A Manifestation of Monsters: Examining the (Un)usual Suspects
by Karl P. N. Shuker. San Antonio, TX, and Charlottesville, VA: Anomalist
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 crea-
tures, about anecdotes and long-lasting stories of creatures that are
most certainly not real, and about deliberate hoaxes. There are inter-
esting 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 men-
tioned. 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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Reference Cited