

Foreword

The unbelievably huge whale swam close to the surface, undulating, parallel to our boat, her calf close beside her. The gentle rhythmic sound of her breathing brought a sense of deep peace. I was aware of her ancient knowledge, carried in her genes through millions of years of blue whale evolution. That day out on the ocean provided one of the most memorable of the great store of memories that I have been gifted with throughout my 75 years. Dolphins came to us also on that same day, some 2000 our captain estimated. Suddenly they were all around us, hunting. Wherever we looked there were dolphins, racing through the water, intent on their prey. It was breathtaking. Just as suddenly, they were gone. And then, a few hours later, there they were again, enchanting us with their vitality, their energy. This time they were surely playing as they dived under the boat, torpedoed to the surface, zigzagged. Playing for the sheer joy of life, as do the chimpanzees when the ripe fruit is all around and their bellies are comfortably full.

My fascination with the denizens of the ocean was first triggered by Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. For several years I dreamed of learning about the beings that lived in the mysterious world under the water. It was at that time that I read *Moby Dick* as one of my school books. I couldn't sleep at night. I used to lie imagining what it must be like – being pursued by killers, knowing that if you come up for air you will be most cruelly harpooned. Yet knowing too that you could not forever put off the increasingly desperate need for air. And it has become far worse: in those days there was no sophisticated technology that can track a whale's movements from afar. Today there is truly no escape for a hunted whale.

I have never lost my love for the ocean and her creatures, my fascination with whales and dolphins, even though my path took me into a very different world in the rainforests of Africa. And this interest in the cetaceans has only intensified as we learn more and more about their complex lives, their cultures, their communication. Who can fail to be moved when they listen to recordings of the songs of the humpback whales?

That they have emotions and a capacity for suffering I have never doubted. When I was a child I had a wonderful teacher from whom I learned a great deal about animals, their intelligence and their emotions. That knowledge stood me in good stead when, after a year in the field studying chimpanzees, I was admitted to

Cambridge University in England to do a PhD in ethology in 1961. Although I was thrilled to have this opportunity, I was also a bit apprehensive as I had never been to college at all. Imagine my shock when I was told I had done everything wrong. It was not scientifically acceptable to talk about chimpanzees having personalities and their own individuality, nor the capacity to think, and I certainly could not ascribe to them emotions. All these things were unique to the human animal. To suggest otherwise was to be guilty of that worst ethological crime: anthropomorphism, attributing human-like behaviours to other-than-human animals. Fortunately, despite my scientific lack of know-how, I was able to stick to my convictions, mainly, I am sure, because of the lessons I had learned from that great teacher of my childhood. And that was my dog, Rusty.

Given the similarity in chimpanzee and human DNA and brain anatomy, why should it be surprising that chimpanzees should be capable of intellectual abilities once considered unique to humans? Why would there not be similarities in emotional expressions? And the differences between individuals in behaviour as well as appearance were so obvious that it was clearly ridiculous to deny them. The 1960s saw the burgeoning of field studies of a variety of creatures with complex brains and correspondingly complex social behaviour. It became increasingly clear that reductionist explanations for many of these behaviours were simply not appropriate.

As this book points out, cetacean social behaviour and cognition is a comparatively new field, largely due to the physical limitations associated with studying them in a watery environment, so different from our own. But with incredible determination and dedication, and through skilful use of some of the latest technology, cetacean researchers have provided many fascinating and extremely significant insights into the lives of their subjects. There can now be no reasonable doubt that these animals are highly intelligent, and have extraordinarily complex social behaviour, rich communication patterns and cultural traditions that vary between groups of the same species. Nor can it be denied that they show emotions and are capable of altruism, caring for sick and dying companions. This book shares also many stories of the sometimes extraordinary relationships that have been observed between cetaceans and humans.

A story that attracted a good deal of attention concerned a whale who had become hopelessly tangled in fishing lines and the volunteers who went to her aid, cutting through the lines. Some wondered how she would react when she was finally free – with a small slapping of tail or fluke she could easily have killed them. As the last line dropped off she dived down deep – but then came up and swam to each in turn as though thanking them, before swimming to freedom. One of the team said that after looking into her huge eye as he cut the rope from her head, he will never be the same again.

The book also discusses the use of dolphins in entertainment, pointing out the cruelty of capturing these denizens of the open sea, destroying their families, maintaining them in hopelessly inadequate captive conditions, and teaching them

inappropriate 'tricks'. One of the most moving accounts of the effect of unnatural confinement is provided by Alexandra Morton in her book *Listening to Whales*.

Whales and Dolphins: Cognition, Culture, Conservation and Human Perceptions is a very important book. It makes a compelling case for scientists, conservationists and animal welfare groups to combine to develop a new approach to the conservation of cetaceans. An approach that takes into consideration the various environmental threats such as decrease in fish stocks, chemical and noise pollution, the navy's use of low-frequency sonar, the effect of global warming on ocean habitats, collisions with shipping and, of course, hunting – for food, for 'research' or for the live animal trade. And one that combines not only concern for the species, but also for the individual and his or her social group and culture.

We must be grateful to Philippa Brakes and Mark Peter Simmonds, and to all who contributed to this book, for it results in a clarion call for action. Whales and dolphins are ancient and wonderful sapient and sentient beings. How would we be judged by our great, great grandchildren and all unborn generations if, knowing what we do, we do not fight to prevent their extinction? The whales and dolphins need and deserve our help – now, before it is too late.

Jane Goodall, PhD, DBE
Founder – the Jane Goodall Institute
UN Messenger of Peace
www.janegoodall.org