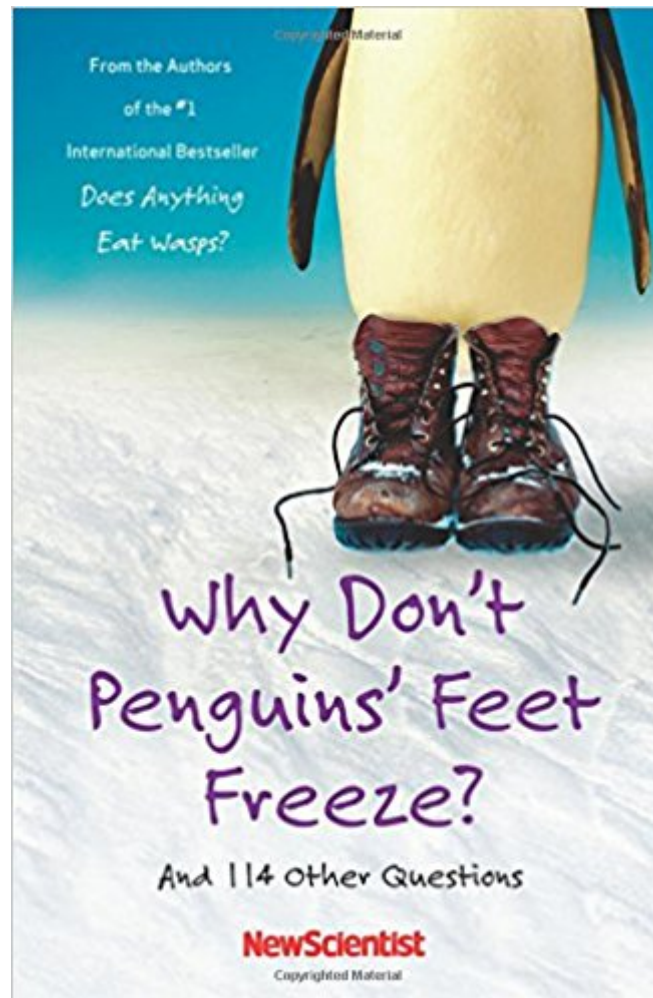




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Why Don't Penguins' Feet Freeze?: And 114 Other Questions



Synopsis

What time is it at the North Pole? What's the chemical formula for a human being? Why do boomerangs come back? Why do flying fish fly? Do the living really outnumber the dead? Why does lightning fork? Why does the end of a whip crack? Everyone has at one time or another thought up odd questions like these, questions that are strange, intriguing, maybe even impossible to answer. Making your morning omelet, perhaps you've wondered why most eggs are egg shaped. Or maybe, the last time you walked on the beach, you felt compelled to ask why the sea is salty. Watching Polly sit on her perch, have you ever marveled at how she stays there -- even when she's asleep? Well, the readers of New Scientist's wildly popular, long-running column "The Last Word" thought of these questions, too, and weren't afraid to ask them. Why Don't Penguins' Feet Freeze? is a brilliant collection of questions and answers for everyone who enjoyed the international, runaway bestseller Does Anything Eat Wasps? Guaranteed to amaze, inform, and delight with topics such as the human body, plants and animals, weird weather, and our wacky world, it'll stump you, enlighten you, entertain and amuse you.

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Customer Reviews

I'm not sure why there is so much excitement about this book. I've never read the "New Scientist", but I assumed the answers provided by the readers from the questions posed by the readers were well researched and/or with scientific merit. After reading the first 2-3 pages of the book, I quickly realized this was not the case. In many cases there were multiple answers to questions, and sometimes the responses were contradicting. Here is an example of a question from page

4:Question: ... people tend to sneeze when they go from dark conditions into very bright light. What is the reason for this?Response summaries (paraphrasing where there are no quotes):1. "Photons get up your nose!"My comment: Very eloquent and thoughtful.2. The warming of the air under the nostrils cause an upward movement of dust particles and hair fibres, and within seconds, sneezing occurs.My comment: Anyone who has this condition knows that sneezing can occur instantly after the eyes are exposed to sunlight. Further, sneezing is possible by looking at artificial light, which provides no warming of the air from a distance.3. This condition is evolutionary and gives the "sunsneezers" an advantage in added protection from harmful sunrays resulting from the depletion of the ozone layer.My comment: The depletion of the ozone layer is a recent phenomenon. Genetic mutations resulting in improved functionality would take much longer than the time it has taken for ozone depletion to develop.4. "...The sneeze occurs because the protective reflexes of the eyes and nose are closely linked. Likewise, when we sneeze our eyes close and also water....

This sequel stands out from its predecessor *Does Anything Eat Wasps* for one reason. There is a very realistic little drawing of an emperor penguin in the top right corner of the page. The penguin is has just hooked a fish and has it on the end of a fishing line that reaches the bottom of the page on page one. On each subsequent page the drawing is slightly altered so as you flip through the penguin firstly reels in the fish, then throws it up in the air, tilts its head back, opens its mouth and eats it. This is very clever, very well done and worth the price of the book alone. Anyway the main emphasis of this book, like *Does Anything Eat Wasps* is a collection of 115 questions pondered by readers of *New Scientist* magazine, published in their popular Last Word column. This column sort of works like a hard copy version of an online discussion board where other readers write in with the answer to the question. Obviously a lot of readers of *New Scientist* are experts in a particular field or another but not all of them are and the so called experts also disagree with each other. There are also some funny answers by people who obviously have no idea but want to add something anyway. Such as one of the answers to *Why Do Sheep Run Away in a Straight Line In Front of a Vehicle Down the Road Rather Than to the Side of the Road* being because sheep know human psychology they know with bloodlust it's harder to run down an animal than just hit it. Likewise someone answers why birds void themselves on you from a great height is because lower isn't much of a challenge! The only disappointing thing about this book is that it doesn't indicate which is the correct answer, the book needs little symbols or something with correct, wrong or we haven't verified this answer yet.

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