most striking animal on the page?

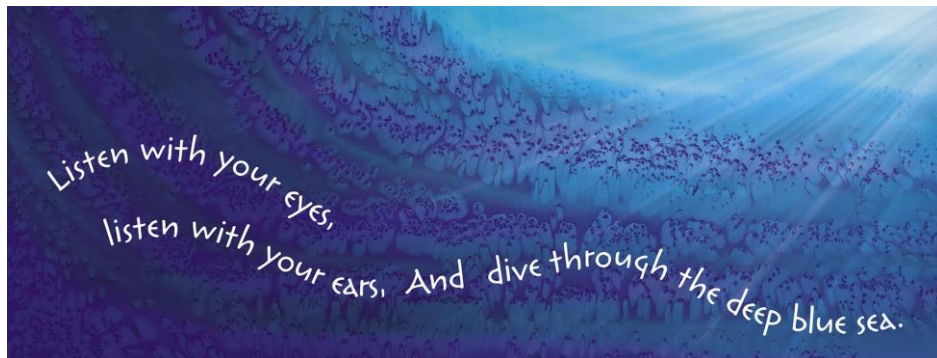
*Discuss* : Other animals which are black and white ie. panda bears , zebras , killer whales or orcas , magpies etc . Find photos of these animals on the computer and find out where that animal lives.

*Activity* : When you add black to a colour it darkens it and when you add white to a colour it makes it lighter. Each child has a one colour, divided into 2 containers and then adds a tiny amounts of black to the one container and a lot of white to the other container. Note how much more white you need to use to change the colour or 'value' of the colour compared to changing a colour by adding black. Refer to the info in the back of the book which looks at 'value' and 'saturation'.

Use the paint to show contrast and cut into interesting shapes.



**LISTEN WITH YOUR EYES, LISTEN WITH YOUR EARS , AND DIVE THROUGH THE DEEP BLUE SEA**

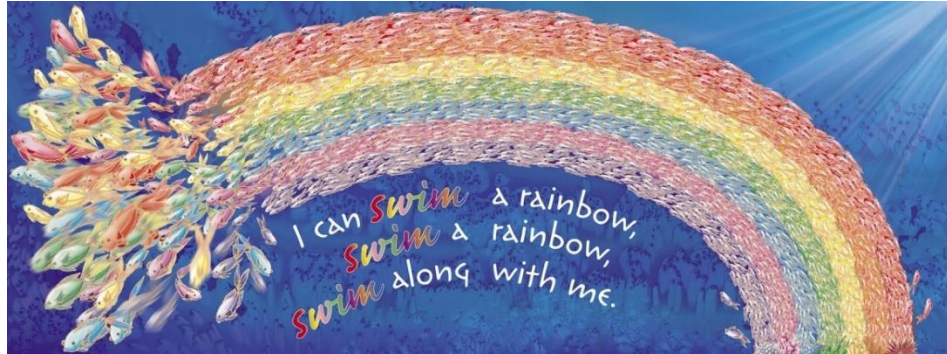


*Fact* : The colour 'blue' gets darker the deeper you travel down into the ocean because the amount of sunlight decreases the deeper you dive.

*Discuss* : Why does it get darker ? Eventually it becomes so dark that only a select type of sea creature can survive. What animals are these? You can source one of Kim Michelle Toft's other books **A Sea Of Words** to find the answers. What are these zones called in the ocean?

*Activity* : Watch the DVD **Finding Nemo** and identify the creatures of the deep.

