

CENTRE FOR SENSORY STUDIES



SENTIENCE LECTURE SERIES

Animal Sentience from Fishes to Flies

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13:00-14:40, [Webinar Registration Link](#)

I present examples of sentience, and its implications, in two major groups of animals: fishes and insects. Fishes make up over 50 percent of all vertebrate species, and insects some 80 percent of all living animals on Earth. Studies of fish perceptions, cognition, emotion, social behavior, and cooperation reveal a richness in these animals' lives that rivals that of land-living vertebrates. Evidence for sentience and cognition in insects is less developed, probably because scientists only recently began studying it. Examples include evidence for chronic pain, observational learning, and attention span. As scientific discoveries continue to blur anthropocentric moral boundaries, there are more reasons than ever to respect and protect our animal comrades.

Jonathan Balcombe is an ethologist with a focus on animal sentience and protection. In addition to over 60 peer-reviewed papers and book chapters, his books include *Pleasurable Kingdom*, *Second Nature*, *What a Fish Knows* (a New York Times bestseller now available in fifteen languages), and his just-released *Super Fly: The Unexpected Lives of the World's Most Successful Insects*. A children's book, *Jake and Ava: A Boy and a Fish*, will be published in October. Balcombe is former Director of Animal Sentience with the Humane Society Institute for Science and Policy, and Department Chair for Animal Studies with Humane Society University, in Washington, DC.

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