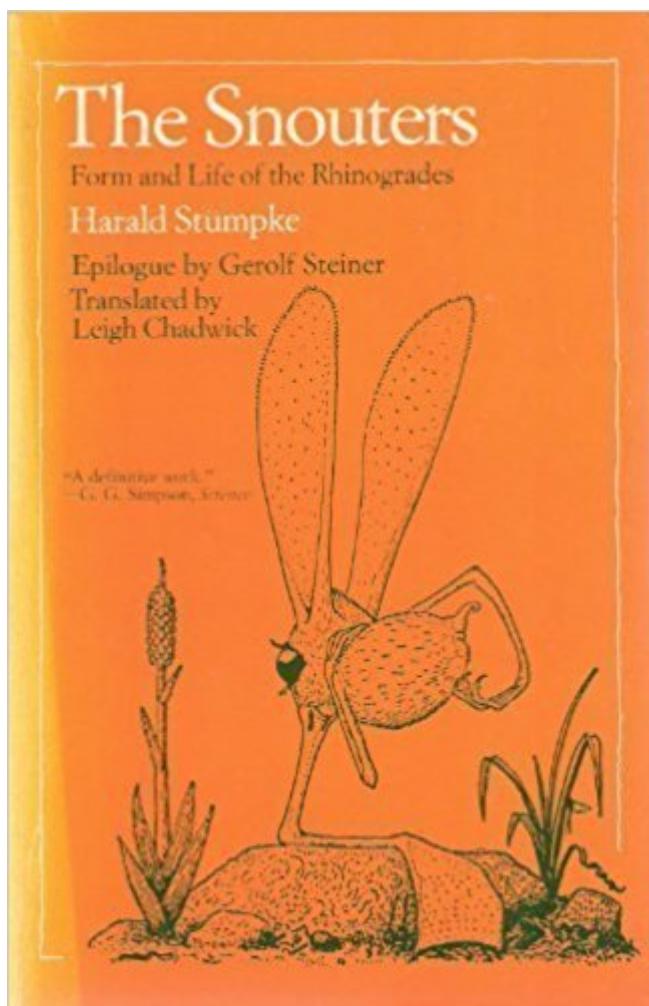


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The Snouters: Form And Life Of The Rhinogrades (A Phoenix Book)



Synopsis

Snouters are mammals found on the Island of Hy-dud-dye-fee. They are part of the order rhinogrades. Their chief characteristic is extra ordinarily developed and variegated noses. This is a masterpiece of evolutionary science fiction

Book Information

Series: A Phoenix book

Paperback: 92 pages

Publisher: The University of Chicago Press (September 1981)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0226778959

ISBN-13: 978-0226778952

Product Dimensions: 0.2 x 5.5 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.8 ounces

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 5 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #2,474,561 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #88 in Books > Science & Math > Nature & Ecology > Field Guides > Mammals #889 in Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Regional & Cultural > European > German #10917 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Humor > Satire

Customer Reviews

Text: English, German (translation)

Fabulous interpretation of evolution in action. A classic for the ages.

It's amazing that nobody has yet written a review of this 55-year-old book. Not only does "Dr. Harald Stämpke" succeed in nearly convincing us that rhinogrades are real, but he also succeeds in being funny, despite an utter lack of overtly humorous content. All of the snouters are physiologically and genetically plausible, although many (the one with humanoid breasts, for example) are obviously fictitious. The text is verbose, reserved, and utterly serious-exactly in the manner of a real scientific monograph. If you are not a biologist, "The Snouters" will be uninteresting to you. If you are (particularly if you specialize in taxonomy), you will find it engrossing, and good for laughs as well. In fact, this is the only book I've ever read that doesn't seem to have any drawbacks whatsoever (for its target audience, at least).

The Snouters-Form and Life of the Rhinogrades by Harald Stumpke is a wonderful little book that shows fanciful adaptations of the snout of the Rhinogrades. Each species is carefully described and illustrated. This could be used in a highschool biology class. Students could read about a Rhinograde and then add their own creations

This is a marvelous spoof book, written in very formal prose, about totally imaginary creatures. (I found a very nice copy at a garage sale selling for a dollar, 50 cents after a bit of bargaining). This was reprinted by The University of Chicago Press with the following legend: "The Snouters was originally published in Germany, under the title *Bau und Leben der Rhinogradentia*, by Gustav Fischer Verlag Stuttgart in 1957. Copyright © 1964 by Gustav Fischer Verlag Stuttgart.

Portions of the book appeared in *Natural History* magazine in April 1967 and is reprinted here with permission. The 15 plates and 12 text figures in this volume were drawn by Gerolf Steiner. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 60637 The University of Chicago Press, Ltd., London. Maggie Koerth-Baker recently wrote a blog post about the book; the picture she refers to can be found by googling Maggie Koerth-Baker imaginary animals."In this dusty display box at the University of Maine sits the carefully preserved skeleton of a small, shrew-like rodent which, lacking hind legs, propelled itself along with the help of a long, jointed nose-foot. If that seems a bit too whimsical to be true, well, it is. The creature belongs to the mammalian order *Rhinogradentia* — an entirely made-up class of animals. Like this specimen, which belongs to UMaine professor Irving Kornfield, the rhinogrades are all rodents and they all have some sort of fantastic nasal appendage ... and, most importantly, none of them actually exist."Now, there are plenty of imaginary animals in the world and, some of them — like the jackalope, for instance — exist in taxidermy and skeletal form despite not existing as living beings. But most of those are folk-crafts, their origins steeped in tall tales or intentionally profitable efforts to mislead, and their inventors lost to time. *Rhinogradentia*, on the other hand, is relatively new. It was created in 1961 by a real German zoologist named Gerolf Steiner who wanted to illustrate the way evolution can create diversity in isolated populations. In order to do that, Steiner created a fake German zoologist called Harald Stumpke, a fake island chain called Hy-yi-yi, and a fake order of mammals with funny noses. And then he wrote a book about it." Published under Stumpke's name, *The Snouters: Form and Life of the Rhinogrades*, is meant to read like a totally serious zoology handbook of the time period. It's a parody that absolutely refuses to wink at you, and it's become a bit of an in-joke among biologists. This particular specimen was actually built by Kornfield, himself, using real animal bones and

illustrations from StÅmpke/Steiner's book."I enjoyed reading the book, and enjoyed reading both Maggie Koerth-Baker's description and the marvelous Reviews here on even more. My only problem is how to dispose of the book, now that I am down sizing my life.Robert C. RossMarch 2015

Besides being a parody of the then-popular academic books telling about wondrous animals from far-off places, Snouters is also a wonderful read. It describes the species of the entirely fictional order of mammals, Rhinogradentia (also known as the Snouters), found only in the Hi-Yay Islands, the distinguishing trait being a remarkably adapted nose. The author follows the projected evolution of the order from the early representatives, whose snout is merely an elongated bill-shaped appendage aiding the animal's rolling method of propulsion, to the most extreme and elaborate species with fully-articulated noses used in a variety of methods of locomotion - springing, sessility, and, in one case, gliding. This excellent study is an amazing read even for the non-biologist. It is also quite useful in portrayal of evolution and adaptation to the surroundings. Vehemently recommended.

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