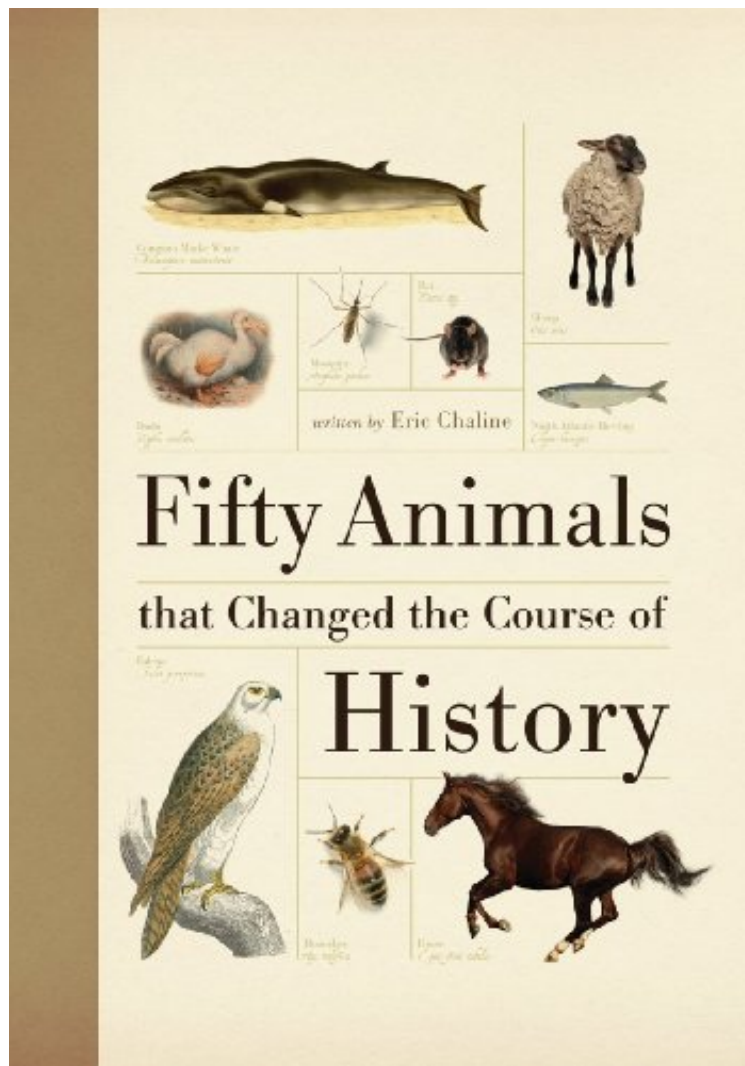


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## Fifty Animals that Changed the Course of History (Fifty Things That Changed the Course of History)

*Eric Chaline*

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**Eric Chaline : Fifty Animals that Changed the Course of History (Fifty Things That Changed the Course of History)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fifty Animals that Changed the Course of History (Fifty Things That Changed the Course of History):

13 of 15 people found the following review helpful. This book disappointed me. By Silk Man I teach human evolution at the college level, so I ordered a copy of this book hoping and expecting to get some worthwhile information. In this I have been disappointed. Although the book is filled with amusing and interesting anecdotes and historical passages,

