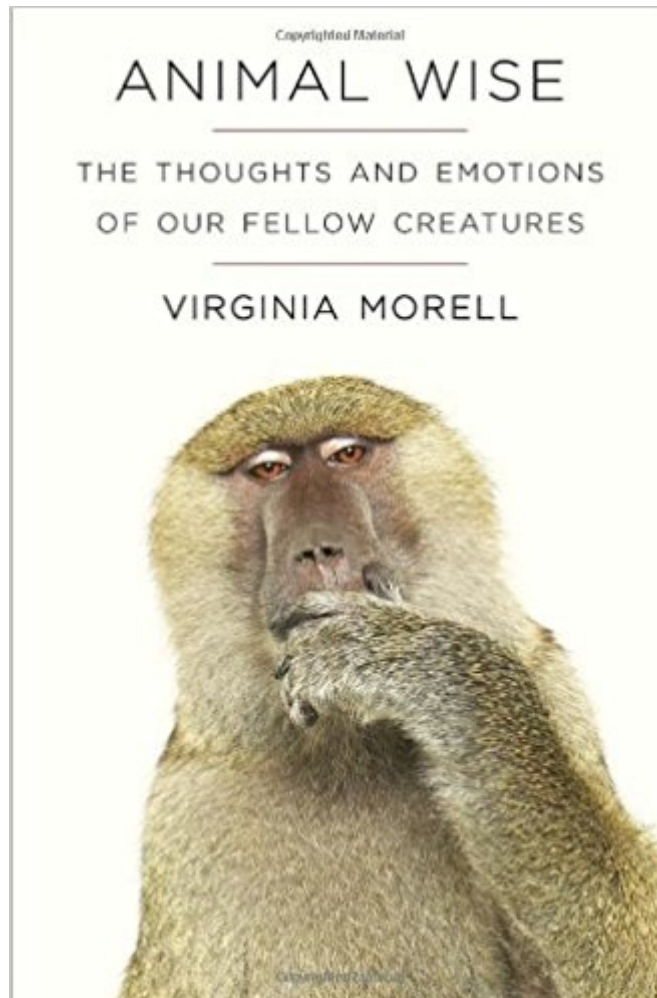




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Animal Wise: The Thoughts And Emotions Of Our Fellow Creatures



Synopsis

Noted science writer Virginia Morell explores the frontiers of research on animal cognition and emotion, offering a surprising and moving exploration into the hearts and minds of wild and domesticated animals. Have you ever wondered what it is like to be a fish? Or a parrot, dolphin, or elephant? Do they experience thoughts that are similar to ours, or have feelings of grief and love? These are tough questions, but scientists are answering them. They know that ants teach, earthworms make decisions, and that rats love to be tickled. They have discovered that dogs have thousand-word vocabularies, that parrots and dolphins have names, and that birds practice their songs in their sleep. But how do scientists know these things? Animal Wise takes us on a dazzling odyssey into the inner world of animals from ants to wolves, and among the pioneering researchers who are leading the way into once-forbidden territory: the animal mind. With thirty years of experience covering the sciences, Morell uses her formidable gifts as a story-teller to transport us to field sites and laboratories around the world, introducing us to animal-cognition scientists and their surprisingly intelligent and sensitive subjects. She explores how this rapidly evolving, controversial field has only recently overturned old notions about why animals behave as they do. She probes the moral and ethical dilemmas of recognizing that even "lesser animals" have cognitive abilities such as memory, feelings, personality, and self-awareness—traits that many in the twentieth century felt were unique to human beings. By standing behaviorism on its head, Morell brings the world of nature brilliantly alive in a nuanced, deeply felt appreciation of the human-animal bond, and she shares her admiration for the men and women who have simultaneously chipped away at what we think makes us distinctive while offering a glimpse of where our own abilities come from.

