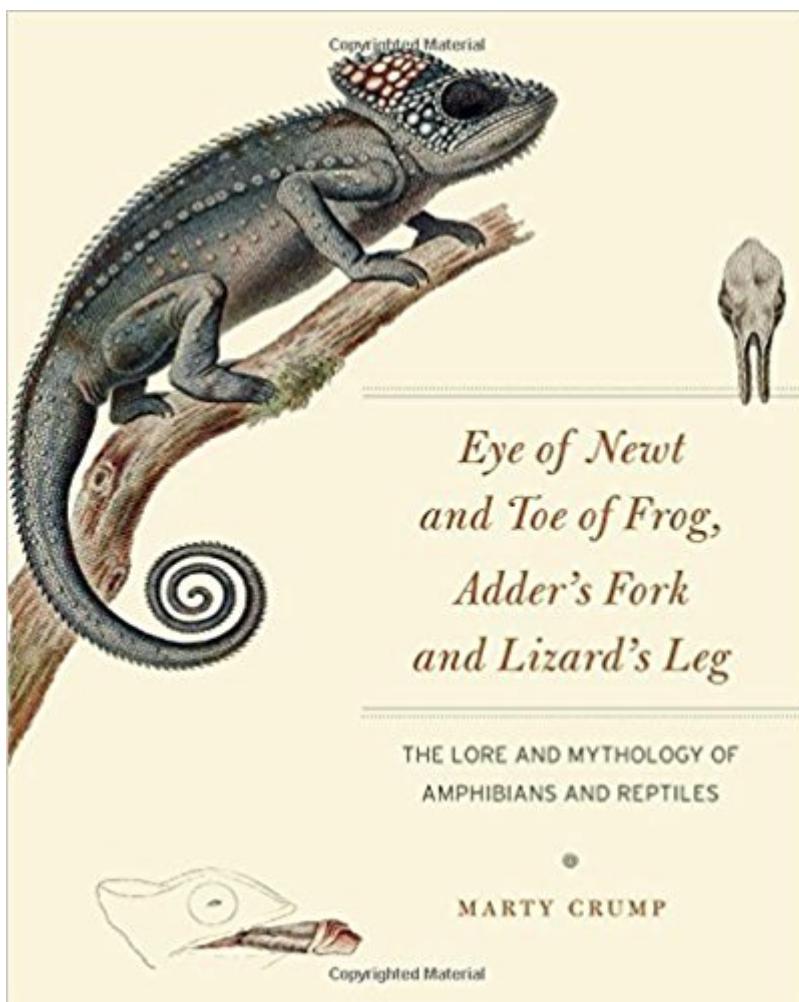


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# Eye Of Newt And Toe Of Frog, Adder's Fork And Lizard's Leg: The Lore And Mythology Of Amphibians And Reptiles



## Synopsis

Frogs are worshipped for bringing nourishing rains, but blamed for devastating floods. Turtles are admired for their wisdom and longevity, but ridiculed for their sluggish and cowardly behavior. Snakes are respected for their ability to heal and restore life, but despised as symbols of evil. Lizards are revered as beneficent guardian spirits, but feared as the Devil himself. In this ode to toads and snakes, newts and tuatara, crocodiles and tortoises, herpetologist and science writer Marty Crump explores folklore across the world and throughout time. From creation myths to trickster tales; from associations with fertility and rebirth to fire and rain; and from the use of herps in folk medicines and magic, as food, pets, and gods, to their roles in literature, visual art, music, and dance, Crump reveals both our love and hatred of amphibians and reptiles— and their perceived power. In a world where we keep home terrariums at the same time that we battle invasive cane toads, and where public attitudes often dictate that the cute and cuddly receive conservation priority over the slimy and venomous, she shows how our complex and conflicting perceptions threaten the conservation of these ecologically vital animals. Sumptuously illustrated, *Eye of Newt and Toe of Frog, Adder’s Fork and Lizard’s Leg* is a beautiful and enthralling brew of natural history and folklore, sobering science and humor, that leaves us with one irrefutable lesson: love herps. Warts, scales, and all.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Crump looks back on the ways in which humans around the world have historically

understood reptiles, using as a framework James Serpell's model: that human perceptions of a species are based upon emotional reactions to it combined with a sense of whether it is beneficial or harmful. To address the emotional factors, she moves through ancient, aboriginal, and modern cultures, thematically sorting myths and stories into themes, including water and creation; good and evil; and transformation, resurrection, and renewal. As she examines utility, Crump surveys traditional Chinese medicine (which often uses animal parts), Western pharmaceuticals, folk magic, and culinary uses for amphibians. She concludes with musings on the ethics of whether researchers should try to debunk myths in the hope of saving particular species, making more explicit her message that fear of these species means the world risks losing them.