the author goes off on tangents unrestrained, giving details to seemingly irrelevant items, and omitting what would appear to be basic and important details under each entry. There is no evidence that the author has much training in basic biology. Someone at the publishing house did not do their job, which would have been to subject this manuscript to a rigorous review by a real biologist. Some examples among many I could cite: page 85: *Proailurus* lived in the forests of earth 25 million years ago. Really? The forests of earth? Page 48: all dogs are genetically identical to wolves. Should we assume the physical and behavioral differences between wolves and dogs are not genetic? The section on the elephant totally mixes the two extant species (saying they are in two genera), the Indian and African elephants, yet the heading of the chapter has *Loxodonta africana*. There are several errors in fact in the text under the honey bee. I cannot recommend this book, even for readers who are more inclined toward history than science.<sup>3</sup> of 4 people found the following review helpful. A fun and fascinating book that intertwines history, zoology, and many other fields. By Thomas E. Davis I've purchased all five books in this series (Fifty Animals, Plants, Minerals, Machines, and Railroads that Changed the Course of History) and they've proven consistently delightful. Each one carefully selects many of the pivotal things that have had a profound impact on human life and societies on a large scale, connecting them both directly and tangentially to numerous other items and events. One will not agree with the authors' every choice, but they are always thought-provoking. In entries that range from two to eight pages, "Fifty Animals" describes the creatures that have had the greatest effect on mankind: how we hunt, eat, clothe ourselves, travel, communicate, do research, play sports, engage in warfare, sicken, and die. The text concisely and entertainingly places them into context and provides a rationale for their significance. Sidebars offer entertaining details about their special abilities or uses, legends and cultural connections, and challenges to their survival. The author explains how the natural and human worlds intersect in social, economic, medical, and historical terms. For example, we read of the food and other products we obtain from the honeybee, whale, buffalo, cow, goat, herring, cod, chicken, turkey, rabbit, oyster, and pig. We learn of the clothing we manufacture from the silkworm, beaver, llama, and sheep; the diseases we acquire from the mosquito, leech, louse, and flea; the discoveries we have made courtesy of the fruit fly, finch, iguanodon, chimpanzee, and dodo; and the companionship, transportation, and labor afforded by such animals as the dog, cat, camel, donkey, horse, and elephant. There are entries on wildlife as diverse as the bat and lion, the cobra and reindeer, the seal and bald eagle, the earthworm and scarab beetle. The book concludes with a chapter on ourselves, the most recent animal to have evolved and the greatest threat to all of the others. A useful list of related readings and websites is also appended. Each of these volumes is cleverly designed, copiously illustrated, and beautifully bound like the renowned Dorling-Kindersley books, and each makes a fine, durable resource for family and school libraries. They provide a jumping-off point for further research and an invitation into the perennial game of "what would you have included on or excluded from this list." All of them are great fun to pick up and browse at random or read from cover to cover.<sup>4</sup> of 6 people found the following review helpful. very good. By W. M. Nielson Excellent book, great layout and format. Rips along with a brief but very informative collection about the amazing animals on this planet and how we utilize them and should appreciate them. These animals really did change the world (so did *e coli* but that is not featured!! hahah) We are still so dependent on these fellows that we share the planet with but we don't give enough credit nor understanding. Read and learn. Also get the others in the series. All of them are great.

The fascinating stories of the animals that changed civilizations. *Fifty Animals that Changed the Course of History* is a beautifully presented guide to the animals that have had the greatest impact on human civilization. Entries are organized by scientific name, except for *Homo sapiens*, which is featured last. The 50 animals include the horse, dog, rat, whale, reindeer, beaver, flea, leech, dodo, falcon, oyster and shark. These creatures, great and small, have played central roles in the evolution of humankind, but they have remained at the periphery of our understanding of history. Whether it is an advancement in scientific knowledge, a trade war, disease and death, battles won and lost, or encounters with explorers in unknown lands, these animals have changed the course of history. More than 150 elegant drawings, photographs and paintings, as well as excerpts from literature, highlight the concise text. Each animal is judged by its influence in four categories: Edible -- animals that have shaped agriculture, such as the cow Medical -- animals that are "disease vectors," spreading bacteria and viruses, from malaria to plague Commercial -- animals used for trade or in manufacturing Practical -- animals used for transportation or clothing. The animals described in *Fifty Animals that Changed the Course of History* are familiar, but their roles in human history are easily overlooked. This attractive reference gives us a fresh perspective on our place in the animal kingdom.

