

The Perfect Swarm: The Science of Complexity in Everyday Life

By Len Fisher

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The process of "self-organization" reveals itself in the inanimate worlds of crystals and seashells, but, as Len Fisher shows, it is also evident in living organisms, from fish to ants to human beings. Understanding the "swarm intelligence" inherent in groups can help us do everything from throw a better party to start a fad to make our interactions with others more powerful. Humorous and enlightening, *The Perfect Swarm* demonstrates how complexity arises from nature's simple rules and how we can use their awesome power to untangle the frustrating complexities of life in our ever more chaotic world.

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Review

Boston Globe
"Fisher makes intriguing connections" and "demonstrates that statistics don't always lie, and sometimes even tell important truths."

Psychology Today
"Fisher jumps with proficiency from locusts to pedestrians to computer algorithms to stock markets."

***BBC Focus* Magazine**
"This would be my nominee for book of the year, if it wasn't still only January. Who knows what may turn up in the next 12 months? Whatever it is, though, will find Fisher a hard act to follow."

Scott M. Cooper, MIT research affiliate; co-author of *Coolhunting*
"It's a rare pleasure to read a book that builds on great ideas that have come before, pushes concepts forward, and challenges the intellect—while at the same time being eminently accessible. This is just such a book."

David Sumpter, professor of mathematics, Uppsala University
"Len Fisher reveals how the study of animal swarms allows us to better understand our own society. By blending personal stories with a clear presentation of new theoretical ideas he shows why rumors, ideas and information spread so rapidly through groups."

Gregory Sword, associate professor of biology, University of Sydney
"That complexity can be simple to explain might seem counterintuitive, but in *The Perfect Swarm: The Science of Complexity in Everyday Life*, Len Fisher demonstrates just that. This book provides a thoughtful, entertaining, and—most important—easy to understand treatment of how patterns emerge and problems can be solved when many individuals interact in very simple ways. Clear and fluent, The Perfect Swarm is an enjoyable source of insight for those who would like to better understand how many seemingly complex things in the world really aren't so complex after all."

Peter A. Gloor, author of *Swarm Creativity* and *Coolhunting*
"*The Perfect Swarm* does a marvelous job of explaining the network effects that determine our daily life. I highly recommend it to anybody seeking practical solutions to the puzzling complexities of everyday life, and especially to anyone interested in the mathematical and physical underpinnings of swarm intelligence, swarm business, and swarm creativity."

Ian Stewart, Author of *Professor Stewart's Cabinet of Mathematical Curiosities*
"From locusts watching *Star Wars* to Murphy's Law of Management, *The Perfect Swarm* hits all the buttons. This is a wonderful tour through the new mathematics of swarms, flocks, and crowds, and it makes the emerging science of complex systems seem simple. Easy to read and highly informative."

Lord Robert M. May, Zoology Department, Oxford University
"I am not sure there is a 'science of complexity,' but there undoubtedly are a lot of interesting ideas emerging about underlying simplicities, and their implications, within many seemingly complicated systems.

Len Fisher’s book is a truly excellent and clearly-written guide to this exciting area.”

Nature
“By focussing wholly on the science of complexity without using narrative ploys to disguise it, Fisher covers a vast subject quickly in a compact book. *The Perfect Swarm* is a valuable contribution.”

About the Author

Len Fisher, Ph.D., is author of *Rock, Paper, Scissors*; *Weighing the Soul*; and *How to Dunk a Doughnut*, which was named Best Popular Science Book of the Year by the American Institute of Physics. He lives in Wiltshire, England, and Blackheath, Australia.

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