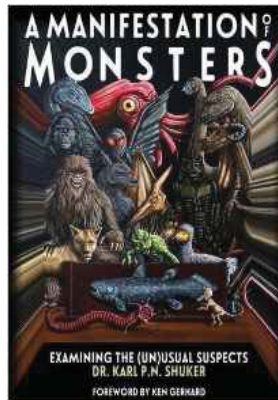


## Further Book of Note

**A Manifestation of Monsters: Examining the (Un)usual Suspects** by Karl P. N. Shuker. San Antonio, TX, and Charlottesville, VA: Anomalist Books, 2015. xi + 202 pp. \$15.95 (paperback), \$9.99 (Kindle). ISBN 978-1938398520.

Shuker's writings are unfailingly informative, meticulously documented, and full of fascinating things that surely are quite new for most of us.

This new collection comprises updates on some earlier writings and an unusually wide range of tidbits about possibly real but unidentified creatures, about anecdotes and long-lasting stories of creatures that are most certainly not real, and about deliberate hoaxes. There are interesting details, too, of how Shuker tracked down some of the material. Those together with the analyses of the varied claims also bring the reader an awareness of how uncertainly reliable is the knowledge we gain from the mass media, and how much science—biology, zoology—still does not know, let alone understand.



The different topics and subtopics addressed are so numerous as to defy listing, and it neglects some fascinating others if just a few are mentioned. Nevertheless, just to whet appetites, how about the almost certainly nonexistent Nandi bears that may nevertheless point to some real creatures, such as African sloths. Or, how could Tolkien's hobbit have known about the Gobi's possibly mythical were-worms? What about the physical evidence of tusks that point to a nevertheless nonexistent elephant pig? Could some enormously monstrous eels really exist? Yes, of course. Could that explain what the creatures are in Loch Ness? No.

There are mystery frogs and toads. Rat kings, a rodent analogue to human Siamese twins, but joined not through heads but by assemblies of inextricably linked tails. The Index offers innumerable inscrutable scientific names—among them *Agrostichthys*, *Ceratogaulus*, *Paralouatta*, *Pheretima*, *Xenothrix*. Also listed is some standard cryptozoological material, physical evidence awaiting explanation such as the Beast of Bray Road or of Buderim, the Camp Fircom carcass; and some cryptids that will be familiar

to many—chupacabra, Bigfoot, mokele-mbembe, the Jersey Devil; as well as some more obscure cryptids.

There are mentions of coy–dogs and hyena–dogs, which may be close to recognition in mainstream zoology: I had just come across an article reporting that the “Eastern coyote” owes about 25% of its DNA to wolves and about 10% to domestic dogs (Goldman 2015).

This book confirms Shuker himself as a hybrid zoologist–cryptozoologist authoritative in both disciplines and as an author always well worth reading.

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Goldman, J. (2015). Is this coyote–wolf hybrid taking over North America? Earth Touch News Network, 9 November, 2015. <http://www.earthtouchnews.com/natural-world/animal-behaviour/is-this-coyote-wolf-hybrid-taking-over-north-america>