

How do I get started?

Think mundane, ordinary, commonplace. Special outings or trips are usually not necessary. Free-living animals live in and around homes, lawns, yards, schools, workplaces, playgrounds, parks, gardens, trees, roads, parking lots, and other everyday places.

Habituate yourself to noticing them and spending a full minute or more contemplating them. That minuscule black insect or red arachnid crawling over the page of your book like a punctuation mark in motion is worth knowing, just like the skittish woodchuck, rabbit, bird or squirrel out back, the fish at the edge of a pond, and the bee maneuvering over a flower.

Animal-knowing just means directing your attention to whoever is making their go at life without direct human involvement. If sensational animals happen to live in your vicinity, great – the idea is just that burning fuel abuses nonhuman animals, and most people don't need to travel to practice animal-knowing. Forget yourself, your tasks, your gadgets and media; it's all about a member of another species whose ancestors contributed to the ecosystems humans thrive on and destroy today.

NOTE: Some nonhuman animals can be dangerous to human beings. Act accordingly.

What am I or the other animals supposed to get out of it?

As with other forms of meditation, there is no single result everyone should expect from practicing animal-knowing. But it is not surprising that people use words like “amazing” or “profound” or report powerful experiences of empathy and gratitude for animals they didn't use to notice at all. Some people feel more indignant over harm civilization does to nonhuman animals and their natural homes. Not surprising, since humans have an innate affinity for other animals and are genetically related to all of them.

In their original, natural habitat teeming with other animals, devoid of words and civilization's infinite distractions, original human beings directly experienced and observed everything and everyone. Doing so provided valuable knowledge, fostering safety, health, and wellbeing. Animal-knowing restores on a small scale our species' original experience.

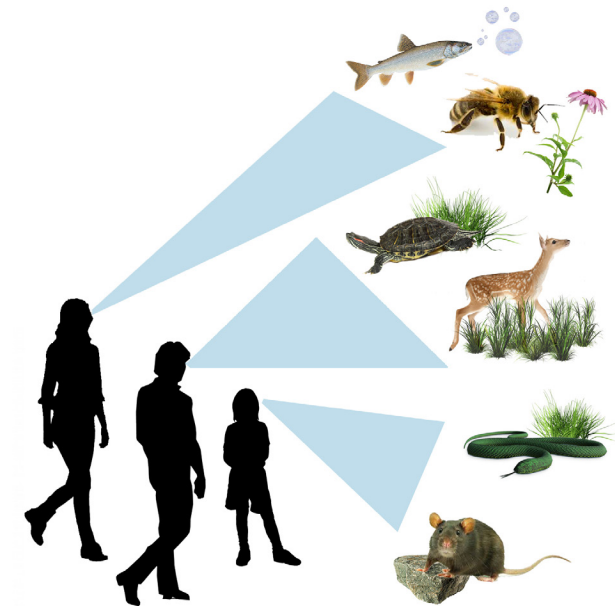
Tell Responsible Policies for Animals your animal-knowing experience.

Happy knowing!

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ANIMAL-KNOWING

Help protect nonhuman animals by restoring our species' natural affinity for them.



a free guide from
Responsible Policies for Animals,
a tax-exempt educational
nonprofit organization

“I plan to continue using animal-knowing as a teaching mainstay.”

— K-6 science teacher, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

What Is Animal-Knowing?

Contemplate a free-living nonhuman animal of any kind anywhere, anytime, without concern for classifying, evaluating, judging, or doing anything to or with them. Put aside personal or cultural bias toward nonhuman animals. You’re practicing animal-knowing.

Focus on the animal’s form, features, expressions, postures, movements, sounds, and interactions with their surroundings and other beings. Open yourself to the animal’s experience. What is the animal doing, and why? What might they be thinking or feeling? How do you feel observing the animal? How would you feel if the animal were injured or killed, their home destroyed, their food or water contaminated? Do you perceive an inner light such as some human beings see in each other?

Why Practice Animal-Knowing?

Animal-knowing is a partial, gradual remedy to civilized humans’ animal and nature deprivation which moves many people to surround themselves with enslaved animals and artistic or manufactured representations of animals or to disrupt nature by traveling to scenic areas, perpetuating animal-abuse

policy and culture. Animal-knowing can help restore our species’ innate benign, respectful, non-judgmental, non-instrumental perception of other animals.

Humans in civilization drive most animals from their natural homes, kill them for entering human homes and businesses, and spend most of their time in artificial surroundings, not in a natural ecosystem like humans’ original home on the African savanna. This mode of existence supplants natural empathy, respect, and awe toward others with ignorance, antipathy, and apathy, furthering civilization’s millennia-long assault on nonhuman animals and the living world.

Practicing animal-knowing, teaching it to others, and ensuring that children practice it can enrich human experience and spread the hands-off attitude our species must nurture to protect nonhuman animals and restore the living world.

No pets or farm animals? Why free-living animals?

Animals genetically altered, enslaved, controlled, trained, and otherwise debased and abused by human beings inspire disrespect, entitlement, condescension, pandering, and mockery rather than the admiration, respect and awe we can experience by contemplating even the tiniest animal living free. Experiencing only enslaved and exploited animals reinforces, subconsciously, civilization’s indoctrination into human supremacy, human superiority, the “great

chain of being,” and other speciesist ideologies that rationalize civilization’s animal-abuse policy and culture.

A purpose and function of animal-knowing is to restore our species’ innate respect and affinity for other animals and the natural boundaries between them and humans. Contemplating a spider living free of human intrusion (even in a human home) accomplishes this; observing a privately owned, human-bred dog, chicken, cat, or horse deprived of self-determination or a fish or a snake in a tank does not.

What about books and films? Do you have to contemplate animals in person?

Truthful science-based books, films, articles, and lectures that undermine established human attitudes of superiority, condescension, mockery, and entitlement can reveal much about animals that aids in animal-knowing. They can nurture appreciation, gratitude, admiration, celebration, and awe toward another being and toward the quadrillions who generated, over millions of years, the systems that support all life.

For an enriching experience of others, however, there is no substitute for direct, unmediated knowledge.

Responsible Policies for Animals is glad to recommend helpful sources as described above.