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Customer Reviews

Animals have minds, and they use them. As science-writer Morell (*Ancestral Passions*, 1996; *Blue Nile*, 2001) points out, the question isn't "do animals think?" but "what do they think?" Morell's journey into the minds of animals (and the researchers who study them) began when she watched her dog invent a game; but she was truly set on her path after clearly being singled out by one of Jane Goodall's chimpanzee subjects. In this exploration of animal cognition, the author visits numerous scientists and observes their research, both in laboratories and in the wild. She sees firsthand, and reports in thoroughly engaging language, research with animals as disparate as ants and elephants, or from such different lifestyles as rats and dolphins. We learn of ants that teach other ants, of rats that express their social joy through special chirps that resemble laughter, and of elephants that grieve for their dead. Archerfish show us that fish can imitate other fish, and dogs reveal that they understand human rules. --Nancy Bent

New York Times Bestseller
Los Angeles Times Book Prize Finalist
ALA 2014 Notable Book
A Kirkus Reviews Best Book of 2013
"Touching and provocative... well-told and often heart-wrenching."
"A fascinating, accessible look at animal cognition."
"This enthralling book might change the way we perceive other species who share the planet with us."
"A compelling read."
"This charming book about animal intelligence has a nice arc to its structure—working from generally more basic (although still remarkable) cognitive abilities of creatures like adventurous ants to the complex thinking of chimps—and it is threaded through with philosophical questions that are as thought-provoking as the creatures and experiments she chronicles."
"For most of the 20th Century, animals weren't allowed to have emotions. But Virginia Morell's new book, *Animal Wise*, tells a new story. After six years of reporting in 11 different countries, the longtime science journalist is pretty certain: Animals feel. And strongly, as it turns out."
"Each chapter takes readers on an adventure alongside researchers as they

probe the minds of such disparate creatures as ants, trout, dolphins, elephants and chimpanzees. •Scientific American•“Virginia Morell sheds light on the many surprises of cognitive awareness of animals. •San Francisco Chronicle•“Animal Wise presents the latest research on the cognitive processes and emotional expressions manifested in animal behavior [and] reveals a dazzling, amazing world of animal behaviors. •Portland Oregonian•“Among the best [books on animal cognition is] Virginia Morell’s Animal Wise, which examines how a different emotion or thought process is evident in a different animal (laughter in rats, for example). •The Economist•“For page after exciting page, [Morell] shows [animals] making decisions, remembering the past, planning the future, and helping others in distress. She resists the urge to close her fine book with musings on what makes humans special. Bravo. It’s humbler, wiser, and more instructive to stop looking down at animals from an imaginary evolutionary pinnacle and, instead, to try to see them as fellow thinking, feeling beings with minds as worthy of understanding as our own. •Sy Montgomery, American Scholar•“Heart- and brain-stirring...An unprecedented tour....about what goes on in the hearts and minds of our fellow beings, from the laughter of rats to the intellectual curiosity of dolphins.” •Maria Popova, Brain Pickings•“Moving and entertaining. [Morell] takes a journalist’s approach to the question of animal minds, but shows a deep compassion and empathy for her subjects, which include species separated by some 100 million years of evolution. [She] obliterates the lines that might separate us from the rest of the animal kingdom by relating trailblazing discoveries of the emotional and intellectual lives of animals. In the process, she challenges us to rethink our ethical obligations to the creatures who share our world. •KQED.org•“There aren’t enough words in the English language to do justice to Animal Wise... This remarkable book by Virginia Morell is transcendent... Readers will be dazzled by the profound insights being gained through scientific study.” •Examiner.com•“Each chapter presents some fascinating and surprising observations. [Animal Wise] is a good read; it is entertaining and thought-provoking. •Tucson Citizen•“Thank goodness for sensitive and compassionate writers like Virginia Morell. She has written a stunning volume charting the latest research on wild and domestic animal cognition and emotions. •Spirituality and Practice•“Animal Wise brings up a lot of important questions. I would recommend it [it] for anyone who cares about animals, not only for the wonders it reveals but for the chance it offers to make a difference in their lives.” •EcoLit Books•“Morell passionately and consistently proves her point in this frequently fascinating

