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Main content

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DEEP THINKERS: INSIDE THE MINDS OF WHALES, DOLPHINS, AND PORPOISES. Janet Mann (Ed.). University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois, 2017. 022638747X; ISBN13: 9780226387475, 192 pp. (Published in Europe by Ivy Press under the title Deep Thinkers: An Exploration of Intelligence in Whales, Dolphins, and Porpoises)

Cetacean intelligence has long been a topic of intense interest. We are fascinated with stories of their tool use, self-recognition, flexibility in problem solving, how and what they communicate with one another, their social organization and cultures, and so on. Cetacean intelligence is a niche topic made accessible to a wide audience in Deep Thinkers through a combination of well-written text and more than 150 illustrations. This book is edited by Dr. Janet Mann whose research interests focus on social networks, life history, conservation, tool use, social learning, and culture among the bottlenose dolphins of Shark Bay, Australia, and, understandably, this volume draws heavily from her areas of interest. Deep Thinkers is authored by Dr. Mann and her expert contributors: Drs. Camilla Butti, Heidi E. Harley, Patrick Hof, Vincent Janik, Eric Patterson, Andrew Read, Luke Rendell, Laela Sayigh, and Hal Whitehead. Marine photographer Bryant Austin's close-up shots of whales awe visually, nicely complementing how the reader will feel when reading the book itself.

The book is divided into eight chapters, and I really liked the labeling on the left side of the pages in the book so you knew which section of the book you are reading. This was especially helpful since each chapter is composed of focal subtopics that can be quickly read as standalone pieces, which makes this a nice book to read equally if you have only short blocks of time or are reading it cover to cover.

As an introduction, the book begins with a brief account of cetacean evolution and a feel for the unique anatomical adaptations of these species. This was an ambitious amount of information to cover in just a few pages, and I personally feel like it came up a bit short. For example, I would like to have seen a list of cetacean species and/or some indication of the taxonomy of cetaceans past the suborder level since various species are referred to in this book. The introduction to this section says it demonstrates "convergence with other taxonomic groups in a range of other habitats (land,...

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Deep Thinkers book. Read 4 reviews from the world's largest community for readers. Humans aside, dolphins, whales, and porpoises are often considered to ... Diving into our current understanding of and dynamic research on dolphin and whale cognition, communication, and culture, Deep Thinkers reveals how incredibly sophisticated these mammals are—and how much we can learn about other animal minds by studying cetacean behavior. Through a combination of fascinating text and more than 150 beautiful and informative illustrations, chapters compare the intelligence markers of cetaceans with those of birds, bats, and primates, asking how we might properly define intelligence in nonhumans. Is it a whale, dolphin, or porpoise? These terms are often used interchangeably, but there is a difference. Learn how to tell these cetaceans apart. Are dolphins and porpoises whales? These marine mammals have many things in common. Whales, dolphins, and porpoises all fall under the order cetacea. Within this order, there are two suborders, the Mysticeti, or baleen whales, and the odontoceti, or toothed whales, which includes dolphins and porpoises as well as sperm whales. If you consider that, dolphins and porpoises are really whales. Size Matters for Being Called a Whale or Not. While dolphins and porpoises are in the same order and suborder as whales, they generally aren't given a name that includes the word whale. Documentary exploring how similar the minds of whales and dolphins are to our own. But how close are their minds to ours? In the Bahamas, Professor Denise Herzing believes she is very close to an answer, theorising that she will be able to hold a conversation with wild dolphins in their own language within five years. In Western Australia, dolphins rely on their versatile and inventive brains to survive in a marine desert. In Alaska, humpback whales gather into alliances in which individuals pool their specialised talents to increase their hunting success. We discover how young spotted dolphins learn their individual names and the social etiquette of their pod, and how being Humans aside, dolphins, whales, and porpoises are often considered to be the smartest creatures on Earth. Science and nature buffs are drawn to stories of their use of tools, their self-recognition, their beautiful and complex songs, and their intricate societies. But how do we know what we know, and what does it mean? Diving into our current understanding of and dynamic research on dolphin and whale cognition, communication, and culture, Deep Thinkers reveals how incredibly sophisticated these mammals are—and how much we can learn about other animal minds by studying cetacean behavior.