**I CAN SWIM A RAINBOW , SWIM A RAINBOW , SWIM ALONG WITH ME.**

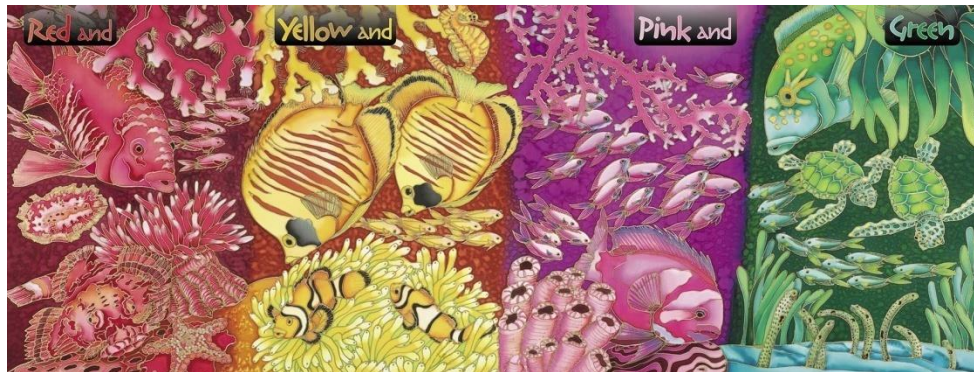


*Fact* : It is the same illustration as the cover. Note the bands of fish.

*Discuss* : The progression of colours and how do they differ from the progression in the story/song? Refer to the information pages to discuss rainbows and the order of colours, which is often remembered by using the name, **ROY.G.BIV**

*Activity* : Paint a rainbow in the correct order then label each band with the correct colour - red , orange . yellow , green , blue , indigo and violet.

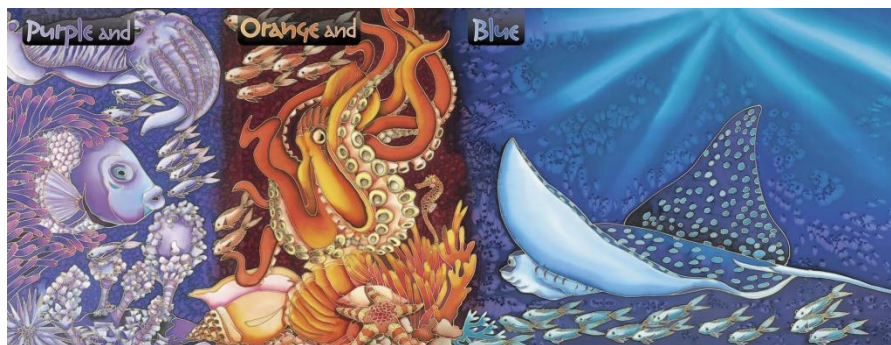
**RED and YELLOW and PINK and GREEN**



The story/song repeats and 4 colours are on the same page.

*Activity* : Find the different creatures in each colour. Cross reference the answers in the back of the book. Choose your favourite animal and draw then find an interesting fact about that animal and write under your drawing.

**PURPLE and ORANGE and BLUE (As above)**



**I CAN SWIM A RAINBOW, SWIM ALONG WITH ME.**



*Fact* : All the colours are represented in this illustration, what are all the colours that are used in this book?

*Find* : Which animal is what colour?

*Activity* : Create 2 columns . one column with 7 colours plus black and white and the other column is pictures of the various creatures ( each representing a colour ), Do not have them in the same order . Use a line between the colours to match up with the creature which is that colour in the illustration. Use the illustration in the book for reference.

### **BLACK and WHITES HERE TOO.**



*Activity*: Photocopy and colour.

Watch a video about coral reefs.

### **INFORMATION PAGES**

- Each animal is numbered and identified for each colour.
- Information about the formation of rainbows and their colours
- Colour and the colour wheel , looking at how colours mix together and different properties of colours ie. hue , value , saturation and temperature  
Note also the term monochromatic and discuss how most of the illustrations in the book are monochromatic.
- Sheet music, the song is set to the classic tune with the change of some lyrics. Research could be done to find out who has sung this song in the past and of course the children can sing it themselves. Listen to different recordings of the the original song.
- What medium has the illustrator used? (Refer to the photo on the back cover which shows a silk painting from the book in progress)
- What is your favourite illustration and why?
- What is your favourite colour and why?
- Can you think of another song which is about 'colour'?
- Have you ever seen a rainbow, when do they usually occur?
- Have you ever noticed what happens when there is a double rainbow?



## Author/Illustrator Background

Kim Michelle Toft has been drawing since the age of 4, her love of art has stayed with her throughout her 'colourful' life. Spanning over the past 51 years Kim has been a teacher in far North Queensland, a graphic designer living on the beach in Adelaide, South Australia, a full time marine and silk artist based in beautiful Northern NSW and for the past 23 years a celebrated author and illustrator, still living in beautiful Northern NSW. She now has her own gallery, Sea Silks Gallery , and studio at The Ramada , on the river in Ballina. Her multi-award winning environmental children's books are quite unique as they are illustrated with hand painted silks. Kim's silk paintings are sold worldwide and have been purchased by some very famous people including the late Morris West, Mick Jagger and Jerry Hall. Visit [www,kimtoft.com.au](http://www.kimtoft.com.au) to watch a short video about her work and how silk painting is done.

