



30 Animals That Made Us Smarter: Stories of the Natural World That Inspired Human Ingenuity

Patrick Aryee

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Millions of years of evolution led to remarkable animal adaptations—adaptations that, as UK broadcaster and wildlife documentarian Patrick Aryee demonstrates in his enjoyable, informative book, scientists draw inspiration from, resulting in useful and outright cool new technologies.

Here, thirty case studies are used to show how specific animal abilities have been adapted to human needs. A group of German scientists used the versatility and muscle structure of the elephant's trunk, from how it bends to its gripping ability, to develop a robotic arm that handles hazardous materials without putting people at risk. A bullet train in Japan had one major flaw (its speed was fine, but the way pressure built up when it went through tunnels made it produce a loud noise), and the solution came from examining the quiet way that a kingfisher dives in search of food.

From well-insulated polar bears to tough-headed woodpeckers and tiny tardigrades, animals have lessons to impart, and *30 Animals That Made Us Smarter* shares them with a perfect balance of conviviality and scientific research. Useful diagrams show how animal bones and muscles, and the technologies based on them, work. The result is a fun book that conveys the wonder of the natural world and explains science in an accessible, creative way.

JEFF FLEISCHER (May / June 2022)

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