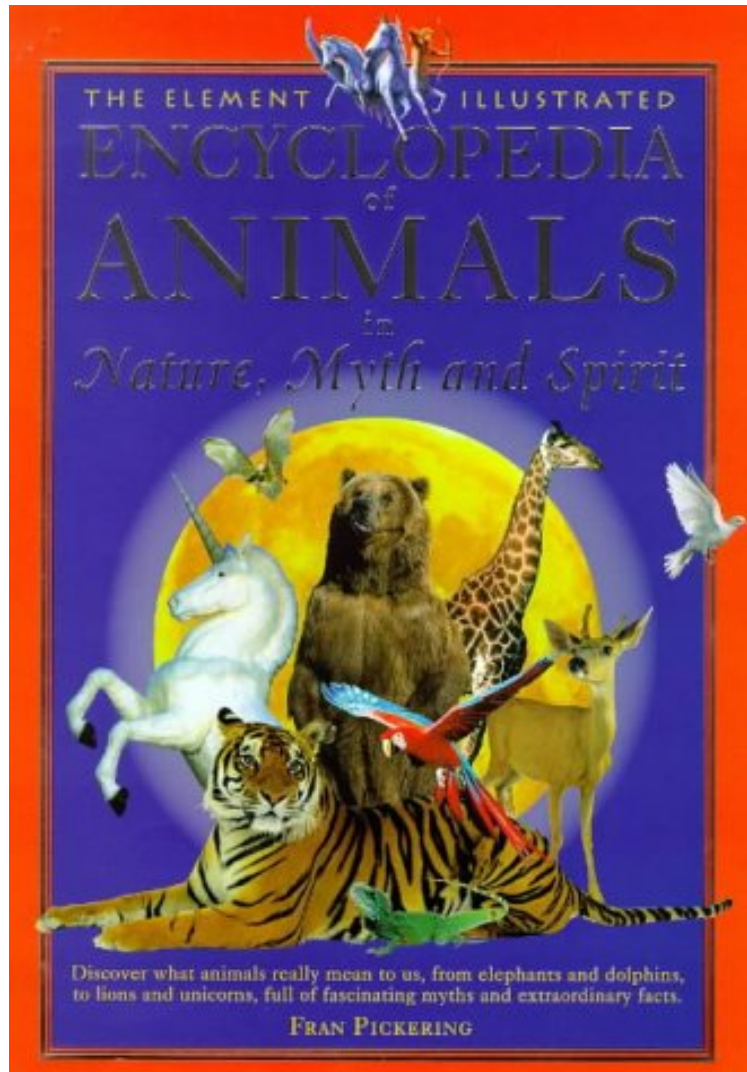


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The Element Illustrated Encyclopedia of Animals: In Nature, Myth and Spirit

Fran Pickering

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Book by Pickering, Fran

From School Library Journal Gr 4-8-A disorganized collection of facts, trivia, symbolism, and legends and stories in an attractive format. The book is divided into four sections-the three elements in which animals live on Earth ("Earth," "Air," and "Water") and "Myth." Unfortunately, the concept of "element" is never defined. These sections each include a number of double-page chapters covering a variety of different themes and animals. The creatures chosen do not represent a cross section; the only non-mammals in the "Earth" section are snakes and ants. While the information is accurate for the most part, imprecise language abounds. Male lions " may only last three years or so before younger males take their place." Each element section concludes with three spreads on such topics as pets, dreams, or animals in astrology. The creatures discussed in these chapters are in no way confined to the part of the book in which they appear. "Myths" is the most interesting section, although it isn't clear why the stories here were not included with the accounts of their real-life counterparts in the body of the book. Information on extinct and endangered animals is also found here. Appealing, full-color photographs and drawings illustrate the book. A thorough index, a list of contact organizations mostly in the U.K., and Web sites conclude the volume. Animals and their place in human folklore a great idea, but not well executed here.-Susan Oliver, Tampa-Hillsborough Public Library System, FL Copyright 1999 Cahners Business Information, Inc.