

**Animal Behavior Society Outstanding Children's Book Award
2017 Reviews of Winner and Finalist Books**



WINNER: Build, Beaver, Build!: Life at the Longest Beaver Dam,

by Sandra Markle
Published by Lerner Books, 2016

Review by Dr. Michelle Solensky, University of Jamestown

Written from the perspective of a young beaver, *Build, Beaver, Build!: Life at the Longest Beaver Dam* describes the animals and behaviors that you might observe if you were able to sit and watch a beaver dam throughout an entire season. In an engaging story format, Sandra Markle describes how a beaver family builds lodges and dams, and how they find food, avoid predators, and defend their territory. Accessible to fairly young readers and beautifully illustrated, this book will help readers visualize what life might be like inside a beaver lodge, and the interactions that might happen between members of the beaver family living inside. It's not surprising that the 3rd-5th grade students who helped select the winner of this award loved this story!

FINALIST: Fish Tricks: The Wild and Wacky World of Fish,

by Haude Levesque
Published by Early Light Books, 2016

Review by Dr. Michelle Solensky, University of Jamestown



Animals do the weirdest things. If you enjoy learning about those weird things, then you will most likely love *Fish Tricks: The Wild & Wacky World of Fish*. After a brief but informative summary of the diversity and anatomy of fish in general, the author delights readers with short, 1-page descriptions of dozens of fish that do some really unusual things. Each description is accompanied by a beautiful full-page illustration. Readers will learn about fish who whistle, use lures to attract prey, spit water jets to knock insect prey into the water, use tools to open clam shells, build tunnels, protect their young, and many other very cool behaviors. *Fish tricks* is a wonderful and very readable book for parents and children to enjoy together!

FINALIST: After a While Crocodile: Alexa's Diary,
by Dr. Brady Barr and Jennifer Keats Curtis
Published by Arbordale Publishing, 2016



Review by Dr. Jean Alupay, University of Southern California

After a While Crocodile: Alexa's Diary is a charming account of a young girl's observations of a crocodile being raised at her school in the form of a diary. The juxtaposition of the illustrator's pictorial representations with pictures of a student representative of Alexa, the school, and the crocodile over time gives the readers a personal connection to the story, as if they are making these very observations themselves. The audience learns from the eyes of a girl and her teacher (and book author) Dr. Barr, learning about the life cycle and behavioral changes of crocodiles over time. The narrative also provides a peek into the culture and language of the Costa Rican people, including Spanish words for some key nouns. Overall, it is a great book for young students to learn about crocodiles through the eyes of a peer.

FINALIST: Crow Smarts: Inside the Brain of the World's Brightest Bird,

by Pamela S. Turner and Andy Comins
Published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016



Review by Dr. Jean-Baptiste Leca, University of Lethbridge

Crow Smarts is a fascinating read providing detailed scientific information about exceptional tool-using, tool-making, and problem-solving birds: New Caledonian crows. These creatures can manufacture complex tool kits, made of various hooked plant parts, to fish for grubs hidden inside tree cavities. This latest addition to the *Scientists in the Field* series offers insights into the mechanisms and evolution of animal intelligence, by focusing on the cognitive abilities underlying this species' behavioral prowess. As we follow the crow scientist Dr. Gavin Hunt, we learn how to design research protocols, do field observations, and conduct field experiments on the tropical islands of New Caledonia to study how smart and particularly inventive these birds are. Spiced up with beautiful photos and drawings of the crows in action, this book will resonate well with a broad readership, from upper levels of elementary school students to bird lovers to animal behavior scholars to the general public. Following this wonderful experience, chances are you'll find the expression "bird-brained" obsolete!