



A Natural History of the Unnatural World: Discover What Cryptozoology Can Teach Us about Over One Hundred Fabulous and Legendary Creatures That Inhabit Earth, Sea and Sky

By Joel Levy, Cryptozoological

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- Sales Rank: #1643659 in Books
- Published on: 2000-01-24
- Released on: 2000-01-24
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 11.24" h x .3" w x 8.60" l,
- Binding: Hardcover
- 224 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

There is no Cryptozoological Society of London, nor are there (as far as science knows) unicorns, kobolds, sphinxes, werewolves, batlike Japanese demons or man-eating horses, which the society purports to study. Since there isn't, and aren't, Levy and his band of photographers, artists and library researchers have produced a profusely illustrated coffee-table hoax, one that doubles as a multicultural reference book about mythical creatures. Levy and friends' achievement amounts to great fun, full of documents, detailed sketches and inventive reports of legendary fauna. Take, for example, the basilisk (*Ophidiogallus basiliscus*), whose mere glance kills all animals except weasels: "Everyone who observed the basilisk perished, so its appearance has always been in dispute." Men wearing suits made of mirrors freed Europe of the beasts in the 16th century, we're told, and its present-day range is confined to the Near East and Africa. Reproduced field notes show how the society teamed up with the "Balkan Werewolf Committee" to find Lyc-V, the HIV-like retrovirus that causes lycanthropy; a two-page article from *Science Today* explains how both HIV and Lyc-V work. The authors devote a few pages to amazing, but actual, animals, such as the giant squid, treating them just as they treat leprechauns, and many more pages to arguably more legitimate cryptozoological quarry, such as Bigfoot and living dinosaurs. Present and future zoology buffs may learn plenty of real science from the farfetched essays: folklore fans will learn even more. The volume's appeal may well prove wider still: think of this as the illustrated text from Harry Potter's biology class. (Jan.)

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About the Author

Joel Levy is a writer on history, the paranormal and science. He is the author of several books, including the *Kiss Guide to the Unexplained*, a beginner's guide to historical secrets and mysteries, the paranormal and supernatural. He lives in London, England.

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