

Animal Cognition



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"Animal Cognition" presents a clear, concise and comprehensive overview of what we know about cognitive processes in animals. Focusing mainly on what has been learned from experimental research, Vauclair presents a wide-ranging review of studies of many kinds of animals - bees and wasps, cats and dogs, dolphins and sea otters, pigeons and titmice, baboons, chimpanzees, vervet monkeys, and Japanese macaques. He also offers a discussion of the ways Piaget's theory of cognitive development and Piagetian concepts may be used to develop models for the study of animal cognition. Individual chapters review the current state of our knowledge about specific kinds of cognition in animals: tool use and spatial and temporal representations; social cognition - how animals manage their relational life and the cognitive organization that sustains social behaviours; representation, communication and language; and imitation, self-recognition and the theory of mind - what animals know about themselves. The book closes with Vauclair's "agenda for comparative cognition". Here he examines the relationship of the experimental approach to other fields and methods of inquiry, such as cognitive ethology, and the ecological approach to species comparisons. It is here, too, that Vauclair addresses the key issue of continuity, or its absence, between animal and human cognition. Given our still limited knowledge of cognitive systems in animals, Vauclair argues, researchers should be less concerned with the "why" question - the evolutionary or ecological explanations for differences in cognition between the species - and more concerned with the "what" - the careful work that is needed to increase our understanding of similarities and differences in cognitive processes. This book should be of use to students of animal behaviour and to anyone who desires a better understanding of humankind's relations to other living creatures.

作者介绍:

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