

# Why the Lion Grew its Mane: a Miscellany of Recent Scientific Discoveries from Astronomy to Zoology

By Lewis Smith

Reviewed by Michalis Hadjimarcou, Cyprus

- ✓ Biology
- ✓ Earth science
- ✓ Physics
- ✓ Ecology
- ✓ Astronomy

The scope of *Why the Lion Grew its Mane: A Miscellany of Recent Scientific Discoveries from Astronomy to Zoology*, as stated by the author, is to offer a “fascinating collection of recent discoveries that overturn popular conceptions, enter realms that were previously the preserve of science fiction, or simply add to the sum of human knowledge”. Indeed, the book consists of a large number of articles covering a wide variety of science issues, some of which are well known and thoroughly investigated, while others bring forward new topics for inquiry. Whatever the case, every article provides new and often exciting, even unexpected, information.

The main source of information and inspiration for the articles are reports of scientific discoveries in peer-reviewed journals and specialist publications. Therefore, the reader knows that the material presented is the product of published scientific research and not the product of the author’s imagination. The book is by no means aimed only at science-ori-

ented people; even those with minimal science knowledge will be able to understand and enjoy most, if not all, of the topics presented.

No reader is likely to find the answers to all of his or her scientific questions; neither will (s)he be interested in every bit of information provided in the book. Nevertheless, with more than 120 topics from nine themes, the average reader should expect to enjoy reading enough articles to make having this book worthwhile. Biology lovers will probably indulge in the ‘new species’, ‘animal behaviour’ and the ‘all in the genes’ topic areas, whereas dinosaur fanatics will focus on the ‘life gone by’ section. Ecologists and environmentalists might prefer to start with the ‘shaping the Earth’ essays. Physicists and high-tech enthusiasts would enjoy the ‘tomorrow’s world’ section. The last three thematic areas, ‘stars, planets and space’, ‘what’s in our heads’ and ‘ancient people’, contain articles of more general interest.

All of the articles are very short, rarely exceeding a single page in length, making reading them very easy. Additionally, the articles are accompanied by large colourful pictures – a good reason to spend time flipping through the book.

*Why the Lion Grew its Mane* would be an excellent idea for a gift or a handy tool for the science teacher to use to give students a short break from a not-so-interesting science topic. Some of the articles would even make a good starting point for in-depth projects or investigations.

## Details

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