Arrivals: New books to watch for

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This week, a petting zoo of recent books that explore humans’ place in the animal kingdom and the natural world.


What makes us unique, of course, are our big fat brains, which, says Staats, allow us to develop sophisticated and complex behavioural repertoires. Nothing new there, except the prolific psychologist takes the usual debate about nature versus nurture a step further. FYI, Staats coined the term “time-out,” that concept so beloved by parents.


Natterson-Horowitz, an animal cardiologist, joins forces with Bowers, a journalist, to look at health in the animal kingdom — eating disorders, infection, adolescence, cancer, addiction, self-harming, among others — to cast light on human medicine. Zoobiquity, of course, is their coinage describing the overlap between us and our animal family.

Learning from the Octopus: How Secrets From Nature Can Help Us Fight Terrorist Attacks, Natural Disasters, and Disease, Rafe Sagarin

The subtitle might seem a bit of a stretch, but Sagarin, a marine ecologist and environmental policy analyst at the University of Arizona, is really making the point that organisms have been surviving in risk-suffused circumstances for millennia, mostly by adapting and creating
partnerships. Human adaptability, says Sagrin, can (and should) mimic natural adaptation.

**Dolphin Confidential: Confessions of a Field Biologist, Maddelena Bearzi**

The Los Angeles biologist has been working with marine mammals for more than 20 years and this University of Chicago book is a memoir of her adventures and discoveries in dolphin research and protection. There’s self-interest here, she argues: Dolphins are a barometer of the health of our oceans, she writes, and if dolphins are sick it has implications for our health too.


Krause is a musician (he replaced Pete Seeger as the guitarist for the Weavers almost half a century ago) and naturalist, and this unusual book is the result of his travels around the world over the past 40 years, recording more than 15,000 species and 4,000 hours of wild soundscapes. Half of these sounds no longer exist in nature, thanks to you know who.

*Sarah Murdoch, smurdoch@thestar.ca*
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