



MYSTERY ANIMALS OF SUFFOLK

by Matt Salusbury

A book of strange and yet-to-be-identified animals, animal folklore and tradition from the region briefly known as the Curious County – including an account of over 150 mystery big cat sightings. The book features:

- **Alien Big Cat sightings** – over 150 reports from around the county, numerous witness interviews. Photos of a possible black leopard from Wortham, North Suffolk. Two waves of big cat sightings in Ipswich, numerous sightings of a slim, black, leopard-like Suffolk big cat known as “Paws”, the Haverhill Puma, a well-documented escaped West Suffolk bobcat, a “tan puma” near Lakenheath, many big cat “kill signs” (evidence of predation on livestock) around the county, dumped soft toy tigers causing brief alarm in Trimley and Sudbury.
 - **Alien invaders** – wild boar shot at Ixworth, at Bury St Edmunds a 1960s hamster infestation.
- **Woodwoses** – uniquely East Anglian wildmen, also evil freshwater mermaids, a shambling hairy apparition on the road to Peasenhall and the “body of a mighty giant dig’d up at Brockford near Ipswich”.
- **Black Shuck** – Suffolk’s phantasmal black dogs, from ancient folklore to encounters around 1970s Lowestoft and Martlesham Creek in the 1990s.
- **Animal ghosts** – spectral coaches and coach horses, equestrian ghosts, a phantom fish in Southwold, invisible horses of Newmarket, Ipswich, Holbrook and elsewhere.
- **Stowmarket’s baby-snatching “frairies”** (fairies) along with “certain little people” who granted a convicted sorceress from Little Bealings her magic powers.
- **Kessingland sea serpents** – Were they just misidentified whales? The Orford Ness “sea dragon”, a Medieval Suffolk-Essex border “crocadrille” and a winged “serpent” in Mendham in 1662.
- **Escaped five-foot tall flightless birds** delaying the East Suffolk Line train at Campsey Ash, an emu on the run from Glemsford, also a Wickham Market wallaby and at Covehithe a swimming piglet in the North Sea.
- **Imps described in dubious testimony from Suffolk witchcraft trials.** Familiars in the form of ducks, exploding mice or “lice of an extraordinary bigness”.
- **Published in August 2023 by Slack-jawed Amazement Productions, printed in Suffolk. A5 format (size 210mm X 148mm), paperback, 348 pages, over 200 black and white images including maps, index, bibliography, glossary. With a preface by Paul Sieveking, founding co-editor of Fortean Times. ISBN 978-1-715721-09-9**
- Price £15 plus postage, available shortly from the Big Cats of Suffolk website bigcatsofsuffolk.com, which has a list of bookshops that stock it.
- *Mystery Animals of Suffolk* is on Twitter, with updates at [@MysteryAnimals](https://twitter.com/MysteryAnimals)
- Book launch of *Mystery Animals of Suffolk* in late 2023 in Ipswich – date and venue to be confirmed. The author is available for signings, talks and book events.
- Enquiries, review copies and for updates and guest list for the book launch: mysteryanimalsofsuffolk@gn.apc.org or phone **079180108529**
- Audio clip of the author talking about big cats on BBC Radio Suffolk <https://soundcloud.com/mattgazette/big-cats-in-suffolk-clip-from-jon-wrights-bbc-radio-suffolk-show>
- **Bigcatsofsuffolk.com** also serves as a reporting centre for big cat sightings in East Anglia and links to video footage of big cats filmed in Suffolk.
- The front cover image shows a gargoyle in the form of a heraldic spotted panther on the church at Theberton, from around 1490. Inset: still from video footage of a black leopard(?) in Wortham, 2010. Inset photo: © Lee Acaster