study of animal behavior. [She] is a gifted writer with a deep knowledge base that never talks down to the reader or the academic community—no small feat. Publishers Weekly (starred review) “[A] delightful exploration of how animals think. Morell makes a fascinating, convincing case that even primitive animals give some thought to their actions. Kirkus Reviews (starred review) “After you read this book, you will be convinced that many different animal species have true thoughts and emotions. You will take a journey to the center of the animal mind. Temple Grandin, author of *Animals in Translation* and *Animals Make Us Human* “From real-estate appraising ants and wife-beating parrots to laughing rats, grieving elephants, and dogs that play Simon Says, Virginia Morell’s *Animal Wise* is a fascinating and intellectually sweeping overview of the new science of animal cognition. With Morell’s unusual ability to capture the passion and humanity of these scientists, this extraordinary book is an impressive treatment of animal minds and a must read for anyone who has ever wondered what is going on in the heads of the creatures we share our world with. Hal Herzog, author of *Some We Love, Some We Hate, Some We Eat* “Why is it that until very recently, many scientists claimed that animals can’t think? Every pet owner knows better, and Virginia Morell is our champion. But she’s not going on guesswork and opinion. *Animal Wise* is thoroughly and meticulously researched. And it’s a page-turner. It’s a window to the natural world that will change the way we view other species. We place ourselves at the top of the evolutionary ladder. Of course we do. We invented the ladder. In her marvelous book, Morell displays the folly of this viewpoint. *Animal Wise* is fabulous! Elizabeth Marshall Thomas, author of *The Hidden Life of Dogs* “Morell’s *Animal Wise* is science writing at its best. Here she not only translates scientists’ jargon and data into enviable prose, but transmits her love of the field to her audience. Novice readers will be enthralled to learn about the intelligence of the creatures in this book, and experts will be extremely pleased to see how she makes their work and that of their colleagues accessible to everyone. Irene Pepperberg, author of *Alex & Me* “From chimpanzees playing computer games to amorous dolphins, Virginia Morell takes us on a lively tour of what we have learned about the emotions and intelligence of animals. By inviting scientists to tell their personal side of the story, she not only brings the animals closer but also the thrill of discovery. Frans de Waal, author of *The Age of Empathy* “These animals have incredible minds. Now thanks to Morell they have a voice. I love this book. It makes me even prouder to share this Earth with our non-human

kin. “Anyone who reads this book will be changed forever in their view of life on earth.”

Richard E. Leakey, FRS, Stony Brook Professor of Anthropology and author of *The Sixth Extinction* “The scientific expertise Virginia Morell provides to this very important subject, and the way she ties this in with the researchers who know their animals so well because knowing them is their life work make this an important book and a great read.”

Bernd Heinrich, author of *Life Everlasting* “Animal Wise brings the reader into the lab and field to learn firsthand from the scientists that marvel over the minds of other animals. Using the sharp pen of an investigative reporter, Morell exposes the expected brilliance of apes, dolphins, and parrots, but also surprises us with simple discoveries of genius among fishes and ants, and even laughter among rats. Each page allows you to anticipate, sweat, grieve, and celebrate with dedicated scientists as you discover and experience their worlds, and those within the minds of the astounding animals that they study. Your journey causes reflection; a consideration of how we treat other species and what they think about us.”

John Marzluff, Professor of Wildlife Science, University of Washington and author of *Dog Days*, *Raven Nights* and *Gifts of the Crow* “Animal Wise is a thought-provoking and highly engaging set of essays that captures the changing views of scientists toward the minds and emotional lives of animals. It is sure to have broad impact on attitudes towards other species and our treatment of them. Thank you, Virginia Morell, for adding legitimacy to what we have so painstakingly observed.”

Joyce Poole, PhD, Co-Director of ElephantVoices, member of the Amboseli Elephant Research Project, and author of *Coming of Age With Elephants* “In sprightly and clear prose Virginia Morell enters the world of animals with respect and insight and with the compelling argument that our lives differ only in degree. The recognition that we are bound in mind to many other creatures, all of them dependent on us for survival, will, I hope, arouse our compassion and assure them a future. This is a fascinating, timely, and important book.”

