

## 2014 Book Reviews

Finalists for the Animal Behavior Society Outstanding Children's Book Award for books published in 2013.

**WINNER: How to Speak Dog: A Guide to Decoding Dog Language, by Aline Alexander Newman and Gary Weitzman**  
Published by National Geographic Society, 2013  
[Buy How to Speak Dog](#)

(Review coming soon!)

**FINALIST : Bats: BIGGEST! LITTLEST! by Sandra Markle.**  
Published by Boyds Mills Press, 2013  
[Buy Bats: BIGGEST! LITTLEST!](#)

**Review by Michelle Solensky, University of Jamestown (ND)**

This book is the most recent addition to the BIGGEST! LITTLEST! series written by Sandra Markle and published by Boyds Mills Press throughout the last decade. Previous books focused on spiders, snakes, insects and sharks. In this book, we learn about the fascinating diversity of bats and the behaviors that make each bat unique. Markle explains how body size can affect the behaviors used by bats to find food and shelter. Large bats can carry large fruit, while small bats can eat food too small to be attractive to larger animals. Big ears help some bats identify frog calls or locate flying insects; big eyes help other bats see well in the dark. Very long tongues allow some bats to drink nectar from flowers with long tubes. Sharp teeth help some groups of bats make a protective tent out of a large banana leaf. If you're curious about how or why bats do any of these things, you will most likely enjoy this book!

**Bats: BIGGEST! LITTLEST!** features wonderful descriptions of how morphology (body shape) affects an animal's behavior, and the descriptions are both informative and entertaining. Superb photographs illustrate the bats and body parts featured. A map, glossary and list of additional sources at the end are also valuable supplements to the narrative part of this book. This is an outstanding science book for elementary school children!

**FINALIST: In Deep with the Octopus, by Norma Dixon.**

Published by Fitzhenry & Whiteside, Ltd., 2013

[Buy In Deep with the Octopus](#)

Review by Jennifer Mather, University of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada

*In Deep with the Octopus* by Norma Dixon (Fitzhenry and Whiteside) describes an animal that's unusual to most children. That leaves the author with lots of information to cover, and she does it thoroughly and attractively. The book starts off with legends that surround the octopus and continues through anatomy, escape and camouflage and lifespan. It is particularly good at describing different octopus species and even has a map showing where in the world's oceans they are found. It ends by talking about the dangers to marine animals posed by pollution and overfishing, and about octopuses as food and pets. For readers who want to test and extend their knowledge, there are a quiz, a glossary and even a list of readings for further information. There is lots of text but it is well set up and there are many, many good pictures of important parts of the animal like arms and eye pupils, different species and an excellent display of the octopus anatomy.

**FINALIST: The Mystery of Darwin's Frog, by Marty Crump**

Published by Boyds Mills Press, 2013

[Buy The Mystery of Darwin's Frog](#)

Review by Eduardo Bessa, Universidade do Estado de Mato Grosso

*The Mystery of Darwin's Frog* is the story about how scientists came to understand the biology of a rare species of amphibian from the Chilean Andes, from Darwin himself to present days. It explores the unusual parental care and reproductive behavior of this animal, relating every finding with the scientific method applied.

This is an almost historical narrative. What I really liked about this book is how it presents scientific progress in such an easy way that any child can understand it. This book does this in a way that does not underestimate young readers, which is rare among children's books.

The book is richly illustrated both with beautiful watercolors and photographs. In addition to the behavioral content, *The Mystery of Darwin's Frog* also addresses the conservation status of these frogs. This is a book for much more than amphibian lovers, it introduces young readers to what Science (in general) and Animal Behavior (specifically) are all about.