

**Animal Behavior Society Outstanding Children's Book Award  
2015 Reviews of Winner and Finalist Books**



**WINNER: Behold the Beautiful Dung Beetle, by Cheryl Bardoe**  
Published by Charlesbridge, 2014

Review by Dr. Michelle Solensky, University of Jamestown

Beautiful may not be the first word that comes to mind when you think about an insect that makes its living on the excrement of other animals, but your opinion may be swayed by this year's winner of the Animal Behavior Children's Book Award. *Behold the Beautiful Dung Beetle*, written by Cheryl Bardoe and illustrated by Alan Marks (Charlesbridge), describes three different types of dung beetles that use animal feces in different ways. Dwellers extract water and bacterial proteins before the dung dries; rollers form dung balls up to fifty times their own weight, and tunnelers stockpile dung clumps in burrows. They fight, they mate, they dig, they sometimes steal each other's dung treasures. After enjoying this lively and informative book, you will almost certainly consider them fascinating, perhaps even beautiful!

**FINALIST: How to Speak Cat, by Aline Alexander Newman and Gary Weitzman**

Published by National Geographic, 2014

Review by Dr. Carrie Hall, University of New Hampshire



"How to Speak Cat" is a delightful young readers' guide to the familiar-yet-mysterious behaviors our feline companions display in variety of contexts. Everyday behaviors are thoroughly described and interpreted based on the authors' own observation of domestic cat behavior, as well as through known scientific investigations of domestic and wild felids. While somewhat anthropomorphized at times, this guide is the perfect resource for pet owners who are interested in understanding why their pet behaves the way she does, and what the meaning of the behavior may be. Behaviors are clearly described and further well illustrated with high quality images and diagrams. Novice and experienced cat lovers will find this guide a fascinating glimpse into the cats communicate with each other, and with us.

**FINALIST: Feathers, Not Just for Flying, by Melissa Stewart,  
Illustrated by Sarah S. Brannen**  
Published by Charlesbridge, 2014



Review by Dr. Jennifer Mather, University of Lethbridge

*Feathers, Not Just for Flying* approaches animal behavior in an interesting way, through the structure of feathers. Each two-page spread has a picture of a type of feather, the bird that uses it and a description of what special use that feather is for the bird. Sometimes there is also an item that a human would use for a similar activity, like the sponge compared to the belly feathers of the Pallas's sand grouse. The pictures are good and the text and pictures link up very well, making it easy to learn the point of the book. Children liked this link as well as the great variety of birds in terms not only of how they were using their feathers but also where anthingas, penguins, bitterns and wood ducks, for instance, came from. And to top it all off, the feathers are beautiful.

**FINALIST: Get the Scoop on Animal Puke!, by Dawn Cusick**  
Published by Charlesbridge, 2014



Review by Dr. Michelle Solensky, University of Jamestown

*Get the Scoop on Animal Puke!* by Dawn Cusick (Charlesbridge) explains the many reasons why animals vomit, and what we can learn about animals from this unpalatable behavior. The authors begin with a quick overview of gut biology before moving on to interesting and colorful pages filled with examples of why, when, and how different kinds of animals vomit or regurgitate partially digested or undigested food. Some animals can't puke, some animals puke primarily to get rid of harmful things they've consumed, but perhaps the most surprising examples are animals that regularly regurgitate to feed mates or offspring, or to build homes. In fact, most humans have eaten such food before in the form of honey. This informative book will both entertain and disgust kids and adults alike!