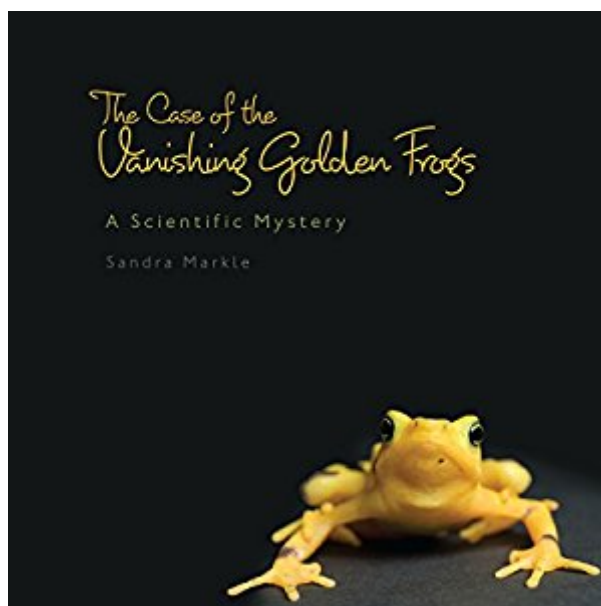


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The Case Of The Vanishing Golden Frogs: A Scientific Mystery



Synopsis

Panamanian golden frogs aren't just cute, little, and yellow. They're also the national symbol of Panama. But they started to disappear about 15 years ago. What's killing them? Could it be a change in their habitat? What about pollution? Might it be a result of climate change? Follow a team of scientists working to save these frogs and protect frog populations worldwide in this real-life science mystery.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I loved this book though it was hard to read in my older kindle.

Traditionally the Panamanian golden frog has been a symbol of good fortune in Panama. People "believed the frogs would give their loved ones good luck in the afterlife" and buried them with golden replicas of the frog. To this day open-air markets often feature golden frog statues, but in the wild they are alarmingly sparse. In 1996 they mysteriously started to disappear from the landscape in large numbers. Karen Lips, a biologist, was startled when she went in search of them in the Fortuna Forest Reserve in Chiriqui Province. The frogs she discovered were far from healthy. In fact, most of them were dead or dying. Instead of researching frogs, her focus shifted and she tried "to figure out what could be killing them." Lips began to speculate on the cause of their deaths. The one thing they all seemed to have in common was that most of them "had patches of peeling skin." Could the golden frogs be dying from a change of habitat, pollution, climate change, or some mysterious disease? Most of her theories seemed to hit a dead end, but she did know that when the golden frogs skin was examined under a microscope "strange sacs" could be seen. Lips relentlessly

struggled to find the answer to the strange demise of the golden frog. She started to look in another direction and enlisted the aid of Joyce Loncore, an aquatic specialist who could possibly hold the key to the mystery. Could they come up with some answers or would the special Panamanian golden frog face extinction? This is a fascinating mystery of an amphibian, the golden frog, who was quickly disappearing from Panama. This story will not only capture the interest of the young reader, but of anyone interested in biological or scientific mysteries. The way it was told generated some amount of tension as the scientists scrambled to figure out what was happening. When the answer to the golden frog's deaths was found, problems still remained. How could they implement and integrate their knowledge into a workable solution? No spoilers here, but reader is in for a real treat with this mystery. The layout of the book, along with the stunning photographs, was a real draw. In the back of the book is an author's note, information on how you can help frogs, an index, a glossary, and additional recommended book and website resources to explore. This is definitely one mystery you may wish to add to your shelves! This book courtesy of the publisher.

The golden frog found in Panama is a national symbol of that country, but in 1996, scientists discovered something disturbing. The once prolific golden frog population was decreasing at an alarming rate. Biologist Karen Lips was the one to make this discovery, and she was greatly disturbed by this development, even more so when she found strange sacs under the dead frogs' skin. The book traces Karen Lips' efforts to uncover the mystery of these strange sacs, and how the mystery is finally solved. Along the way, various theories are put forward as possible explanations for the decreasing frog population - extreme change to their habitat, pollution, climate change, etc. When it is eventually discovered that a fungus is responsible for those weird sac-like things in the dead frogs' skin, the mystery is still not completely solved. Scientists needed to understand and discover how the fungus was killing the frogs, where the fungus originated from, and how it spread. The book also traces efforts to save the remaining golden frog population from extinction, as well as efforts to breed the frogs in captivity. Throughout, there are full color photos to engage young readers' attention, as well as web links for further study, and also a glossary and index. This is a great book to get elementary-aged children and up interested in science and also to foster an awareness of the importance of nature conservancy.

Sandra Markle is one of my favorite authors, and frogs are high on my list of favorite animals, so I was thrilled to have a chance to preview this title. And I wasn't disappointed. The text is informative and easy to understand, but also tells a fascinating and compelling story. Markle does a great job of

capturing both the importance and the fun of science. First, she explains why the disappearance of these tiny creatures matters. Then, she lays out how the mystery unfolded: what questions different scientists asked, and how the answers led to the next piece of the puzzle-and more questions, for other scientists, etc. In fact, that's one of the things I appreciated most about this book: it doesn't follow just one scientist and his or her unique work. It demonstrates how one person's findings sparked others to advance the science, and how each used his or her own expertise and knowledge to contribute the next vital step in the ongoing process. To me, that makes science feel more accessible to kids by showing that successful scientists don't need to solve a whole big problem, they just need to learn something new and tell others. Aside from the masterful text, the stunning layout and design and big, bold photographs on every page make the book visually engaging throughout and are more than enough to keep young readers turning the pages to see what's next. In the author's note, Markle adds this: "No tale of finding a serial killer could be more exciting than this true story. . . . But the story isn't over yet. The amphibian killer is still at large. Perhaps, one day, one of you will become the science detective who finally stops this killer." The book also includes a table of contents, "how to help" section, glossary, age-appropriate recommended resources, index, and photo credits.

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