George B. Schaller, Panthera and Wildlife Conservation Society “From ants to apes, Animal Wise covers wide-ranging scientific research on the cognitive and emotional capacities of many different non-human animals. Noted author Virginia Morell writes clearly and concisely, and this easy read will surely be good for animals because we must use what we know about them to make their lives better in an increasingly human dominated world.”

Marc Bekoff, author of *The Emotional Lives of Animals* and *The Animal Manifesto* and editor of *Ignoring Nature No More* “It is nice to see a science writer of Virginia Morell’s distinction take on this increasingly important topic, and it is good to have her calm and careful voice added to the

conversation. "She has a great deal to teach us about the latest research on the frontiers of this fascinating new world." Animal Wise is a fine book.

—Jeffrey Masson, author of *When Elephants Weep*

Animals have always been portrayed as "non-intelligent, devoid of personality, robotic-like etc". Jane Goodall broke this mold with her first scientific descriptions of chimpanzees at Gombe National Park by the implementation of personal pronouns such as "he" or "she" instead of the usual "it" in referencing her subject matter -- her thesis was rejected on this "anthropomorphism" alone ... Jane held firm eliminating all the "its" and reestablishing her designation of "he, him, her, hers" in reference to certain chimpanzees. The editor finally backed down and this small breakthrough allowed scientists to begin seeing animals as individuals, then to see them with colorful and complex personalities and finally to begin seeing their complex social interactions. Since then this field of animal intelligence has exploded illuminating the surprising intelligence of arthropods, birds, rats, canines etc. This book is a delightful update on where the science of animal intelligence currently stands. The chapters on porpoises and elephants are weak and loosely written but the vast bulk of this book is an enjoyable read and a delight to see scientists beginning to understand the complex societies of animals. More importantly, the author goes into the background on how biologists have elucidated all this information by exploring their experimental techniques. A winner!

I don't really need a book to tell me that animals think and feel (my cats and dog have no issues communicating with me). Still, it's very interesting to know what's being done to prove the intelligence of animals. The science sometimes is a little too dense and I struggled with those parts, but I mostly learned so many things that are simply amazing! Did you know that ants can teach? Cows and whales have regional accents. Crows use tools. And dogs... it is amazing how we have evolved together, being that we have no common ancestors. I was just a little disappointed that cats have not been studied as much because these tests require the animals to cooperate and cats are simply not interested (I can almost picture my cat, Charlie, telling a scientist "Dude, I'm napping" | I really don't care whether humans think or not, as long as you guys feed me. Now, go away and close the door behind you).

After reading this book, I stopped eating fish (the only living creature I still ate) - how can you eat creatures who dream? For animal lovers, this book is fascinating. For people who don't think about these things, maybe it's time to change their perception.

I love animals and have always been searching what I could learn about their mental achievements. This book has enlightened me more and added the quality of empathy to bestow towards them. And what was shared by the author is a small beginning of what we will learn as years go by. Thanks to our Wise, Loving Creator for making them to be our companions and to learn more about ourselves and our place on this planet.

This is a current review of the consciousness and communications of social animals, a subject that was thought to be unscientific throughout much of the twentieth century, but with the availability of new neuroscience and the "naïve" approach of several current investigators we are back to Darwin's assumptions of the animal minds that inform their behavior. This is a good and readable sampling of the experimental evidence supporting what animals must be thinking. It is based on the author's chatty interviews of various investigators of ants, fish, parrots and other birds, rats, elephants, dolphins, chimps, dogs and wolves. It is a welcome relief from the "mindlessness" of behaviorism. Jerry Woolpy

Everyone who shares a home with a dog or cat knows without doubt that their pet thinks and experiencing emotions, but the research review of other species including insects, fish, and birds was enlightening. Very interesting review of the current animal cognition research.

Learned things about animals that grabbed my attention, and fascinated me. Highlighted sections to share with others in my circle

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