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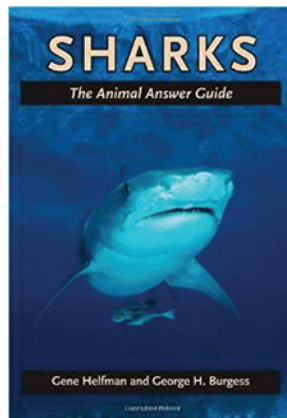
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book reviews



Sharks: the Animal Answer Guide by Gene Helfman and George Burgess. 2014. Johns Hopkins University Press. ISBN-13: 978-1421413099. 288 p. US\$26.95.

Sharks: the Animal Answer Guide is well written, informative, engaging, and most of all, timely. While the format of this book follows that of the well designed *Animal Answer Guide* series, with individual questions arranged neatly into chapters based on common themes, one needs only to read the first two pages to understand the authors' inspiration for writing this book: the seminal work *Sharks in Question* by Springer and Gold. As a litmus test, I dusted off my dog-eared copy of *Sharks in Question* to see if the authors succeeded in "reaching the same audience, and updating the material." Without question, acclaimed ichthyologists Gene Helfman and George Burgess accomplished their goal, adding rich details to topics covered in *Sharks in Question*, while providing comprehensive answers to numerous new and pertinent questions.



As promised, Helfman and Burgess add considerable detail to many of the topics originally posed in *Sharks in Question*. One of my favorites is their discussion of reproduction and development, a chapter that includes answers to 18 well-thought questions ranging from relatively straightforward concepts (e.g., fecundity, gestation) to the more complex (multiple paternity, parthenogenesis). As a bonus, in this chapter and throughout the book, Helfman and Burgess pay equal tribute to skates, rays, and chimeras, the often neglected relatives of sharks. It is significant that Helfman and Burgess are able to synthesize an immense amount of information while still making it accessible to the reader. For example, the details included in the question "Do sharks get parasites?" are impressive, and the unique anecdotes peppered throughout the answer make the reading truly enjoyable.

Much has been learned in the time since *Sharks in Question* and Helfman and Burgess devote much of their book to this new information. My favorite chapter is titled "Human Problems (from a shark's viewpoint)", which examines questions such as "Are any sharks endangered?", "What is finning?", and "What can an ordinary citizen do to help sharks?" Chapter 11 takes a departure from science and addresses the role of sharks in culture and media, and while the discussion of sharks in religion, mythology, and philosophy was interesting and well researched, I would have preferred to see less emphasis on sharks in modern movies, and more emphasis on the movie *Jaws*, given the movie's role in creating misconceptions about sharks, and the culture of fear it created.

Underpinning a well-written and accurate book, what makes *Sharks: The Animal Answer Guide* so enjoyable was the palpable enthusiasm exhibited by both authors. Just as *Sharks in Question* inspired a generation of young naturalists to better understand sharks, *Sharks: the Animal Answer Guide* is written with a contagious passion that will undoubtedly inspire the public of our generation to learn about, protect, and conserve these magnificent denizens of the deep.—*J Marcus Drymon, University of South Alabama, Dauphin Island Sea Lab, 101 Bienville Boulevard, Dauphin Island, Alabama 36528.*

