



Animal Files

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Produced by: Ditta Prola

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Versions: 

Format: SD

A complicated system of relationships inextricably binds each title of the natural ecosystems. In fact, scientists are just starting to understand the complex nature of the animal world. In their opinion, each behavior, each shape, and colour is never there by mere chance. Everything takes place following a rigorous survival law. How to proceed? In front of this still greatly unknown world, researchers and scientists find themselves as if they had to translate an unknown language without a dictionary! Little by little, with patience, deep study and analysis, they explain the oddest (or funny) behaviours, disclose the mystery of strange shapes, flashy colourful feathers or the designs on the snakes' skin. They find answers to the motivations of rituals and dances, they reveal the mechanism that governs the relationship between the species and the language they use. Following the guidance of specialists in ecology, animal behavior and natural sciences, this series will allow the viewer to get to know and better understand the marvelous world of animals. And it might also, very often, uncover the deep roots of many human behaviours.



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Episodes



Animals' sight and seeing

Carlo & Lodovico Prola

Almost every animal has eyes, but not all see as we do. Each species has a special eye sight, appropriate to its needs. The shape of the eye, its position on the head, the development of particular sensibilities, have allowed each species to have the kind of sight which allows it to localise food, to defend itself from predators, to find its partner.



Animals without frontiers

Carlo & Lodovico Prola

Parrots in the streets, among houses, gardens and trees. We are not in a city of Africa, the Amazon or Australia. We are in a quiet residential neighbourhood of Rome. The presence of exotic animal and plant species is not a novel or unusual phenomenon: we can find "aliens" non only between birds, but also between fishes, reptiles, mammals and insects.



Biodiversity

Carlo & Lodovico Prola

The frenetic explosion of life that follows the stasis of winter has precise biological motivations that have been carefully examined by scientists. The totality of the organisms, both animal and vegetal, that populate our planet in a multitude of forms, are the result of long and complex evolutionary processes that have engendered the incredible variety of life on earth which biologists have coined biodiversity.



Instinct and learning

Carlo & Lodovico Prola

Today etologists no longer maintain as they once did that there is a marked separation between instinctive and learned behaviour. Indeed, the category instinctive behaviour is falling into disuse. Thanks also to research on imprinting, learning acquired in the prenatal phase and in the first few days after birth, instinct and learning are now recognised as a complex synthesis of behaviour.



Just meeting or mating

Carlo & Lodovico Prola

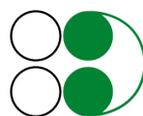
Among animals the strategies to find, approach and seduce a partner are seemingly infinite. But why do all animals, from mammals to birds, from reptiles to insects, spend so much energy in courtship? Why have they developed such complex and time-consuming methods?



Numbering Nature

Carlo & Lodovico Prola

To protect any wildlife population it is first necessary to assess its size and distribution in a territory, to understand its biological needs, its habits and behavior. And this is possible only if the individual components of the population are identifiable so as to observe them over a long period of time.



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The biological clock **Carlo and Lodovico Prola**

How do animals measure the passage of time? What clock schedules their life? Living beings have a biological clock that is at the root of the circadian rhythm, that is a clock that regulates the cycles of the 24 hour clock itself.



The ecological niche **Carlo & Lodovico Prola**

The secret to the peaceful coexistence of the different species is specialisation. Every animal belongs to a particular ecological niche which is complementary to its physical and biological characteristics and which allows it to flourish without entering in competition with other species.



The global rulers **Carlo & Lodovico Prola**

The number of insects that live in our world today far exceeds the total population of all other living organisms put together. Over 900,000 different species of insects are known, an enormous and impressive number. Since it is estimated that for every human being on earth there are over 200 million insects, we should consider ourselves lucky that it is only occasionally that an insect pesters us and other warm-blooded animals.



Together or alone **Carlo & Lodovico Prola**

Almost every animal gets in contact with its own fellows at least once in life: in the sake of procreation. In order to find a partner, even the most aggressive and solitary animals are compelled to totally modify their usual behaviour, engaging themselves in all sorts of rituals to seduce their mates.



An alibi for the violence **Carlo & Lodovico Prola**

The justification that violence is an inevitable primeval instinct and part of our genetic inheritance, due to our evolutionary link to the animal world, doesn't hold up at all. In the animal world intraspecific violence, meaning among individuals of the same species, does exist, but it rarely leads to extreme consequences.



Extra-sensory perceptions **Carlo & Lodovico Prola**

They teach us at school that there are five senses through which we perceive the outside world. This may be true for us humans, but not at all for many other living beings. Let's find out why.



Let's start from the tail **Carlo & Lodovico Prola**

We're talking about tails, that funny looking part that we often consider useless and annoying, but which actually is, as we shall see, a precious thing for many animals.



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Lies

Carlo & Lodovico Prola

Forthright, simple and spontaneous, and so extremely sincere that they could never lie. This is how we perceive the animals around us. But is this really true? Deception is actually a truly ancient talent, used both to escape a predator and to surprise a prey.



Life is a game

Carlo & Lodovico Prola

One of the activities humans share with many animals is the playing of games. Ethologists have shown that many animals have a strong disposition to curiosity and play. They search out and explore new situations, following an inner instinct, finding any opportunity to play - either by themselves or with others.



Feet: life support

Carlo & Lodovico Prola

What allows some animals to graze at a height of 6 metres, and others to perform acrobatic feats, or remain glued like suction cups to any type of surface? Their feet, of course. Let's prepare for a journey to discover the most curious "extremities" in the animal kingdom.



Nature's engineers

Carlo & Lodovico Prola

Birds' nests, spiders' webs, foam houses, wasps' tunnels are only a few examples of the incredible constructions that nature's engineers manage to build most of the time unaware of what they've accomplished, guided only by mysterious instincts.



Nature's orchestra

Carlo & Lodovico Prola

In an attempt to escape from the chaos of the city, we'll focus on the opposite of noise, which is not silence, because silence in itself does not exist, but rather on the ensemble of natural sounds, generally soft and delicate types of sounds, which for millions of years have been the only soundtrack of life on Earth and which we very rarely hear today.



Private property

Carlo & Lodovico Prola

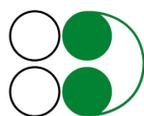
Many animals defend an area of their habitat which they perceive as their own property. A territory can be occupied by one single animal which defends it from the presence of its own kind, or it can belong to a group which will defend the territory from individuals of the same species who don't belong to the group.



Sleeping beauties

Carlo & Lodovico Prola

Alone or in company, all animals sleep, even though length and intensity of sleep greatly varies from species to species. As for sleep time, everyone has their own preferences: some like to sleep alone, others prefer sleeping in company.



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