From Booklist Humans are the most successful species of mammal to ever walk the earth, according to author Chaline. We have needed help to claim and shape the planet, and we may still be beaten by what we consider to be lower forms of life. In 49 informative essays, the author profiles mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, insects, and other species that have assisted or resisted the human takeover. Most, such as horses, honeybees, and silkworms, have contributed to our geographic spread and technological advancement. Rats, lice, and mosquitoes have nearly wiped us out. The fiftieth essay is about us and how we may be our own worst enemy. Each two- to six-page essay recounts an animal's relationship with humans and highlights edible, medicinal, commercial, and practical contributions to human history.

Readers may choose to read only the essays that interest them. Natural-history students will find the essays helpful introductions to further study. A website guide is included. Recommended for most public libraries. --Rick Roche A simple writing style makes this book ideal for younger students, and it would be a wonderful addition for any classroom studying animals, while the intriguing trivia and historical references found in accompanying side-bars will engage even the most experienced adult reader. Be prepared when you compare your list of animals to the ones selected for this book, the last entry is one you most likely overlooked. (Melissa McCartney, Science Magazine Science Books and Films 2012-02-01) Humans are the most successful species of mammal to ever walk the earth, according to author Chaline. We have needed help to claim and shape the planet, and we may still be beaten by what we consider to be lower forms of life. In 49 informative essays, the author profiles mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, insects, and other species that have assisted or resisted the human takeover.... The fiftieth essay is about us, and how we may be our own worst enemy.... Natural-history students will find the essays helpful introductions to further study. A website guide included. Recommended for most public libraries. (Rick Roche Booklist 2011-12-01) A companion to Fifty Plants That Changed the Course of History, Fifty Animals is the same sort of inspired invitation to browsing, with short but informative essays on each of the subjects, rich in illustrations, excerpts and sidebars. It's the sort of book that has you saying Wow, listen to this and Did you know... to companions over and over. (Globe and Mail 2011-09-24) Readers may choose to read only the essays that interest them. Natural-history students will find the essays helpful introductions to further study. A website guide is included. Recommended for most public libraries. (Rick Roche Booklist 2011-12-01) (reviewed with Fifty Plants that Changed the Course of History) These two volumes from Firefly uncover some of the most interesting stories of how animals and plants have impacted human civilization in economic, political, and industrial history. This is an original approach that links the biological sciences to the social sciences and students and general readers will find many interesting stories within these pages. (Shannon Graff Hysell American Reference Books Annual 2012 2012-04-01) [It] will no doubt be popular even as an informal addition to any education setting. (Philip LiWei The Green Teacher 2012-06-30) Fifty Animals reminds us of our relationships with our biosphere brothers and sisters, and the delicate balance this all entails. (Martin Lockley Network , The Scientific and Medical Network 2012-03-01) This interesting and pleasingly illustrated book... is a timely reminder that all creatures great and small are co-habitants of the biosphere of which we are an integral part... Fifty Animals That Changed the Course of History is full of interesting facts, and Chaline shows a sense of balance in selecting those most pertinent to the biological, medicinal, cultural and historical importance of his protagonists. Thus, one is sure to learn an assortment of factoids... Fifty Animals reminds us of our relationships with our biosphere brothers and sisters, and the delicate balance this all entails. (Martin Lockley Network (The Scientific and Medical Network 2012-11-01) This is a fun read. Each animal has its own section and each section is anywhere from two (Dodo, Carp and Cochineal) to eight pages (Human) in length. Chaline's book is visually pleasing... There are some striking photographs and drawings that highlight each section. Wide margins provide space for informational boxes... Special interest boxes... present some intriguing aspect of the animal's contribution to history... I admire Chaline's attempt to create and justify such an interesting and thought-provoking list... It is well written and a pleasure to read. (John B. Jenkins, Biology, Swarthmore College, Swarth Quarterly of Biology 2012-12-01) About the Author Eric Chaline is a journalist and writer and has published titles on philosophy, including The Book of Zen and The Book of Gods, and on history, including Traveler's Guide to the Ancient World: Ancient Greece, History's Worst Inventions, History's Greatest Deceptions and History's Worst Predictions. He now lives and works in London, England, where he is conducting doctoral research in sociology at South Bank University.