

Animal Feelings

Do animals have feelings? People used to think that humans were the only animals to experience emotions. Now we know that other animals also have feelings like happiness, sadness, and fear.

Sometimes animal emotions are easily recognizable. When your dog wags her tail, you can tell that she's happy. But sometimes animals express their feelings differently from us. When a bee gets a treat, it flies faster.

One animal that very clearly shows its feelings is the dolphin. Because people have studied dolphins in captivity, we know a lot about how they express their emotions. In particular, scientists have seen that dolphins experience loving friendship and deep grief.

Dolphins express loving friendship to the trainers who work with them. They nuzzle, splash, and wiggle to show their feelings. They also show loving friendship to other dolphins. In one experiment, scientists separated dolphins that usually swam together. When they played the sounds of the missing dolphin to the other, the dolphin swam quickly and excitedly to find its friend. The dolphin did not display this reaction with sounds from unknown dolphins.

Scientists have also seen dolphins displaying grief behavior. When a dolphin calf dies, the mother will often carry it for several days. Sometimes



other dolphins come to see the dead calf, in the same way that humans might attend a funeral.

Studying animal emotions makes it clear that humans and animals are not so different after all. The results of these studies help us understand how to better treat animals. It might be our goal to maximize positive emotions and minimize negative ones. Having compassion for the feelings of our animal friends is a positive emotion for us too!



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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. What do bees do when they get a treat?
 - a. Fly faster
 - b. Make honey
 - c. Wag their tails
 - d. Sting people

2. What emotion do some dolphins show to their trainers?
 - a. Loving friendship
 - b. Deep grief
 - c. Fear
 - d. Happiness

3. What is a dolphin baby called?
 - a. A dolphy
 - b. A fish
 - c. A calf
 - d. A pup

4. What is most likely the meaning of the term “captivity” as it is used in the text?
 - a. The wide-open ocean
 - b. A confined space where animals can be scientifically researched
 - c. A location in which the animals are treated poorly
 - d. A place where endangered animals always go

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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