### Kim's Environmental Picture Books

All Kim's books have a strong environmental focus and reflect her love of the ocean and the coastal habitats which support it. The combination of interesting, interactive prose-style text and stunningly detailed hand painted silk illustrations have made her books internationally and nationally renowned, winning many coveted awards including-

*One Less Fish* – Honour Book – Children's Book Council of Australia 1998

*The World That We Want* -Honour Book-Green Earth Book Awards, USA 2006

*A Sea Of Words* – Notable Book – Children's Book Council of Australia 2007

*Tick Tock Tick Tock What's Up Croc?* – Whitley Award for Best illustrated

Children's Book - Royal Zoological Society of NSW 2010

*Recipe For Perfect Planet Pie* – Shortlisted Golden Dragon Book Awards 2014

All Kim's books are still in print, which is a testament to their quality.

Her past titles include:

- *One Less Fish (UQP)*
- *Neptune's Nursery (UQP)*
- *Turtle's Song (UQP)*

- The World That We Want (*UQP*)
- Reef Superstar (*Brolly Books*)
- A Sea of Words (*Silkim Books*)
- The Twelve Underwater Days of Christmas (*Silkim Books*)
- Tick Tock Tick Tock What's Up Croc? (*Silkim Books*)
- Recipe For Perfect Planet Pie (*Silkim Books*)
- I Can Swim A Rainbow (*Silkim Books*)

Silkim Books was set up by Kim 11 years ago, publishing the last 5 books. Each book takes approximately 18 months to 2 years to research, draw, paint, design and produce. One hand painted silk illustration takes 2-3 weeks to produce and an original silk can measure up to 2 metres x 1 metre!

Kim visits thousands of children each year throughout Australia spreading the environmental message as well as demonstrating and teaching her unique illustration style – silk painting.

If you would like Kim Michelle Toft to visit your school please go to her website to make an enquiry visit [www.kimtoft.com.au](http://www.kimtoft.com.au) or email Kim directly [info@kimtoft.com.au](mailto:info@kimtoft.com.au)

**I Can Swim A Rainbow** is Kim's 10<sup>th</sup> book. She is already working on her next two books, *The Forgotten Sea* and *Coral Sea Dreaming: The Picture Book*.

### **Author Motivation**

“Being surrounded by nature has always sustained and nurtured me. Whether it's diving under the waves, snorkelling on a coral reef, hiking through a rainforest or swimming under a desert waterfall, all of nature's wonders continually motivate me to write and illustrate books about their preservation.

It has been 25 years since I wrote and illustrated my first book ***One Less Fish***. This book was also about the immense beauty and vulnerability of coral reefs. When I first researched this book there was 70% of reefs around the world under threat there is now 85% endangered! I felt it was time to revisit this topic and highlight this ancient but fragile ecosystem.

I wanted to use colour as a vehicle to portray the diversity and beauty of the reef. I also wanted to challenge the child to look very closely at the silk illustrations to find the camouflaged animals. I felt a rainbow was an excellent way to get this message across and when I approached Warner Brothers, who own copyright of the original song, they were delighted to give me permission to adapt the song to fit my framework.

I always enjoy researching and providing additional information for the children to extend their knowledge. My goal is to get kids thinking about positive ways of helping this planet. Children are our future and therefore it is them who will ultimately

make 'greener' decisions and create a better place to live.

My wish is that this book is put into every school in the world."

*Kim Michelle Toft*

### **Marketing and Selling Points**

- For ages pre-school to middle primary
- Clever text which can be read or sung and stunning hand painted silk illustrations
- Topics which are environmentally relevant
- Bonus sheet music included
- Colouring template to copy and colour
- Eight pages of child friendly information, ideal for research
- Kim Michelle Toft's record for producing excellent educational, environmental and visually beautiful children's books. All still in print.