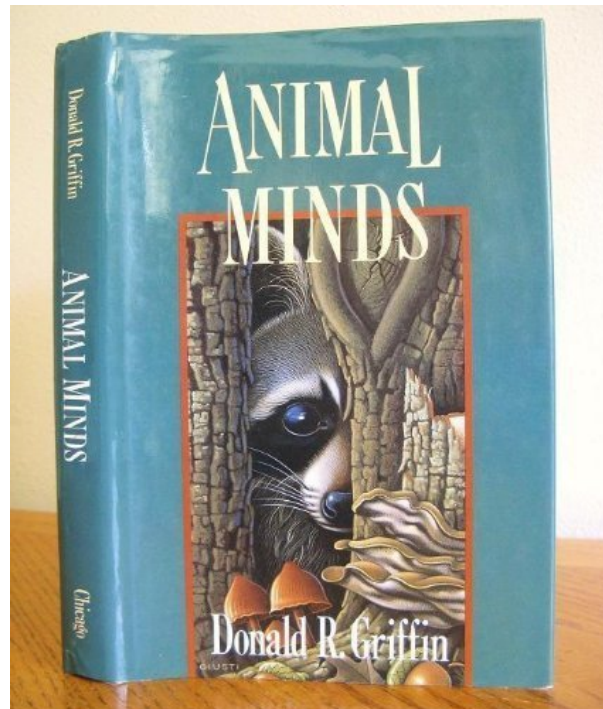


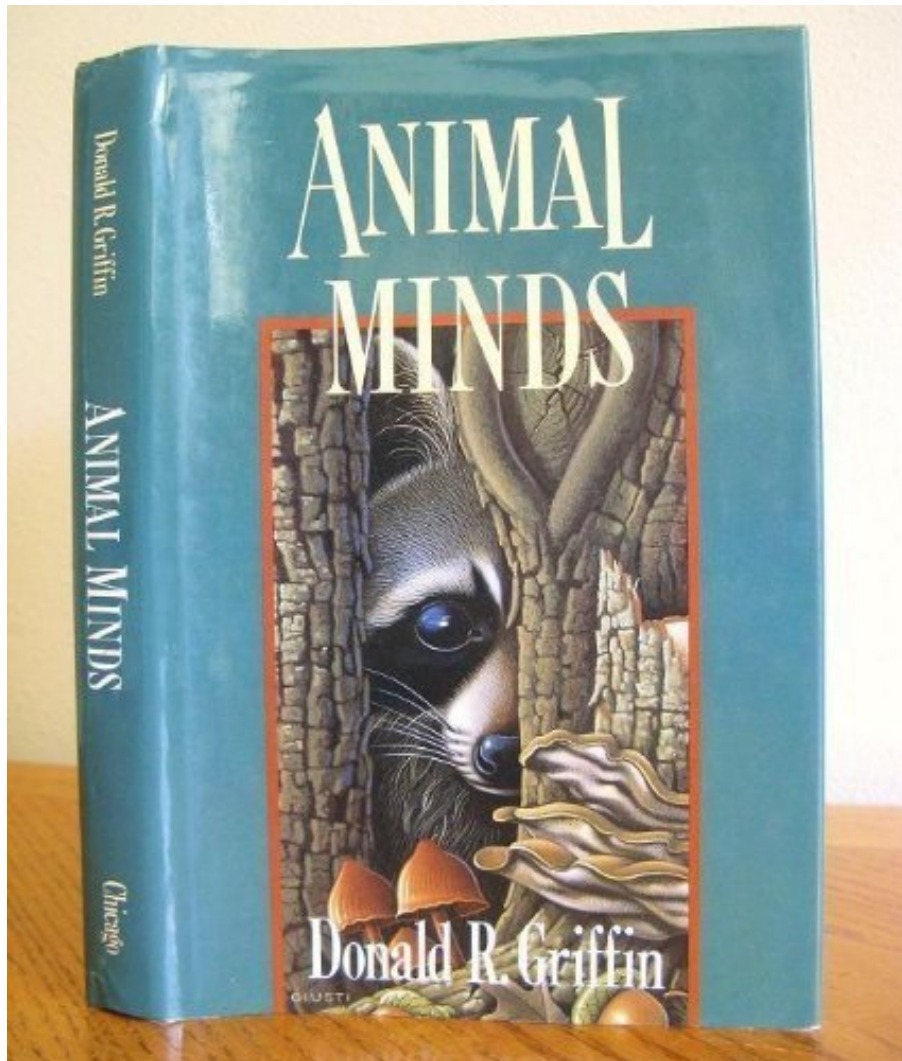
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Donald R. Griffin draws on the research in animal behavior, the philosophy of mind, and cognitive science of the 1980s and 1990s to broaden the terms in which one can consider the nature and potential of animal minds. In species ranging from bees to dolphins to chimpanzees, Griffin gives examples of foraging behavior, predatory tactics, artifact construction, tool use, and the experimental psychology of animal cognition. He gives us instances of animals communicating vocally and symbolically, revealing some of the surprising intricacies of their social arrangements.

