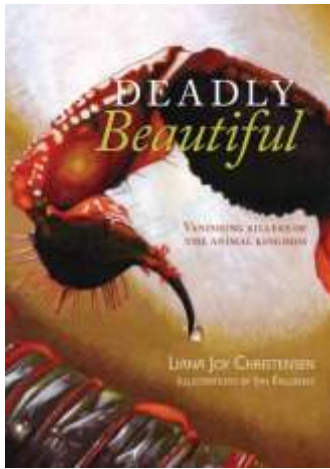


**DEADLY BEAUTIFUL: Vanishing Killers of the Animal Kingdom.** Text by **Liana Christensen**, illustrations by **Ian Faulkner**. Exisle Publishing, 2011



*Deadly Beautiful* takes you on an entertaining and informative journey through a branch of the animal kingdom long feared - deadly animals. Snakes, crocodiles, spiders, sharks, octopuses, wolves, bears, tigers, hippopotamuses and many many more are explored in *Deadly Beautiful*; collected together not because of any zoological similarity but because they can and have killed humans.

Clear, up-to-date, scientifically accurate information about the natural history of these species is presented on each animal, examining their day-to-day existence, how they have developed the weapons they possess and how they use them for defence, for hunting and for making love. Woven into the text are accounts of people's close encounters with deadly animals – the good, the bad and the bizarre – as well as stories from myth and legend that have contributed to modern perceptions. In addition, realistic risk assessments are included, often in a gently humorous way; for

example, how much more likely you are to die in your bed than be killed by a shark.

**Liana Christensen** was for five years editor of the wildlife and natural resources magazine *Landscape*. She has worked extensively with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), earning from them a citation for excellence in science journalism. Her nature essays have regularly appeared in anthologies and magazines such as *Australasian GEO*.

**Ian Faulkner** is an illustrator, cartoonist and cartographer with over 25 years experience and a passion for natural history. He has been artist in residence at the Australian National University, and also cartographer at *Australian Geographic Magazine*, as well as undertaking work for The Australian Museum and Sydney's Taronga Park Zoo.

## Book Review

**BIRDLIFE.** Edited by Nyanda Smith and Perdita Phillips. Lethologica Press, Fremantle 2011. A collaborative art and text book that explores the avian world.

Review by **Yvette Watt**

Recently I went to a local designers/makers market, and was overwhelmed by the number of items from jewellery, to cards, and other art and craft works that were decorated with birds. Judging by the following Facebook exchange I saw later that day, I wasn't the only one to be struck by the flock of feathered creatures that featured on so many pieces on offer:

**Christine:** *A big thank you to my customers who purchased at my market stall today... And Lucy your comments are already influencing my thoughts of new work ♥.*

**Lucy:** *which comments? The chihuahua gush?*

**Christine:** *No, the ornithological one...*

**Lucy:** *how so? (she says suspiciously)*

**Christine:** *I promise never to make bird prints*

**Lucy:** *birds aren't bad, per se. I'm talking about the ubiquitous 'cute' birds. I love birds usually*

**Christine:** *A rephrasing of my previous comment: I promise never to make cute bird prints.*

**Lucy:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XM3vWJmpfo&feature=youtu.be>

**Christine:** :-D

Just 2 days earlier I had found a rather lovely little book titled *Birdlife* nestling in my pigeonhole. Published by the Western Australian boutique publishing house, Lethologica Press, this beautifully produced, small scale book combines the bird-themed poetry and prose of Nandi Chinna, Michael Farrell, Graeme Miles and Nyanda Smith with artwork in the form of photographs and drawings by Perdita Phillips. Phillips' evocative visuals, which act as independent artworks rather than illustrations of the text, "range from covert photography from within museums around the world, to tracking bowerbirds in the Kimberley."

With all these representations of birds fluttering around, I couldn't help but wonder what is it about birds that so captures our imagination. Of course birds appeal because so many are so beautiful, with their often extraordinary plumage, complex songs and lovely forms, and it is these kinds of birds we see rendered into the rather ubiquitous creatures that inhabit the art/craft markets. However, while not so popular as decorative motifs, the not-so-cute birds, such as crows and ravens, also inspire artists and writers. But regardless of their type, as creatures of the sky it is the other-worldliness of birds that is so compelling, as we envy their apparent freedom that comes of being able to defy gravity so readily. As such, it is no wonder birds inspire creative responses, so fittingly illustrated in Goya's wonderful image titled *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*, which shows a man (Goya himself, it is presumed) asleep at his desk, while above him flutter a variety of winged creatures, which has been interpreted as a comment by Goya on the creative process.

The writers and artist in *Birdlife* respond to and use birds in a variety of ways. From the selected diary entries recording the real birds slaughtered by Captain Charles Fremantle and his team in 1829, to symbolic and metaphorical birds, and birds that haunt the text, rather than being clearly described, this little book is a fitting tribute to birds in their many forms – not just the cute ones. As such, it is a little book full of big ideas, and one that anyone with even a fleeting interest in birds should enjoy.

For more information see: [http://www.lethologiapress.org/teapot/?page\\_id=985](http://www.lethologiapress.org/teapot/?page_id=985)

## CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

### Open Court Popular Culture and Philosophy Series

#### PLANET OF THE APES AND PHILOSOPHY

Editor: John Huss

The editor encourages contributions from philosophers and other intellectuals that explore topics connected to the Planet of the Apes franchise, from Pierre Boule's 1963 novel *La Planète des Singes* to the 1968 politically charged blockbuster starring Charlton Heston, through the sequels and TV series to the 2011 reboot/prequel, *Rise of the Planet of the Apes* (the first in a planned trilogy). The prequel, which was released at roughly the same time as the documentary *Project Nim*, has recently received attention from philosophers and animal rights activists, including Peter Singer. Much public discussion of *Rise of the Planet of the Apes* has centered on ethical and philosophical issues.

Of particular interest for the volume are popular essays addressing current debates in science and religion, biology, mind, consciousness and self-consciousness, language, personhood, identity, human/nonhuman boundary, speciesism, animal ethics, social and political philosophy, philosophical anthropology, utopia/dystopia, and environmental ethics. Authors who would like to try their hand at engaging a non-academic audience in philosophical dialogue using the *Planet of the Apes* films as a touchstone are especially encouraged to submit an abstract. These essays are aimed at a popular audience of *Planet of the Apes* fans, but should nonetheless advance a substantive argument.