

Preface

Most of us have heard about Pavlov's dogs and the Skinner box, and many are aware that applied behavioural science has come a long way since then. Behavioural testing of animals is used in many different scientific disciplines, from laboratory-based studies in neuroscience to fieldwork in behavioural ecology. But why do we use the tests we do? What can they tell us and – not least – what are their limitations?

This book will give an introduction to the use (and perhaps misuse) of behaviour tests applied to animals. Through illustrative examples from a variety of species, the aim is to inspire the animal experimenter to think about what a given behavioural test can be used for and how the results can be interpreted. It is *not* meant as a dictionary or list of tests from which a researcher can choose, but as an inspiration on what to do (and not to do) when developing and executing tests of animal behaviour.

I could have chosen to delve into the history of behavioural experimentation with a detailed presentation and discussion of the tests most commonly used. Instead, I have opted for a lighter tone (and tome), hoping that you may actually read it to the end. This has, of course, some drawbacks. There will be omissions and the purists among you may scoff at some of the simplifications used to describe the hows and whys in the different chapters. However, I believe this to be justified if it makes more people read about this subject and, perhaps, as a consequence, develop an interest in the practical use of behavioural testing to ask animals questions.

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