



4-30-2004

# *The Animal Mind* by James L. Gould and Carol Grant Gould

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### Recommended Citation

Lariviere, Serge (2004) "*The Animal Mind* by James L. Gould and Carol Grant Gould," *Western North American Naturalist*: Vol. 64 : No. 2, Article 16.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/wnan/vol64/iss2/16>

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## BOOK REVIEW

**The Animal Mind.** James L. Gould and Carol Grant Gould. Scientific American Library, New York. 1999. \$19.95, paperback; 236 pages. ISBN 0-7167-6035-5.

There are few tasks as difficult as trying to understand how people think, let alone how animals think. But good insights can be obtained through proper review of the knowledge gained by scientists over years of behavioral, sociological, and psychological research. To take that knowledge and summarize it into a text suitable for the average naturalist is another challenging task, one that is suitably mastered by James and Carol Grant Gould in *The Animal Mind*.

The book is extremely well presented with glossy cover, high-quality paper, and wide margins. Containing 10 chapters, this book covers topics as general as the nature of learning (Ch. 3) to a very specific and detailed case study of invertebrate cognition (Ch. 5). Each chapter begins with a well-chosen quote relating to the chapter and preparing the reader for its content. An example is the quote in the Prologue: "Who taught the raven in a drought to throw pebbles into a hollow tree, where she espied water, that the water might rise so as she could come to it?" (Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, 1605).

The book is also well illustrated with over 140 figures, only one of which, the photograph of Donald R. Griffin on page 4, is of poor quality. Photographs of researchers (e.g., Ivan Pavlov on p. 46, B.F. Skinner on p. 51) add a neat personal element to the text. Many simple graphs also provide visual illustration of concepts, facilitating for the reader the understanding of concepts. The text is well written and in a style accessible for the most part to all. Some sections are too technical or may cover certain topics in too much detail for the

average reader interested in glancing at the whole subject. This is especially true for the discussion of visual information (p. 15), classical conditioning (p. 56), and foraging and communication in honey bees (Ch. 5). The bias toward honey bees probably stems from the authors' work and interest in honey bees, as evidenced by their 1988 book on that topic (*The Honey Bee*, Scientific American Library).

Although I found few typos or misspellings, I was often distracted by the unusual spelling of cooperation, coordinates, microorganisms, reexamination, and preexisting (spelled coöperation, coördinates, microörganisms, reëxamination, and preëxisting). Also distracting were a bizarre word choice when referring to geese that imprinted on Konrad Lorenz as "ducks" (page 37) and an ephemeral but abusive use of acronyms (pp. 46–50), one of which comes again 31 pages later (p. 81) without a reminder. These shortcomings were compensated by great examples (digger wasps on pp. 39–43), engaging anecdotes (Clever Hans in the Prologue), and concise wording. Humor is sparse in the text (but one figure is a Larson cartoon, p. 38) and sometimes subtle, as evidenced on p. 170: "When it comes to the skills that make us able to dominate other species, humans are clearly the smartest of all animals (with the possible exception of the domestic house cat)."

Overall, I believe the book is slightly too technical to make it to the coffee or bedside table. However, for naturalists keenly interested in better understanding how animals can do "smart" things, or for undergraduate students of animal behavior, *The Animal Mind* is a good overall review of the topic.

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