(Publishers Weekly) "Eye of Newt brings thousands of years of lore into the fight against extinction. Read a chapter here and there, and look up your favorite creepy crawly in the index. Or, look up one you loathe. You'll see it in a new light and find a respect for it that you didn't know you had." (Sierra) "In borrowing a line from the witches' spell for the title of her latest book, herpetologist Crump acknowledges up front that the amphibians she studies don't exactly enjoy the same warm reputation among humans that most furry mammals do. However, as Crump sifts through the various legends and fables about reptiles in this fascinating tour of amphibian folklore, she emphasizes that feelings and judgments about certain animals depend on which cultures are making the evaluations. . . . Well-crafted chapters also cover such juicy topics as reptile-based magic, sexual prowess, and folk medicines. The result is a sumptuously illustrated, informative, and entertaining volume." (Carl Hays Booklist) "Love herps. Warts, scales, and all." This humorous description appropriately accompanies this lively, accessible roundup of reptiles and amphibians in folklore, written by herpetologist Crump, who cites biologist Archie Carr and four-year-old granddaughter Fionna as her touchstones. Covering creation myths, witchcraft rituals, and more, Crump implores readers to "embrace the spirits, dragons, demons, deities, heroes, and trickster" and allow yourself to view the world of amphibians and reptiles through different lens, emphasizing the urgency of conservation. . . . Essays are enhanced by color photographs. Readers will enjoy this fun, fascinating fairy-tale theater featuring toads, snakes, and more.

(Library Journal) "You'd be forgiven for wondering whether there could be enough fables, myths and stories involving amphibians and reptiles to fill an entire volume, but herpetologist and science writer Crump has accomplished the feat with aplomb, and the result is a beautiful, engaging, and absorbing collection. But this is more than just a set of tales from around the globe: Crump also teases out our deep-rooted ambivalence towards a group of creatures we have long

cast in both positive and negative lights. . . . I hope that this book, along with providing a lively overview of folk beliefs about these animals around the world, can help to play a role in amphibian and reptile conservation. (Inga Zeisset, University of Brighton Times Higher Education) "Crump takes a new and original approach. . . . Eye of Newt goes beyond collecting and debunking, and well beyond useful entertainment. In an unexpected turn that has broad and important implications for conservation and conservationists, the book argues that conservation initiatives can be made more effective by integrating folklore. . . . For a children's book that she published in 2013, *The Mystery of Darwin's Frog*, Crump drew on studies she had made earlier, in Chile, of two species of mouth-brooding frogs, *Rhinoderma darwinii* and *R. rufum*; but shortly after that book appeared, scientists in South America reported that populations of *R. darwinii* had severely declined and that *R. rufum* was almost certainly extinct. . . . Given that amphibians are the biologist's canary in the mine, an early-warning system for danger ahead, the fate of *R. rufum* is alarming news. Scientists and teachers of the generation between Crump and her young readers should feel the responsibility keenly: she is our canary." (Kate Jackson Times Literary Supplement) "This richly illustrated book, whose intrepid author sampled pit-viper wine on her readers' behalf, is full of herpetological lore. Her stories are as mesmerizing as a cobra's gaze. (BBC Wildlife) "Crump, a US conservationist with a passion for amphibians and reptiles pursued over almost five decades, is an optimist. Her vast new compendium of herpetological mythology and folklore . . . is a crazy quilt of a book that quickly convinces the reader that these species constitute an enormous wealth of cultural capital. In losing them, we lose part of ourselves. (Gail Vines New Scientist) "A superb book. Crump explores the myriad ways in which humans have viewed reptiles and amphibians over the ages, before science stepped in and gave us a very different perspective. The author has set herself a huge task. . . . Crump is engaged, entertaining, and never judgmental. . . . If we want to change views of reptiles and amphibians we need to start out by acknowledging and understanding people's current belief systems. Because views of reptiles and amphibians are shaped by myth and fable, we need to comprehend those stories before we can change those attitudes. It's a compelling argument to drag academics out of the ivory tower into the tribal gathering, to show us a perspective on our beloved study animals that differs from our own, and is vastly more widespread. Crump is no soapbox orator—she writes gently but persuasively. She asks a scientifically informed readership to open their minds to another way of thinking. And in the process, she gives us some cracking yarns. (Rick Shine, University of Sydney, Australia Current Biology) "This

