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## Local octopus expert Dr. Jennifer Mather featured in latest installment of Scientists in the Field book series

Renowned octopus expert Dr. Jennifer Mather and her team of researchers are featured in a new book, *The Octopus Scientists: Exploring the Mind of a Mollusk*, the most recent addition to the Scientists in the Field book series.

The series, by naturalist Sy Montgomery, is written for middle-school-aged readers and highlights the work of people engaged in scientific careers in the natural world, studying everything from spiders and bats to creatures that can only be seen with a microscope.



“We feel privileged to have had Sy write about us. Sy is a wonderful person to be anywhere with; she’s curious, social and interested in everything,” says Mather. “The idea of the book is to try to explain how field researchers get into field research and how they work.”

Mather, who teaches in the University of Lethbridge’s Department of Psychology, spent nearly a month studying octopuses in Moorea, an island paradise just north of Tahiti in French Polynesia. She and two other professors with octopus expertise, Dr. David Scheel and Dr. Tatiana Leite, and Keely Langford from the Vancouver Aquarium, undertook the field study to see if they could determine whether personality or prey availability play a role in what an octopus eats.

*The Octopus Scientists* describes the work the scientists do on a daily basis, from donning wetsuits and looking for octopuses to then administering personality tests and recording the octopuses’ responses to being approached and being gently touched with a pencil. Scientists then collect the prey remains found near the den for sorting and identification.

“To figure out what an octopus eats you find its home and then you find its garbage heap,” says Mather. “They eat the soft part of the food and throw out the hard parts.”

The book will be officially launched at the Vancouver Aquarium on June 2. A more detailed story on Mather’s work in Moorea can be found on the [U News website](#).

**Media availability:**

**When:** Tuesday, May 26, 9:45 a.m.

**Where:** General Stewart School, 215 Corvette Crescent

**What:** Dr. Mather will be making a presentation to Hennie Machielse-Ens’ Grade 1 class from 9 to 10 a.m. Media are invited to the classroom to catch the closing portion of her talk and to interview her immediately afterward.

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