- Sales Rank: #3119595 in Books
- Published on: 1992-10-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 1.02" h x 6.23" w x 9.23" l,
- Binding: Hardcover
- 310 pages

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Unsophisticated interpretation of important evidence

By Andrew N. Carpenter

Griffin, one of the founding fathers of cognitive ethology, summarizes the best scientific evidence that animals have a rich mental life that involves thought, intentionality, and consciousness. He focuses on three phenomena: the versatility and adaptiveness of animal behavior, nervous system physiology, and animal communication. To his credit, Griffin is not dogmatic; he admits that much scientific work remains before any of the evidence can be considered significant, and he is willing to consider interpretations of the data that reject his own views on animal minds.

In the end, unfortunately, Griffin's impassioned claims about behavior that "indicates" complex thought don't go far enough. The book consists of relatively undetailed reports of animal studies. He provides little detail about scientific methodology and does not develop an adequate theoretical framework for a deep understanding animal mentality. He has no clear methodology for interpreting the strength of the data he summarizes, and consistently conflates important distinctions between perception, consciousness, and self-consciousness. Although Griffin champions an interdisciplinary approach to solving problems of mind, he pays little heed to the many philosophical problems with understanding crucial mental concepts.

Committed defenders of animal minds will enjoy this general retrospective by one of their intellectual heroes. Readers who want a deeper exploration must turn elsewhere -- Collen Allen and Marc Bekoff's *\*Species of Mind\** would be an excellent starting point.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

AN INTERESTING SURVEY OF RESEARCH INTO THE MINDS OF VARIOUS ANIMALS

By Steven H Propp

Donald Redfield Griffin (1915-2003) was an American professor of zoology at various universities who did seminal research in animal behavior, animal navigation, acoustic orientation and sensory biophysics.

In the Preface to this 1992 book, Griffin states, "This book will review evidence of versatile thinking by animals, and of equal significance will be a representative sampling of the wide range of scientific and scholarly opinion about animal minds. This spectrum of strongly advocated views demonstrates the basic importance attached to the nature of animal mentality by both scientists and philosophers." In the first chapter, he elaborates, "The aim of this book is to reopen the basic question of what life is like, subjectively, to nonhuman animals, and to outline how we can begin to answer this challenging question by analyzing the versatility of animal behavior, especially the communicative signals by which animals sometimes appear to express their thoughts and feelings."

He points out that "Adaptiveness is a completely separate matter from the possibility of conscious thinking. Because mantis shrimp are crustaceans a few centimeters in length, it is assumed a priori that they cannot possibly be conscious." (pg. 200) After reviewing the various "Ape Language" experiments, he says, "On balance, it now seems clear that apes have learned to communicate simple thoughts."

He concludes on the note, "I am confident that with patience and critical investigation we can begin to

discern what life is like, subjectively, to particular animals under specific conditions.... Because mentality is one of the most important capabilities that distinguishes living animals from the rest of the known universe, seeming to understand animal minds is even more exciting and significant than elaborating our picture of inclusive fitness or discovering new molecular mechanisms."

6 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

I enjoyed it.

By Psycho Hedgehog

I recently read this book for a class, and found it very readable. Granted, it doesn't go as far into interpretations of what all of this means, and more leaves that up to the reader. Try the book *Animal Consciousness* by Daise and Michael Radner if you want to go more into the philosophical, and not a run through of animal behavior. It will also help you, in addition to this book, come to your own informed conclusions about the reality of animal consciousness and thought.

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