book is a treasure! Every herpetologist, in fact any biologist interested in understanding perceptions about animals (and plants), their own and those of the public, should own this book. It should not stay on the shelf, but be read often browsed, both selectively and broadly, as well as consumed in depth. Crump asks us why we are scientists, why we do our work the way we do, and urges us to think more broadly about perceptions of all sorts and to include an understanding of local perceptions in our research. This book is more than a compendium of lore and myths; it is a gift, an education, a remarkable treatise about ways of understanding biology. Its content alters and illuminates our perceptions of amphibians and reptiles and of conservation biology, and will enliven and enrich the reader's research, teaching, and citizenship in our world. (Marvalee H. Wake, University of California, Berkeley Copeia) "A well illustrated introduction on the subject." (Ian Paulsen Birdbooker Report) "Eye of Newt is, as promised, a fascinating examination of amphibians and reptiles, but at its heart it is a deep consideration of the human species. . . . Every so often, there comes along that brilliant, imaginative intellect who can inspire others to think clearly about topics they otherwise would never have considered. Crump is exactly such an intellect." (Chris Lazzarino Kansas Alumni Magazine) "A scholarly, provocative, and compelling account of our relationships with amphibians and reptiles. These interactions are extremely diverse, both highly positive and severely negative, and by helping us understand them, Eye of Newt will play a critical role in resolving contentious but core issues in conservation. Driven by fine, clear, evocative writing—the more so for Crump's personal stories interwoven with those of her granddaughter and her late friend, the great writer-naturalist Archie Carr—and Fenolio's always outstanding images, Eye of Newt is engaging, trustworthy, and will be of widespread interest both to amphibian and reptile enthusiasts and professional herpetologists. Wonderful and unusual, emotionally and intellectually captivating, this is an important, timely book—and the ending is superb." (Harry W. Greene, Cornell University author of "Snakes: The Evolution of Mystery in Nature" & "Tracks and Shadows: Field Biology as Art") "When I read Crump's work, I think of an Alison Krauss album, or sometimes Judy Collins or Susan Werner; every note perfect and flowing, professional—talented and trained. Here, Crump thoroughly explores the folklore and mythology surrounding amphibians and reptiles: frogs, salamanders, caecilians, turtles, snakes, and lizards. There is nothing like Eye of Newt out there. A great book." (Michael J. Lannoo, Indiana University School of Medicine author of "Malformed Frogs" and "Leopold's Shack and Ricketts's Lab") "Accomplished scientist and author Marty Crump has distilled a lifetime avocation studying amphibian and reptilian folklore into a

masterwork. Eye of Newt not only instantly becomes the authoritative source on lore and mythology, but also transforms it into a compelling argument for conservation. Without these species our culture would be forever impoverished. No reader will ever look at one of these animals the same again. (Thomas E. Lovejoy, George Mason University 2012 Blue Planet Prize Laureate)

Marty Crump is currently an adjunct professor of biology at Utah State and Northern Arizona Universities; she has been a herpetologist for more than forty-five years. For at least that long, she has been intrigued with the folklore of amphibians and reptiles. She is the author of *In Search of the Golden Frog*, *Headless Males Make Great Lovers*, and *Sexy Orchids Make Lousy Lovers*, all published by the University of Chicago Press, as well as the recent award-winning children's book *The Mystery of Darwin's Frog*. She lives in Logan, UT.

This excellent volume gathers together folklore concerning amphibians and reptiles. Well-written and fascinating stories.

Wonderful book. Entertaining as well as educational.

Beautiful book, interesting information. It is a lot larger than I anticipated (not really travel size), and the information is not as technical/detailed/in depth as I would like.

These shears are very durable and made of high quality material. Great product. Feels good in the hand. fast shipping. would purchase again. my neighbor love it,

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